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Spring 2011, Volume 24, #1

Cover Photo: Gary Skiff.

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## Northwest Dharma News

### Message from NWDA President on Peace

Discovering and manifesting true peace is at the heart of all Buddhist traditions. As the Buddha taught in the *Dhammapada*:

*Do no harm,  
Cultivate benefit,  
Tame one's mind;  
This is the teaching of the Buddhas.*

The Northwest Dharma Association's tri-fold mission of providing Buddhist resources, sharing Regional News, and cultivating Collaboration Across Traditions is in harmony with this fundamental teaching.

In the past year NWDA has co-sponsored Family and Prison Dharma Conferences, hosted our annual Teachers Meeting, has been developing effective and fun board cohesion, and was honored to receive a generous grant from the Tides Foundation for our on-going efforts promoting inter-tradition dialogue and cooperation. This recognition is both humbling and inspiring for our efforts to bring together the many streams of Buddhism here in the Pacific Northwest, to celebrate our diversity and work together in bringing such fundamental aspects of our traditions as peace into our world.

With another year comes another turn of the wheel, the joy of impermanence, as one cycle leads to another and some board members step down, while others are invited to engage. We are now entering the season of board elections for new members, and I encourage you to participate in the nomination process. We greatly look forward to welcoming new members to our board sangha!

If you appreciate the benefits that NWDA provides our region, please consider joining us, or nominating someone you think would be a good addition. In the end we are all connected, and our unique organization not only exists to serve you, but is also composed of you!

I would like to recognize the vast behind-the-scenes efforts of our wonderful all-volunteer staff: David Forsythe, Timothy O'Brien, and Julie Welch. Without their dedication and exertion, NWDA would not be here.

Though I wasn't able to attend the Annual Gathering held recently in Portland, I offer heartfelt thanks to the 2011 Planning Committee, to the Portland Insight Meditation Center, and especially to all of the presenters for creating an auspicious event. We are grateful for the sharing of your wisdom and hard-won experience.

Gatherings such as these help open our hearts and minds to new possibilities for understanding and peace, qualities that are desperately needed in our world. We hope to continue meeting together and bring benefit to all.

To conclude, here is a verse by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche:

*May the noble path of non-violence  
Flourish in all the worlds there are  
When beings meet and interact*





*May the connections they make be filled with love  
And by this may auspiciousness  
Light up the whole universe!*

—Nick Vail, NWDA President

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## Northwest Dharma News

### 2011 Election of NWDA Board of Directors in April Nominations Requested by March 31

Nominations for candidates to be elected to positions on the Board of Directors of the Northwest Dharma Association are being accepted now until **March 31st**. Voting by online ballot will take place between **April 1st** and **April 30th**.

Two elected positions on the board are filled each year. The newly elected board members begin their 3-year terms in June.

The main qualification for serving on the NWDA Board is enthusiasm for the work of the Association. It's a great way to experience fellowship with other Buddhists, especially those outside of your sangha, practice, or tradition.

If you've been looking for a way to get more deeply involved in the regional Dharma community or to express your generosity towards those who are already on or seeking the path, please think about nominating yourself. You can do so anonymously.

If you know of someone you feel would be a positive addition to the Board, please consider nominating her/him.

Candidates must be current Individual or Teacher Members of the Northwest Dharma Association. For information on joining the Northwest Dharma Association, click [here](#).

To nominate yourself or another, click [here](#).

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## Northwest Dharma News

### NWDA 2010 Annual Report

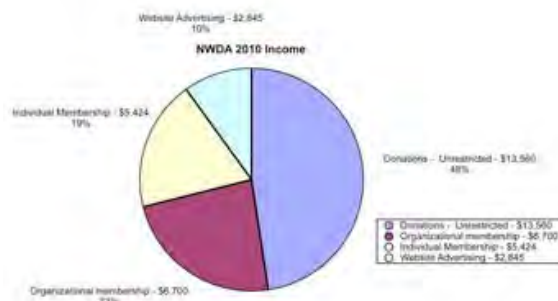
The Association took a very important step this year in defining more precisely how we accomplish our mission of “supporting Buddhist teachings and community.” Our activities fall into three categories:

- o Buddhist Resources
- o Regional News
- o Collaboration Across Traditions

Here is what we did in 2010:

#### Buddhist Resources

We provided resources primarily through the NWDA website, [www.northwestdharma.org](http://www.northwestdharma.org). Besides the general information on the site, our directory offered listings of each of our member groups with links to their websites and emails, plus a Google Map system that helps users locate Buddhist centers and activities in their geographical area. Our calendar of events continued to be an important source of listings of classes, retreats, and other events throughout the region.



Northwest Dharma Association Income, 2010

#### Regional News

For over 20 years, the Association has published the *Northwest Dharma News*. The *News*, which became an online publication in the fall of 2007, published four issues in 2010. The *News* has gone from a bi-monthly to a quarterly publication due to limited resources of volunteer time and money.

