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# Wisdom



§ 多倫多大學佛教學生的心靈廣場 §

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## BUDDHISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

*Reverend Bhikkhu Punnamadhammo, a monk of the Thai Forest tradition (and an occasional UofT lecturer), wrote the following article at our request, opening this issue's theme of Buddhist teaching and practice in relation to the environment.*

**I**sn't hard for Buddhists to understand the basic principles of environmentalism. Buddhist philosophy has always seen the universe as an inter-related and mutually dependent whole. Nothing existing as independent entities, every action has incalculable effects on the whole. This is the essence both of ecological science, and of the Dependent Origination. Ecological thinking is still very new in the West, but Buddhist thought has incorporated the principles of inter-dependence for twenty-five centuries.

Likewise, the principles of Buddhist ethics are based on ahimsa, non-harming. The First Precept enjoins us not to harm or kill any living being. In an important sense, all beings are seen as equal. This is because of the possibility of humans taking rebirth

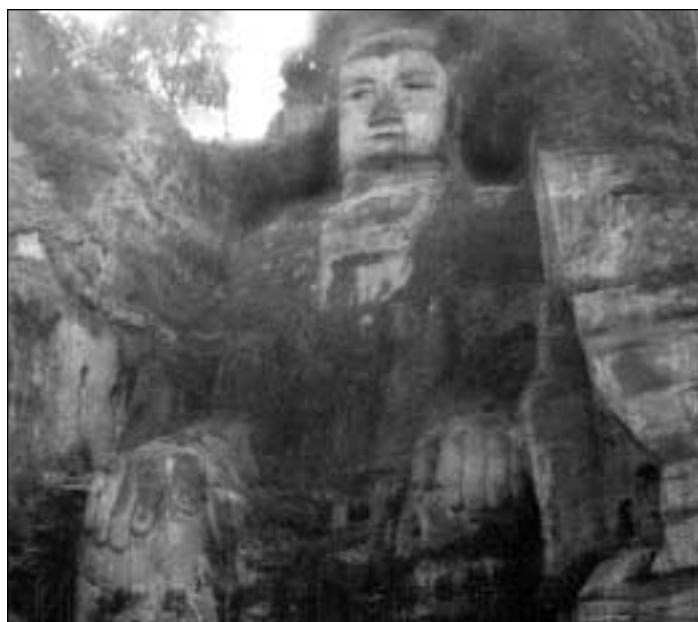


PHOTO: CAZ ZVARIKUSKAS

*The Giant Buddha at Leshan, China.*

### “the unexamined life”

*An address to an inter-faith panel on religion and the environment, June 1st & 6th, 2002*

*BY EISEL MAZARD*

**I** have been asked to speak briefly as to what Buddhism teaches in relation to the present crisis of ecology, and as to what this religion has to offer in the political struggle to redress our collective dependency upon the unsustainable exploitation of nature in the future.

I am glad to be speaking alongside the representatives of these other religious traditions, as there is a common advantage to the religious perspective on ecology. Every religious tradition would agree that mankind's salvation is not to be found at the bottom of any oil-well, nor in the depths of any gold-mine, nor in the fortunes to be made from the exploitation of natural resources and

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in the animal realm and vice-versa. Thus, an animal is not an essentially different type of entity from a human, each kind being only a temporary state of transformation. This is to be contrasted with the dominant western paradigm of man's dominion over “the brute creation.”

But before we become too smug about our wonderful Buddhist environmentalism, we need to ask a hard question - why do so many Buddhist countries have such lousy environmental records?

Let me tell you a little story. I am a Canadian by birth, but I took ordination in Thailand and spent five years there. When I had been in the country a short while, and was still a layman, I took a bus journey from one town to another. I had a bag of sweets with me, and as I unwrapped each one I diligently collected the wrappers in a plastic bag for disposal later. This is just normal behaviour for a Canadian of my generation.

At a rest stop, the driver walked down the aisle, doing some clean-up. He took my bag of empty wrappers and with a casual gesture tossed them out the empty window, into the roadside

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# “the unexamined life”

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human labour. Almost every religion instructs its followers to turn away from amassing “the things of this world” and to seek out something more lasting, more meaningful, or more real — either in the next life or in a better understanding of this one.

