

Mindful News



Newsletter of the Mindfulness Community of Puget Sound

Spring 2004

Teachings on the Diamond Sutra

Here are some excerpts from Eileen Kiera's classes on the Diamond Sutra:

When we practice as a bodhisattva, we vow to take action with no idea of the one who acts, the action or the receiver of the action. We vow to give with no thought of the one who gives, the gift or the receiver. We act with no ideas of separation, of self or other, and no concern about the results. So when we weed the garden, we don't think about having the garden be weed-free or about others who are enjoying themselves doing other things. When we think this way, we can't enjoy weeding the garden, and we will pull only weeds of unhappiness. But if we weed the garden with our minds stilled and peaceful, then our every action will be nourished by our happiness.

The bodhisattva intends the best for all and then lets go.



The Diamond Sutra seeks to cut us free from our illusions of a permanent, separate self. The Buddha's words point to the empty reality of existence. This does not mean that things don't exist. Emptiness is fullness, made up of all life, flowing and indivisible.

The Diamond Sutra tells us that even emptiness is empty. It encourages us to let go of all our notions about existence, so that we can experience each moment as it is, new and unfolding. Consciousness is like pure water. There is no

image that doesn't reflect in it. The images, however, have no body, no self, no existence separate from the water itself.

The Diamond Sutra says "dwell nowhere, and bring forth that mind."

Eileen will share a summary of her classes on the Diamond Sutra in the next Mountain Lamp newsletter. To find out how to subscribe, contact Nan Macy at 360-592-0600/nanmacy@hotmail.com.



Mindful News

Mindful News is the voice of the Mindfulness Community of Puget Sound, a Sangha that practices Buddhism in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh. It is published three times a year. May it be for the benefit of all beings.

Teacher: Eileen Kiera
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Monday Night Program: Duncan Berry, Doria Reagan, Evelyn Tay, Naoto Kosugi, Erie Jones
Days of Mindfulness: Jon Prescott, Claire Massart, Ellie Graham, Chuck Beek
Wednesday night sit & TTS liaison: Ellie Graham
Center Coordinating Committee: Naoto Kosugi, Anita Graham, Mike Melancon
Second Saturday Tea Gathering: Carmen Orso, Eric Dee

If you have any questions or want further information, please call us at 206-324-5373 or visit our website at www.mindfulnesspugetsound.org

Our weekly program, which usually includes two periods of sitting, walking, and a Dharma talk or community dialogue, is every Monday from 6:30 to 8:30 PM at our center at 1910 24th Ave. S. We have a Day of Mindfulness on the third Sunday of most months from 10 AM to 5 PM and a Fellowship Evening from 6:30-8:30 PM on the fourth Thursday. All are welcome.

We welcome contributions to the newsletter. Please email ideas to tlutterman@comcast.net

Hello From the Editor

This past winter and spring, our teacher Eileen Kiera invited us to participate in a focused six week practice period. The focus of this period was Eileen's teaching on the Diamond Sutra.

The period consisted of several dharma talks by Eileen, as well as a weekend non-residential retreat at the Seattle Practice Center and a formal retreat at Camp Indianola.

The Diamond Sutra emphasizes our connection to all beings, so we decided to make that the theme of the newsletter.

Yours in Gratitude for all the people, pets, 'coons, vultures, and various other critters that support us--

Teresa Lutterman

Family Day of Mindfulness

Please join us for our family Day of Mindfulness on July 18th. We are inviting families and children to join us for a day on Bainbridge Island, where we will gather for meditation in Chuck Beek's yurt and enjoy canoeing, kayaking and water fun at Lisa Down's home on Eagle Harbor. This will be a great opportunity for us to practice with our families and get to know some of the important people in each other's lives. Contact Jon Prescott at jonpre@covad.net/425-373-0369 if you need more information.

Fall MCPS Retreat

The Fall MCPS retreat will be held at Camp Indianola on November 5 – 12.

Thank you to Jenny Ogier for the artwork on page one and Lisa Down for the artwork on page three.

Remembering our Relationships to Other Beings

by Jip Chitnarong

The altar room is my maternal grandmother's place. It's where she takes refuge, where she meets her past, and consoles her present and future.

The room is located on the second floor of a traditional Thai house, protected from any distracting noises. On the top shelf of the altar sits my grandmother's Buddha image, eyes closed in a lotus position. On a lower shelf is a glass bowl, containing a bundle of white cloth, which wraps the remains of our deceased ancestors. A picture of a smiling and walking newborn Buddha-to-be is up high, almost touching the ceiling.