#### Collaboration Across Traditions

Supporting information sharing, cross-fertilization and collaboration among the Mahasangha is what makes NWDA unique. The Association sponsored or co-sponsored four collaborative Mahasangha events in 2010. (*Click on links to read more about the events.*)

**Family Dharma Conference**, January 22 & 23

[news.northwestdharma.org/Spring2010/CreatingaPathfortheNextGeneration.php](http://news.northwestdharma.org/Spring2010/CreatingaPathfortheNextGeneration.php)

**Annual Gathering 2010** on theme of “Birth, Death, and In Between”, February 20

[news.northwestdharma.org/Spring2010/BirthDeathandInBetween.php](http://news.northwestdharma.org/Spring2010/BirthDeathandInBetween.php)

**Prison Dharma Conference**, June 4, 5, 6

[news.northwestdharma.org/Summer2010/PrisonDharmaConference2010.php](http://news.northwestdharma.org/Summer2010/PrisonDharmaConference2010.php)

**Teachers Meeting**, October 2

[www.northwestdharma.org/news/Fall10/meeting.php](http://www.northwestdharma.org/news/Fall10/meeting.php)

In addition, in the past year the *Northwest Dharma News* featured articles on the environment, prison dharma, arts and science, family practice and other topics of common interest and concern, fostering communication among diverse Buddhist practitioners and non-Buddhists as well.

Our online **Teachers Forum** continued to allow teachers to speak with one another as peers about their issues, ideas, concerns.



Northwest Dharma Association Expenses, 2010

Board member terms begin in June each year. New board members elected or appointed to serve starting in June 2010 were Ven. Thubten Chonyi, Ruby Grad, Jacqueline Mandell, Tim Tapping, and Lisa Gardner. They joined continuing board members Dh. Avichala, Caterina De Re, Bill Hirsch, Jeff Kerr, Koro Kaisan Miles, Dick O'Connor, and Nick Vail.

At its meeting June 13th at Bodhi House in Olympia, Washington, the board elected the following officers to one-year terms for 2010-2011: Nick Vail, President; Caterina De Re, Vice-President; Jeff Kerr, Treasurer; Bill Hirsch, Secretary. Julie Welch is Immediate Past President.

### Volunteer Staff

Volunteers perform almost all of NWDA's work. David Forsythe, volunteer Office Manager, handles most of the Association's administrative tasks. Julie Welch is volunteer Editor of the *Northwest Dharma News*. Timothy O'Brien continues as Project Coordinator. Since July 2010 he has been serving in a volunteer capacity.

Board members and other volunteers perform all the other activities of the Association including contributing to the *News*, planning and conducting events, strategic planning, outreach and public relations, etc. NWDA's only contracted service is the graphic production of the *News*.

### Financial Information

In 2010, NWDA had income of \$29,139; higher than 2009 by \$3,532. Donations accounted for this difference. Total expenses were \$15,871; lower than 2008 by \$9,402. The difference was due to the position of Project Coordinator becoming a volunteer. The net result was an increase in reserves of \$12,934.

Direct donations accounted for 48% of revenue, individual membership for 19% and member group dues for 36%; the remaining 10% came from website advertising.

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## Northwest Dharma News

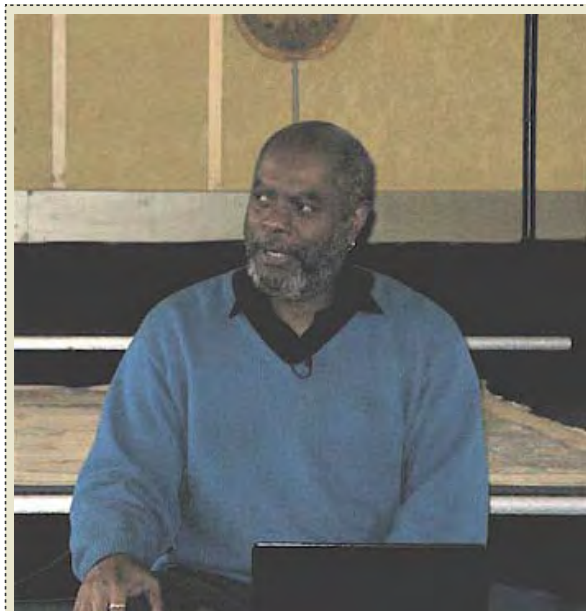
### Dharma, Conflict & Peace: NWDA Annual Gathering 2011

The Northwest Dharma Association's 2011 Annual Gathering took place February 26th in Portland, Oregon at the Portland Insight Meditation Center. In keeping with NWDA's theme for this year, the program focused on "Dharma, Conflict and Peace".

