Monthly NEWSLETTER

Southern Rhythms, Sacred Music of South Africa (page 3)

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When people slander me

By Grand Master Hsing Yun NanHua

NanHua Dharma Talks

When people slander me, what should I do? Forbearance is the path of least harm. Set a good example for my children and grandchildren; Follow the gentle, not the violent.

We should not get too upset when slandered by others. It does not hurt us too much to get the short end-of the stick once in a while - for when the clouds clear, the sun will shine through. We need to treat others with sincerity and honesty, thereby setting a good example for the younger generations. Even further, we need to "Follow the gentle, not the violent."

We should be reasonable when someone slanders us. Once slandered it appears we are getting the short end of the stick. This is not true. In reality, if we can be patient and uncalculating, if we refrain from seeking revenge, in time people will know the truth. Then the slander not only will not harm us but will become an opportunity to gain merit.

Just as the Sutra of Forty-two Sections says, "To slander others is like blowing dust into the wind; not only will it not harm others, the dust will ultimately fall back on ourselves. To slander others is also like spitting up into the sky, when it falls, it will fall flat in our face." Thus, we should not be bothered by others' idle talk and slander. Instead, we should be tolerant, patient, and forgiving. The greatest strength in this world comes not from fists nor guns but from tolerance under insult According to Buddhist teachings, the merit gained from practicing the precepts is not as great as the merit gained from practicing tolerance. So you can see here the strength of tolerance. In our practice the first thing we need to learn is tolerance. We have to be tolerant in our speech and should not yell at others for no apparent reason. We have to be tolerant in our bodies and should not show anger on our face. We have to be tolerant in



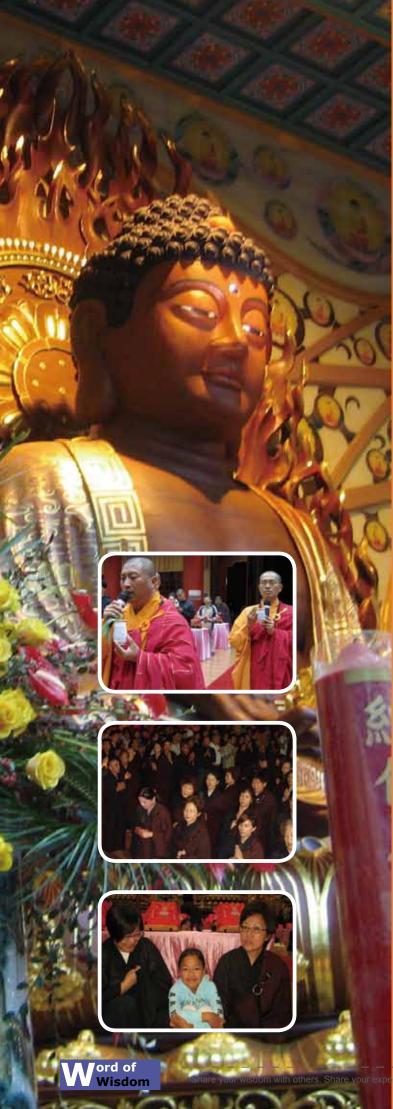
our minds and be truly forgiving of the bad deeds that others have done to-us. If we can do this, we set a good and invaluable example to the younger generations.

There is a story in the Sutra of the One Hundred Parables. One day, a father sent his son to the market to buy some food and drinks to serve his guests. When his son did not return for a long time, the father was getting worried and went out to look for him. He found his son standing on the street staring at a stranger. The father was puzzled and asked him why he stared so. The son told his father that since the stranger would not step aside to let him pass, both of them decided to stare at each other to see who would give up first. The father was very mad and told his son to run home with the groceries and he would take his place and see who would win.

Does not giving a single step mean victory? Does this make us truly happy? If we want to set a good example to the younger generations, we should be tolerant, patient, and forgiving. Our children will benefit from it tremendously.

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Emperor Liang Repentance

31stMar-4th Apr 2010

Twice a year Nan Hua Temple holds a very special Dharma function called Emperor Liang Repentance. This year the function took place from Wednesday 31 March to Sunday, 4 April 2010.

The function started on Wednesday evening with a Purification Ceremony of the whole Temple. The reason for this is to prepare everyone mentally and also to cleanse the atmosphere in the Temple so that it is conducive to this event. Devotees come from all over South Africa to participate and the Temple comes alive with the happy sounds of friends meeting and exchanging all the latest news.

