



BUDDHIST NEWS

News from the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas

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Happenings

Humboldt State University Students Visit CTTB

A GROUP of thirty-two students and two professors from Humboldt State University in Arcata visited the CTTB community for a weekend program of cultivation and study from November 8 to November 10, 1991. The program was the fourth annual visit organized by the HSU Newman Fellowship chaplain Father John Rogers and the CTTB administration. Students from Humboldt's World Religions class, journalism majors, artists, and truth-seekers took part in the daily schedule of ceremonies, meditation, and meals alongside the monks and nuns of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas.

Students agreed to observe the traditional monastic code of ethics while on campus, which prohibits harming any living creature, eating meat, stealing, sexual relationships outside of marriage, false speech, smoking, and taking intoxicants or drugs of any kind.

The three-day event included discussions on Science & Spirituality and on Buddhism, a Buddhist-Christian Dialogue, and dialogues with monks and nuns, and featured participation in the monastery's daily schedule of ceremonies, meditation, and even a Catholic Mass on Sunday morning, celebrated in the Hall of Ten Thousand Buddhas by Father Rogers.

Co-teachers who provided a Western framework for the discussions of Buddhist ideas and principles included Dr. George Weissmann, a quantum physicist from the University of California, who is now a curriculum consultant at DRBU, and Professor Mary Bockover of Humboldt's Philosophy Department.

The Buddhist teachers opened the session with a ground rule: "We hope not to turn you into Buddhists during your stay here, but rather to lead you to become a better and more clear-minded devotee of whatever faith you have. Buddhism is the teaching of wisdom and of the mind, and those are broad, inclusive topics. Whom could we exclude from the mind's scope? Welcome to the co-creative learning circle, where we learn from each other!"

Dr. Weissmann championed true science, and distinguished it from "scientism," which is belief in the truth of the findings of the scientific method. Scientism he called a pseudo-faith, and as misleading and

potentially as harmful as superstitious, uncritical acceptance of any religious teachings.

Students met face-to-face with fellow Westerners who hold beliefs and values profoundly different from their own Judeo-Christian outlooks and paradigms; they discovered Buddhist principles to be both ecumenical and wholistic, thus easy to approach and relevant to their daily experience.

Participants arose at 3:30 A.M. for morning chanting, then joined a meditation lesson before breakfast. A combination of lectures, dialogues, and active participation in the life of an ongoing monastic community introduced the Buddhist teachings more vividly and directly than could any written text.

On the second evening, Dr. Snjezana Akpinar, a Dharma Realm Buddhist University faculty member who specializes in Islamic studies, gave a lecture on the current Middle East situation and Father Rogers narrated his slides of a visit to the Buddhist Holy sites in India.

Not all guests found the session entirely to their liking. Several felt that the discussions were too high-level, and said they got a bit lost in parts of the Science and Spirituality discussion. Others wished for more time to meditate during the active three-day schedule, while others wanted more chances to interact with the nuns and monks. Many of the students who took part expressed interest in spending a semester or a year at DRBU in a future exchange program.

After the final session, students who evaluated the weekend said the most valuable experiences were:

1. the chance to participate in ceremonies;
2. the tranquil atmosphere of the monastery which enhanced their contemplation;
3. the vegetarian cuisine which was tasty and filling without being too heavy;
4. the warm hospitality of the teachers and the staff.

Great Thinkers of the West: On Buddhism

OF THE great religions of history I prefer Buddhism, especially in its earlier forms, because it has had the smallest element of persecution.

Buddhism is a combination of both speculative and scientific philosophy. It advocates the scientific method and pursues that to a finality that may be called rationalistic. In it are to be found answers to such questions of interest as, "What are mind and matter? Of them, which is of greater importance? Is the Universe moving towards a goal? What is man's position? Is there living that is noble?" It takes up where science cannot lead because of the limitations of the latter's instruments. Its conquests are those of the mind.