Sometimes, under a kerosene lamp, my grandmother tells stories in the altar room. She likes to tell of when she was about ten years old, the time she developed a high fever and became semi-conscious. The village had no modern medical facility, so her parents called on the local medicine man.

He prepared an herbal concoction, but was unable to get it down her throat. Finally, he took out a vulture's feather and gently cleared her mouth and throat with the feather. He got the water and medicine down. She recovered.

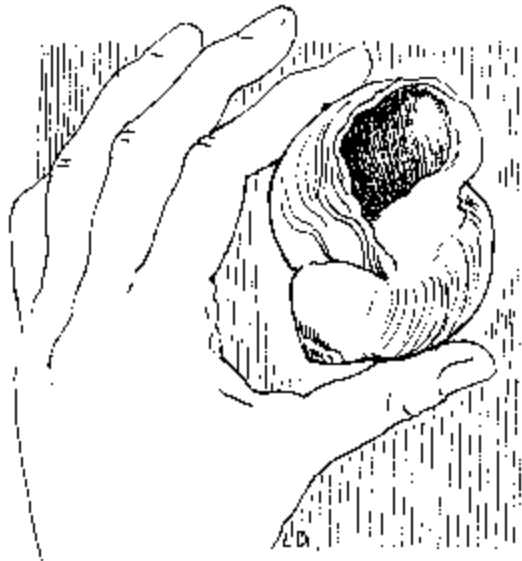
"I would have not been here without that vulture, without that medicine man, without those herbs, without everything. Without them, you would have not been here either. We depend on other things for our lives." Grandmother ends the story.

* * *

The chronic and disabling disease I live with makes me dependent on others. I receive from lots of people, as well as from countless other beings in my food and medicines. Dependency

does not make me feel less of a person. Instead, I feel humble, that I am a field of merit, where others can cultivate their goodness.

I try not to burden or take advantage of those other beings. I want to relate to them instead of consuming them. When I speak to them, I imagine the vulture's feather is gently clearing my throat, as I return to my breath.



All are welcome to attend a meditation, sutra service and discussion at Jip's home most Thursdays and Sundays from 7:15 to 8:15 PM. Contact Naoto Kosugi at 206-714-2607 for details.

Gatha For Appreciating Cats

by Doria Reagan

Looking at you, I know that you are my friend along the path.

Petting you, I am grateful for your companionship and your beauty.

Caring for you, I know that you depend on me. Sitting with you, I know that I depend on you.

Migrations Into Life

by Claire Massart

Remember Thay's dialogue with Buddha? "Buddha, who are you?" Answer (as heard by Thay): "I am your freshness!" Today, during my morning walk ritual through Seattle's Volunteer Park, I particularly enjoyed Nature's freshness. Rain was falling gently, shining on every leaf, every flower, every feather, every blade of grass, and I bet, on every little critter invisible to the naked eye. My awareness of the myriads of microscopic creatures living on Earth with us had been heightened by "Microcosmos," one of Jacques Perrin's documentaries, watched the night before. A magical display of Life at play, uncovering not the life of the leaf but the "life IN the leaf", the bug, the worm.

I discovered my compatriot's work at this past Winter Retreat with Dear Thay. There we saw a DVD of "Winged Migration" narrated in its original French. Its beauty took my breath away - breath, the anchor of mindfulness practice. Had I played with the meditation gatha on short/long breath while I was watching this "*Peuple Migrateur*," it would have sounded something like: "Breathing in, I am aware that my in-breath has shortened to nothing. Breathing out, I am aware that my out-breath is going on for ever".

Seeing these magnificent beings fly together across the Sky as one Sangha body greatly inspired the flock of migrating meditators we had formed at Deer Park Monastery, in the Great Hidden Mountains of Southern California: Venerable Elders showing the way. Youngsters following trustfully. Flight formations in impeccable order - all members acutely aware of each other's presence as they wheel in time and space. Mutual care for each other while navigating through drastic weather changes and other manifestations of life's impermanence. Tragic encounters with human greed. Eagerness to live. Hard work, endurance, persistence, patience, courage. Practical training for life, learning by doing, learning ...on the

wing. Collective surrender to the "rules", with a common sixth or so sense for when it is time, as a group, to feed, to rest, to play, to fly. Flying freely in endless vastness, in endless beauty.