After the Purification Ceremony the reading of ten scrolls begins. Each reading takes approximately an hour and a half, and there are different offerings made at the beginning of each reading. These offerings are intended to awaken a mind of generosity in the participants, and a willingness to look clearly at their own shortcomings, with the intention of striving to correct these shortcomings in the future.

The ten offerings made are incense, flowers, light, water, fruit, tea, biscuits, ornaments, Buddhist teachings, and clothing. Three scrolls are read each day, one in the morning, the second in the afternoon and the final reading takes place at night. Each evening there is a Dharma teaching given to the participants by one of the Masters, explaining in more detail the teachings chanted through the course of the day.

During the early morning service, (which begins at 06h00) it is customary to read a portion of the Flower Garland Sutra, containing the 10 Vows of Samanta-bhadra Bodhisattva, but this time there was a change, in that it was read on Thursday morning only. These ten vows are to:

- 1. Worship and respect all Buddha's
- 2. Praise the "Thus Come Ones"
- 3. Make abundant offerings
- 4. Repent misdeeds and hindrances
- 5. Rejoice at other's merits and virtues
- 6. Request the Buddha to turn the Dharma Wheel
- 7. Request the Buddha to remain in the world
- 8. Follow the teachings of the Buddha at all times
- 9. Accommodate and benefit all sentient beings
- 10. Transfer merits and virtues universally

We wish that we should make use of this kind of dharma function towards those who attend that they should be able to repent and erase their strong karma, add their wisdom and compassion, and live even a happier life. As to the whole world, we wish world peace and the reduction of calamities where by we wish that all sentient beings should be able to leave suffering and attain happiness.

our expe<mark>rience with the young.</mark>

Wheelchair Donations in Giyani 14"Mar 2010



n 14th March, the Director of Nan Hua temple, Ven. Hui Fang and Ven. Hui Liao, drove 500 kms in one day, to visit the community of Mashoka village in Giyani (Limpopo Province). They, together with two members from the Outreach Dept. represented the two million strong Fo Guang Shan community in donating wheelchairs to this impoverished village.

There are about 20 000 people in Mashoka village and they largely depend on grazing for their main economic activity. A high rate of unemployment, shortage of food, lack of skills and poor living conditions characterize life in Mashoka. The government bureaucracy involved in the distribution of basic services makes life in Mashoka even more difficult. Few people have proper housing, clean drinking water, electricity or roads.

Despite all these obstacles, Mrs. Elna Japisa Mathonsi (a Director on the Homu Traditional Council) and other community members, with blessings from King Homu, launched the Mashoka Development Trust, which caters for skills development, disabled people and has an income generation project.

During the event, attended by almost the whole village, 20 wheelchairs and 7 pairs of walkers were donated. Ven. Hui Fang acknowledged the difficulties facing disabled people, particularly in SA, due to a lack of education and skills. He assured the people of Mashoka that Nan Hua Temple would continue to assist them whenever it can with various projects involving skills training and development.

Mrs. A K Tlakula, a representative from the Mayor's office of Greater Giyani Municipality, welcomed the donations and acknowledged the incompetency that prevailed within the government structures dealing with the development of disabled people in particular. Mr. Mathebula said in his opening statement, "During this period of recession we tend not to give but (are) quick to receive, but this is not applicable to everybody. Buddha's Light International Association have shown us that this is not the case. There are a lot of organizations, which are ready to give, no matter what circumstances the economy is facing, and they are the true givers." For the vote of thanks, Mrs N.S Makhubele praised the temple for their donations and the way it was done. The temple only gave to people who were previously selected and who were physically present to receive their wheelchair donation.

The King of Mashoka, M.S. Nghalalume was very appreciative and invited the temple staff for future occasions, especially mediation events and religious dialogue.

Southern Rhythms, Sacred Music of South Africa



22thMar 2010

A special programme for SABC TV2, and also to be show-cased at the 2010 World Cup Soccer event, was flimed at the Nan Hua Temple on Monday, 22 March 2010.

Innermedia was awarded the SABC 2 cultural showcase series for broadcast during the 2010 World Cup, entitled Southern Rhythms, Sacred Music of South Africa, based on the pilot production we filmed, in part, at Bronkhortspruit.