—Bertrand Russell, *Philosopher*

The religion of the future will be a cosmic religion. It should transcend a personal God and avoid dogmas and theology. Covering both the natural and the spiritual, it should be based on a religious sense arising from the experience of all things, natural and spiritual, as a meaningful unity. Buddhism answers this description...If there is any religion that would cope with modern scientific needs it would be Buddhism.

—Albert Einstein, *Scientist*

As a student of comparative religions, I believe that Buddhism is the most perfect one the world has ever seen. The philosophy of the theory of evolution and the law of karma were far superior to any other creed.

It was neither the history of religion nor the study of philosophy that first drew me to the world of Buddhist thought, but my professional interest as a doctor. My task was to treat psychic suffering and it was this that impelled me to become acquainted with the views and methods of that great teacher of humanity, whose principal theme was the chain of suffering, old age, sickness and death.

—Dr. Carl G. Jung, *Psychologist*

The fundamental teaching of Gautama, as it is now being made plain to us by study of original sources, is clear and simple and in the closest harmony with modern ideas. It is beyond all dispute the achievement of one of the most penetrating intelligences the world has ever known.

Buddhism has done more for the advance of the world civilisation and true culture than any other influence in the chronicles of mankind.

—H.G. Wells, *Historian*

...He gave expression to truths of everlasting value and advanced the ethics not of India alone but of humanity. Buddha was one of the greatest ethical men of genius ever bestowed upon the world.

—Dr. Albert Schweitzer, *Theologian*

Educational Events

Developing Virtue Secondary School Special Course Offering

This semester, the secondary students are studying the history of Chinese art and civilization in a special hands-on course taught by a team of three artist-teachers. During the first part of each two-hour class period, the students study the history of Chinese art and culture starting from prehistoric times with Ms. Pao-chi Chen, an artist and art historian from mainland China. Then the students, under the direction of ceramics artist Mr. Michael Owen and artist Mrs. Sarah Kennedy Owen, use the art of the period being studied as inspiration to create pottery and other artifacts that are authentic reproductions, or in the cases of the younger students, creative interpretations of this art. There will be an exhibit of the students' work at the end of the semester.

Happenings

DRBU Lecture Tours

- From October 4-15, 1991, a delegation of DRBU faculty members, including monks, nuns, and lay people, traveled north to Seattle, Washington, and Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, and Toronto in Canada, where they lectured at various schools, colleges, and other public institutions on "Buddhism: North America's Growing Religion."
- From early February to early April of 1992, another CTTB delegation will be touring the Asian countries of Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. They will be giving lectures as well as hosting or participating in Buddhist ceremonies.

Buddhist Viewpoints

Vegetarianism--the Compassionate Choice

"Whatever living beings there may be—feeble or strong, tall, stout, or medium, short, small, or large, seen or unseen, those dwelling far or near, those who are born and those who are not yet to be born—may all beings, without exception, be happy-minded...Just as a mother would protect her only child even at the risk of her own life, even so let one cultivate a boundless heart towards all beings."

IN THE *Sutra of Universal Love**, the Buddha teaches us to have compassion for all living beings, to the point that we regard them all as we would our only child. In practice, this means that we do not hunt, fish, or kill animals. Furthermore, we do not eat meat, because animals must be slaughtered to produce meat.

Nowadays, many doctors, scientists, nutritionists, and people concerned about good health are beginning to see that a no-meat diet is a very good thing, not only for the health of individuals, but for the well-being of the planet's ecological and economic condition as a whole. In *Diet for a New America*, author John Robbins explains that raising animals for their meat requires many times more farmland, water, and energy resources than raising an equivalent amount of crops (say soybeans and wheat) for human consumption. So meat production is directly linked to the problems of deforestation, pollution, poverty, the shortage of resources, and ultimately war.

Eating the flesh of fellow living beings has been deplored by many well-known people throughout history, including Plato, Socrates, Plutarch, Saint Francis of Assisi, Tagore, Henry Thoreau, Leo Tolstoy, Voltaire, Pope, Shelley, Upton Sinclair, H.G. Wells, Leonardo Da Vinci, Isaac Newton, Pythagoras, Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein, Benjamin Franklin, Gandhi, Albert Schweitzer, Bertrand Russell...the list is endless.