But I do not regard the environmental crisis as a spiritual crisis; and the Buddhist religion does not assign any spiritual value to nature. Therefore, Buddhism does not offer any model of spirituality to serve as the solution to what is an economic, political, and cultural problem. As an illustration of this, in 1990 the Dalai Lama was invited to speak on the subject of “Spirit and Nature” in an academic forum much like this one; he flatly refused to speak on any political questions of ecology, and then, instead of discussing nature in terms of spirituality, he surprised his audience by describing nature as nothing but another obstacle to the emancipation of the spirit — void of any inherent value.

[Buddhism & Ecology, 1997] There is a very wide gap between Western cultural perceptions of Eastern religions, and the real doctrines of Buddhism.

Buddhism neither idealizes nature, nor any aspect of the human nature that has done so much damage in its desire to consume it. The aspiration to preserve nature for future human needs and the desire to use it up in the present are not ethically independent opposites, but are reciprocal values, derived from the same basic will — from the self-interest and egoism held in common by us all. From the Buddhist perspective, it does not make sense to champion one desire or another among the motives that turn the cycles of our consumerist society; instead, the root causes of the problem are addressed in our teaching.

To use a related example, the pursuit of self-interest in our society produces both the extremes of wealth and of poverty; thus, in the Buddhist teaching, the two are regarded as reciprocal. In our society, some valorize the amassing of wealth, and others valorize the labours of the poor; in the political struggle between the two, just enough is taken from the wealthy (in taxes or in charity) to keep the poor in tow as the economics of egoism grind on. But as long as the process continues, all mankind suffers in the meaningless pursuit of a satisfaction that the things of this world cannot offer us. We wear out the world with our desires; our own minds and bodies are soon spent in chasing after vanities, or in serving the vanities of others, by economic compulsion.

The message of Buddhism —in relation to the challenge of ecology and for this society’s future— is not that our exploitative economy can exist in balance with nature. For it cannot. The message of Buddhism is not that nature, if regarded as sacred, can provide enough to satisfy all of mankind’s desires. On the contrary, even one man’s appetites could not be satisfied with the exhaustion of all that remains. The further mankind marches toward the horizon of its desires, the further that horizon recedes: an infinite regress, over the surface of a finite earth.

What Buddhism does teach is that each of us is more than the sum of our desires; that human nature, and the suffering it

entails, can be overcome. So too for our exploitative dependency upon natural, and human resources. We cannot build an enlightened society in the absence of enlightened people; Buddhism offers the methods of self-liberation and empowerment that offer an alternative to the destructive pursuit of self-gratification that has precipitated the ecological crisis.

Now I must make a concession. Any religion can claim that if only the people of the world would follow their particular doctrine, or awaken to their particular feeling of spirituality, the ecological crisis would be averted; i.e., mankind would turn from the worldly to the spiritual. I think this is spurious; and I will readily admit that if the whole world’s population converted to Buddhism tomorrow, it would no more stop the unsustainable exploitation of resources than if they converted to any other religion. As long as we conceive of religion as something apart from and superior to worldly concerns —namely, the desires that drive our consumerist society— religion shall remain ineffective in informing and transforming the society that now stands on the brink of ecological collapse.

All religions purport to know the meaning of life; but none can loosen the grip of those who cling to what is meaningless in it. The ideals of religions are inevitably turned to the egoistic interests of those who propound them. Belief does not negate self-interest; quite the contrary, we choose to believe only what will advance our self-interest. Therefore, Buddhists do not look to the future for a spiritualization of the world, nor should we even expect the spiritualization of the egoists who live in it. Buddhists, like ecologists, are neither partisans of the spirit, nor partisans of the worldly; and this is the basis of the profound consonance that has been long felt between the two.

The Buddhist, like the environmental scientist, regards nature not as the creation (or embodiment) of the divine, nor as the mere means to serving human desires — we regard the world, first and foremost, with detachment. The Dalai Lama’s statement that nature is void of inherent values, properly understood, is not an attack on ecology, but a description of the first step toward a detached view of nature of all kinds. Detachment, in our understanding, is the indispensable counterpart of compassion; and it is only through detachment and compassion that we can hope to overcome our appropriative and exploitative dependency upon nature —including human nature— both as individuals and as members of a society.