Two monastic flocks flew thousands of miles westwards to join the third one at the Ocean of Peace meditation nest. A nest built with bamboo sticks, terra cotta grains, copper bits, colored pieces of glass, fabric strings, and much more. On a plateau overlooking a valley, encircled by mountain crests just like the rim of a monk bowl. One flock started their journey on the Eastern coast of the vast Atlantic ocean, where the few scattered plum villages by Sainte-Foix-La-Grande share their rolling hills with ancient grape villages. The other flock took off on the Western side of the same ocean, in the Green Mountains by Vermont. Both flew all the way across the New Continent of North America. From Southeast Asia, some migrants crossed the Pacific at their own pace, remembering boat people drown in giant waves, and the ones rescued.

And then, a bunch of us impermanent lay-flocks came from all directions, some flying, some rolling... some for a week or so, some for a month or so, some for the entire rainy-season-migrant-gathering. We scattered in the woods or piled up in warmer barracks. We sung with local birds. We rattled



U. S. Fish and Wildlife

with snakes. We howled with coyotes. We basked in the sun with frozen lizards. We rose and set with Him, the sun. We gazed at Her, the moon. We fed with quails, jays, rabbits and rats. We inhaled the scents of wild silver-green sage and purple-blue lilac. We drifted with the clouds. We sweated on the hiking trails. We rested under the oak trees. We blossomed with

the fruit trees. We swayed with the bamboo trees. We slept under the stars. We got sick and we got well. We planted foreign flowers, eaten by rabbits, eaten by coyotes, eaten by - nobody seemed to eat coyotes...

We also watched the monkey mind swing incessantly from branch to branch over miles after miles of pasts and futures— and sometimes, by some sudden miracle, for a second or two, aaah, we could hear blissful

silence behind the rustling leaves. We took all the time in the world to sit, eat, drink and walk, to deeply relax with the sound of lullabies, to let Dharma rain in, to talk from the heart, to work with diligent ease. We smiled, from inside out, from outside in; half smiles, full smiles, constant smiles, intermittent smiles; lips smiles, eyes smiles, all-body smiles; fake-it-until-you-make-it smiles, as a choice started at the corners of tight lips on a face aged by seriousness, and that is quite a stretch; natural smiles glowing from every cell of the body. Those of us who tried too hard to transform at the base were told with a loving smile: “chill!”, so, we tried hard to

chill... We sometimes heard Buddha whisper “wake up!” in the sounds of ancient bells and modern phones, then we took time to pause, and “simply” BE.

Well, we tried our best. We often “failed,” at least I did. Which left us with plenty of opportunities to strengthen patience, compassion and other useful virtues, and that alone, I call “success.”

Winged Migration, a utopia come true, a humbling model for the human species, well known to suffer from self-centered arrogance. A mirror reflecting and reaffirming the Sangha Thich Nhat Hanh had birthed into existence in the killing fields of his father-land and mother-tongue. A Sangha who, under his guidance, has been dancing for decades the delicate mingling of tradition and innovation, East and West, monastic and lay, monk and nun, to the drum of reverent (r)evolution.. A Sangha who in this process, manages to keep her Zen essence intact. A living Sangha in constant change. A multiplying Sangha. A refuge. An invitation to return to real life, to protect, serve, and celebrate it. A simple-sounding, nearly-impossible-looking practice of Being In The Present Moment and staying in that power of Now. A universal tool to self-tailor our individual and personal contribution to life. And a gift to a troubled world, within us, between us, around us. We are the gift. And we are the world.

I hear Thay’s voice echo gently up the mountains and down the sea: “*Up to you... up to you... Together... together...*” Will we wake up on time?

May all our Ancestors and Descendants smile on each of us. May All Species Be Well.



Life Service/line art by Timothy Knepp



Animal Friends

by Jenny Ogier

Several years ago I worked for an animal rights organization in California. I was the person in charge of receiving and answering almost all of the correspondence between donors and the organization. During this time I received and answered hundreds of letters – full of suggestions, drawings, schemes for pet retirement homes, angry rants and ramblings against people who didn't like animals and the most amazing and touching letters filled with an overflowing love and compassion. Most of these correspondents were elderly and poor, struggling with maintaining an existence, keeping their pets and sending in very small contributions. Here are some of their voices:

Dear Sir or Madam –

My name is Edgar ___ and I am taking care of Mrs. Stella L___'s home while she is confined to the Rio Verde Health Care Center. ...

I have been her friend for 55 years. She is and has been (in) a wheel chair for quite a while now.... I am 83 years and Stella is 84 years old and I can't write worth a darn any more. ... We both love animals and the cats that their owners won't feed are hungry. I can tell by their loud shrill voices and are very hungry, so I feed them on the back porch.