Dr. Sharif Abdullah, Portland State University adjunct professor in Philosophy and Conflict Resolution, offered the morning keynote address. An author and international peace activist, Sharif is founder and president of Commonway Institute, a non-profit organization dedicated to solving challenges of the 21st century with solutions based on a global society that includes all people.

Sharif has had many different life experiences, from abject poverty in Camden, New Jersey (voted at one time "the worst city in the United States") to sitting at the table with heads of state. He has worked on every continent with the exception of Antarctica. As a result his is the unique perspective of a wide-angle lens with great depth perception.

In places such as Sri Lanka, where he worked to promote a ceasefire agreement in the country's long civil war, he has witnessed what he calls "The Mess." The Mess consists of today's problems, including: genocide, pollution, hunger, homelessness, industrial pollution, crime, and slave labor. Sharif's presentation addressed the issue of what we can do about the Mess.



Dr. Sharif Abdullah, founder/president of Commonway Institute, presents the keynote address at the 2011 Northwest Dharma Association Annual Gathering on "Dharma, Conflict & Peace".



Global visions for mending "The Mess".

He described three types of consciousness found in three types of people he calls "Keepers", "Breakers" and "Menders."

- Keepers are the indigenous people of the planet who place no load on the planet or on others. They behave as though they are a part of the earth.
- Breakers are those who think in dualistic terms of "me" and "you". Breakers seek ever-increasing control over all aspects of life on earth.
- Menders are those who think in terms of "oneness." They seek to restore balance with the earth and consciously live their lives as an integral part of a living, sacred planet.

How do we address the Mess? The answer for Sharif (and later presenters as well) is an inside-out approach wherein we first need to make friends with ourselves and then carry that attitude to our relationship with others.

Though not formally a Buddhist, Sharif believes that to begin this work you need a meditation practice and a governing attitude of gentleness. Spirituality, he says, is not about following a certain religious teaching or practice; it means acting with compassion, forgiveness, love, harmony, and sacrifice. Becoming a Mender is a three-step process beginning with spiritual consciousness, then an adjustment of values and the embracing of action in concert with them. The transformation is like that of a butterfly, from all-consuming caterpillar to a being light-as-air.

A panel of teachers and individuals who have led peace efforts within their own groups and communities offered a variety of viewpoints on peacemaking and conflict resolution in the afternoon session of the gathering.

LaShelle Lowe-Chardé of Portland's Dharma Rain Zen Center explained the basic principles of Non-Violent Communication (NVC). She broke out four distinct aspects of conversation into "Observation", "Feelings", "Needs", and "Requests." In Observation, one separates facts from interpretation. In Feelings, you recognize that emotions come from your perceptions. Needs are guiding energies that enter your consciousness. Because Needs are universal, expressing them directly can easily

create a connection. Requests are ways to help meet your needs. Here it is important to differentiate between Requests and Strategies. When these get entangled one tends to feel desperate, angry or hopeless. Having many strategies to meet a need results in a sense of spaciousness and flexibility.

Ruby Grad, NWDA board member, attorney and member of Portland Friends of the Dhamma, talked of her experience with conflict resolution serving on the Ethics and Reconciliation Committee at Spirit Rock Meditation Center in California. These experiences always involved a lay teacher (all the teachers were lay teachers) and a student. Generally the request for conflict resolution services would come from a student. The approach was always to facilitate or mediate, never to impose or arbitrate. When possible the differing parties would come together under the guidance from someone from the Conflict Resolution Committee.

Khenpo Jampa Tenphel, of Sakya Monastery in Seattle, began his talk by noting how precious it was for all of us to come together and learn from each other about peaceful conflict resolution. He wished blessings on all future NWDA events this year. A thank you to you, Khenpo!

Tying his comments to the Bodhisattva practices, Khenpo reminded us the Buddha taught that if you cannot remember all 84,000 of his teachings, try to remember at least these three:

- 1) Practice Virtue,
- 2) Avoid Non-Virtue, and
- 3) Tame the Mind.



Members of the afternoon panel. From left: LaShelle Lowe-Chardé, Ruby Grad, translator, Khenpo Jampa Tenphel, Dr. Robert Gould, and Dr. Sith Chaisurote.

Regarding the practice of virtue, Khenpo turned our attention to the six precepts of Generosity, Discipline, Patience, Effort, Concentration, and Wisdom. He elaborated on his assertion that crises in the outside world begin within us, in our minds. To resolve conflicts we must tame our minds. If there is harmony in us, harmony will manifest itself in all our actions. We should take seriously that all want happiness and want to avoid suffering. These wants are universal.

Dr. Robert Gould, chair of Portland State's Department of Conflict Resolution, addressed a particular kind of afflictive emotion he called the "Should Monster". This is the creature that torments us with what we should be doing now, what we are ignoring, what would be a better use of our time, what we should have done better. To make peace with these mental torments Professor Gould suggests we replace guilt with forgiveness and compassion. By making peace with ourselves we can bring peace to the world.

