



Ekodo Retreat Handbook

“Enough”

August 2015

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Introduction to Ekodo

Ekodo (eko – ecological; dō – way). Ekodo approaches environmental and social action as sacred practice. Ekodo is a training environment for assertive, compassionate social and environmental action. The training resources we use are not new – indeed they have an ancient history in many cultures. We come to Ekodo from a Zen practice perspective but Ekodo (and Zen) is compatible with any (or no) religious tradition. What is core though is a loyalty to a few core themes. These themes include

1. Self confidence in an interconnected world
2. The practice of interconnectedness in the heart of environmental action
3. An interconnected community

Anyone who is awake to what is going on in the world right now cannot help but be compelled to acknowledge that we live in a challenging and pivotal time for our global society. To be awake here refers to acknowledging the massive accumulation of evidence that our global society faces a massive challenge:

- Biodiversity loss – we are in the midst of the 6th major extinction event
- Resource depletion – several different stock resources are at or past their peak
- Population growth – our global population is increasing at approximately 70-80 million per year
- Climate change – the long range forecast is drought and associated agricultural challenges
- Conflict – inevitable

We are on the Titanic, the messages are coming in of danger ahead, the captain is incompetent/asleep and not taking responsibility for the situation, and not enough people are doing what needs to be done. This is our job. The biggest mistake we can make is thinking that other people run the world.

For more information, please visit our website. www.ekodo.org

“I am Enough” – Jo Campbell

Let me start by being clear that when I say “I am Enough” it is not meant as a positive-thinking mantra or even as Metta – although it could be. In this case I am using the phrase a little differently. And yet the difference may seem subtle to onlookers. “I am Enough”, in this context has little or nothing to do with how good I am or how effective my actions are. It is not a statement relating to any of my qualities, skills or previous experience. Nor does it deny any of these. “I am Enough” is far greater than my actions or abilities, and yet it is also my actions and abilities – just exactly as they are.

Let me put it as a question, one that forms the basis of all mystical traditions. “Who am ‘I’?” Or rather, “Who am I beyond my name and reputation?”

In Zen we sit quietly on a cushion, settle into our bodies, calm the mind by following the breath, and in one way or another, gradually drop this question into the very grounds of our being. “Who am I beyond my name?” Or, “What is this?” “And this?”

Let’s just assume for a moment, as an intellectual exercise (which Zen is not), that we are all part of an interconnected universe. And taking this a step further, can we see that as such we are not separate from this greater whole? We are the greater whole and the individual all at once, just as a note is both the note and the grand symphony, or a drop of water is the ocean. How can I *not* be enough when I’m part of the whole?

We can all probably agree that our actions have significance not just to ourselves but to the whole. But just let this thought settle for a moment into the body. “Our lives have significance to the whole.” What about, “Our life is the whole”? Can we truly experience

this? Where does this sit in the body? What shifts as this settles?

Acknowledging that “I am the whole/ the whole is me,” gives me a sense of deep belonging, responsibility, reverence, and most importantly a deeply centered legitimacy in my efforts to protect this vast Self. In this way, my actions to ‘save all beings’ are also saving myself and vice versa. This is why we liken Ekodo to a martial art, and say that defending ecosystems and communities is ultimately self-defense, or “Self-defense.” It is also why it is said, “The whole world is medicine”.

“I am Enough” is a practice both on the cushion and off the cushion. “I am Enough” is the intersection between realizing our own true nature and realizing that nature needs us to stand up and express this part of the universe in compassionate action (i.e. not just sitting on the cushion). Saying “Enough!” is the whole expressing itself as any self-regulating system does given the chance. In this way, the sickness becomes the medicine.

So “I am Enough” is not about our capacity to act, it is about our legitimacy to act. It is our birthright to stand up and say “Enough” to protect the greater whole. The work of how we go about saying “Enough!” is a lifelong practice, engendering both wisdom and compassion. But it starts with our experiencing that we are fully legitimate, fully moved, and fully ‘enough’ to walk this path.

In short; ‘The Earth is my Witness’ and “My Witness is the Earth”.

[Jo Campbell, July, 2015]

“This is Enough” – Jo Campbell

On one level “This is enough” is exactly the same as “I am enough”, in that I am this. But these words also open up other possibilities. In Zen, please take nothing that is said as absolute or definitive or even ‘right’. This is not an intellectual pursuit. Words can be useful and in the previous article, I explored an aspect of ‘I am enough’ in a rational sort of way. But Zen constantly asks us to explore the matter experientially and for ourselves.

The same goes for “This is enough”. Let’s just sit with that for a moment. Settle into your posture and become aware of your experience right here. Bring a welcoming, friendly curiosity to what is going on for you right now. Remain open to your full experience – thoughts, physical sensations, emotions, and senses. Let yourself observe, without any judgment, what comes and goes in this full body/heart/mind experience. Now quietly drop in the statement, “This is enough”. Or “I am enough”. Or simply “Enough!”.

What do you experience, and how do you meet this experience? Can you just let it be? Observe and be present with your experience? Bear witness to it – and yet not be separate from it? Fully experience the full experience. Again, “This is enough”.

Joanna Macy shares the sentiment of many Buddhist teachers and practitioners when she writes, ‘To be alive in this beautiful, self-organizing universe -- to participate in the dance of life with senses to perceive it, lungs that breathe it, organs that draw nourishment from it -- is a wonder beyond words.’ How does this speak to you of “This is enough?” Where does this sit in your body? What lights up?

She also wrote, ‘If you want an adventure, boy, what a time to choose to be alive! Don’t waste time in self-pity over darkness; don’t waste time trying to figure out better circumstances that you might like. You’re born into this and you’re here to love it, and to see that it goes on.’ Bernie Glassman Roshi puts it another way. ‘Cultivating a connection to the Oneness of life or to God means that we can both be perfectly content with the perfection of the world exactly as it is and do loving actions to make it better.’ Again, what is your full experiencing of ‘this is enough’?

‘You’re here to love it and to see that it goes on’. This captures both the challenge and the delight of being alive. We certainly don’t want to spend our life so caught in the rapture of criticism for the system that we fall into a deep depression and miss the beauty that surrounds us. At the same time, we do not want to spend our life oblivious to what is really going on. Joanna Macy writes; ‘The most radical thing any of us can do at this time is to be fully present to what is happening in the world’.

Notice she says ‘fully present to’ rather than simply ‘aware of’. She is hinting at a subtle but huge difference here. All the ‘awareness raising’ that has happened to date around environmental and social justice, has not translated into *enough* action, in fact it has to some extent dulled our ability to see, or be fully present to, the experience. It has become white noise we have learnt to live with or rather, ignore. But to be fully present to something goes beyond awareness at a rational/intellectual level. It begins to touch us. And once we are deeply touched by something, we cannot avoid acting. If we allow ourselves to feel compassion (to suffer with another) we are compelled to act.

Susan Murphy Roshi puts it like this, “[We] must rely on what is happening in order to learn how to proceed, [and] dare to meet it fully just as it really is. [What] is so urgently being called up in us flows naturally from daring to welcome a hard reality”.

This is where mindfulness can help us. In mindfulness we learn to experience our lives fully, to stay present when things become difficult, to bear witness to things just as they are, and to respond carefully and authentically rather than out of triggered reactivity.

Bernie Glassman writes, ‘When we bear witness, when we become the situation — homelessness, poverty, illness, violence, death — the right action arises by itself. We don’t have to worry about what to do. We don’t have to figure out solutions ahead of time. Peacemaking is the functioning of bearing witness. Once we listen with our entire body and mind, loving action arises. Loving action is right action. It’s as simple as giving a hand to someone who stumbles or picking up a child who has fallen on the floor. We

take such direct, natural actions every day of our lives without considering them special. And they're not special. Each is simply the best possible response to that situation in that moment.'

Susan Murphy adds a slightly different dimension to this when she writes, "'Just as it really is' cannot possibly hide the suffering and ruin and awfulness of things; and yet that is exactly what opens the way for the deep reassurance of all things to reach us; and with it the possibility – the fact – that we are not helpless at all, that we all actively make this mysterious world, and that everything we do counts."

But where to put our efforts when there is so much that needs to be done? The question becomes 'What is enough?'. When you consider the world's urgent problems, where do you begin? And can you ever do enough? And if not, is it worth trying? How does this dilemma sit within you?

I once heard Joanna Macy say something like; We cannot know the impact of our actions. We do not know if our efforts to save the planet will be enough. However, we attend to the world with loving kindness, just as a midwife attends to a new born baby or a hospice worker attends to a dying man; with great compassion.

Thich Nhat Hanh offers a very practical response to dilemma of where to put our efforts: "Take one thing and do it very deeply and carefully, and you will be doing everything at the same time." This is enough – in a very active sense.

So what is the one thing that you are passionate about? The one thing that really moves you?

In the book "The Wheel of Engaged Buddhism", Kenneth Kraft offers a mandala to illustrate what he calls, 'a new map of the path' (see page 18). Within this mandala are 5 modes of practice (moving into the world, extending compassionate action, exploring new terrain, at ease amidst activity, and spreading joy in ten directions) and 5

fields of practice (cultivating awareness in daily life, embracing family, working with others, participating in politics and caring for the earth).

The point is, there are many ways to practice engaged Buddhism. From how we parent, to right livelihood, to political activism, to environmental restoration work, and we each must find our own path. The articles by Joanna Macy later in this booklet lay out a range of other options. There are also many websites on Engaged Buddhism that can offer guidance.

In the end, we each have to find that ever-evolving sweet spot of "this is enough" where our practice can blossom, our compassionate actions can make an impact (unknowable though it is), and 'every day can be a good day'.

Ekodo offers up these words: 'I am enough', 'This is enough' and 'Saying "Enough"'. We invite you to let them become an inquiry into engaged practice, a form of engaged koan. You might add others, such as 'You are enough' and 'What is enough?'. 'Enough' is a sort of turning word, intersecting the issues of our time: Need verses greed. Compassion verses blame. Justice verses injustice. Stillness and action.

We can find rational answers to these questions but they won't mean anything unless we do something. The call to realize our true nature through compassionate action is building for all who practice Buddhism or mindfulness. Our true nature is oneness, oneness naturally leads to compassion, and compassion naturally leads to action. Where we put our efforts is up to us, and the options are sadly multitudinous. But act we must.

It is enough to know that we are enough to say "Enough"!

[Jo Campbell, July, 2015]

“Saying Enough!” – Sean Weaver

Stillness cultivates clarity. When we are clear we can see our inter-being vividly. We identify with suffering. We identify with the causes of suffering. Not because we are merely connected to suffering and its causes but because we are these. In this interconnected world there are no solid or fixed boundaries. There is no separation at all – never has been, never will be. When we take away our name, achievements, and reputation we are left with something much vaster than we could ever imagine or conceptualize. That is why we cannot know our true nature. But we can experience it, realize it.

In this experience of thorough interconnectedness, compassion naturally arises. When we identify with suffering we are compelled to act to alleviate it. This is an invisible drive (Bodhichitta) that takes up residence when we cultivate clarity from stillness. Then we act. In this action we make compassion real. We realize compassion only when we act upon a compassionate impulse. The more we clarify, the more we are compelled to act. In this realization of compassionate action we realize our true nature because it is our true nature to act compassionately. This is an act of enlightenment. Enlightenment practice. Just as sitting meditation is enlightenment practice. It is not something to wait for in some distant future. It is something to practice right now. It is incredibly accessible.

A central motif in Zen is an image of two arrows meeting in mid air – one is great stillness, the other great action. They meet in the explosion of the present moment intertwining as to become indistinguishable in the great reconciliation of opposites that we sometimes call the Buddha Tao. When there is not enough stillness these two arrows are out of balance. When there is too much stillness these two arrows are out of balance.



Bursting with enthusiasm we bring forth the mind of our truest self. In this explosion of the now we act to look after the place. We make mistakes, we feel anguish, we fall into conflict, we suffer too. But we also apply our training.

To be free from anxiety is to give it our full attention. To be liberated by mistakes is to embrace our mistakes openly and fully. To be thrown into unexpected conflict is a great opportunity to practice in the lion's mouth. "I accept this situation is real. I am grateful for the teaching it brings, and I forgive its causes openly and fully".

What teaching do we gain from our mistakes, from conflict? One: the full and intimate experience of anguish as a physical sensation of body, stripped of any narrative. We breathe into this sensation, and feel its texture, its edges. This is a Dharma Gate – an opportunity for experiencing our true nature and to pass freely through the Gateless Barrier of enlightenment because it was never there in the first place. Two: we can ponder the underlying causes of the situation and consider how we can shift those underlying conditions. Three: we reflect on what we would do differently next time. Four: we feel gratitude for the learning and self-growth opportunity presented by this episode and its aftermath. In this sense of gratitude we relocate our enthusiasm and drive to continue with wild abandon.