The message of Mahayana Buddhism is quite hopeful in this regard, but it burdens each of us with a choice. Will we take an interest in our own enlightenment —and, thus, in the world’s salvation— or will we struggle to sustain what is unsustainable for just a few years’ more enjoyment of (what Socrates called) “the unexamined life”? Everyone agrees that the world is worth saving, but the practical question for each of us, at this juncture of history, is whether or not “the unexamined life” is worth living. Socrates gave his answer, and the Buddha essentially said the same: that the unexamined life is not worth living even at the expense of just that same life. How much more foolish are we today, who live this way at the expense of the entire world?

# BUDDHISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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ditch. The ditch, of course, was full of all kinds of similar rubbish.

A trivial thing, but on a larger scale it was clear that Thai environmental practice is very lax. Even when the laws are on the books, they are not enforced. Deforestation has reached such a point that it is effecting the local climate, the rainy season being much shorter than it was a half century ago.

Shouldn't a Buddhist people like the Thais know better? Well yes, they ought to. One of the senior monks in my tradition commented in regard to such considerations that the problem in Thailand isn't Buddhism, it is that Thailand is not Buddhist enough. In other words, Buddhist principles are not applied as much as they should be. (Please don't think I am picking on Thailand, which is a wonderful country in so many ways, it is just that I know something of the case.)

To be fair, Thailand, and Asia generally, has not been industrialized as long as Europe and America, and up until recent decades, human impact on the environment has been negligible. There are signs of a new awareness, and there are environmental movements in Thailand seeking to educate people and turn things around. It is to be hoped that something new and wholesome may come yet from the application of Buddhist ethics and philosophy to environmental issues.

Understanding environmental theory with the aid of Buddhist ideas is one thing, applying them practically is another. Reverence for life, compassion and not-harming, mindful living and awareness of consequences are often spoken of in this context. This are all very important, but I would like to focus on another cardinal virtue that doesn't get enough press, and that is contentment (*santutthita* in Pali)

Recently, the ratification of the Kyoto accord on greenhouse gases has become a hot issue ( no pun intended! ) It is quite disheartening to watch the unseemly scramble of our political and economic leaders for exemptions, exceptions and slow-downs. At least, at long last, everyone seems to be admitting the obvious fact that human activity is causing climate change.

However, much of the leadership —and, it must be said, the population at large— want to find some way to deal with the problem without impacting on our lifestyles or stopping what is called “economic growth.” Attempts to mitigate the so-called Kyoto targets are especially sad because these targets themselves are a compromise position, and probably inadequate.

This opposition represents a heavy state of delusion. As Buddhists we should be courageous in facing reality, and the reality here is that our lifestyle will be impacted by climate change. We do not have a choice in the matter, it has gone way too far for that. Our only choice is this; we can make the hard decisions now and begin reducing emissions on a planetary scale or we can continue as we have done, merrily enjoying our greed and ignorance until Mother Nature shuts us down the hard way.

This is where the virtue of contentment comes in. If we are to maintain any kind of decent life into the twenty-first century we need to simplify and make do with less. This idea is anathema to conventional economic thinking. Our economy is driven by the engine of desire and its (temporary) satisfaction. I probably don't need to tell you what that leads to, according to the Buddha's teaching.

Contentment has been called the magical wish-fulfilling gem. That is, all your wishes are fulfilled if all you wish for is what you already have! This may seem like a cheap trick, but when you think about it, it is very profound. What do we want material objects for in the first place? Is it not to provide us with happiness, that is, pleasant feeling or *sukha vedana*? If we can find this happiness without material support, are we not better off? And how happy does more and more material wealth make us anyway? Especially when it must be purchased at the cost of long hours and constant stress.