The panel discussion concluded with a presentation by Dr. Sith Chaisurote, president of the Peace Revolution Project/World Peace Initiative. Dr. Chaisurote, who is also a professor of finance at the University of Oregon, introduced us to ways technology can help in bringing about a more peaceful world. Based on a program for youth developed originally in Thailand by the Dhammakaya Foundation, Peace Revolution offers online and MP-3 meditation instruction, multiple activities, and social networking for "Peace Rebels" worldwide. Responding to the motto "World Peace through Inner Peace", a Peace Rebel commits to regular "Inner Peace Time" and "Self-Development", recording and reflecting on relationships with self, family, friends and society at large. Currently there are 3,000 registered users from all over the world.

For me, the amazing thing about this conference was how all the speakers addressed the same point my teacher stressed to me the first time he gave me a private teaching: "Dick, work on yourself. A doctor who doesn't know medicine cannot help his patients. A banker with no money cannot help his clients. Buddhism is about harmony. So if you are meditating at home and your young children come to you wanting to play, stop meditating and be with your children. Buddhism is about harmony, not about creating more chaos."

[NEXT MAHASANGHA ARTICLE >](#)

*For more information about organizations mentioned in this*



*article, please visit:*  
[www.commonway.org](http://www.commonway.org)  
[www.peacerevolution2010.org](http://www.peacerevolution2010.org)  
[www.cnvc.org](http://www.cnvc.org)

*Contributor: Dick O'Connor.  
Photos: Jacqueline Mandell.*

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## Northwest Dharma News

[VIEW PHOTO GALLERY FOR THIS ARTICLE](#)

### Bearing Witness At Auschwitz-Birkenau

*Calling out to hungry hearts, all the lost and left behind  
You who wander, you who thirst, I offer you this Bodhi Mind.  
Calling out to hungry spirits, everywhere through endless time  
Gather round and share this meal, your joy and your sorrow,  
I make mine.*

From "Gate of Sweet Nectar", these words were part of the Buddhist liturgy I and others chanted at Birkenau, honoring those who died there and in other death camps.

In November last year I participated in the 2010 Zen Peacemakers' Retreat at Auschwitz-Birkenau near Oswiecim, Poland, site of the Nazi camps where millions lost their lives.

The Auschwitz-Birkenau Bearing Witness Retreat was founded by Roshi Bernie Glassman in 1996. In most years since then there have been summer and winter retreats for people of all spiritual orientations and ethnic, cultural and national identities. Eighty people attended last November's retreat, coming together with senior teachers Sensei Eve Marko and Sensei/ Acharya Fleet Maull to "bear witness" at Auschwitz- Birkenau.



Entrance to Auschwitz. Actually standing in front of the "Arbeit Macht Frei" ("Work Makes One Free") sign, I felt incredulous. What a profound denial of what took place behind that gate.

[CLICK ON IMAGE TO VIEW PHOTO GALLERY](#)



All Saints' Day. We happened to be in Poland for All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, November 1st and 2nd, when candles and wreaths are placed on grave sites. A

The Three Tenets that inform the Zen Peacemakers' five-day retreats are Bearing Witness, Not Knowing and Loving Action.

My aspiration for the retreat was to be present and not turn away. I arrived at Auschwitz with the desire to embrace all three tenets, but was not sure that I could.

I began with Not Knowing. I did not know what to expect, who would be there, from what backgrounds, from which countries, from what spiritual traditions, would it be multi-generational...

I wished to penetrate the unknown. When we don't know, when we don't have fixed ideas about something, then anything is possible. Things happen, nothing ever remains the same. Expectations of what should happen block one from experiencing what does happen. I vowed not be attached to preconceived ideas.

But attached I was.

I knew about Bearing Witness. I worked in Cambodia during UN-sponsored elections and wrote a poetry collection about that experience. Although I wasn't Khmer and didn't live through the "Pol Pot Time", I wished to bear witness to the Killing Fields. I feel as a Jew, all holocausts, all genocides must be railed against.

From this retreat I learned to look at Bearing Witness even more complexly. Bearing witness should attempt to encompass the totality of a situation. At Auschwitz-Birkenau, meditating at the train tracks that brought in the exhausted, frightened victims, we "became" the guards in the watchtowers, the Jewish children who learned to spell at Birkenau, the Gypsies (also called Romas) whose entire camp was liquidated one night at Auschwitz.

We became Joseph Mengele, called the Angel of Death, who decided who would go immediately to the gas chambers or who would receive a living death with a wave of his finger. I understood that we each have in us the capacity to be every kind of person from Adolf Hitler to the Dalai Lama. From this realization I could begin to

wreath was placed by the tracks at Birkenau as well.

approach not-judging. How would I feel or act if all the trappings that I knew as "me" were taken away?