The series of 6 x 48 minute episodes follows the narrative journey of ethnic musician Pops Mohamed as he travels around South Africa meeting 10 different traditions, both universal and indigenous, that have a sacred musical component to their worship. As he travels, the music will evolve into an ensemble which will include a fusion of all the groups he meets.



Reburial of Unidentified Migrant Workers 14thMar 2009







Over 50 unidentified migrant workers were reburied in a multi-faith ceremony in Roodepoort on Wednesday after spending an estimated 80 years in unmarked mass graves on the West Rand.

Property developers accidentally unearthed the remains almost two years ago and notified the South African Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA).

An investigation revealed the miners had come from various African countries and China to work in South Africa in the 1920's and had likely died from TB and malnutrition which were both prevalent on the gold mines at the time.

The South African Heritage Resource Agency and organization Freedom Park on Wednesday agreed to work together to ensure that no-one in South Africa was ever buried face down again.

The South African Heritage Resource agency invited different representatives from different religions to attend a reburial service for the deceased miners. Nan Hua Temple acknowledged the invitation by attending. Venerable Yi Chuan led the delegation of venerables, these being Venerable Hui Xiang and Venerable Hui Liao. Also present were Blia members from Johannesburg with their chairman ,Fong De Man. A prayer was recited for the 50 deceased who had come from different countries and it was agreed that they should be amongst the unknown heroes who have helped to develop South Africa, thus entitling them to the highest honour.

The function was attended by Buddhists, Christians, Catholics, Islamics and also local South African Sangomas, together totaling more than a hundred people. Included with the Chinese representatives, apart from the Nan Hua Temple venerables, were also Blia members as well as the Overseas Chinese Relations Organization Consul.

Prison Report

Destroy Failure and Discover Purpose Behind Bars

This is due to the fact that the outside world needs you. I encourage my fellow inmates to seek from all sources that can inspire you, like Dharma groups and sound advice.

Drink from all sources that inspire you to succeed. Most of us discovered failure by carrying the wrong map regarding the purpose of life, and since we have at long last discovered that failure is a feedback, let's accept that failure is part of success and don't be discouraged to accomplish personal ambition.

Every obstacle is an opportunity to walk this road with pride. Never walk on left or right side, but in the middle of it, and looking forward to the day you will join your families safely. Never look back but look forward to take every step mindful as a springboard to deeper insight.

There are no things such as problems, there are only opportunities. Take every step and difficulty as a signpost to be read. Learn to live and love now. You will see it when you believe it. Have strength to walk this road.

Amitofo

Thabo Mvelase Zonderwater Medium A Correctional Centre



Young Life On Buddhist Teachings SUNDAY SCHOOL

he life in our townships is not easy, not only for adults but also for young teenagers who find themselves caught up in the community where moral and cultural values are rapidly diminishing. The children and teenagers are left to learn on their own, what is good in life and what is not. But this kind of upbringing causes severe community problems when these teenagers become involved with the wrong people. In later years, they realize that what they learned from them and were encouraged to do was the biggest mistake of their lives. In trying to assist the community to fix this problem, Nan Hua Temple Sunday School has taken center stage in bringing the willing children from Kungwini municipal area together to learn and practice Buddhist teachings. At the same time we recognize their talents, passions and encourage them to desire a better future for themselves.

Here are comments from some about their experiences at Nan Hua Buddhist Sunday School:



Thandeka Mashilo (15) Buddhist Sunday school teaches us a lot of things about Buddhism. Before we had no knowledge about Buddhism, now we know their prayers, the five precepts, the life story of the Buddha, as well as the Buddhist Refuge and about visiting abroad. Also it teaches us not to steal some-thing that does not belong to you and to be trustworthy to your parents, elders and friends.



Kagiso Madihlaba (13) It keeps me busy on Sundays, and it teaches me not to be shy around people. I must be strong and be able to explain myself and what I want to be in life, and also to build up myself and my life. I love Sunday school very much, now I know about myself, my rights and my responsibilities.



Mandla Mahlangu (17) Sunday school is very important to us because we learn a lot of things. It teaches respect to elders. When we are at Sunday school, there is no time to create crime, that's why I say Sun-day school is playing an important role in our life as teenagers. We believe that if you follow Buddhist teach-ings and our instructor, you will have a better future. I want to thank Buddha for making me such a strong young person.