Simplicity of wishes and contentment with what little we have are virtues that are out of fashion these days. They are not much in synch with the spirit of post-modern capitalism. This was clear as far back as the 'sixties when the military government of

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Photo: (Frank) Siew-Keo Yong

# Detachment and the Environment

*Phillip Ernest, UofT Scholar of Sanskrit and East Asian Studies, writes on what value should be accorded to nature in keeping with the Buddhist philosophy of the middle way (Madhyamaka-shunyatavada). A differing interpretation of the matter is offered by a colleague in the article following.*

**T**he question “Should Buddhists feel any reverence or respect for Nature” raises the problem of what kind of respect it is possible to feel for anything once the apparent reality of ‘Nature’ has been seen through so that it is regarded as a mere creation of the mind. Why should a Buddhist respect anything? Why should a Buddhist?

To Buddhists who take the Shunyatavadin perspective, these questions might suggest two more. First, what is respect? It is a feeling of recognition that we have in the face of that which is not identified with ourselves (with ‘I’): it assigns a self to the other, whether that self be (as we think) animate (possessing a ‘soul’) or inanimate (a ‘thing’). This respect is not necessarily a friendly one: the hatred and violence elicited from us by an enemy or obstacle is as much a testimony to our respect for it as love and desire. For instance, if one person does not respect another enough to care about their opinions, disagreements between the two would be unlikely to grow into violent arguments. Conversely, two people might respect each other too much to disagree with each other, and their differences might either be ignored, or be repressed, to simmer quietly until they blaze forth in violence.

Secondly, what is nature? It may be that this is one of those humongous, over-arching conceptual frameworks that the human subject projects onto its surroundings to enable it to orient itself in the chaos of whatever ‘the world’ is (‘true reality’, ‘samsara’, ‘the Void’).

A person is one ‘thing’. But Nature is an obvious abstraction; it is far removed from the unarguable immediacy of the human faces before our eyes. I feel that I might be willing to die for one of these faces. But what would I be willing to do for the sake of this imaginary golem — this ‘Nature’, which even non-Buddhists can recognize as a mental fabrication? The Buddha teaches that a person is unreal. This is really unreal.

NATURE CAN BE A CONVENIENT, OR AN INCONVENIENT, DESIGNATION. It can be convenient in proportion to the detachment with which it is handled; and here we are lucky, because, despite our human compulsion to cling to the object we respect, it is much easier to remind ourselves of the subjectivity of an abstraction, than that of our friends, lovers, and enemies. Nature may be, so far as the compassionate are concerned, a concession of upaya [“skillful means”] to the illusion of an anthropomorphic universe, a convenient designation for the human race’s need to organize, conceptually and practically, its environment according to its clinging to the illusion of the individual flesh. Nature is the mythic

extension of our clinging, beyond the body and out into the body’s environment; it is the infinite extension of our craving for security, sureness, and stillness, which, like all craving, will never be satisfied, not even if it can grasp the whole universe — precisely as the myth of Nature is designed to do.

Our bodies seem to suffer least when they are left more or less in their ‘original’ state: encroachments both ‘natural’ (age, disease, pleasure, anxiety, weather) and ‘unnatural’ (torture, medicine, technology and its effects) tend to vitiate the equilibrium of ourselves as bodies, and to make us suffer. The same principle may be seen as valid for our bodies’ environment also. We seem, as bodies, to be better off without many of the alterations that have been wrought in the ecosphere by a technological society that is running mad. But this concept of Nature (if clung to even slightly by minds that insist that it must have the consistency of a real entity) immediately begins to produce its own monsters. There is a sense in which Nature (which is, after all, the original home of the suffering [duhkha] of the human body) is no more felicitous an environment than the over-modified world created by science. The three classic sufferers seen by Shakyamuni on his first, clandestine outing from his father’s palace were, after all, being afflicted by ‘natural’ calamities.

If Buddhists take the view that all ‘things’ only exist as such by virtue of our ‘respect’ for them, what hope is there of evoking in ourselves any feelings of respect for a blatant chimera like ‘Nature’? Why, indeed, should Buddhists care about anything? This is the seminal question of Buddhism, and its classic answer is, as we know, that all our suffering comes precisely from misconceived and misplaced care, and that there is no good reason to care about anything — except detachment (i.e., the eightfold path leading to enlightenment)! This is a paradox, but it is one that mainly troubled certain Indian philosophers (e.g. the Abhidharmists whom Nagarjuna was attempting to refute) who had a hard time resolving doctrinal questions as to the ultimate basis of ethical values in a universe void of any “thing” uncreated and unconditioned by consciousness. The vast majority of Buddhists seem not to have been troubled by this nightmarish problem, either because they didn’t perceive it, or because they were able to let go of the mode of thinking in terms of causal reasons and absolute entities, and thus to cease clinging to justifying principles.