Finally, a few words about Loving Action. When one truly bears witness one becomes merged with the situation. One experiences non-duality. The loving action, the right action seems to arise spontaneously. Peacemaking is the function and fruit of bearing witness. Loving action comes from the compassion born from bearing witness. Loving action is the right action.

[< PREVIOUS MAHASANGHA ARTICLE](#)

*For more information and to see a video about the Bearing Witness Retreat at Auschwitz-Birkenau, please visit:*  
[www.zenpeacemakers.org](http://www.zenpeacemakers.org).

*Willa's talk was informed by "Bearing Witness: A Zen Master's Lessons in Making Peace", by Bernie Glassman.*

*Contributor: Willa Schneberg.  
Photos: Willa Schneberg.*



## Northwest Dharma News

### “The Economics of Happiness” Debuts in Seattle

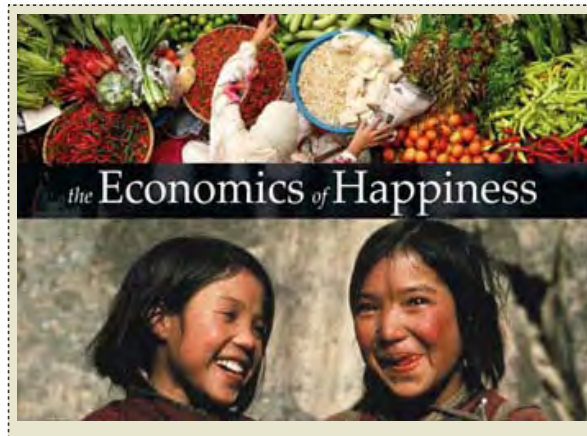
*“We look around and what do we see? We see businesses going on as usual; we see governments – at best – thinking four years down the road when they really need to be thinking seven generations down the road. We need positive visions for humanity and the planet.”*

*“Around the world I actually see more hope than hopelessness.”*

*“The future with less oil could be preferable to the present with lots of oil.”*

These three quotes are the opening lines of a new documentary film, “The Economics of Happiness” by Helena Norberg-Hodge and others from the International Society for Ecology and Culture.

The world premiere showing of the film was held at Seattle’s Town Hall in January (and re-shown by Wallingford Meaningful Movies in February). A panel discussion featuring producer Helena Norberg-Hodge, authors David Korten, John de Graaf, Rev. Robert L. Jeffrey Sr., and Yes! Magazine Executive Director Fran Korten followed the screening.



More than 20 Northwest organizations, including the Seattle Buddhist Peace Fellowship, sponsored and promoted the premier showing. In the greater Seattle area we are fortunate to have such a great wealth of organizational talent promoting positive futures, environmental sustainability, local food, business, and energy, social justice, and compassionate action.

“The Economics of Happiness” looks deeply at the effects of the global economy on society in both the developed and the less developed world. By recognizing that what we call economics is culturally and ideologically specific, the film shows how that ideology has led us into profound environmental and spiritual crises. But the film does not stop at criticism – it also shows efforts throughout the world that promote more local, sustainable, and equitable patterns of living.

For the past 35 years, filmmaker Helena Norberg-Hodge has lived, at least part-time, in Ladakh, India’s northern-most state high in the Himalayas on the border with Tibet. She has seen first-hand the consequences of globalization. Up to the 1970s Ladakhis lived a traditional agrarian culture that had no unemployment, no hunger, no poverty, no homelessness – the most striking thing about their society was how genuinely happy the people appeared. (See Norberg-Hodge’s book “Ancient Futures: Learning from Ladakh”.)

Then Ladakh was opened to “development” with subsidized roads, subsidized foreign food and fuel, and corporate advertising that extolled Western life-styles. Within less than one generation Ladakhis (especially the young) had come to think of their way of life as backward. Today pollution, unemployment, poverty, and even homelessness are prevalent.

The systemic economic forces that would have us prefer to amass corporately produced goods over living more simply and sustainably are affecting not only the Ladakhis – they dominate the lives of all of us. “The Economics of Happiness” brings together opinions from well known experts throughout the world to examine our economic situation. Included are Buddhist scholars (Samdhong Rinpoche, Kyentse Norbu Rinpoche), environmental activists (Vandana Shiva, Bill McKibben), politicians (Gavin Newsom, Mayor of San Francisco; Zac Goldsmith, British Parliament) and economic analysts (Juliet Schor, David Korten), plus many others.

Despite the depth and difficulty of our economic problems the film takes a fairly optimistic view of our possible futures. As David Korten points out, “In the end the only power that any of these institutions of empire have is the power we as citizens yield to them.” The film shows many ways that people are taking action for local

empowerment and community, including community farming, local currencies, the transition town movement, credit unions, decentralized energy production, and the celebration of local identity and knowledge.