In conflict we notice that it is a conflict. Take four deep breaths. Notice the sounds, the colour of the sky. In this gap that we create with mindfulness we regain our clarity and then choose how to act rather than let the autopilot of a fight or flight reaction take over. We can transcend this natural fight or flight programming and recruit ourselves into a more advanced form of human nature by remaining open and listening intimately to the sounds of conflict. We offer a free shot to the voice of criticism, insult or abuse. We rummage through the quarry of criticism to find and accept gems of great value to us and our endeavor. We are enough just as we are, right here, right now, and need not defend this "enoughness" because there is nothing to defend. This gives us the emotional energy to remain compassionate with our opponents, and not see them as enemies but as valued and respected parts of our great community.

Beyond our name, reputation, achievements we are much vaster than this little defensive self. We include the blue of the sky and it is not defensive. We include the weight of the mountain and it is not defensive. It is. We are. We are also the criticism that is flung at us. This too is nothing but our true nature presenting itself to us in this form and presenting to us an opportunity to crack open our heart-minds into the mystic. We can be grateful for this opportunity to be all-weather practitioners of kindness. This is the territory of mastery. This is where black belts get worn. When the going is easy, sitting beside a tranquil river alone in the vastness, it is easier to gather a sense of clarity. This is important work. When we carry this sense of clarity and ease into the raging torrent of conflict - then we have stillness in action – then we have recruited ourselves into mastery and become a stream entrant, surfing the natural energies of human drama. So we are not afraid of such encounters, because we are not afraid of our true self.

Sean Weaver July 2015

“How to take off a Plastic Raincoat” – Arthur Wells

An ancient saying in Zen goes: “Practicing zazen is like walking in mist – you don’t know you are getting wet until you are soaked through.” What soaks through? The world itself, the “myriad beings,” in Dogen’s words, soak in till we’re wet through, if we let it happen. Until this begins to happen we are lonely, separate individuals. As the soaking progresses we gradually realise that our isolation is an illusion created by our endless thinking, remembering, planning, rehearsing dialogues, worrying and regretting.

Buddha drew our attention to how the unfixed nature of the self -- the way it’s always changing and needing patching up and reassurance -- is the source of our anguish (*Dukkha*). We suffer because of our “self-clinging” (*Tanha*), he said. In Zen we expand this and say that our suffering is caused by clinging to the “separateness of self.” To use a modern image, our ego is as flimsy and provisional as a plastic raincoat. It’s something we put on in order to avoid getting soaked through by the vast world that comes at us from all sides. The great question is how can we stop being afraid of getting soaked?

Separateness of self is a fear-driven creation of our own minds. This is not to say it’s an illusion – our mind-creations are quite real, just as our dreams are real, but they can be a barrier to feeling truly at home in the world. A different kind of life is possible without this mind-created barrier. Actually everyone in their lifetime gets a few big rips in their plastic raincoat! Sooner or later, through experiences of love, or creativity, or delight in nature, everyone has an experience of being so intensely alive that there is *just this moment*. It need not be a joyful or happy thing either – it may be prompted by the deepest grief or even terror that plunges us out of our ordinary frame of thinking. Whatever the cause, it is an awakening out of our dream of isolation into the world of vast connectedness. Then, if only for a few moments, there is a falling away of all the constructs that reinforce the idea of separate self. Fortunately, life itself does this to nearly everyone. Until it happens – until the plastic raincoat gets shredded -- we have no idea that such ‘deep-seeing’ is even possible for us. What does this all have to do with meditation? Being forcibly plunged into the unspeakable vastness of the present moment is not the same

thing as meditation, because eventually life will do this to us anyway, however it’s definitely the goal and purpose of meditation. Meditation is the *practice* of awakening to the present moment. We rehearse or practice any ability so it’s there when we need it. Sitting and walking meditation dissolves our separateness, at first from our own breath and body, then progressively through attention to sound, light, movement and landscape, it wears away our isolation from the wider world. Gradually we strip off the thin raincoat of our separation and even welcome getting wet through.

In terms of how we feel about ourselves and our life, this changes everything, enabling us to say with Yunmen, “Every day is a good day!” This means we can say that *even on a day when the most terrible or difficult things happen, it’s still a good day*. How can this be? It’s a deep shift of perspective. Our ability to value life is not now confined to what is happening to ourselves alone, whether this is enjoyable or anxious or painful for us, or even immensely sad. A new, deeper undercurrent is present, informing us that no matter what happens to us personally there is profound dignity and beauty in being human and in being part of this great universe. A central radiance stabilises. What we are is enough. More than enough!

When seeing and feeling become vast and wide like this, even for just a few seconds, even if we’re tired or sick or bereft or even dying at the time, we still rejoice that orcas are surfacing through the ice around Antarctica, elephants walk through the savannahs of Africa, children play and laugh, people sing and dance and make great music everywhere, our loved ones and friends are alive and doing their own thing somewhere, and when it’s dark the stars will come out and fill the sky with impossible splendour.

This has everything to do with how we come to *care* about what is happening in our world. How can we not care when ultimately we are it, and it is us? This inescapable identity wrenches open our heart.

[Arthur Wells July 2015]

Buddhism: A Religion or “Evolving Culture of Awakening”? - Arthur Wells

Stephen Batchelor calls himself a “secular Buddhist,” which means “nonreligious” Buddhist. He says: “Buddhism is a constantly evolving culture of awakening rather than a religious system.” Let’s look critically at this claim. Imagination made us human. Because we very early developed the power of imagination, religion appeared close on the heels of language, maybe 80,000 years ago, and its great value and power was to ease our fears and give us the protection of invisible beings we pictured as being in charge of everything. If the ocean waves became destructive we thought the spirit of the ocean was angry. If the winds blew down trees and homes we assumed the wind-spirit was angry. It was the same with floods, famines and diseases—all caused by angry spirits. We believed that sometimes catastrophic divine anger produces tsunamis or devastating earthquakes or volcanic eruptions.

But this raised a new difficulty. How can feeble humans influence these mighty invisible beings? The answer we devised was wonderfully inventive -- do it by manipulation! Use praise, flattery, cunning, deception, spells, magic, ritual sacrifices, gifts, bargaining, apologies and pleading. The next great step forward in religion was huge, going beyond manipulation to the idea of loving relationship. This enabled us to imagine the source of the universe as being like an ideal parent, with whom we can relate on loving terms. I myself grew up with this idea as the central fact about the world, so it was very painful to have to let it go.

The last great step of the human imagination since religion has been science. Science of course remains fundamentally imaginative -- first imagine what *non-supernatural* cause there might be for whatever we observe, then test the idea. Our discoveries have progressed to the point where we are now only stuck for a non-supernatural cause of the universe itself. We know that our universe formed 14 billion years ago, and the first living things appeared 550 million years ago, first as a single cell that was able to subdivide its nucleus and form clusters of cells. This process, occurring trillions of times, brought about complex life-forms. Egg-laying sea creatures slowly evolved into egg-laying amphibious creatures and finally into egg-laying reptiles that could live on the dry land and breathe air to supply their oxygen. Great dinosaurs dominated this planet for 185 million years. Then 65 million years ago a giant comet hit the earth and extinguished the dinosaurs, except for crocodiles and birds. Human beings eventually appeared because of this chance collision. Sixty million years ago our first mammalian ancestor was a furry mouse-like creature crawling around the grasslands of East Africa.

At some point in this evolving process consciousness appeared, beginning as little more than a physical response to the environment -- responding to sight, touch and smell, etc. In most animals, birds and fishes, awareness does not generate any worries about the past or future, so they live in an endless present, responding to the opportunity or threat of each moment. Self-consciousness is a dramatically new thing. With it came the awareness of transience. No longer able to live like animals in a one-dimensional present, humans acquired the painful new insight that we live between a beginning and an ending. Dying looks like a kind of sleep, so we inferred that we might be able to awaken from this sleep. If death isn’t the end for us, this solves the fairness question of why some people prosper and others don’t. Don’t worry, says religion, it’s sorted out later. Those who have been good will be rewarded and the wicked will be punished, so accept the injustices on earth. Our life on this earth is merely a testing ground for how we shall spend eternity. Yeah, right! This is painful to let go of too.

Coming to terms with the role of *chance* in our lives has been part of the pain of letting go of the religious outlook. The religious view is that there is no such thing as a chance event -- it’s all planned from on high. Earthquakes and tsunamis are a punishment. HIV and Ebola are punishments for sexual sinning, etc., etc. Science instead shows us the accidental quality of life right down to the micro level, as hundreds of millions of spermatozoa, each carrying a genetic code arrived at by the meiosis/mitosis roulette, attempt to fertilise an egg. Which sperm and egg gave rise to each of us was a matter of chance.

We now live in a post-religious world. What shall we do with our consciousness and imagination now? The Buddhist answer, as Stephen Batchelor says, is to further develop a culture of awakening. “Awakening” implies emerging from a condition of dream or delusion, but about what? From its beginning 2,500 years ago Buddhism was very clear -- our challenge is to awaken from being mistaken about the nature of the self. In the branch of Buddhism that is Zen, coming down to us from China, Korea and Japan, from a period beginning 1500 years ago, the delusion of self is defined as the belief in a *separate* self. In Zen the self is composed entirely of the flow of the universe through us in each moment, coalescing momentarily as us. Awakening is simply to see this clearly. How should we cultivate this awakening? How shall we live in the light of it?

Zazen is like Observing Gorillas in the Wild – Arthur Wells

Gorillas in the Mist was the name of the 1988 film about Dian Fossey who befriended a tribe of gorillas in central Africa. Previous generations of biologists had assumed these animals were extremely dangerous, so they always carried large, powerful rifles. A few older gorillas may have witnessed these big sticks that made a terrifying bang and killed gorillas and other animals, and kept well away from gun-carrying scientists! Fossey and her mentor George Schaller went into gorilla territory without weapons. The gorillas quickly noticed their friendly and curious attitude, and probably the absence of 'big-bang-kill-sticks'. Over time they allowed Fossey to come very close and observe them as they went about their lives. Sitting still, watching hour after hour, receptive, respectful, without judging whatever she saw happening, Fossey eventually understood what she was seeing and wrote her revolutionary account of gorilla society and behaviour.

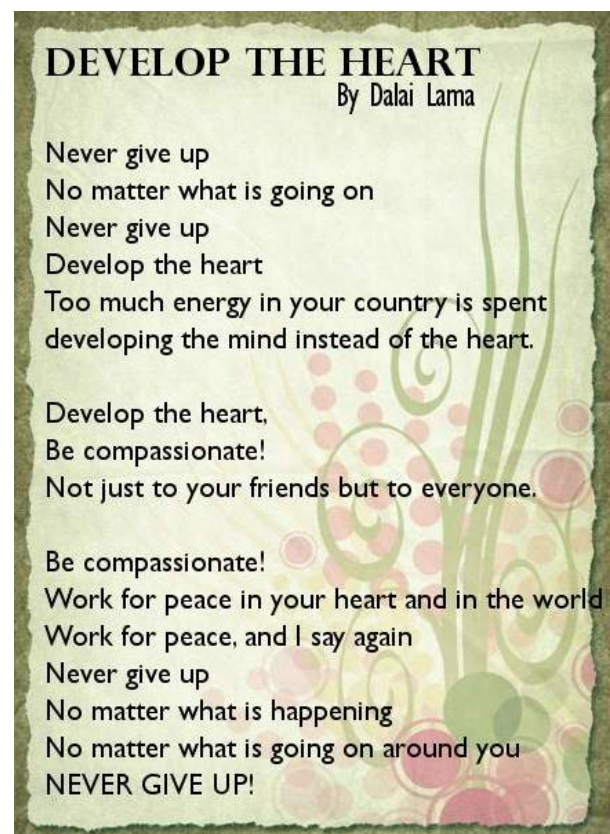
Zazen is exactly this kind of patient, non-aggressive attention to what we do not know or understand. As in Fossey's experience, nothing happens quickly in zazen – we hope when we first sit down that we'll quite soon experience peacefulness, but instead we find an endless stream of memories, judgments, schemes and regrets, along with a hot-mix of negative feelings such as irritation, boredom, resentment and shame. Very often people beginning zazen find that calmness seems further away than in busy activity – it's easier to distract ourselves by *doing* something. Trying to follow our breath just increases our restlessness and irritation at the crazy clutter of our minds. In the end people who start zazen does one of two things -- either they give up zazen, or accept it on its own terms as hard, frustrating work which depends entirely on the same spirit of kindness and respect that Fossey showed her gorilla friends, until we can allow ourselves to be as we are.

In Zen each moment is new and unique. This includes observing our old reactions! Zazen can't be forced, but does require careful attention – similar to Fossey's attention to her subjects. Careless drifting will miss the fresh new moment of perception, whatever it is. Zazen is the

resolute practice of returning over and over again, every time we notice we are lost, to full attention to this moment of experience. Coming back repeatedly gradually builds strength and confidence.