Yes, my folks had a farm and I was raised on a farm. And I would release the animals from the trap, bring them home to the farm, and yes, I had helped and I would heal their broken legs, and finally they realized I was trying to help them and fed them. I picked up a baby Coon I found russeling in the leaves and could not locate his Mother. So I brought it home and gave it milk in

a doll bottle. I put a small hole in the end of the nipple. And when it started to nibble on lettuce I changed him over. I had that coon 8 years. But as a boy myself I had him in my arms a big share of the time, everywhere I went that coon was in my arms. That little guy was always in my arms, and that coon always wanted to be with me. He died a natural death. But it took me many months to just get over his death. I just loved that coon and he was so pritty and wonderful. So now you know I am an animal lover. So those that don't like me don't have too.

I will close now, and hope I didn't mess you up. I will ask you to forgive my writing, as my old age is catching up on me. ...

Yours Truly,

Edgar S___



U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Bob Savannah

To Whom It May Concern:

I am very interested in doing something to help animals. The problem is a small Widow's Pension so I can't send very much. Living in this apartment I can't have a dog but the Love is still there. I do have 4 Bluebirds LOVEY & DOVEY, also BETTY & BUDDY BLUEBIRD FRANK. Named after my late husband who loved Birds so much. I'll close with a TWEET TWEET from my Bluebirds. So long and God Bless for what you are trying to do.

*Your Friend,
Margaret*

(This came with a \$1 contribution.)

Managing Practice Center Concerns and Complaints

by Teresa Lutterman

On Sunday April 4, members from MCPS and TTS gathered with the goal of improving communication between the sanghas. The meeting was open to all members of both sanghas.

Those present adopted a procedure for handling complaints. The focus is on complaints relating to the use of the practice center space, but could be used for broader concerns as needed:

Step One: Encourage the ethic of “mindful complaining/grumbling.” In other words, first ask ourselves is this a valid concern? Does it really need to be spoken? Is it important enough to us to follow through with the time and effort needed to resolve the concern?

Step Two: If one feels his or her concern needs attention, the issue should be brought to the Seattle Practice Center Coordinating Committee (SPCCC). They can then determine if there is an existing policy

which addresses the issue. If there is, the SPCCC will handle the complaint based on the relevant existing policy.

Step Three: If the SPCCC does not feel it can appropriately handle the complaint, then it will be elevated to the Boards of the two sanghas for further consideration.

The proposal was adopted for one year.

Upcoming Mountain Lamp Events

Summer Retreat --“Awakening to Summer” ; August 4 – 8 with teachings by Eileen Kiera.

Harvest Retreat and Festival: September 25 – 26 with teachings by Jack Duffy.

Ongoing Practice: Everyone is welcome to Mountain Lamp’s daily practice and First Saturday Practice Days. Contact Nan Macy for details at 360-592-0600.

Mindfulness Community of Puget Sound Membership & Subscription Form

Yes, I would like to participate in the Mindfulness Community of Puget Sound as a:

___ Regular member: \$25/month (or whatever you can)to support practice center and activities.

(note—Regular Members pay reduced fees for retreats.)

___ Associate Members: \$10/year to defray cost of newsletter.

___ Supporting Member: Donation basis. Members who cannot attend regularly but would like to receive newsletter and support the Sangha financially.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone: (day) _____ (evening) _____

E-Mail _____

Return to MCPS, 1910 24th Ave. S, Seattle, WA 98144

Excerpt from *The Essence of the Records of Master Lin Chi*

By Thich Nhat Hanh

...Those who practice the way do not have to engage in hard labor. Do not maltreat your body and mind by running in pursuit of some external object. You should see that you already are what you want to be, according to the spirit of aimlessness, just as the wave as soon as it knows it is already water can cease running after water. The way of the practice is to stop because the present moment is always the moment when we can return to our true home, whether it is by our steps, our breathing, or as we eat a meal, put on our robe, drink water or go to the toilet. You do not need to go anywhere, you do not need to do anything else. What you are looking for is already there available to you.



Photo of apartment sign by Teresa Lutterman

Host Helps Guest

by Michael Melancon

My teacher took my raft from me today
And bashed it into tiny pieces.

Treading water
On an open sea
Surrounded by floating bits of panic.

Calmly watching “letting go.”

Reaching down and touching bottom with my
toe.

Hey!! I can stand
up here!!

The other shore.

(This was written after
reading and reflecting
on *The Essence of the
Records of Mater Lin
Chi*)



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