So what does it mean to care about something? What do we care about? We care about things. And these things only become things by virtue of our respect for them. It seems that respect entails a commitment to the objective reality of a thing — a reality that Buddhists deny.

So far, there seems to be little chance for Buddhist ecology: there seems to be no ‘Reason’ why Buddhists should care about ‘Nature’.

But this, we feel, is absurd. We need it to be absurd. We are Buddhists because of our compassion, our compassion for the suffering of our own and others’ selves — even though this distinc—

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Thailand began “reforms” to promote economic development and modernization. I have heard that the authorities tried to put pressure on the monks to stop talking about *santutthita*. What a problem for the ambitious technocrats if everyone were already happy!

The critical change needed is not social or political. The problems of greed and waste are also present in socialist systems, as the history of the Soviet Union makes clear. What is needed is a fundamental change of attitude. We need to rethink our values. For instance, economic good should be seen as making sure that everyone has enough, rather than that the fortunate few have more and more.

If we are trying to think about the environment, what is wrong with it and what can be done to save it, we need to understand the root causes. It is useful, at one level, to talk about various kinds of fuel use and other industrial processes. But as Buddhists we ought to know that everything follows from the mind. All social problems, including global warming, begin at the same place - with greed, hatred and ignorance.

I would like to add a final word for those who are already committed environmental activists. It is very good that you are able to see beyond your own narrow interests and to do some good for the world as a whole. But if I may, I would like to caution you against falling into other kinds of bad karma and unwholesome states.

For the activist, it is all too easy to become chronically angry. This is not only a negative mind-state, it is counter-productive. This happens when we personalize the issues involved. It is

tempting to succumb to a simplistic kind of thinking where we blame politicians, or industrialists or loggers or people who drive SUV's. This creates a rigid “us vs. them” scenario that impedes, rather than fosters change. Remember that Buddhism teaches universal compassion. It may be easy for an environmentalist to love the spotted owl, but she may need to work a little harder to sympathize with the logger who is trying to feed his family.

Another problem that environmental activists face is avoiding despair. By committing to action in the world, they often take inside the burdens of the world. Buddhism teaches that everything is impermanent, and this includes the natural world - all the plants and animals, even the species of plants and animals, will pass away and disappear in time, regardless of human activity to harm or to help. The very land and sea will one day be no more.

It is not necessary to let this become a prescription for apathy. Buddhist recognition of *anicca*, impermanence, means more than abandoning attachment to a stability that cannot be found. It means embracing change, and learning to work within a flowing pattern. It is possible to be active in the world without attachment to the world. This kind of mental dance is akin to the space athletes call “being in the zone” where the athlete abandons any idea of competition or achievement, and just does it. The wonderful paradox is that it is precisely in this state that the athlete performs at his absolute maximum. This touches on one of the central paradoxes of Buddhist philosophy, the union of compassionate action and the wisdom of voidness. The enlightened one knows that all beings are without intrinsic self-essence, and yet she works tirelessly (and joyfully!) for the relief of their suffering.

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## Detachment and the Environment

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tion of the self is one that the Buddha (in the teaching of dependent co-arising) reveals to be “unreal”. We “are” Buddhists “because” we care. But how can we care for things that do not “really” exist? How can we care about things if, in affirming their ‘existence’, we only demonstrate our own lack of enlightenment — affirming the delusion that the teaching was supposed to overcome? How can we justify the love of Nature, without embracing an unenlightened view of ‘the real’?

Only by freeing ourselves from the notion that what we love must be real, by not clinging to the notion that only the objective other can evoke our love. For Buddhists, perhaps the opposite is true: without our love, where is the other? “If there is no action and agent/ Where could the fruit of action be?/ Without a fruit,/ Where is there an experiencer?”