But today, the plight of farm animals is much worse than in the past. Modern cows, pigs, and chickens are raised in completely inhumane "meat factories" in which they are separated from their mother at birth, cooped in cramped cages, and treated like machines for the duration of their unnaturally short life. They never see green grass or sunlight. After becoming aware of the profound misery suffered by the animals who end up as attractively packaged meat in our supermarkets, hopefully our natural compassion will make us think twice before eating meat again.

In our culture, meat-eating is an old habit which is difficult to change. Many still think that human beings were born to eat meat. They argue that we need meat for protein. But in fact, modern research shows

that Americans consume too much protein, not too little. It also shows that we can get sufficient protein in a vegetarian diet. Furthermore, meat contains fat, cholesterol, hormones, dyes, and other toxins which clog up our circulatory system and give us heart disease, strokes, cancer, and diabetes. In contrast, spinach and bean sprouts give us vegetable protein as well as very beneficial plant fiber which helps clean our system.

In conclusion, if we stop eating cows, pigs, chickens, eggs, and other living beings, we not only develop our compassionate nature, but we also benefit our health and the health of the planet. Moreover, what many people don't know yet is that vegetarian cuisine can be extremely delicious and tasty, too. In a future issue we hope to publish some vegetarian recipes.

* From *What the Buddha Taught*, by Walpola Rahula, published by Gordon Fraser, London, 1967, p.97.

Forthcoming Events

Special Sessions, Celebrations

The annual Ten Thousand Buddhas Repentance Session will be from Monday, April 13, to Friday, May 8, a total of 25 days.

Shakyamuni Buddha's Birthday will be celebrated on Sunday, May 10, 1992.

The celebrations are open to the public. Those wishing to stay at the City to participate in the sessions should call the City to get an application form.

Regular Events

Every Sunday morning, the public is invited to Buddhist Sunday Church at the Guest Hall. There is meditation from 8 to 9 A.M., and then a group discussion and lecture from 9 to 10:30 A.M. Afterwards, everyone is invited to join the community for the vegetarian meal at 11 A.M.

Every evening of the week, the public is invited to join the community in the following activities at the Buddha Hall:

5:15-6:15 P.M. Meditation

6:30-7:30 P.M. Evening Recitation Ceremony

7:30-9:00 P.M. Sutra Lecture

Diet For A New America.

By John Robbins. Stillpoint Publishing, 1987. 423p. paperback \$13.95
(0-913299-54-5).

The subtitle of this book is "How Your Food Choices Affect Your Health, Happiness and the Future of Life on Earth." Its message is that what we eat profoundly affects the well-being of all living creatures and the balance of the planet's ecosystem.

The author, president of EarthSave Foundation and a resident of California, grew up under the expectation of one day taking over the world's largest ice cream company, Baskin-Robbins. But his conscience caused him to refuse the power and success which awaited him in what he calls the Great American Food Machine, the farming and food production industry which has persuaded Americans that animal products are a necessary part of their diet, yet who subject these animals to increasingly inhumane living conditions under the modern techniques of factory farming.

Instead, Robbins dreamed of another kind of success based on respect for all life, and of a "society that is truly healthy, practicing a wise and compassionate stewardship of a balanced ecosystem."

The book presents several points well supported

by clear documentation and scientific evidence:

1. the American food industry has very little concern for the well-being of the animals it raises for food, for the health of the consumer, and for the impact of its practices on the environment;

2. for the sake of protecting its profits, it does not want the public to be informed about these issues;

3. therefore, the industry propagates the myth that animal products are an essential and wholesome part of our diet.

4. In fact, modern studies overwhelmingly indicate that it is an excess of meats, dairy products and eggs which are responsible for the epidemics of heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis, and many other diseases of our time.

This book leads its readers to "the understanding that the healthiest, tastiest, and most nourishing way to eat is also the most economical, most compassionate, and least polluting." To find out why, read this easy-to-understand book which may change your life.

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