Zazen cultivates a very special, inward aspect of our intelligence that enables us to discover for ourselves the nature of freedom. It would be nice if there was an easier way – it's hard to get up and sit in the morning, but there is no real substitute for meditation. Yoga is good, walking is good, reading is good, creativity of all kinds is wonderful, but only zazen generates the spiritual vitality that our liberation requires. No other practice is passionately investigative enough, posturally strong enough or mentally focussed enough to untie the complex knots of suffering that bind us.

[Arthur Wells, July 2015]



Instructions for Sitting in Zazen – Arthur Wells

Zazen is awareness of the present moment with particular attention to body, breath and sound.

A line in a story by James Joyce goes: “Mr Duffy lived a short distance from his body.” We laugh, but it’s our problem too. When we are lost in thought we inhabit a disembodied realm. In zazen we return to physical groundedness.

Begin by attending to four aspects of body-awareness. **First**, straighten your back and push the crown of the head upwards while tucking the chin back. Without losing the strength of your posture, relax so there is no strain in back or neck. **Second**, let go of tension in the face, relaxing the muscles around the eyes and mouth until the face is soft and mask-like. **Third**, release all tension from your shoulders, allowing them to settle in the lowest comfortable position. Let the arms and hands be soft and relaxed. **Fourth**, relax the abdominal wall so your breath flows freely. Feel the downwards pressure of the diaphragm on the viscera with the in-breath and this pressure release with the out-breath.

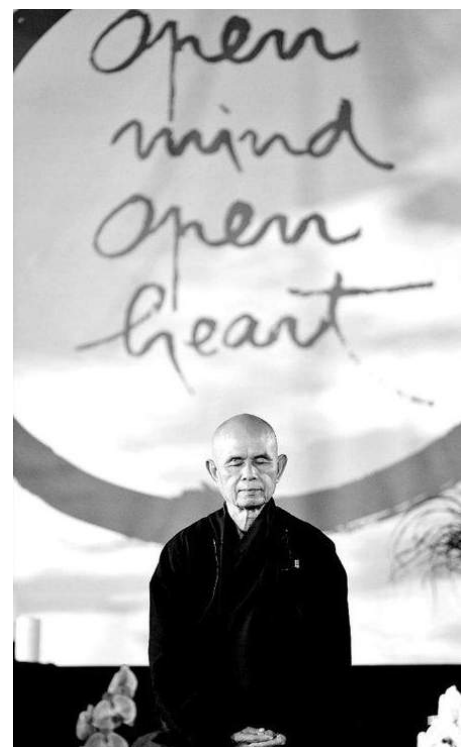
Return repeatedly to the present moment. When you become aware that you have become lost in thought, return to feeling the breath, hearing sounds or noticing your body sensations. Meditation should not be tightly controlled, but nor is it entirely passive – it requires a conscious choice to return to the present moment many times before the mind quietens down. Usually after perhaps 10 or 15 minutes you will reach a steadier awareness of the present moment and spend less time caught up in imaginary dialogues, worrying, or planning. Then the remaining minutes of sitting are very precious.

Cultivate a sense of the whole body participating in and enjoying each breath. The whole body moves subtly with breath, as you discover if you attend to the tiny movements of the head and neck, back and shoulders, and even the hips and legs as you breathe. If you are able to develop a whole-body awareness in zazen, it is only a small step to including the warmth or chill in the room, the breeze, the play of light in the vicinity, and the sounds that you are hearing (receiving them without inner comment). Including your surroundings brings a feeling of

spaciousness. The sense of a firm boundary between ‘self’ and ‘other’ begins to dissolve.

Forget the separate self. When meditation has become a regular practice you will commonly experience a falling away of the sensation of being separate from everything. There is no need to seek out this experience. We hear it grandly described in terms such as “becoming one with the universe,” but it is not such a big deal. The separateness of self was only ever an illusion conjured up by the mind. From earliest childhood we were always “one with the universe.”

Sit in a spirit of kindness. The Buddha taught that loving-kindness (*metta*) should first be extended towards yourself. Notice the places of tension or holding back, where there may be emotional pain from the past still locked into your body tissues. To breathe in a way that includes the whole body begins to open these areas of locked-in tension. Notice where your fear and anger ‘live’ in the body and breathe through that area to soothe and release the aching and tension. In genuine zazen there is nothing we refuse to acknowledge and include in our field of awareness.



She Let Go ... A Poem by Ernest Holmes

She let go. Without a thought or a word, she let go. She let go of the fear. She let go of the judgments.

She let go of the confluence of opinions swarming around her head. She let go of the committee of indecision within her. She let go of all the 'right' reasons. Wholly and completely, without hesitation or worry, she just let go.

She didn't ask anyone for advice. She didn't read a book on how to let go. She didn't search the scriptures. She just let go. She let go of all of the memories that held her back. She let go of all of the anxiety that kept her from moving forward. She let go of the planning and all of the calculations about how to do it just right.

She didn't promise to let go. She didn't journal about it. She didn't write the projected date in her Day-Timer. She made no public announcement and put no ad in the paper. She didn't check the weather report or read her daily horoscope. She just let go.

She didn't analyze whether she should let go. She didn't call her friends to discuss the matter. She didn't do a five-step Spiritual Mind Treatment. She didn't call the prayer line. She didn't utter one word. She just let go.

No one was around when it happened. There was no applause or congratulations. No one thanked her or praised her. No one noticed a thing. Like a leaf falling from a tree, she just let go.

There was no effort. There was no struggle. It wasn't good and it wasn't bad.
It was what it was, and it is just that.

In the space of letting go, she let it all be. A small smile came over her face.
A light breeze blew through her. And the sun and the moon shone forevermore....



The Fourteen Precepts of Engaged Buddhism

Thich Nhat Hanh (From the book *Interbeing*)

1. Do not be idolatrous about or bound to any doctrine, theory, or ideology, even Buddhist ones. Buddhist systems of thought are guiding means; they are not absolute truth.
2. Do not think the knowledge you presently possess is changeless, absolute truth. Avoid being narrow minded and bound to present views. Learn and practice nonattachment from views in order to be open to receive others' viewpoints. Truth is found in life and not merely in conceptual knowledge. Be ready to learn throughout your entire life and to observe reality in yourself and in the world at all times.
3. Do not force others, including children, by any means whatsoever, to adopt your views, whether by authority, threat, money, propaganda, or even education. However, through compassionate dialogue, help others renounce fanaticism and narrow-mindedness.
4. Do not avoid suffering or close your eyes before suffering. Do not lose awareness of the existence of suffering in the life of the world. Find ways to be with those who are suffering, including personal contact, visits, images and sounds. By such means, awaken yourself and others to the reality of suffering in the world.
5. Do not accumulate wealth while millions are hungry. Do not take as the aim of your life fame, profit, wealth, or sensual pleasure. Live simply and share time, energy, and material resources with those who are in need.
6. Do not maintain anger or hatred. Learn to penetrate and transform them when they are still seeds in your consciousness. As soon as they arise, turn your attention to your breath in order to see and understand the nature of your hatred.
7. Do not lose yourself in dispersion and in your surroundings. Practice mindful breathing to come back to what is happening in the present moment. Be in touch with what is wondrous, refreshing, and healing both inside and around you. Plant seeds of joy, peace, and understanding in yourself in order to facilitate the work of transformation in the depths of your consciousness.
8. Do not utter words that can create discord and cause the community to break. Make every effort to reconcile and resolve all conflicts, however small.
9. Do not say untruthful things for the sake of personal interest or to impress people. Do not utter words that cause division and hatred. Do not spread news that you do not know to be certain. Do not criticize or condemn things of which you are not sure. Always speak truthfully and constructively. Have the courage to speak out about situations of injustice, even when doing so may threaten your own safety.
10. Do not use the Buddhist community for personal gain or profit, or transform your community into a political party. A religious community, however, should take a clear stand against oppression and injustice and should strive to change the situation without engaging in partisan conflicts.
11. Do not live with a vocation that is harmful to humans and nature. Do not invest in companies that deprive others of their chance to live. Select a vocation that helps realise your ideal of compassion.
12. Do not kill. Do not let others kill. Find whatever means possible to protect life and prevent war.
13. Possess nothing that should belong to others. Respect the property of others, but prevent others from profiting from human suffering or the suffering of other species on Earth.
14. Do not mistreat your body. Learn to handle it with respect. Do not look on your body as only an instrument. Preserve vital energies (sexual, breath, spirit) for the realisation of the Way. (For brothers and sisters who are not monks and nuns:) Sexual expression should not take place without love and commitment. In sexual relations, be aware of future suffering that may be caused. To preserve the happiness of others, respect the rights and commitments of others. Be fully aware of the responsibility of bringing new lives into the world. Meditate on the world into which you are bringing new beings.

The Buddhist Teaching on Four Kinds of Love: the *Brahmaviharas* – Arthur Wells

Brahmavihara means ‘Dwelling-place of Brahma.’ In Hinduism Brahma was the God who created the physical world. However the Buddha himself was agnostic about Gods, and looked for the deeper ethical teaching beneath the Indian mythology. Buddha’s emphasis was always on how to live in the world.

Metta is ‘loving-kindness’ or a tender desire for the wellbeing of others, with no expectation that this be returned. Its opposite of course is hatred. *Theravada* Buddhism speaks of the ‘near enemy’ of each quality, which appears similar but is a trap, so the near enemy of *Metta* is behaving in a friendly way *to get something* rather than from desiring another’s well-being, e.g. we may secretly hope for admiration, praise or gratitude. The method for using *Metta* in meditation is first to extend kindness to the self, then to someone who is loved, then to someone not cared about before, and then towards an enemy.

Karuna is compassion for pain and suffering wherever it occurs. The opposite is cruelty or enjoying making others suffer. The ‘near enemy’ of compassion is said to be pity, in which we hold ourselves apart from the sufferer in aloof superiority. Genuine compassion, as the word implies, is ‘feeling with’ the other person’s pain. In practicing *Karuna*, also first extend compassion towards one’s own suffering, then to someone we love, next to someone we have felt indifferent towards, and lastly towards an enemy. Deeply

investigating our own suffering brings the recognition that others suffer in the same ways we do. This obliterates our separateness from them and we more readily think of practical solutions.

Mudita has no precise English equivalent, but may be translated as ‘sympathetic joy’ or simply ‘gladness’. Its polar opposite is envy or jealousy. The near enemy is difficult to pinpoint, but could for example be to relish someone achieving wealth or power, (e.g. winning the lottery !?) which may not be for their true benefit. Genuine *Mudita* is being glad about success that is truly good for another person’s deepest wellbeing, such as when they experience love or develop their gifts and abilities. The most important example of *Mudita* is rejoicing when another person awakens to their true nature.

Upekkha means ‘serenity or ‘equanimity.’ If there was no challenge or difficulty to rise above, the word ‘serenity’ would mean little. It is accepting with a calm heart the life we have been given, exactly as it is, no matter what struggles it brings. Such deep inner peace arises from breaking down the illusion of separate self. Its polar opposite is endless agitation and self-preoccupation. Its near enemy is indifference or not caring. Equanimity develops as the culmination of practicing the three previous qualities, and is the fruit of a lifetime’s practice of kindness, compassion and gladness.

[Arthur Wells, July 2015]

Four Noble Truths

- Suffering
- Cause of Suffering (clinging)
- End of Suffering
- Path to the End of Suffering (Noble Eight-Fold path)

Noble Eight-Fold Path



1. Right View
2. Right Intention
3. Right Speech
4. Right Action
5. Right Livelihood
6. Right Effort
7. Right Mindfulness
8. Right Concentration

Right Livelihood – Sean Weaver

Four Noble Truths

1. Suffering: *Identify a form of suffering that you would like to alleviate in your livelihood*
2. Cause of suffering (craving): *Identify the cause of suffering that you would like to alleviate in your livelihood*
3. End of suffering: *Identify what the end of this suffering looks like for the people you wish to help*
4. Path to the end of suffering (Noble Eight-Fold Path): *Identify a strategy to implement or deliver this end of suffering and any steps along that path.* This can be informed by the Noble Eight-Fold Path: Right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right diligence, right mindfulness, right concentration.

Right: as in tuning a guitar – not too much of this, not too much of that.

Right View

Open mind, curious mind, humble mind, beginner's mind. Right view is our ability to distinguish wholesome roots from unwholesome roots. Right view is cultivated by mindfulness and an awareness of self. Right view especially includes our recognition that we are good enough just as we are. This informs and illuminates everything we think and do.

Right Thought

Right View comes into language as our inner voice. Connecting thought to body. Using thoughts, not being used by thoughts. Thinking about underlying causes and not just focusing on symptoms. E.g. responding mindfully to a mistake: what can I learn from this mistake? What were the conditions that led to me making this mistake? How can I change these conditions? Experience the anxiety of the mistake as a physical sensation and give it my full attention. Allow it, hold it.