Puntsu Monamudi (18)

Sunday school teaches me the following:-How to live my life to the fullest. The skills to be a good leader. To deal with different challenges To enjoy myself as a human being. To be able to maintain myself, How to handle difficulties. To respect people around me. To teach people about the way of life. How to hold up under pressure. To explore different activities

activities.



Tshepo Mnguni (14)

I come to Sunday school every Sunday in order teaches us about Buddha, life in general, and about Nan Hua temple. Sometimes they give us presents, like food, snacks, clothing and blan-



Nhlanhla Malaza (13)

I think Sunday school is good for me because play a drama and do various sports. We also

nese summer camp, where they taught us about Buddha and drugs and other bad things.



Thulani Mahlangu (14)

ple, for example how to be responsible for your actions, how to behave when talking to people

ing because in Buddhism we believe that to kill is a sin, so say that we believe in Buddhism, but I don't care because the school I am a different person, so I thank my leader, Abby for



Gideon Mahlangu (14)

They teach us how to respect and being at Sunday school keeps us away from drugs. Our teacher respects us and we respect him and he teaches us a lot of things that we are now good

at, for example acting, drama and soccer. He also teaches us English and in return we also teach him Isizulu. We learn about Buddha and sometimes they give us



Skhumbuzo Mahlangu (14)

Sunday school keeps us away from drugs and makes us feel happy. Before I attended Sunday Abby, our teacher took us to visit the temple last year and they treated us very well. I respect

Abby always and he respects us back.



Thandowami Gumede (11)

I love Sunday school because it teaches us many things like sports and we challenge other teams. Mr. Abby teaches us about the life of the Buddha and we have done a play about it. He is currently teaching us a play called "Beyond

light" .I love June and December best when we go to the temple for the children's camp and we learn things about Chinese people and Buddha.



The Golden Buddha

LEARNING TO LOVE YOURSELF

Oliver Wendell Holmes once attended a meeting in which he was the shortest man present.

"Dr. Holmes," quipped a friend, "I should think you'd feel rather small among us big fellows." "I do," retorted Holmes, "I feel like a dime among a lot of pennies."

The Golden Buddha

And now here is my secret, a very simple secret; it is only with the heart that one can see rightly, what is essential is invisible to the eye. Antoine de Saint-Exupery

In the fall of 1988 my wife Georgia and I were invited to give a presentation on self-esteem and peak performance at a conference in Hong Kong. Since we had never been to the Far East before, we decided to extend our trip and visit Thailand.

When we arrived in Bangkok, we decided to take a tour of the city's most famous Buddhist temples. Along with our interpreter and driver, Georgia and I visited numerous Buddhist temples that day, but after a while they all began to blur in our memories.

However, there was one temple that left an indelible impression in our hearts and minds. It is called the Temple of the Golden Buddha. The temple itself is very small, probably no larger than thirty feet by thirty feet. But as we entered, we were stunned by the presence of a ten-and-ahalf-foot tall, solid-gold Buddha. It weighs over two-and-ahalf tons and is valued at approximately one hundred and ninety-six million dollars! It was quite an awesome sight the kindly gentle, yet imposing solid-gold Buddha smiling down at us.

As we immersed ourselves in the normal sightseeing tasks (taking pictures while oohing and ahhing over the statue), I walked over to a glass case that contained a large piece of clay about eight inches thick and twelve inches wide. Next to the glass case was a typewritten page describing the history of this magnificent piece of art.

Back in 1957 a group of monks from a monastery had to relocate a clay Buddha from their temple to a new location. The monastery was to be relocated to make room for the development of a highway through Bangkok. When the crane began to lift the giant idol, the weight of it was so tremendous that it began to crack. What's more, rain began to fall. The head monk, who was concerned about damage to the sacred Buddha, decided to lower the statue back to the ground and cover it with a large canvas tarp-to protect it from the rain. Later that evening the head monk went to check on the Buddha. He shined his flashlight under the tarp to see if the Buddha was staying dry.