As with many documentaries “The Economics of Happiness” has a tendency to preach, but it also incorporates ideas rarely raised in conversations about economics, such as the interdependence of our economic and spiritual lives and how our economic ideology based on individualism and greed are at the root of many of today’s most serious challenges.

This is a film that can stimulate worthwhile, constructive conversations in our community about our vision for the future and the decisions we need to make so that vision can become a reality in our lives. The mindful dialogue needed for new directions continues and “The Economics of Happiness” can help.

As Norberg-Hodge says at the end of the film, “At the deepest level localization is about connection. It’s about re-establishing our sense of interdependence with others and with the natural world. And this connection is a fundamental human need.”

*For more information about film sponsors, to check for future screenings and to get the DVD when it becomes available go to: [www.theeconomicsofhappiness.org](http://www.theeconomicsofhappiness.org).*

*Contributor: David Berrian.  
Photo: Courtesy of The Economics of Happiness.*





Northwest  
Dharma  
News

## Dharma in Hell: A Workshop for Prison Volunteers

As Acharya Fleet Maull sees it, modern prisons and jails are the “charnel grounds” of our culture. Like the yogis of Tibet who entered burial grounds to examine their own dark side, those who volunteer in these present day charnel grounds encounter difficult challenges.

On January 16 Acharya (senior teacher) Maull offered an all day workshop for prison volunteers and people interested in learning more about prisons. Hosted by the Portland Shambhala Center, the workshop was entitled “Dharma in Hell: Mindfulness-Based Programs in Prisons, Jails, and Youth Facilities”.

Maull is a senior student of both Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche and Sakyong Mipham Rinpche, as well as a Dharma successor of Roshi Bernie Glassman. A social activist as well as meditation teacher, he founded Prison Dharma Network, Peacemaker Institute, the National Prison Hospice Association and the Center for Contemplative End of Life Care. He is the author of “Dharma in Hell: The Prison Writings of Fleet Maull”.

The Saturday program at the Portland Shambhala Center was attended by 30 people of different backgrounds, interests and Buddhist traditions. The focus of the workshop was on providing a structure in which participants could explore their own interests in prisons and prisoners.

Through a series of mindfulness-based guided meditations, self reflections and empowerment exercises participants were asked to examine their own fears, hesitations, and true motivations, including the question: is your interest in prisoners about you or about them?

Working in pairs, participants created stories in which they took turns assuming the roles of “victim” and “victimizer”. Many people expressed how powerful it felt to switch the roles. This was a way to experience being a victim, giving away power or taking responsibility, being empowered. Some of these same exercises of self-empowerment and transformation Acharya Maull presented at Oregon State Penitentiary (OSP) on his last visit to the Northwest.

The workshop was a first step in training potential volunteers to support the ongoing prison Dharma work done by the Portland Shambhala Center and Portland Dharma Rain Zen Center. This training highlighted the importance for those of us who volunteer in these challenging situations to be aware of our own confusions, misgivings and heartfelt connections.

During this training participants were able to interact and ask questions of current volunteers. The awareness that we are all human beings, can be a reminder that we are presenting more than a meditation program. We are also an alternative social role model. For that reason, we hope to bring some sanity and not add more confusion to these chaotic, toxic environments.

Portland Shambhala has been running mindfulness meditation programs at Oregon State Penitentiary in Salem for the past five years, alternating on Tuesday nights with volunteers from Portland’s Dharma Rain Zen Center and the OSP Buddhist prison chaplain.

Every month Shambhala or Dharma Rain hosts an all day meditation program at OSP. These day long programs are led by visiting teachers such as Acharya Maull, or by local teachers. The program consists of extended periods of mindfulness meditation with instruction, followed by a Dharma talk or other transformative material and group discussion. Volunteers and the inmate participants share in a lunch provided by the prison.



Prison Dharma activist Acharya Fleet Maull.



Dharma Rain Zen Center also has ongoing programs at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility (a women's prison) as well as some correctional facilities in eastern Oregon.

Also present at the workshop was a representative from Living Yoga, which does volunteering at OSP and other facilities.

*For more information about Portland Shambhala Center, Dharma Rain Zen Center, Living Yoga and their prison programs, please visit:*

[www.portland.shambhala.org](http://www.portland.shambhala.org)

<http://portland.shambhala.org/contact.php?who=prison>

[www.dharma-rain.org/?p=programs\\_prison](http://www.dharma-rain.org/?p=programs_prison)

[www.living-yoga.org](http://www.living-yoga.org)

*Contributor: Doug McCanne.*

*Photos: Courtesy of Prison Dharma Press.*



## Northwest Dharma News

### Creston Zen Centre

Since she returned to Canada in 1996 after Zen training in California, Oregon, and Japan, Kuya Minogue has always created a zendo wherever she has lived. In an 8' x 10' hotel room in the frozen north, a Gulf Island chicken shed, even a wilderness tent, she immediately established a place for zazen—and invited people to sit.