[Muulamadhyamakakaarika XVII.30]. What we see is there only because we respect it. The Avatamsaka-sutra says that “There are no real sentient beings to speak to,/ But according to conventional norms they provisionally teach.” “They do not believe in things, yet can enter deeply into them.” And why? Because, it

may be, although suffering is as empty of our meaning as the whole of the universe —with which it is, in fact, equated as predicate in the Buddha’s primal utterance— it is no less worthy of our attention for that. Indeed, what else is there, if, to use a phrase of Leonard Priestley, *Shunyatavada* holds that “Samsara is nirvana misunderstood”?

We seem to be unable to give up the respect of persons and things; the apparent existence of the world —and our desire for it— demonstrates our attachment (i.e., that we are not yet enlightened). It is a world swarming with persons, values, and meanings— even gods and souls. Our enlightenment would mean their extinction, their liberation from the web of mutual attachment that keeps this show alive; but that is a level of liberation from attachment that most of us may not soon reach. What, in the meantime, are we going to do about persons— these values, these souls, that we can’t stop creating? After Nagarjuna, Buddhists can give no reasons for their love. But as Nagarjuna says in the *Muulamadhyamakakaarika* [XXIV.14ab], “For whom emptiness is possible,/ For him all is possible.” Nature and compassion are ready to hand as skilful means for those Buddhists who feel that love is a possibility that speaks for itself, beyond reasons.

# Enlightenment and Ecology

*UofT scholar Jeff Lindstrom writes in response to Phillip Ernest's article*

**T**he fundamental question is that of how a Buddhist should relate to nature. The answer to this question depends (or can depend) on the answers to some other questions:

*What is the nature of the Buddhist's relationship to the other?*

*Is there a difference between the Buddhist's relationship to another human, and to a non-human entity such as an ecosystem?*

*Using "Nature" more broadly, what is the relationship of a Buddhist to the material world?*

Bringing the answers to these questions together, we may speak as to the role of reverence or respect in the Buddhist view of nature.

*What is the nature of the Buddhist's relationship to the other?*

In many kinds of Buddhist meditation, there is a preliminary vow before each meditation to the effect of: "I dedicate my efforts to the liberation of all sentient beings." The question then is, "Is Nature sentient?"

If "sentient" simply means to have sense perception, then that category includes many, many beings. Certainly, "much of" nature then becomes sentient.

The Bodhisattva vow at the centre of Mahayana doctrine proclaims the desire to postpone nirvana until all sentient beings are liberated; however self-congratulatory this may be, the Mahayana distinguishes itself from its predecessors with this commitment to care about the other and its enlightenment.

Aside from doctrine, though, why should I care about the other? I believe the answer can be framed largely in terms of the cognition of liberation. In our ignorance, we cling to the idea of a separate self and other. Until we reach some stage of non-dual awareness, we must assume that the actions we take direct to "outside world" are essentially actions we make on ourselves.

Hence, a callous disregard for the natural world is equivalent to a callous disregard of our own well-being. When we do become enlightened, then dependent co-arising is intuitively grasped, and we would more "naturally" avoid harming the other.

*Is there a difference between the Buddhist's relationship to another human, and to a non-human entity such as an ecosystem?*

Considering the matter in terms of sentience, is a tree sentient? A tree is certainly affected by the outside world, but then so is a rock. A cougar or a harp seal is certainly sentient, but isn't really in a position to pursue the dharma. A human, though, is in such a position — assuming other favourable conditions are met. So, given a choice between helping a tree and helping a human, I will help the human. I revere consciousness, over the unconscious complexity of an ecosystem or the simplicity of a slug.

*Using "Nature" more broadly, what is the relationship of a Buddhist to the material world?*

I like to use two analogies. In the blackboard analogy, the blackboard does not control what I write on it, although I may be constrained by the size of the blackboard, its texture, or the compatibility of my chalk.