As the light reached the crack, he noticed a little gleam shining back and thought it strange. As he took a closer look at this gleam of light, he wondered



if there might be something underneath the clay. He went to fetch a chisel and hammer from the monastery and began to chip away at the clay. As he knocked off shards of clay, the little gleam

grew brighter and bigger. Many hours of labor went by before the monk stood face to face with the extraordinary solid-gold Buddha. Historians believe that several hundred years before the head monk's discovery, the Burmese army was about to invade Thailand (then called Siam). The Siamese monks, realizing that their country would soon be attacked, covered their precious golden Buddha with an outer covering of clay in order to keep their treasure from being looted by the Burmese.

Unfortunately, it appears that the Burmese slaughtered all the Siamese monks, and the well-kept secret of the golden Buddha remained intact until that fateful day in 1957.

As we flew home on Cathay Pacific Airlines I began to think to myself, "We are all like the clay Buddha covered with a shell of hardness created out of fear, and yet underneath each of us is a 'golden Buddha' a 'golden Christ' or a 'golden essence,' which is our real self. Somewhere along the way, between the ages of two and nine, we begin to cover up our 'golden essence,' our natural self. Much like the monk with the hammer and the chisel, our task now is to discover our true essence once again."

Excerpts from'Chicken Soup For The Soul ' by Jack Canfield



Learning Experiences of ABS Students

about Gratitude



Ben Yi

To have a mind of gratitude in the world of today is a great blessing indeed. Many people are always happy to receive blessings and acts of goodwill from others, but often find it hard to give back words

of thankfulness. Very often people say 'it's his job to do this' or 'it's her duty to take care of us' and enjoy being at the receiving end, without showing any acknowledgement to the giver or servant. Also in many cases people only show gratitude in situations where they are in a direct position of receiving benefits; but if the benefits are indirect or in very small quantities, gratitude is hardly expressed.

However, gratitude is a very important quality that goes hand in hand with humbleness. When we do good to others with a kind, loving mind and the next person is able to see this and be thankful, then we automatically feel motivated to do more. This is simply because we all have compassion in our hearts no matter how big or small. The nature of compassion is to do good. Thus gratitude is a balancing principle of kindness and generosity.

In order to maintain healthy relationships with others, we need to learn the fundamental principles of relationships. In today's world, leadership skills are valued more than technical skills by many organizations. Despite the many qualities valued and needed in any kind of healthy relationship, gratitude is the most important. Without it we are unable to see the acts and kindness performed by others, that are done for us and be able to acknowledge and express our appreciation to them. These not only motivate kindness, but strengthen the relationship, generate happiness and build trust between people. Holy personalities such as Sakyamuni Buddha emphasized the importance of gratitude.

Gratitude can be expressed in many ways at different times. Thus it's very important for sentient beings to express their gratitude towards those who do them good in order to strengthen the relationship.



Ben Lai

As human beings, showing appreciation helps us to create good affinities with others. It creates trust, humility and encourages our providers to keep on helping others. The world nowadays is full of

greed and hatred and if we get something from someone free of charge, we need to show how grateful we are. Some people are busy thinking of others in order to give them hope, joy and convenience. So let us in turn show our appreciation. We need to show gratitude even in our daily greetings and smiles.



Ben Shang

Gratitude helps one to understand other people. Without gratitude you are nothing. You must have a mind of compassion and know how to cherish others. Gratitude cannot stand on its own, only wis-

dom can lead to gratitude. The mind of gratitude has helped me a lot, especially in terms of being short tempered. In the past I used to prefer to be alone and didn't want people around me. However, after I heard about the benefits of gratitude. I followed what they were saying and so I have developed a mind of forgiving.

Those who know that they are not willing to forgive other people should find a way of developing gratitude within themselves, and then they will see how it helps.



Ben Zang

A mind of gratitude should always arise towards all beings, things and situations. When you have such a mind you are easily satisfied. This also helps one not have a greedy mind. When you are satis-

fied and don't have greedy mind, you are capable of staying away from the path of anger and hatred. If you don't have a grateful mind when your friend does something wrong to you it is very easy to develop anger and to hate that person. I should not expect to be appreciated for every act I do because if I expect that, you are bound to experience disappointments and frustrations. This mind of gratitude and appreciation helps me to deal with greed, anger and hatred.