In the backyard of the home she shares with her partner in Creston, British Columbia, Minogue has built her latest zendo from the ground up.

Creston is a small, agricultural town in the Columbia basin, toward the eastern edge of the province. By luck Minogue discovered there a local contractor who happened also to be a lifelong student of Japanese aikido and swordsmanship. Daniel Kempling, like Minogue, had always dreamed of building a traditional Japanese structure. He knew a specialist in Japanese-style woodworking in Victoria, Sean Mahoney, who shared that dream, too. With patience, hard labor and the generous help of volunteers, the dream became a reality.

As Minogue puts it, "They came. They did it." The new zendo, though not completely finished, was ready for use at the start of the Centre's winter training session in January, 2011. The altar and shoji screens in the upstairs training hall haven't been added yet and two basement rooms for residents-in-training remain to be completed.

Creston Zen Centre offers sessions of concentrated practice each year in the fall, winter, and spring. Students commit to regular individual practice plus weekly zazen, class, and dokusan (private discussion with teacher) during the three-month training term. They also attend at least one of the three weekend retreats offered each session.

Each training term has a theme. Students in the 2011 winter training session are reading Francis Dojun Cook's "How to Raise an Ox", an exploration of the teachings of Dogen. The three winter weekend retreats explore Dogen's work more deeply.



Kuya Minogue leads chanting at Creston Zen Centre, Creston, British Columbia.



Interior of Creston Zen Centre's newly constructed zendo.

Minogue also offers an online version of each training term. Using group and individual email exchanges, teleconferencing, and blogging, online students carry out vows of practice and pursue Dogen study. Those who aren't able to attend a retreat in person do self-guided retreats at home.

An independent lay teacher trained in the Soto Zen tradition at Shasta Abbey and Dharma Rain Zen Center, Minogue is also a student of Natalie Goldberg, founder of Zen Writing Practice and author of "Writing Down the Bones".

After attending a workshop with Goldberg in 2003, she "fell in love with writing practice" and now uses it daily. She also reserves longer periods for intensive writing practice during which writing sessions function like sitting intervals in a sesshin. Since taking up this practice her writing "has changed completely", transforming itself from prose to poetry. Recently she's had her work published in the poetry journal "Matrix" and been invited to the Montreal Zen Poetry Festival.

Zen Writing Practice is one of the methods Minogue uses for training at the Creston Zendo and in the teaching she offers online. She also conducts workshops on Zen Writing Practice occasionally and works individually with students interested in Zen Writing per se.

Recently Creston Zen Centre has formed a partnership with Creston's Red Jade Martial Arts, headed by Sifu Neil Ripski. Discovering that their practices share common origins and common goals, Ripski and Minogue have found mutual benefit in becoming "sister temples".

Minogue and her students are also committed to community outreach. One dream

still in the works is the development of Maitri House, a non-sectarian social service center dedicated to helping those who help others.

After sitting in tents and chicken coops, after years of “hermitage practice” in aboriginal settlements in the north, Minogue has come to rest at Creston Zen Centre. “I’m settled here,” she says. “I’m down, rooted.”

*For more information about Creston Zen Centre, please visit: [www.zenwords.ca/index.html](http://www.zenwords.ca/index.html).*

*Photos of zendo construction with Japanese joinery are at: [www.zenwords.ca/new.html](http://www.zenwords.ca/new.html).*

*Contributor: Julie Welch.  
Photos: Kuya Minogue & courtesy of Creston Zen Centre.*



## Northwest Dharma News

### New Home for Plum Mountain

The Plum Mountain Buddhist Community in Aberdeen, Washington has moved into new quarters, which will serve as a Buddhist practice center on the Twin Harbors, as well as provide lodging for spiritual director, Kobai Scott Whitney, and office and library space for Plum Mountain Refuge.

"Plum Mountain has been in the trunk of my car for too long," says Whitney. "Now we have a lease with option to buy on a lovely, quirky old house right on bus lines and within easy walking distance of downtown Aberdeen."

Where did the name Rosemary Cottage come from? It's from an old movie says its former occupant, Mary Louise Millner, who has practiced with Kobai. "The house was built in 1923 and was first owned by the Magees. He was the Aberdeen postmaster and a City Council member and his wife was a piano teacher who taught generations of Harbor kids to play. They lived here almost 50 years. My husband and I bought it in 2003 and we called it Rosemary Cottage. It's from a 1934 movie called 'Dark Angel', which starred Merle Oberon and Frederick Marsh. The cottage in the movie was in Kent."