Right Speech

The outward expression of Right Thought is Right Speech. Careful speech that is aware of the power of speech in its effect upon others. We

have two ears and one mouth: use them in proportion. We are aware that we can cause suffering through speech. We are aware that we can alleviate suffering through speech. What dominoes do we want to start tumbling? What kind of stone do we want to throw into the pond? How do we speak when things are going rough? What speech would escalate a conflict? What speech would resolve a conflict? You are good enough, just as you are, right here, right now. Encouragement, encouragement, encouragement.

We need to be especially mindful of our speech to children, but also mindful of our speech to children of all ages.

Frustration: what about when your expression of kindness does not produce desired results? Notice when it is more important to not speak and let others speak. Right speech is also right listening.

Right Action

This is the embodiment of Right Speech. Doing what needs to be done. Enhancing happiness, preventing suffering. When we are kind to others it brings joy to both them and us. If we are unkind to others it brings suffering to them and us. If we want to be happy, make others happy. We have power to change the world around us for the better. We can act to make it better. We can choose to act in this way regularly and practice it. A guiding set of principles for right action in the Buddhist context are the 10 grave precepts: Not killing, not stealing, not speaking falsely, not misusing sex, not giving or taking drugs, not speaking of the faults of others, not praising oneself whilst criticizing others, generosity, not indulging in anger, not defaming the three treasures: Good enough, practice, community.

Right Livelihood

This is the organization of Right Action into a profession. Earning a living without transgressing our ideals. Not just what we do to make a living, but also how we approach this. Also, right livelihood needs to be right for us and our personal and family circumstances. What is right livelihood for one person is not necessarily right

livelihood for another. One of the things that can easily cause us to compromise on our ideals is an expectation or opportunity to earn more money or gain more fame from certain actions or approaches. Small is beautiful. Letting something grow organically is beautiful. Evolutionary change is beautiful. Right livelihood can be the ground whereby you cultivate your self-realization as a daily practice. Right livelihood can be the living expression of our true nature.

Right Diligence

Right Diligence is gentle discipline and perseverance. Just as the practice of clarifying the mind requires an awake and noble, upright posture, our right livelihood requires diligence and perseverance. But this diligence needs to be in alignment with our ideals. Working very hard for fame or fortune may be diligent, but may not be right diligence.

Right Mindfulness

The continual cultivation of clarity is Right Mindfulness. Cultivating our awareness of our circumstances, stilling the mind enough to cultivate clarity, acting with clarity, responding with clarity, and keeping the mind clear. Noticing

the conditions that lead to the mind losing clarity: these conditions can include over-work, taking on too much, getting stressed, getting over tired. But we do not want to overdo mindfulness. Not too much, not too little.

Right Concentration

Focus, focus, focus. Zen is the cultivation of single pointed focus of mind. We can burn a hole in a piece of paper using a piece of glass, but to do so we have to focus. We can burn a hole through life's challenges, but to do so we have to focus. We can burn up all of our delusions and realize our true nature, but to do so we have to focus. If we chase two rabbits we will catch neither. What rabbit do we want to chase? Chasing several things results in drilling several shallow wells. We will not strike water this way. We do not strike water by drilling another well. We carefully choose a spot and drill there and persevere there. It is important to take time to choose. Setting aside time for reflection to enable this choosing to arise from clarity is an important part of right livelihood.

[Sean Weaver, July 2015]



Some Examples of Zen Activism – Jo Campbell

During the war in Vietnam, **Thich Nhat Hanh** worked tirelessly for reconciliation between North and South Vietnam. He also set up relief organizations to rebuild destroyed villages, instituted the School of Youth for Social Service (a Peace Corps of sorts for Buddhist peace workers), founded a peace magazine, and urged world leaders to use nonviolence as a tool. Hanh's Buddhist delegation to the Paris peace talks resulted in accords between North Vietnam and the United States. He also helped organize rescue missions well into the 1970's for Vietnamese trying to escape from political oppression. He is accredited with coining the term 'engaged buddhism'.

Robert and Anne Aitken and Nelson Foster - established the **Buddhist Peace Fellowship** in 1978. The current website describes BPF as 'exploring a rich and challenging spiritual-political paradox: *Accepting the world as it is, and fighting like hell to change it*'. They work in the fields of climate change, gender, capitalism, militarism, race, prisons, and also in training people in non-violent direct action.

Bernie Glassman and Sandra Jishu Holmes, established the **Zen Peacemakers Order** - the integration of spiritual practice and social action through Three Tenets:

- Not-knowing, thereby giving up fixed ideas about ourselves and the universe;
- Bearing witness to the joy and suffering of the world; and
- Loving action for ourselves and the world.

In 1972 they established **Greyston** in Yonkers New York, which provides permanent housing, jobs, job training, child care, after-school programs and a host of other supportive services to a large community of formerly homeless families, advancing the principles of empowerment, empathy, and responsible action. Greyston hires 175 people and its programs reach 2,200 community members annually in southwest Yonkers.

Bernie Glassman has also run **Bearing Witness Retreats** in the concentration camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau, in Poland, for the past 20 years. Most of each day is spent sitting by the train tracks at Birkenau, both in silence and in chanting the names of the dead. He has run similar retreats bearing witness to ethnic cleansing in former Yugoslavia, atrocities to Native Americans, and also street retreats for the homeless of New York.

Issan Dorsey - drag queen and drug addict turned Zen teacher – set up the first hospice dedicated to caring for those dying from AIDS in San Francisco. **Maitri Hospice** is still providing that care today even though Issan himself succumbed to AIDS in 1990. There are several other Buddhist organisations that provide care for the sick and dying, including the **New York Zen Centre for Contemplative Care**.

There is also the **Prison Mindfulness Institute**, which offers the **Path of Freedom** course, a mindfulness-based emotional intelligence curriculum that has been developed for at-risk populations.

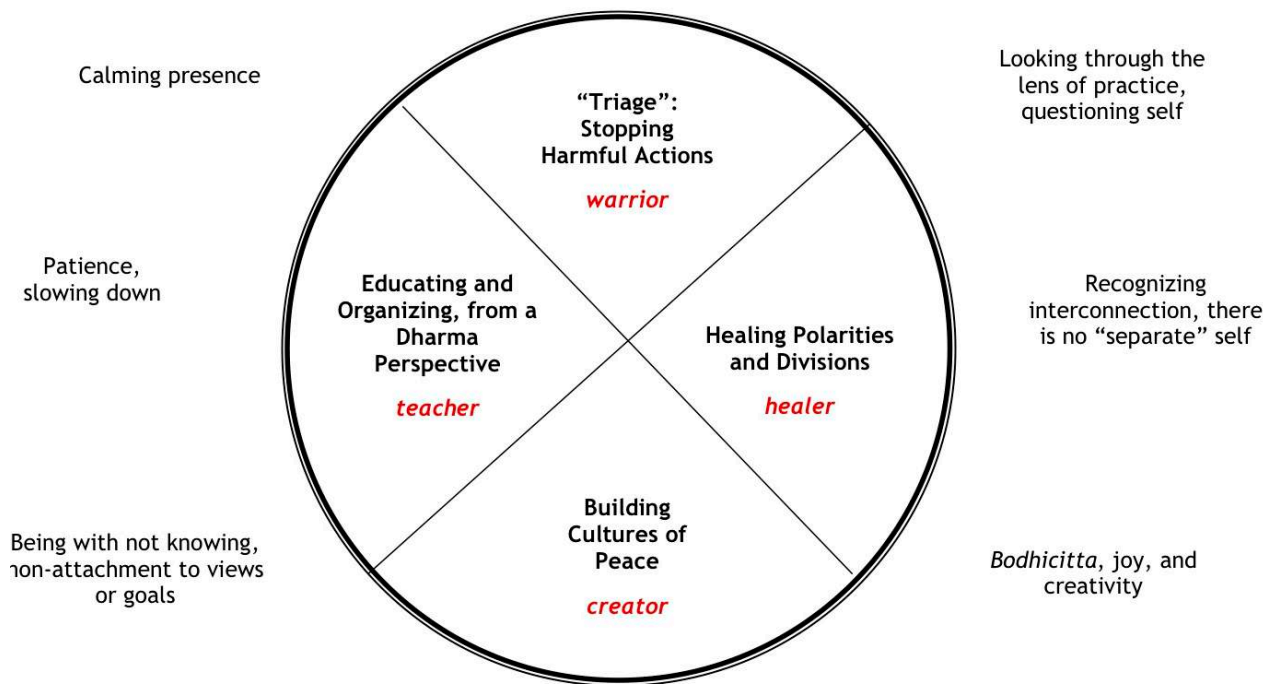
Buddhist scholar **Joanna Macy** has trained thousands of people through her innovative experiential courses, such as **The Work that Reconnects**.

Thai monks have **ordained trees** in an effort to stop logging.

The International Network of Engaged Buddhists run programmes to 'Empower Right Livelihood' also in Thailand.

These are just a few examples of mostly American Engaged Buddhism. There are many other organisations across Asia and Europe. For a more global picture, visit DharmaNet International's website;
<http://www.dharmanet.org/lcengaged.htm>

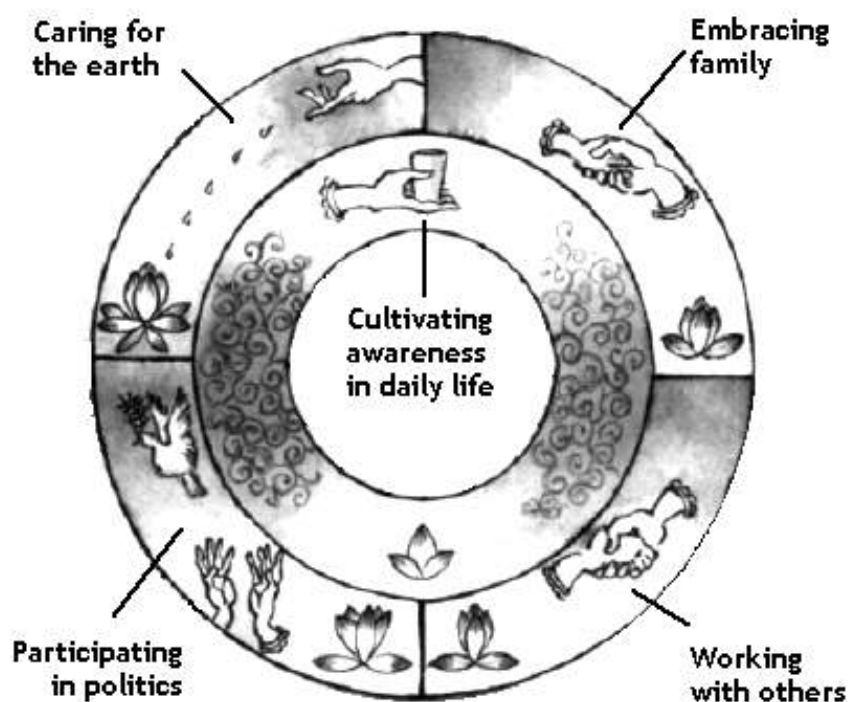
The Mandala of Socially Engaged Buddhism



The inner circle of the mandala represents the potential "fields of engagement" for dharma activists. At different times in our life, we may feel drawn to different kinds of actions. The outer circle represents qualities of Buddhist social action, which can permeate whatever action we undertake. Please see reverse for more details and ideas.

This mandala is based on a group conversation from a Buddhist Peace Fellowship retreat in April 2003.

Wheel of Engaged Buddhism (excerpt) Source: Kenneth Kraft



Some Quotes to Lift the Heart in Difficult Times

‘(The) monastery walls have broken down and the old teaching and practice of wisdom, love, and responsibility are freed for the widest applications in the domain of social affairs.’
Aitken Roshi

‘The gap between concern for our own personal suffering and concern for the world’s suffering, including social justice, is narrowing. My presentation argued that the paths of individual transformation and social transformation need each other, and my sense is that we are collectively beginning to understand it.’
David Loy (after attending meeting in June 2015 of 200 Buddhist teachers)

‘If we want there to be peace in the world, we have to be brave enough to soften what is rigid in our hearts, to find the soft stuff and stay with it. We have to have that kind of courage and take that kind of responsibility. That’s the true practice of peace.’
Pema Chodrin, *Practicing Peace in Times of War*.