Ben Jue

In our lives there is something important we have to learn and practice. If we can work diligently practicing it, we can reduce our affliction. The important point I am trying to emphasize is Gratitude or the mind

of gratitude. Gratitude simply means thankfulness and the appreciation of kindness regardless of what is it. To have such mind automatically helps us to reduce the complaining mind. Let's take an instance where if we can appreciate and be grateful for being scolded by another, doesn't this help us to learn from our mistake? But if we can't appreciate that, we will complain and enmity can arise. Gratitude is not only cherishing big things, but small things as well. When and how should we show our gratitude? It should be expressed everywhere, anytime, with everyone and everything, including our parents, teachers, fellow students, servants etc. For example: teachers have to be thankful to their students, because if there were no students, would there be teachers? The opposite is also true.



FIVE MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE BUDDHA'STEACHING TO THE WORLD OF TODAYBy Prof. J.S. Kruger

It is clear to all thinking, concerned people that the world finds itself in a state of crisis. This crisis shows at least five aspects:

First there is the ecological aspect, announcing the destruction of many forms of life, including human life. Nature unexpectedly appears to be fragile and mortal. Secondly, there is the challenge raised by modern science, rendering many certainties of the past uncertain, and ushering in a new world of technology bringing not only advantages, but also threats.

Then there is the religious aspect: in several parts of the world religions are in a state of conflict and promote conflict among each other and in the societies where they find themselves, and everywhere they are all under threat as secularism and nihilism creep into all societies.

Fourthly, the social aspect with its many faces reminds us that injustice towards children and women and the socially exposed and weak of all kinds, exploitation and discrmination are as urgent as at any time in the past.

And lastly there is the problem of our individual human integrity, happiness and goodness as human beings. Our unhappiness is a chronic human disease over the ages; it is also aggravated by the circumstances that we live in today, and by the other dimensions that I have mentioned. These five are all interrelated, like the fingers of a human hand.

What might the contribution be of the ancient teaching of the Buddha towards dealing with these problems? After all, he proclaimed his message in a very different place (the plain of the Ganges River in India), at a very different time (two thousand five hundred years ago), in a very different kind of society (pre-industrial, pre-modern).

I believe that the teaching of the Buddha is indeed most relevant for today. While retaining an essential identity and structure over two and a half millennia, it proved to be adaptable to all times and cultures.

To move upwards through the above five crises:

Through meditation and the acquisition of insight into our human condition, the Buddha demonstrated and taught us the way to inner peace and our individual liberation from greed, hatred and delusion, which, even today, are the root causes of all human suffering and misery. His teaching shows the way to personal happiness and enlightenment.

The Buddha demonstrated and taught non-violence and kindness, compassion with those who suffer, joy with those who are happy, and equanimous justice to all living beings, of whatever nationality, age, gender, race, social status they might be, human as well as non-human. The Buddha demonstrated and taught inclusive, tolerant acceptance of all religions. He did not browbeat people into submission to authority, but invited all to radical honesty. Treating all teachings with respect, his message nevertheless transcended all religious institutions and dogmas. Ultimately there is the great Emptiness, which renders



all our human claims to absolute rightness and dogmatic certainty invalid and vainglorious.

The Buddha's message does not rely on, and does not claim to be true on the basis of some supernatural revelation as its source. It rests on investigation of reality as we humans know it, honest and unflinching experience of our human condition, and reason. In its own day it had no difficulty in relating to the science of the time. Neither does it have any difficulty in being reconciled with the science of today with its relativity theory, quantum theory and evolution theory.

The Buddha's message rests on the assumption, and teaches, that we humans are part of a great system in which all things (human and non-human, living and non-living) hang together in a vast network of interdependence. An ecological concern and responsibility are not add-ons to the Buddhist understanding, but essential pillars of it.

None of the above is extraneous or accidental to the Buddha's message. All are intrinsically part of the core Buddhist outlook, handed down over twenty-five centuries.

Compared to previous epochs, our crises of today are more global and more pervasive than ever. They affect not only individuals, but societies, cultures and religions; not only some of them in relative isolation, but all of them simultaneously; not only humans, but all life on Earth.

The ancient Buddhist message is worth being treasured and interpreted for the world – Africa, South Africa - of today. Each starting with oneself, attaining inner peace and insight, we are invited to assume responsibility for the well-being of all, to exist in an exemplary manner before and for our troubled world, and to make a skilful contribution to it. In Buddhist language: claiming nothing for ourselves, we may take part in the great bodhisattvic calling and responsibility, knowing that we are part of the great Mystery, referred to by Buddhists as Buddha-Nature.

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