"Rosemary Cottage" in Aberdeen, Washington, new home of Plum Mountain Buddhist Community.



Plum Mountain's spiritual director, Kobai Scott Whitney.

Whitney says he sees positives as well as cautions when a sangha begins to own property. "Sometimes all the energy of the sangha goes into the property. There are committees for long-term planning, for landscaping, for maintenance, etc. ... and of course fund-raising campaigns to meet the costs of mortgage, utilities, upkeep and insurance. Pretty soon the sangha IS the property."

Plum Mountain Buddhist Community is about finding peace for individuals in their lives, according to Whitney, but also about peace and social justice within the broader community. "People who just want to meditate are certainly welcome here, but our broader mission is to bring the benefits of ethical behavior and mindfulness to those at the margins of our society: the mentally ill, elders, people in recovery from addictions or trauma, as well as those in prison or people without shelter."

Whitney says that the Buddhadasa tradition of Thai Buddhism, in which his sangha practices, emphasizes working together with other faith communities for the greater good. "Even the sociology of religion research shows us that this is the best way to achieve interfaith trust and appreciation."

"The quickest way to sabotage our understanding of each other," Whitney adds, "is to put us in a room together to talk about theology or metaphysics. It's hopeless! But get us together with the Muslims and the Presbyterians and the Wiccans to cook lunch for the unsheltered or to rehab low-income housing for migrant families and we begin to appreciate each other, at the same time that we are making our various faiths active in the world and witness to its suffering."

A sangha can treat its place of practice as a club house, Whitney suggests, or as a country club or as what the historical Buddha envisioned: a simple refuge (vihara) from our manic daily lives where people can learn the skills they need to be happy. "I know it sounds dopey," Whitney acknowledges, "but happiness in this lifetime is what the Buddha taught."

So whether Rosemary Cottage becomes a club house, a vihara or just the house down the block, Plum Mountain Buddhist Community now begins a new era of its history. A formal dedication will occur in late April or early May.

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*For more information on Plum Mountain Buddhist Community and its events and practice schedules, please visit: [www.plummountain.org](http://www.plummountain.org).*

*Contributor: Kobai Scott Whitney.  
Photos: Lenny Reed.*

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## Northwest Dharma News

### Remembering Kannin Dorothy Deming Smith

Kannin Dorothy Deming Smith was one of the pioneering Zen practitioners in Seattle and became a teacher herself when she opened her Cold Mountain Hermitage there.

Dorothy began zazen practice under the guidance of University of Washington art history professor Dr. Glenn Webb in 1974, at the age of 55. A Zen practitioner in the Rinzai tradition, Webb was then perhaps the only Westerner teaching zazen in Seattle.

Dorothy took her priest's vows in 1995 and soon after created the Cold Mountain Buddhist Hermitage at her tiny home in Seattle. She taught and inspired students there for more than a dozen years. The name of the hermitage refers to the Cold Mountain lineage of Rinzai Zen as does Dorothy's dharma name, Kannin ("Cold Jurisprudence"). "Cold" is understood in the sense of "serene, calm".

When interviewed by the Northwest Dharma News in 2008, Dorothy had this advice for young Buddhists:

"Go for it. No apologies. Nothing. Your life is your showpiece... You have nothing to do with any of it. I have nothing to do with any of it. It happens out there. It happens on the rim. And all we can do is just... stay calm. Stay calm. Stay collected."

Kannin Dorothy Deming Smith made her transition on October 9, 2010.

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*Dharma friends and students who were not able to say good bye can find Dorothy's memorial page at the Beck's Funeral Home website:  
[www.becksfuneralhome.com](http://www.becksfuneralhome.com).*

*Contributor: Sibyl Lundy.  
Photo: Caterina De Re.*



Kannin Dorothy Deming Smith at her home in Seattle, 2008.



## CONTRIBUTORS

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Doug McCanne became a student of Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche in 1975. He is a member of the Portland Shambhala Center, where he administers the prison program and is a meditation instructor and Shambhala teacher.

Timothy O'Brien is volunteer Program Coordinator for the Northwest Dharma Association.

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Willa Schneberg is a poet, visual artist and a psychotherapist in private practice in Portland, Oregon. Her most recent poetry collection is entitled *Storytelling in Cambodia*, Calyx Books. Her website is: [www.threewayconversation.org](http://www.threewayconversation.org). During the month of April she will have an exhibit of her ceramic sculpture at the Guardino Gallery, Portland. She is a member of the Portland Shambhala Center.

Nick Vail is current President of the Northwest Dharma Association.

Julie Welch is Immediate Past President of the Northwest Dharma Association and editor of the Northwest Dharma News.

Kobai Scott Whitney is spiritual director of the Plum Mountain Buddhist Community. Active in prison dharma and Buddhist recovery circles in the Northwest, he lives in Aberdeen, Washington.

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