Similarly, nature, as the material world, is essential for my spiritual development. Without my physical body I cannot read, talk about, or follow the dharma. However, Nature, or material reality, or my physicality, is just the blank slate upon which my

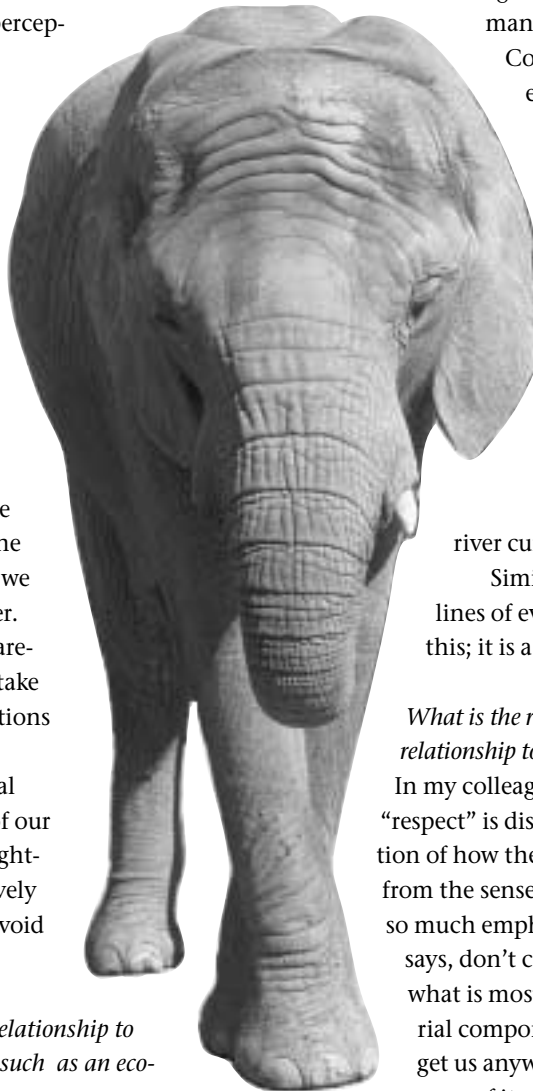
thoughts, will, and spiritual development are made manifest. There is no conscious will in nature. Consciousness is a product of sentience, and even where sentience is present, there may not be consciousness.

If I get into a car, there is no moral superiority to my sitting back and letting the car ride down the highway in the "natural" direction it is inclined to take. Or, if the mechanical nature of this analogy is found objectionable, if I'm in a canoe going down the river, I think I'm entitled to paddle it in one direction or another. There is no moral superiority in surrendering my actions to the unconscious force (not even Will) of river currents.

Similarly, eco-systems are the products of many lines of evolution. But consciousness is more than this; it is a way to escape the strictures of evolution.

*What is the role of reverence or respect in the Buddhist's relationship to Nature?*

In my colleague Phillip Ernest's article, the question of "respect" is discussed in terms of reification (i.e., the question of how the mind creates the impression of real things from the senses and the imagination), but I wouldn't put so much emphasis on this aspect of it. As Ken Wilber says, don't confuse what is most fundamental with what is most meaningful. After all, studying the material components of a building's bricks isn't going to get us anywhere closer to understanding the significance of its architecture.



Is it much more of a problem if we assign abstract preconceptions to physical objects than to human beings? I submit that our preconceptions can keep us in ignorance no matter what object or being we are trying to understand.

I will revere or respect anything if it helps me to escape the chains of my ignorance. If I have enough wisdom, I will realize that the other is not a mere extension of my ego's impulses. In Indian Buddhist Tantra, elaborate correspondences were made between the external and internal worlds. Likewise, in modern biology thinkers such as Henry Plotkin note that all our interactions with, and adaptations to, the outside world are forms of knowledge. Our very existence depends on the outside world; in another sense, we are the outside world.

FOR THIS REASON, IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER IF MY LOVE IS FOR A HUMAN, a slug, a rock, or the whole of nature, as long as there is love involved. There may be moral dilemmas in which I must choose one over the other, but the Buddha never indicated that we

shouldn't make tough choices. As I recall, he said we might have to kill one man on a ship if he's planning to kill the hundreds of others on the same ship. Similarly, I'm prepared to sacrifice a tree for a man, but this should be a conscious choice, made out of love. Evading these tough decisions, or deciding that all life is equally revered, is the tyranny of pseudo-shunyata (a "phony emptiness"). The real teaching of emptiness isn't the belief that everything shares the same conventional characteristics; Nagarjuna makes this clear in attacking both clinging to differences, and the banality of oversimplification.