‘Compassion is not at all weak. It is the strength that arises out of seeing the true nature of suffering in the world. Compassion allows us to bear witness to that suffering, whether it is in ourselves or others, without fear; it allows us to name injustice without hesitation, and to act strongly with all the skill at our disposal.’
Sharon Salzberg

‘Everyone is capable of compassion but we tend to avoid it so that we don’t have to experience our pain for the world and other beings.’
Joanna Macy

‘We have to face the pain we have been running from. In fact, we need to learn to rest in it and let its searing power transform us.’
Charlotte Joko Beck

‘If we are able to look deeply into our suffering and embrace it tenderly, great compassion can be born.’ Thich Nhat Hanh

‘The heart that breaks open can contain the whole universe.’ - Joanna Macy

‘As we work to heal the Earth, the Earth heals us. No need to wait.’ - Joanna Macy

‘Kindness is my only religion.’ Dalai Lama

‘What is love? Love is the absence of judgement’.
Dalai Lama

‘It is unconditional compassion for ourselves that leads to unconditional compassion for others.’
Pema Chodron

‘If the world is to be healed through human efforts, I am convinced it will be by ordinary people, people whose love for this life is even greater than their fear.’ Joanna Macy

‘It always seems impossible until it is done’.
Nelson Mandela

‘No.’ Rosa Parks.

‘For ten years I couldn’t stop thinking, feeling – just anger, just rage – until this moment. A crow laughs, the dust clears ... Carrying self and other makes the balance pole heavy. When emptiness looks at a butterfly, the whole body becomes light. Downwind, pine and cedars recklessly enter the clouds.’
Zen poet and wandering monk, Ikkyu (Japan, 1394-1481).

‘The gene-pool of a camel is an informational script of the desert in which it survived, and the same for every species.’ Richard Dawkins

‘A human being is part of a whole, called by us ‘the Universe’, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and affection for a few persons nearest us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circles of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.’
Albert Einstein.

‘When you are dead you’re not going to have any problems at all, so appreciate your problems!’
Mel Weitzman, poet and Zen teacher in the lineage of Shunryu Suzuki.

'Buddhism is a constantly evolving culture of awakening, rather than a religious system.'

Stephen Batchelor, *Buddhism Without Beliefs*.

'Zazen is the gate of ease and joy.' Eihei Dogen, founder of Soto Zen in Japan, 1200-1252.

'The self is not a spirit that peers into the world from the outside. The self is itself a cloud of minute events and as such is part of the world.' -
- Don Cupitt, British radical theologian, born 1933.

'If we have no peace it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.' -
Mother Teresa

'If a person seems wicked, do not cast him away. Awaken him with your words, elevate him with your deeds, repay his injury with your kindness. Do not cast him away, cast away his wickedness.' Lao Tzu

'Nonviolence means avoiding not only external physical violence but also internal violence of the spirit. You not only refuse to shoot a man, but you refuse to hate him.' Martin Luther King Jr

'Hate; it has caused a lot of problems in this world. But it has not solved one yet.'
Maya Angelou

'In spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart.' Anne Frank

'We are here not because we are law-breakers; we are here in our efforts to become law-makers.' Emmeline Pankhurst

'We will take direct action against injustice without waiting for other agencies to act. We will not obey unjust laws or submit to unjust practices. We will do this peacefully, openly, cheerfully because our aim is to persuade. We adopt the means of nonviolence because our end is a community at peace with itself. We will try to persuade with our words, but if our words fail, we will try to persuade with our acts.'
Martin Luther King Jr., *Stride Toward Freedom*

'If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.' Nelson Mandela

'I see the great adventure of our time as not losing heart or going crazy but regaining humanity in the course of fighting for a planet where our children's children can safely flourish. There is no map for this wild adventure, no ten-point plan, no guarantees. In all respects it is oddly like life itself; discovered in the act of living. But win or lose it's the great adventure on offer, and I am here to urge that no human being worthy of the name can ever give up on it.'
Susan Murphy

'Practicing full accord with reality is always, like the universe itself, a work in progress. It requires holding yourself and your consciousness open towards the unknown (in which we all dwell) in a curious rather than presuming way. Meditation is the act of paying reality the courtesy of wonder and friendly curiosity that is sometimes called non-judgemental attention, a process that never stops opening and revealing itself, and clarifying what is needed at this moment.' Susan Murphy

'Every crisis is the chance to see what we have been missing. This great, slow-building global crisis is our tremendous chance to see ourselves more clearly. Mistakes are our way of enlightenment; difficulty hatches our intelligence. A problem is needed to tell us what is missing, what we have not been seeing.' Susan Murphy

'Change like this doesn't come from a top-down approach. No living system has a boss. The boss is all of us, inextricably together, using the distributive wisdom of countless local actions occurring simultaneously.' Susan Murphy

'So the mending – of mind and world together – can take place in a way that lies immediately to hand in every human being right where they are right now.' Susan Murphy

'Feeling compassion for ourselves in no way releases us from responsibility for our actions. Rather, it releases us from the self-hatred that prevents us from responding to our life with clarity and balance.' Tara Brach

'To know when you have enough is to be rich beyond measure.' Lao Tzu

'Enough is abundance to the wise.' Euripides

On *Wu Wei* Or Action Of Non-Action – Jo Campbell

Wu Wei is described by Stephan Legault in his book 'Carry Tiger to Mountain – The Tao of Activism and Leadership';

"Action without action is following the natural course – the flow; it is not about doing nothing."

He goes on to say, "The *wu wei* of activism is about accepting things as they come. That includes our passionate – and yes, sometimes burning – desire to make change in the world. To fight this passion and the outrage it spawns would also be to go against the flow of things."

"The true Way is within us
We must wait with patience
For it to reveal itself
For it is older than all the stars in the sky."

Tao Te Ching.

Another author who has much to offer to engaged Buddhism and is based in Australia is Susan Murphy Roshi. In her book 'Minding the Earth, Mending the World' she writes this about *wu wei*:

"...In describing the mind of the hunter, philosopher Ortega y Gasset inadvertently supplies a very fine account of the intentional practice of awareness I have been describing – still, alert and relaxed, intently observing the flow of what is happening, while at every point making an impartial kind of peace with that flow, and with itself. The technical Zen name for this practice of mind is *shikantaza*, a disciplined state of actively resting in the most natural state of mind. Let's look at his description once more in the light of what I have said about meditation:

The hunter does not look tranquilly in one determined direction sure beforehand that the game will pass in front of him. The hunter *knows that he does not know* what is going to happen. Thus he needs to prepare *an attention, which does not consist in riveting itself on the presumed*, but consists precisely in *not presuming anything* and in *avoiding inattentiveness*. It is a '*universal*' attention, which does not inscribe itself at any point, and *tries to be on all point* (Susan's italics).

Knowing how much you do not know about what is going to happen is a first step towards being at

ease in not presuming anything, while remaining sufficiently alert (consciously 'avoiding inattentiveness') to be ready for what in fact does happen.

'Preparing an attention' in this fashion is a continuing discipline or practice. It is nothing like edgy vigilance. Oddly enough, instead a kind of active contentment is its basis, in the sense of seeing quite clearly what is here, including any clamour the mind might make for things to be different. It's like someone finally turning off the loud music and letting you hear the world. When you manage to sustain such attention, you find contentment quietly present under everything.

... [There] is no invitation in *wu-wei* to inertia or passivity, for its contentment is not complacency but a guide to action. A state of contentment that is not wishful about its circumstance but has developed alongside a willingness to meet the real limits of a situation leaves us informed and alert, ready to respond to what may endanger the conditions that provide for a fundamental contentment.

.. Curiously enough, it is this willingly and lovingly dispassionate state of mind that is most ready and able to come up with useful and creative responses to any emergency. And we certainly have one of those on our hands at this moment in history."

"The Tao does nothing and yet nothing is left undone." Lao Tzu

Stephan Legault interprets this famous line as, "There are two elements of Lao Tzu's 'action with no action'. The first is allowing action to arise of its own accord. The second is taking appropriate action when it does. Like Tai Chi's 'Retreat to Ride Tiger', there is a time to step back and pause, and a time to push forward and act in an appropriate way."

Our practice is to be both the caller and the responder to the rising of action. We are the whole system calling as well as the individual and collective responding.

(Jo Campbell, July, 2015)

Marshall Rosenberg: Non-Violent Communication

Marshall Rosenberg in 1961 completed a PhD in clinical psychology under Carl Rogers. He later studied comparative religion and developed from that his Non-violent Communication process which now has trainers in 35 countries. The primary viewpoint of Nonviolent Communication is that it is our nature to enjoy giving. The question then is what separates us from our compassionate nature so that we become defensive, withdraw or attack. Rosenberg came to identify the problem as our moving away from what is observed, felt and needed into judging and diagnosing. Here are the four steps of NVC:

1. Say what concrete actions we observe others are doing that we like or dislike without introducing any judgment or evaluation. Rosenberg says our evaluation of 'wrongness' in the other person increases their defensiveness and resistance and decreases our chances of getting our need met. If we try to get what we need by manipulating others into feeling fear, guilt, shame or desire for gain, we will not get what we need, because it won't be given for the sake of our well-being. We will experience diminished goodwill if the other person complies out of a sense of internal or external coercion. The poet Rumi wrote: "Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right-doing, there is a field. I'll meet you there."

2. Identify feelings: To say, "I feel it isn't right to play music that loudly," is not expressing a feeling but a judgment. It will be heard not as a feeling -- to which the person playing the loud music might respond out of a wish to meet our need and turn the music down -- but as a criticism or demand. Here is a list of words that should not be used after "I feel" because they contain an interpretation of the other person's motives, (which although it may be true, blocks the way forward for helpful communication):

Ignored, abandoned, abused, attacked, betrayed, bullied, cheated, distrusted, intimidated, let down, misunderstood, neglected, patronised, pressured, provoked, put down, rejected, taken for granted, threatened, unappreciated, unheard, unsupported, used.

Here is a list of words that cleanly express feelings without an overlay of judgment:

Afraid, agitated, alarmed, angry, annoyed, anxious, apprehensive, ashamed, bewildered, bitter, brokenhearted, concerned, confused, cross, depressed, despondent, disappointed, discouraged, disgusted, disheartened, dismayed, disquieted, disturbed, edgy, embarrassed, exhausted, fearful, frightened, frustrated, furious, gloomy, helpless, horrified, hurt, impatient irritated, jealous, lonely, miserable, nervous, numb, overwhelmed, panicky,

pessimistic, puzzled, resentful, sad, scared, shaky, shocked, sceptical, startled, surprised, suspicious, terrified, tired, troubled, uncomfortable, uneasy, unhappy, unnerved, upset, uptight, weary, worried.

3. Express the needs that lie behind our feelings: Unless our need is expressed in a way that does not sound like a criticism, we are unlikely to have the need met out of the other person's good will towards us. Their energy will instead be invested in defending themselves against attack. If we *connect our feelings to our needs*, there is more chance that others will act out of compassion for us. Needs which all human beings have alike are:

Spiritual Communion—*beauty, harmony, inspiration, order, peace;*

Autonomy—*to be able to choose our own dreams, values, goals and actions, and to make our own plans for these. Integrity: authenticity, self-worth, opportunities to be creative and to create meaning and purpose in our life*

Physical Nurturance—*to have air, water, food, movement, protection from illness and danger, rest, sexual expression, shelter, touch;*

Play—*to have fun and laughter;*

Interdependence—*acceptance and appreciation from others, closeness, community, consideration, emotional safety, empathy, honesty, love, reassurance, respect, support, trust, understanding, warmth, and to have the opportunity to give from the heart and contribute to others' lives and well-being..*

4. Make a request: A request is not a demand. Demands imply that a person will be guilt-tripped, punished or blamed if they do not comply. A genuine request is asking for something that is clear and practical, not something the other person is left to guess at, and that they might do for our wellbeing out of natural compassion rather than guilt or a sense of duty. It is important that the request is not about *stopping* doing something that we don't like (the element of blame is implicit if we ask someone to stop something, and it is more likely to be heard as a demand). It is much more likely to be agreed to if it is something positive that they may choose to do for our sake and can feel good about doing, free of any coercion or manipulation. **Note:** Our requests may not be accepted. How will we respond? If we complain that the person has not followed through, it suggests we were secretly making a demand. Rosenberg's first principle is that we cannot change another person. The only change worth having is one that comes from them, from the impulse of natural giving.

Nonviolent Action as a Political Strategy – Gene Sharp

<http://www.beyondintractability.org/contributors/maire-dugan>

While faith- or philosophy-based nonviolence often leads to political change, one can also look at nonviolence from a purely strategic vantage point. This is the view of Gene Sharp, the preeminent cataloguer of nonviolent action. ... moral jiu jitsu operates by generating questions within the adversary who comes to a change of heart in the course of this process. Sharp, on the other hand, refers to "political jiu jitsu."

By combining nonviolent discipline with solidarity and persistence in struggle, the nonviolent actionists cause the violence of the opponent's repression to be exposed in the worst possible light.

According to Sharp, non-violent action acts in three ways to change opponents' behavior:

- Conversion
- Accommodation
- Coercion

Conversion involves a change of heart in the opponent to the point where the goals of the protestors are now her/his own. At the other extreme, in coercion, the opponent has had no change of heart or mind, but acquiesces to the demands of the protestors because s/he feels there is no choice. In between is accommodation, probably the most frequent mechanism through which nonviolent action is effective.

In the mechanism of accommodation the opponent resolves to grant the demands of the nonviolent actionists without having changed his mind fundamentally about the issues involved. Some other factor has come to be considered more important than the issue at stake in the conflict, and the opponent is therefore willing to yield on the issue rather than to risk or to experience some other condition or result regarded as still more unsatisfactory.

A Gandhian approach suggests that conversion is the appropriate goal of nonviolence. Not all nonviolent action proponents, however, adhere to this standard. On the other extreme there are those whose only concern is achieving the desired goal and the most effective and/or expeditious way of getting there. In between are those who prefer conversion where possible, but not at the cost of significantly prolonging the

struggle or participants' suffering. Sharp defines three major categories of nonviolent action:

- **Protest and Persuasion.** These are actions that highlight the issue in contention and/or a desired strategy for responding to the situation. Specific methods include petitions, leafleting, picketing, vigils, marches, and teach-ins.
- **Noncooperation.** Protestors may refuse to participate in the behavior to which they object socially, economically, and/or politically. Specific methods include sanctuary, boycotts, strikes, and civil disobedience.
- **Nonviolent intervention.** This category includes techniques in which protestors actively interfere with the activity to which they are objecting. Specific methods include sit-ins, fasts, overloading of facilities, and parallel government.

In general, the level of disruption and confrontation increases as one moves from protest and persuasion to intervention. If the protestors' goal is to convert, "protest and persuasion" is likely to be the most appropriate category from which to choose. If the protestors wish to force their opponents to change their behavior, they will probably need to include nonviolent intervention methods in their overall strategy. Those who are seeking accommodation might best mix protest and persuasion tactics with noncooperation if the former are not having the desired impact.

When arranging nonviolent action, it is particularly important to consider the audience. A rally may serve to inspire the already committed (sometimes it is important to "speak to the choir"), but is not likely to change minds; a boycott of a service provided by someone who has not been educated about the issues in question is likely to produce an unnecessary level of resentment.

George Lakey and Martin Oppenheimer offer a particularly helpful way of looking at this issue. They point out that any person or group can be categorized according to where she, he or it stands in regard to the issues:

- Active proponents
- Active supporters
- Passive supporters
- Neutral
- Passive opponents
- Active supporters of the opposition
- Active opponents

They then make the point that one's aim in any action should be to move the target population up one notch.

Whatever criteria are chosen to assess possible tactics before embarking on them, nonviolent actionists would do well to imitate their military counterparts at least in the following categories: careful planning and discipline of participants. With that, nonviolence may be just as likely to be successful in a conflict as violence, and it is much less likely to cause much increased hostility, escalation, and backlash.

Sharp, Gene. *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*. Boston: Porter Sargent Publishers, 1973.

Martin Luther King's Six Principles of Nonviolence & Six Steps to Nonviolent Social Change

1. Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people.
2. Nonviolence seeks to win friendship and understanding.
3. Nonviolence seeks to defeat injustice, not people.
4. Nonviolence holds that suffering can educate and transform.
5. Nonviolence chooses love instead of hate.
6. Nonviolence believes that the universe is on the side of justice.

(derived from "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence", Stride Toward Freedom. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 1958)

Step 1: Gather Information

Learn all you can about the problems you see in your community through the media, social and civil organizations, and by talking to the people involved. Also learn what the people who disagree with you are thinking about this situation.

Step 2: Educate Others

Armed with your new knowledge, help those around you, such as your neighbors, relatives, friends and co-workers, better understand the problem you are addressing. Build a team of people devoted to finding solutions, define your goals and develop a plan of action together.

Step 3 Remain Committed

You will face many obstacles and challenges as you and your colleagues try to create change. Continue to encourage and inspire one another along the journey.

Step 4: Negotiate

Talk with both sides. Go to the people who are in trouble or are hurt by the problem you are trying to solve. Also go to those people who are contributing to the problem. Use intelligence and humor as you present your plan and find common ground to benefit the greater good.

Step 5: Take Direct Action

This step is often used when negotiation fails to produce results, or when people need to draw broader attention to a problem. It can include many kinds of tactics including peaceful demonstrations, letter-writing, boycotts, petitions, or rent strikes.

Step 6: Reconcile

Agree to disagree with some people's actions or some groups' policies. Show all involved the benefits of changing, not what they will give up by changing. Keep all actions and negotiations peaceful and constructive.

* Adapted from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 'Letter from a Birmingham Jail'.
<http://mlkwestchester.org>

Martin Luther King's Four Principles Of Civil Rights

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. laid out four principles that he used during the civil rights movement. We offer them because when we use people power it does require that we act civilly, respectfully, and modeling the highest integrity we can muster:

1. Define your objectives. Injustice and violence are everywhere around us. A single campaign or action will not remove it all. One must begin by focusing on a specific injustice; it should be possible to discuss it in fairly simple and clear-cut terms. Decision-making and negotiations during a campaign will be helped immensely if you have defined clearly your short-range objective and your long-range goal.
2. Be honest and listen well. Part of your goal is to win your opponent's respect. Conduct yourself in a way which encourages that respect by showing your scrupulous care for truth and justice. A crucial part of nonviolent direct action is the understanding that no one knows the complete truth about the issues at hand. Listening with openness to what your opponents have to say about your campaign is very important in your pursuit of the whole truth. Similarly, listening carefully to those who are struggling at your side helps ensure that the oppression which you are fighting is not replaced by another oppression.
3. Love your enemies. No matter how deeply involved in unjust and violent systems some people are, your goal is to break down those systems, not to punish others for wrong-doing. Real justice is established when people refuse to maintain oppressive systems, not when the people in those systems are destroyed. Nonviolence requires a
4. steadfast and conscious willingness to mentally separate respect for all people from disrespect for what some people are doing in a given situation.
5. Give your opponents a way out. By using nonviolence, you are showing a kind of strength that overcomes injustice. Avoid self-righteousness with opponents. Recognize their weaknesses, embarrassments and fears. In specific confrontations, as well as in the larger campaign, find a way to let them participate in finding a solution. Give them options to respond to, not non-negotiable demands.

[These principles were first developed in the context of the struggle for civil rights in the U.S. at the request of Dr. Martin Luther King. The present version has been slightly revised for international use by the International Fellowship of Reconciliation]

Martin Luther King Quotes

"Nonviolent resistance does resist," he wrote. "It is not a method of stagnant passivity. While the nonviolent resister is passive in the sense that he is not physically aggressive toward his opponent, his mind and emotions are always active, constantly seeking to persuade his opponent that he is wrong. The method is passive physically, but strongly active spiritually. It is not passive non-resistance to evil; it is active nonviolent resistance to evil."

"Nonviolence does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent but to win friendship and understanding," King teaches. "The nonviolent resister must often express his protest through noncooperation or boycotts, but he realizes that these are not ends themselves; they are merely means to awaken a sense

of moral shame in the opponent. ... The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community, while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness."

"The nonviolent resister not only refuses to shoot his opponent; he also refuses to hate him. At the center of nonviolence stands the principle of love."

"We will take direct action against injustice without waiting for other agencies to act. We will not obey unjust laws or submit to unjust practices. We will do this peacefully, openly, cheerfully because our aim is to persuade. We adopt the means of nonviolence because our end is a community at peace with itself. We will try to persuade with our words, but if our words fail, we will try to persuade with our acts."

Gandhi's Principles of Nonviolence

1. Humiliating or deliberately provoking your opponent invites violence.
2. Knowing your facts and arguments well helps avoid violence.
3. If you are open about your cause your opponent is less likely to be violent.
4. Look for common ground between you and your opponents to promote trust and understanding.
5. Do not judge others.
6. Trust your opponent. They will sense this trust.
7. Compromise on inessential items to promote resolution.
8. Sincerity helps convert your opponent.
9. By making personal sacrifice you show your sincerity.
10. Avoid exploiting weakness in your opponent. Aim for integrity, not simply to win.

<http://www.sydneyalternativemedia.com/id73.html>

1. All life is one.
2. We each have a piece of the truth and the un-truth.
3. Human beings are more than the evil they sometimes commit.
4. The means must be consistent with the ends.
5. We are called to celebrate both our differences and our fundamental unity with others.
6. We reaffirm our unity with others when we transform "us" versus "them" thinking and doing.
7. Our oneness calls us to want, and to work for, the well-being of all.
8. The nonviolent journey is a process of becoming increasingly free from fear.

<http://www.cpt.org/files/PW%20-%20Principles%20-%20Gandhi.pdf>

Robert Aitken Meets Joanna Macy

[From Aitken's book *The Morning Star*, pp. 194-195].

I had the pleasure of meeting with Joanna Macy recently [1989], and she shared with me a communication she had sent to colleagues in preparation for a panel discussion being planned around the forthcoming visit of the Dalai Lama to the San Francisco Bay area. Here are ideas I have lifted from that communication.

Joanna points out that we live in a world that can die. Whole species and life-support systems are already dying, and massive want, hunger, oppression, disease and conflict assail a growing proportion of the planet's beings. We can do something about it and yet we tend to act as if we don't believe what is happening. She asks, "How can we become simply *present* to what is going on and let it become real to us? Great adventures await us; what is it that erodes our will, our creativity, our solidarity?"

Joanna finds that many people (especially those drawn to Eastern paths) have developed notions about spirituality that hinder them from realizing their power to effect change. Among the "spiritual traps" that cut the nerve of compassionate action are these:

1. That the phenomenal world of beings is not real. With this view the pain of others and

the demands on us that are implicit in that pain are less tangible than the pleasures of aloofness we can find in transcending them.

2. That any pain we may experience in beholding the world derives from our own cravings and attachments. With this view the ideal way to deal with suffering becomes nonattachment to the fate of all beings, not just nonattachement to matters of the ego.
3. That we are constantly creating our world unilaterally through our subjective thoughts. Confrontation is considered negative thinking, acceptance is positive. Therefore it is concluded that when we confront the injustice and dangers of our world we are simply creating more conflict and misunderstanding.
4. And the corollary, that the world is already perfect when we view it spiritually. We feel so peaceful that the world will itself become peaceful without our need to act.

Shackles and traps drop away in such lucid exposition of Wrong Views. Our responsibilities stand forth clearly.

Joanna Macy: Four Ways of Looking at the World

From *World as Lover World as Self*, Berkley 1991.

Joanna Macy says there are four ways that people on spiritual paths tend to look at the world. These four attitudes are not specific to any particular religion and are found in most traditions.

World as Battlefield: The view that good and evil are pitted against each other in a battle of light against darkness (a belief going back to Zoroastrianism in ancient Persia – now Iran). This world-view is good for arousing courage and the fiery energies of anger, aversion and militancy, and also for giving a sense of certainty at times when there is much upheaval and change. People feel they are fighting God's battle and must ultimately win. However it fosters intolerance and an apocalyptic belief in an end-of-the-world-as-we-know-it scenario ("Armageddon"). Some view climate change or the nuclear catastrophe as God's will. The world is a proving-ground and all that really counts is to save our immortal souls. This view tends towards fundamentalism.

World as Trap: Here the spiritual path is not seen as a matter of vanquishing a foe but of withdrawing and disentangling ourselves from this messy world, in order to escape its confusion and suffering, and be safe and serene. The hope is to ascend to a higher plane, above the turmoil of the world. It sets spirit above nature and may even breed contempt for the material plane of existence. Because we still have bodies this presents a bit of a problem! Trying to escape from something breeds a love-hate relationship with it – craving and aversion inflame each other in a vicious circle, mortifying the flesh and getting drawn into desires, then needing more mortification (ascetic practices) to make up for the desires we gave in to.

World as Lover: Macy believes that the world itself has a role to play in our liberation because "its very pressures, pains and risks wake us up and guide us home to our vast, true nature." We may even see the world as a most "intimate and gratifying partner." In Hinduism and Sufism we find hymns and poems full of longing for the bliss of union with the divine, and the whole world becomes full of this sweetness and beauty. The ancient goddess religions also had this character, as did the bridal mysticism of the Christian tradition. A friend of Macy's went through a time of great personal loss which she recovered from when she said, "I learned to move in the world as if it were my lover." We can discover our lover in each life-form, says Joanna Macy – "in the bus-driver, the clerk at the checkout counter, the leaping squirrel."

World as Self: Another step – not a great one – is to see the world as self. We fall not just in love with the world, but into oneness with it. In the *Upanishads* the sage opens a seed-kernel and tells his student: "*Tat tvam asi* – That is you. The tree that will grow from this seed -- that is you. The running water -- that is you. The sun and the sky, and all that is -- that is you." Mystics in the Western tradition tend to speak of merging with God rather than with the world, but at times even the Christian and Islamic mystics lose this distinction. Hildegard of Bingen said: "I am the breeze that matures all things green . . . I am the rain and dew that causes the grasses to laugh with the joy of life." Once the bonds of limited ego snap, that blazing unity knows no limits. The 15th Century mathematician and cardinal Nicholas da Cusa defined God as an infinite circle "whose periphery is nowhere and whose centre is everywhere." That centre is you and me, and the tree in the front garden.