Compassion is self-love. As long as we are ignorant, we must consciously compensate for this ignorance of duality by loving others as we love ourselves. Once we are enlightened, we will recognize that web of dependence that Phillip refers to in his article — but this merely enhances our compassion rather than diminishes it.

We should love nature for it is loving ourselves too, but must avoid the clinging of worshipping something that we perceive as superior or magical.

For me, this is essentially a cognitive issue. Love conquers our dualistic ignorance; namely, the conception that there is an "I" and an "other," immutably separate. However, enlightenment does not mean that the "other" disappears into thin air, while the egoic "I" remains. When we are enlightened, the love for all is automatic. Until that time, we're going to have to try harder to love both our Selves and the Other. For really, what is the difference?

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## Wisdom

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The book entitled *An Inquiring Mind's Journey's into wisdom, compassion, freedom and silence* by Bhante Kovida has recently been published. For more information or to order a copy, please e-mail Chris at [wisdom.tor@rogers.com](mailto:wisdom.tor@rogers.com)

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S. N. Goenka • North American Tour  
April to August 2002

S. N. Goenka, the internationally known teacher of meditation, is in North America to teach and speak about the ancient meditation practice of Vipassana, a simple and practical way to achieve real peace of mind.

A unique opportunity for anyone interested in meditation in its purest and simplest form. If not now, when? Meditation now.

### Public Talk

Sunday, July 21st, 7 pm  
(door open at 6:30 pm)  
Cardinal Carter Academy  
36 Greenfield Ave. (Yonge/Sheppard)  
Toronto, Ontario

\*\*\*Yonge/Sheppard subway  
Limited free parking is available.

Event is presented free and open to the public.  
For more information call 416-214-4804



"No religious dogma is taught here, but a way of life, how to live peacefully and harmoniously. Vipassana has nothing to do with organized religion, rites or rituals and is the observation of reality from moment to moment. The technique developed from the Buddha's search to end suffering, and the conversion involved is from misery to happiness, bondage to liberty and ignorance to enlightenment. Anybody can do it."

—S. N. Goenka, *Awakenings*, March 2000

Meditation Now tour organized by Vipassana Teachers of S. N. Goenka. All sponsored by Bhavana for Fun!



[www.MeditationNow.org](http://www.MeditationNow.org)



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*University of Toronto Buddhist Community members at the Royal Ontario Museum. From left to right: Caz Zyvatkauskas (UofT staff, public affairs), Chris Ng (UofT student in East Asian Studies) Shani DeSilva (UofT student, Toxicology), Eisel Mazard (UofT graduate)*

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## EXPLORER OF TIBET AND THE HUMAN PSYCHE

The U of T Buddhist Community is proud to present two slide-lecture presentations on a pioneer Buddhist scholar and French feminist, Madame Alexandra David-Neel, and her adventures in Tibet



By PROFESSOR BARBARA FOSTER, the co-author of the highly praised biography: 'The Secret Lives of Alexandra David-Neel' (Overlook Press 1998).

**Friday, July 26, 7 - 9 p.m.**  
 Uof T Campus at the International Student Centre, 33 St. George Street (near College St.)

**Saturday, July 27, 6 - 8 p.m.**  
 Hong Fa Temple, 1330 Bloor Street West (near Lansdowne subway station)

Admission for each event: \$5  
 Refreshments will be served.

Professor Foster's presentations in Toronto will trace Madame David-Neel's extraordinary pilgrimage through India, China and Tibet.

"Creatures without feet have my love,  
 And likewise those that have two feet,  
 And those that have four feet I love,  
 And those, too, with many feet.

May those without feet harm me not,  
 And those with two feet cause no hurt,  
 May those with four feet harm me not,  
 Nor those who many feet possess.

Let creatures all, all things that live,  
 All beings of whatever kind,  
 See nothing that will bode them ill,  
 May nothing evil come to them."

— Cullavagga

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