[Arthur Wells, April 2015]

Joanna Macy's Personal Guidelines for the Great Turning

An edited excerpt from the introduction to *Stories of the Great Turning*, edited by Peter Reason and Melanie Newman, published by Vala Publications.

When you know where to look, you begin to see an unprecedented phenomenon now happening in this world of ours. Be they teachers in *favelas*, forest defenders, urban farmers, occupiers of Wall Street, designers of windmills, military resisters (the list goes on...), the fact is people from all walks of life are coming alive and coming together, impelled to create a more just and sustainable society.

In his book *Blessed Unrest* Paul Hawken presents this – what he calls The Movement With No Name – as the largest social movement of human history. Estimating the number of grassroots groups and nongovernmental organisations for social justice, Indigenous rights and environmental sanity, he suggests a figure of 2 million of us (as of 2007), and counting.

Each of these groups and organisations represents a yet vaster number of individuals who, in some way or another (and each uniquely in their own fashion), are hearing the call to widen the notions of their self-interest and act for the sake of life on Earth. In this defining moment, countless choices are being made, habits relinquished, friendships forged, and gateways opened to unforeseen collaborations and capacities.

These shape the stories that deserve to be told – stories of ordinary men, women and youngsters who are making changes in their minds, their lives and their communities, in order to lay the groundwork for this more just and sustainable world. These are the tales that we need to hear, and those who come after us will want them as well. For when future generations look back at this historical moment, they will see, more clearly than we can right now, just how revolutionary it is. They may well call it the time of the Great Turning.

For those of us living now it is easy to be unaware of the immensity of this transition – from an entrenched, militarised industrial growth society to a life-sustaining civilisation. Mainstream education and mainstream media do not provide

the tools for comprehending such a perspective. Yet social thinkers such as Lester Brown and Donella Meadows and others recognise this transition as the third major watershed in humanity's journey, comparable in magnitude and scope to the agricultural and industrial revolutions. This is the essential adventure of our time.

Like all true revolutions, it belongs to the people. Its inspiring stories do not star titans of industry or party politicians, military generals or media celebrities. The power of this revolution lies in the fact that it comes from people of all ages and backgrounds as they engage in actions on behalf of life itself. Their motivation represents a remarkable expansion of allegiance beyond personal or group advantage. This wider sense of identity is a moral capacity more often associated with heroes and saints; but it now manifests everywhere on a practical and workaday plane. From children restoring streams for salmon spawning, to inner-city neighbours planting community gardens, from forest defenders perched high in trees marked for illegal logging, to countless climate actions to limit greenhouse-gas emissions, an undreamt-of wave of human endeavour is under way. Each of these engagements has its own intrinsic rewards, whether its initial goal is achieved or not. And even when failing to reach the desired outcome, the gains can be invaluable in terms of all that has been learnt in the process – not only about the issue, but also about courage and co-creativity.

Still, it is easy to turn away from playing a part in the Great Turning. All of us are prey to the fear that it may be too late, and thus any effort is essentially hopeless. Any strategy we can mount seems so puny in comparison with the mighty systemic forces embedded in the military-industrial complex. The accelerating pace of destruction and contamination may already be taking us beyond those tipping points where ecological and social systems unravel irreparably. Along with the Great Turning, the Great Unravelling is happening too, and there is no way to tell how the larger story will end.

So we learn again that hardest and most rewarding of lessons: how to make friends with uncertainty; how to pour your whole passion into

a project when you can't be sure it's going to work. How to free yourself from dependence on seeing the results of your actions. These learnings are crucial, for living systems are ever unfolding in new patterns and connections. There is no point from which to foresee with clarity the possibilities to emerge under future conditions.

Instead of any blueprint of the future, we have this moment. In lieu of a sure-fire strategy to pull off the Great Turning, we can only fashion guidelines to help us keep going as best we can, and to stay on track with a simple faith in the goodness of life. Here are five of those guidelines that have already served a number of us over the years. Try them out, and make up some of your own.

1. Come from gratitude

We have received an inestimable gift: to be alive in this wondrous, self-organising universe with senses to perceive it, lungs that breathe it, organs that draw nourishment from it. And how amazing it is to be accorded a human life with self-reflective consciousness that allows us to make choices, letting us opt to take part in the healing of our world.

The very scope of the Great Turning is cause for gratitude as well, for it embraces the full gamut of human experience. Its three main dimensions include actions to slow down the destruction wrought by our political economy and its wars against humanity and Nature; new structures and ways of doing things, from holding land to growing food to generating energy; and a shift in consciousness to new ways of knowing, a new paradigm of our relation to each other and to the sacred living body of Earth. These dimensions are equally essential and mutually reinforcing. There are thousands of ways to take part in the Great Turning.

2. Don't be afraid of the dark

This is a dark time filled with suffering, as old systems and previous certainties come apart. Like living cells in a larger body, we feel the trauma of our world. It is natural and even healthy that we do, for it shows we are still vitally linked in the web of life. So don't be afraid of the grief you may feel, or of the anger or fear: these responses arise, not from some private pathology, but from the depths of our mutual belonging. Bow to your pain for the world when it makes itself felt, and

honour it as testimony to our interconnectedness.

When the Zen poet Thich Nhat Hanh was asked: "What do we most need to do to save our world?" his questioners expected him to identify the best strategies to pursue for social and environmental causes. But Thich Nhat Hanh answered: "What we most need to do is to hear within us the sounds of the Earth crying." When we learn to hear that, we discover that our pain for the world and our love for the world are one. And we are made stronger.

3. Dare to vision

We will never bring forth what we haven't dared to dream or learnt to imagine. For those of us dwelling in a high-tech consumer society, replete with ever proliferating electronic distractions, the imagination is the most underdeveloped, even atrophied, of our mental capacities. Yet never has its juicy, enlivening power been more desperately needed than now.

So, think of how many aspects of our current reality started out as someone's dream. There was a time when much of America was a British colony, when women didn't have the vote and when the slave trade was seen as essential to the economy. To change something, we need to hold the possibility that it could be different. Author and coach Stephen Covey reminds us: "All things are created twice. There's a mental or first creation, and a physical or second creation to all things."

4. Roll your sleeves up and Link arms with others

Whatever it is that you're drawn to do in the Great Turning, don't even think of doing it alone. The hyper-individualism of our competitive industrialised culture has isolated people from each other, breeding conformity, obedience and an epidemic of loneliness. The good news of the Great Turning is that it is a team undertaking. It evolves out of countless spontaneous and synergistic interactions as people discover their common goal and their different gifts. Paul Hawken sees this amazing emergence at the grassroots level as an immune response of the living Earth to the crises now confronting us.

Many models of affinity groups and study-action have emerged in recent decades, offering methods for learning, strategizing and working

together. They help us uncover confidence in ourselves as well as in each other.

5. Act your age

Now is the time to clothe ourselves in our true authority. Every particle in every atom of every cell in our body goes back to the primal flaring forth of space and time. In that sense you are as old as the universe, with an age of about 14 billion years. This current body of yours has been being prepared for this moment by Earth for some 4 billion years, so you have an absolute right to step forward and act on Earth's behalf.

When you are speaking up at a city council meeting, or protecting a forest from demolition, or testifying at a hearing on nuclear waste, you are doing that not out of some personal whim or virtue, but from the full authority of your 14 billion years.

The beauty of the Great Turning is that each of us takes part in distinctive ways. Given our different circumstances and with our different dispositions and capacities, our stories are all unique. All have something fresh to reveal. All can help inspire others. And that's why we need these stories.

Joanna Macy's Three Dimensions of the Great Turning

1. Actions to slow the damage to Earth and its beings

Perhaps the most visible dimension of the Great Turning, these activities include all the political, legislative, and legal work required to reduce the destruction, as well as direct actions--blockades, boycotts, civil disobedience, and other forms of refusal. A few examples;

- Documenting the ecological and health effects of the Industrial Growth Society;
- Lobbying or protesting against the World Trade Organization and the international trade agreements that endanger ecosystems and undermine social and economic justice;
- Blowing the whistle on illegal and unethical corporate practices;
- Blockading and conducting vigils at places of ecological destruction, such as old-growth forests under threat of clear-cutting or at nuclear dumping grounds.

Work of this kind buys time. It saves some lives, and some ecosystems, species, and cultures, as well as some of the gene pool, for the sustainable society to come. But it is insufficient to bring that society about.

2. Analysis of structural causes and the creation of structural alternatives

The second dimension of the Great Turning is equally crucial. To free ourselves and our planet from the damage being inflicted by the Industrial Growth Society, we must understand its dynamics. What are the tacit agreements that

create obscene wealth for a few, while progressively impoverishing the rest of humanity? What interlocking causes indenture us to an insatiable economy that uses our Earth as supply house and sewer? It is not a pretty picture, and it takes courage and confidence in our own common sense to look at it with realism; but we are demystifying the workings of the global economy. When we see how this system operates, we are less tempted to demonize the politicians and corporate CEOs who are in bondage to it. And for all the apparent might of the Industrial Growth Society, we can also see its fragility--how dependent it is on our obedience, and how doomed it is to devour itself.

In addition to learning how the present system works, we are also creating structural alternatives. In countless localities, like green shoots pushing up through the rubble, new social and economic arrangements are sprouting. Not waiting for our national or state politicians to catch up with us, we are banding together, taking action in our own communities. Flowing from our creativity and collaboration on behalf of life, these actions may look marginal, but they hold the seeds for the future.

Some of the initiatives in this dimension:

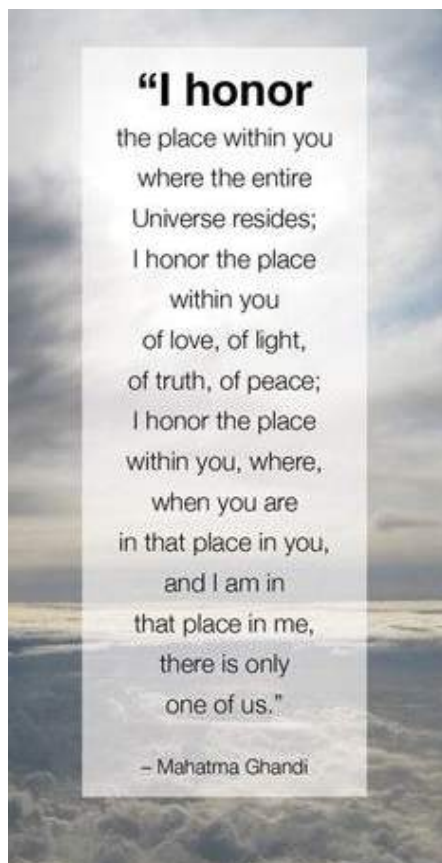
- Teach-ins and study groups on the Industrial Growth Society
- Strategies and programs for nonviolent, citizen-based defense
- Reduction of reliance on fossil and nuclear fuels and conversion to renewable energy sources

- Collaborative living arrangements such as co-housing and eco-villages, community gardens, consumer cooperatives, community-supported agriculture, watershed restoration, local currencies...

3. Shift in Consciousness

These structural alternatives cannot take root and survive without deeply ingrained values to sustain them. They must mirror what we want and how we relate to Earth and each other. They require, in other words, a profound shift in our perception of reality--and that shift is happening now, both as cognitive revolution and spiritual awakening.

The insights and experiences that enable us to make this shift are accelerating, and they take many forms. They arise as grief for our world, giving the lie to old paradigm notions of rugged individualism, the essential separateness of the self. They arise as glad response to breakthroughs in scientific thought, as reductionism and materialism give way to evidence of a living universe. And they arise in the resurgence of wisdom traditions, reminding us again that our world is a sacred whole, worthy of adoration and service.

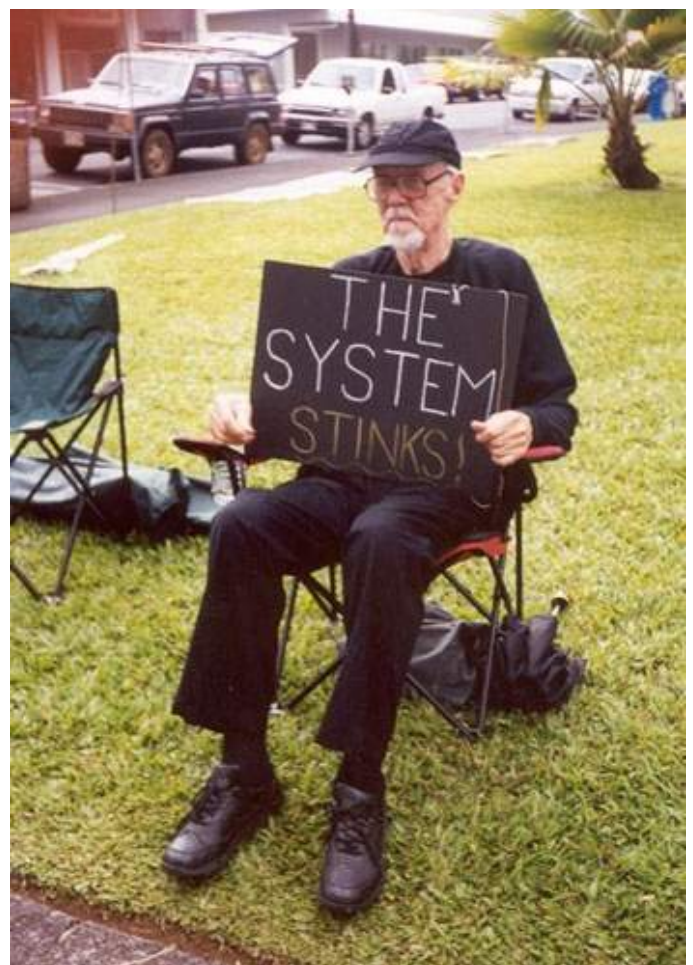


The many forms and ingredients of this dimension include:

- general living systems theory
- deep ecology and the deep long-range ecology movement
- Creation Spirituality and Liberation Theology
- Engaged Buddhism and similar currents in other traditions
- the resurgence of shamanic traditions
- ecofeminism and ecopsychology
- the simple living movement.

The realizations we make in the third dimension of the Great Turning save us from succumbing to either panic or paralysis. They help us resist the temptation to stick our heads in the sand, or to turn on each other, for scapegoats on whom to vent our fear and rage.

<http://www.joannamacy.net/engaged-buddhism/225-learning-to-see-each-other.html>



Robert Aitken Roshi
Founder of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship

Great Vows for All – a brief commentary

Suffering beings are numberless; I vow to free them.

This 'Bodhisattva vow' is the central innovation of Mahayana Buddhism (the 'Great Vehicle') that evolved from about 500 years after the Buddha. In original or Classical Buddhism (Theravada) the aim was to free oneself from being reborn by extinguishing all desires -- thus gaining Nirvana or eternal peace. In contrast the great vow of the Mahayana is to remain and struggle in the realm of suffering (Samsara) until all beings are freed, "down to the last blade of grass." At the deepest level of Mahayanist thought Nirvana and Samsara are understood as one and the same reality viewed from two perspectives.

Greed, hatred and denial arise endlessly; I vow to abandon them.

The belief that we have a separate self is our 'denial' or ignorance of our connectedness to all that exists. This in turn causes 'greed' and 'hatred,' and together these were called the 'Three Poisons'. We abandon these Three Poisons through the spiritual disciplines of meditation, chanting and bowing, but more importantly, through compassionate action in the world. Together these practices erode the separateness of self and strengthen our love, acceptance and equanimity.

Dharma gates are countless; I vow to wake to them.

All experiences are 'Dharma gates,' or opportunity to awaken. Each sight, sound, touch,

taste and emotion -- especially difficult feelings like shame, anger and fear -- are rich in potential. The gateways include contact with dogs, cats, children, people, trees, rivers and mountains -- all that releases us from our separateness. The wind and rain save us as they touch our skin. Loving relationships are our best dharma gates of all.

The Buddha way is boundless; I vow to embody it fully.

The Buddha Way is the way of awakening. Clearly awakening can never be complete because the gateways to it are endless and everywhere. Our vow therefore is to plunge into full engagement with no holding back. We 'embody' the Buddha Way when we sit in meditation, put on clothes, read the news, eat breakfast, work creatively, engage in parenting, act lovingly towards someone, resolve a conflict, fight injustice, protect the natural world and lie down tired at night.

[Arthur Wells, July 2015].

Loving Kindness Metta

Ezra Bayda – 'Being Zen'

May I dwell in the open heart.
May I attend to whatever clouds the heart.
May I be awake in this moment, just as it is.
May the awakened heart be extended to all beings.

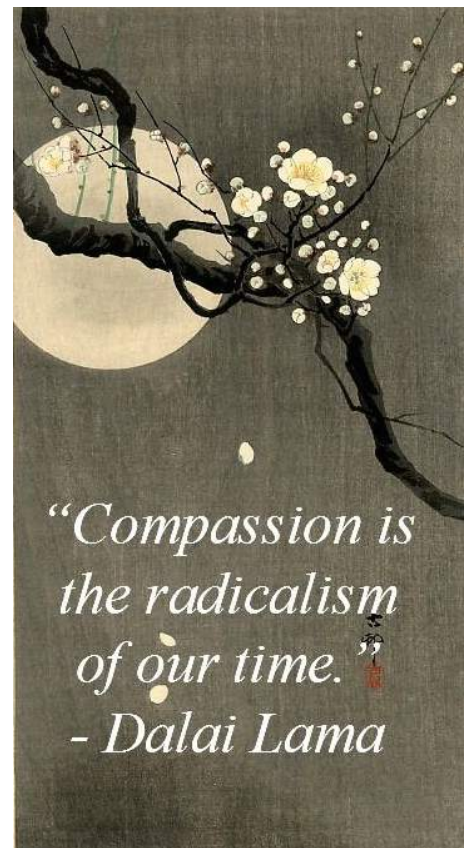
"Song of Zazen" (Hakuin Zenji – 1685-1768)

All beings by nature are Buddha, as ice by nature is water;
 Apart from water there is no ice, apart from beings no Buddha.
 How sad that people ignore the near and search for truth afar,
 Like someone in the midst of water crying out in thirst,
 Like a child of a wealthy home wandering among the poor.
 Lost on dark paths of ignorance we wander through the six worlds;
 From dark path to dark path we wander,
 When shall we be freed of birth and death?

For this the zazen of the Mahayana deserves the highest praise:
 Offerings, Precepts, Paramitas, Nembutsu, atonement, practice –
 The many other virtues--all rise within zazen.
 Those who try zazen even once wipe away beginningless crimes –
 Where are all the dark paths then? The Pure Land itself is near.
 Those who hear this truth even once and listen with a grateful heart,
 Treasuring it, revering it, gain blessings without end.

Much more, if you turn yourself about,
 And confirm your own self-nature--self-nature that is no nature,
 You are far beyond mere argument.
 The oneness of cause and effect is clear,
 Not two, not three, the path is straight;
 With form that is no form, going and coming - never astray;
 With thought that is no thought
 Singing and dancing are the voice of the Law.

Boundless and free is the sky of Samadhi,
 Bright the full moon of wisdom,
 Truly is anything missing now?
 Nirvana is right here, before our eyes,
 This very place is the Lotus Land,
 This very body the Buddha.



Torei Zenji: (1721-1792) “Bodhisattva's Vow”

I am only a simple disciple, but I offer these respectful words:

When I regard the true nature of the many dharmas,
I find them all to be sacred forms
Of the Tathagatha's never-failing essence.
Each particle of matter, each moment,
Is no other than the Tathagatha 's inexpressible radiance.

With this realization, our virtuous ancestors,
With compassionate minds and hearts
Gave tender care to beasts and birds.
Among us, in our own daily lives,
Who is not reverently grateful for the protections of life:
Food, drink and clothing!
Though they are inanimate things,
They are nonetheless the warm flesh and blood,
The merciful incarnations of Buddha.

All the more, we can be especially sympathetic
And affectionate with foolish people,
Particularly with someone who becomes a sworn enemy
And persecutes us with abusive language.
That very abuse conveys the Buddha's boundless kindness
It is a compassionate device to liberate us entirely
From the mean-spirited delusions we have built up
With our wrongful conduct from the beginningless past.
With our open response to such abuse
We completely relinquish ourselves
And the most profound and pure faith arises.

At the peak of each thought a lotus flower opens,
And on each flower there is revealed a Buddha.
Everywhere is the Pure Land in its beauty.
We see fully the Tathagata's radiant light right where we are.
May we extend it throughout the world
So we and all beings become mature in Buddha's wisdom.

Maka Hannya Haramita Shin Gyo

All:

Kan ji zai bo sa gyo jin han-nya ha ra mi ta ji
 sho ken go on kai ku do is-sai ku yaku.
 Sha ri shi shiki fu i ku ku fu i shiki
 shiki soku ze ku ku soku ze shiki
 ju so gyo shiki yaku bu nyo ze.
 Sha ri shi ze sho ho ku so fu sho fu metsu
 fu ku fu jo fu zo fu gen
 ze ko ku chu mu shiki mu ju so gyo shiki
 mu gen-ni bi zes-shin i
 mu shiki sho ko mi soku ho
 mu gen kai nai shi mu i shiki kai
 mu mu myo yaku mu mu myo jin
 nai shi mu ro shi yaku mu ro shi jin
 mu ku shu metsu do
 mu chi yaku mu toku i mu sho tok 'ko
 bo dai sat-ta e han-nya ha ra mi ta
 ko shim-mu kei ge mu kei ge ko mu u ku fu
 on ri is-sai ten do mu so ku gyo ne han
 san ze sho butsu e han-na ha ra mi ta
 ko toku a noku ta ra sam-myaku sam-bo dai
 ko chi han-nya ha ra mi ta
 ze dai jin shu ze dai myo shu
 ze mu jo shu ze mu to to shu
 no jo is-sai ku shin jitsu fu ko
 ko setsu han-nya ha ra mi ta shu
 soku setsu shu watsu
 gya tei gya tei hara gya tei hara so gya tei
 bo ji sowa ka han-nya shin gyo

Translation of the Maka Hanya Haramita Shin Gyo (the Heart Sutra)

Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, practising deep Prajna Paramita,
clearly saw that all five skandhas are empty,
transforming anguish and distress.

Shariputra, form is no other than emptiness,
emptiness no other than form;
form is exactly emptiness, emptiness exactly form;
sensation, perception, formulation,
consciousness are also like this.

Shariputra, all things are essentially empty-- not born, not destroyed;
not stained, not pure, without loss, without gain.

Therefore in emptiness there is no form, sensation,
perception, formulation, consciousness;
no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind,
no colour, sound, smell, taste, touch, thought;
no seeing and so on to no thinking;
no ignorance and also no ending of ignorance,
and so on to no old age and death,
and also no ending of old age and death;
no anguish, cause of anguish, cessation, path;
no wisdom and no attainment.

Since there is nothing to attain,
the Bodhisattva lives by Prajna Paramita,
with no hindrance in the mind,
no hindrance and therefore no fear;
far beyond delusive thinking, right here is Nirvana.

All Buddhas past present and future live by Prajna Paramita
attaining Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi.

[Therefore know that Prajna Paramita
is the great sacred mantra, the great vivid mantra,
the unsurpassed mantra, the supreme mantra,
which completely removes all anguish.

This is truth not mere formality.]*

Therefore set forth the Prajna Paramita mantra,
set forth this mantra and proclaim:

Gate, gate, paragate, parasamgate, Bodhi svaha!

* This section contained in square brackets was added centuries later and smacks of jingoistic self righteousness that we note and retain only to keep up a tradition but there are rumblings to loose this section...

Enmei Jikku Kannon Gyo

All. Kanzeon

namu butsu
 yo butsu u in
 yo butsu u en
 bup-po so en
 jo raku ga jo
 cho nen kanzeon
 bo nen kanzeon
 nen nen ju shin ki
 nen nen fu ri shin.

[repeat seven times]

Translation:

Kanzeon! I venerate my Buddha nature; in Buddha nature I have my source, with Buddha nature I have affinity - affinity with/as Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, constancy, ease, assurance, purity. Mornings my thought is Kanzeon, evenings my thought is Kanzeon, thought after thought arises in mind, thought after thought is not separate from mind.

Closing Dedication For Retreat

Ino:

In the purity and clarity of the Dharmakaya,
 in the fullness and perfection of the Samboghakaya,
 in the infinite variety of the Nirmanakaya,
 we dedicate our sesshin and our reciting of
 Maka Hannya Haramita Shin Gyo, to:

The Ancient Seven Buddhas, Dai Osho,
 Shakyamuni Buddha, Dai Osho,
 All Founding Teachers, past, present, future, Dai Osho;
 and for the enlightenment of bushes and grasses
 and the many beings of the world;

All:

All Buddhas throughout space and time;
 all Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas;
 the great Prajna Paramita.

Notes

Notes

“The best way to find yourself is to loose yourself in service of others”.
Mahatma Gandhi

The Gathering Of Who We Are

What do I stand for in all my imperfections,
Just as I am, right now?
Placing my body on this great body.
Where do I stop and you begin?

And will you gather with me here?

"If you cannot go through as you are, you cannot go through at all."
How then should we go through?

How should we enter this barrier,
Or any door for that matter?

Standing tall as myself
I walk into my life as each moment asks
With nothing missing.

On this threshold of intimacy,
Where are the barriers now?

Jo Campbell