UU Sangha

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Understanding Nirvana

By Robert Oliva

For those of us who seriously consider Buddhism, the idea of nirvana very often remains a mysterious and distant goal. It's actual relevance for our practice may be shrouded in vague and fragmentary knowledge, especially since descriptions of nirvana vary widely. I have heard it described as annihilation, the dissolution of the self, even death. Often nirvana is used as a euphemism for some ultimately happy or even a drug-induced state of mind. To some it is seen as a place, not unlike heaven, where we go or enter if we are enlightened. In my opinion, none of these views are accurate and may actually be misleading.

Nirvana has been a fascinating idea to me for many years. It is the end goal of Buddhist practice yet remains intangible and elusive. What is this strange term that is so easily misunderstood? What is nirvana? Why does it play such an important role in Buddhism?

Some History

Liberation (moksha) is the goal of all ancient Indian religions. For centuries before Sakyamuni Buddha's birth the sages of India had defined the task of religion: to end suffering and the countless reincarnations of the individual. Nirvana described the state of release from desire and clinging to this life that awaited those dedicated to the spiritual path. In the Samkya yoga of ancient India nirvana is the ultimate realization of unity with the Self.

In the later Hindu scriptures nirvana was well known. In the *Mahabharata* nirvana is seen as serene peace and satisfaction. In the *Anugita* it is as a fire without fuel. In the *Bhagavad-gita* it is the attainment of Brahman reserved for the person who has forsaken all objects of desire and lives without cravings or self-centeredness. Nirvana is the goal of all who enter the path of release to end the karmic cycle of life and death.

To the Buddha nirvana expressed the highest absolute beyond the flux of reality. He held that there was no autonomous Self to which we must unite. To Sakyamuni Buddha there could be no obstacle or screen between humanity and absolute reality. He saw the idea of an autonomous Self as such an obstacle. To the Buddha nirvana was not the unity of the Self and the individual soul but the realization of reality itself as one in itself.

Early Buddhist Nirvana

Early Buddhist scriptures like the *Udana* see nirvana as an absolute in the highest sense: it is not born or composed, it is irreducible, inexpressible and beyond all human experience. But paradoxically to be "saved" we must attain this inexpressible state. Going beyond profane existence and re-establishing ourselves on the plane of the unconditioned accomplishes this. It is a rebirth into a suprahuman life that is impossible to define. The Buddha offered his followers the path and method to attain this inexpressible state.

From the earliest times it was the saint that could hope to reach the highest liberation. Buddhist practice was largely monastic in nature. The path of liberation was a path for monks and holy men and women who renounced this life and took on the orange robes of the monastery.

The Buddha spoke little of this state of liberation. Why he did so has been debated for centuries. There are many instances in the early Buddhist scriptures when the Buddha remains silent at being confronted with the demand to define nirvana or ultimate reality. Buddha was unequivocal about his silence. One could never speak of nirvana and capture it, explain it, do justice to it. Buddha criticized the Brahmans for contending that they could define absolute reality. Buddha insisted that maintaining

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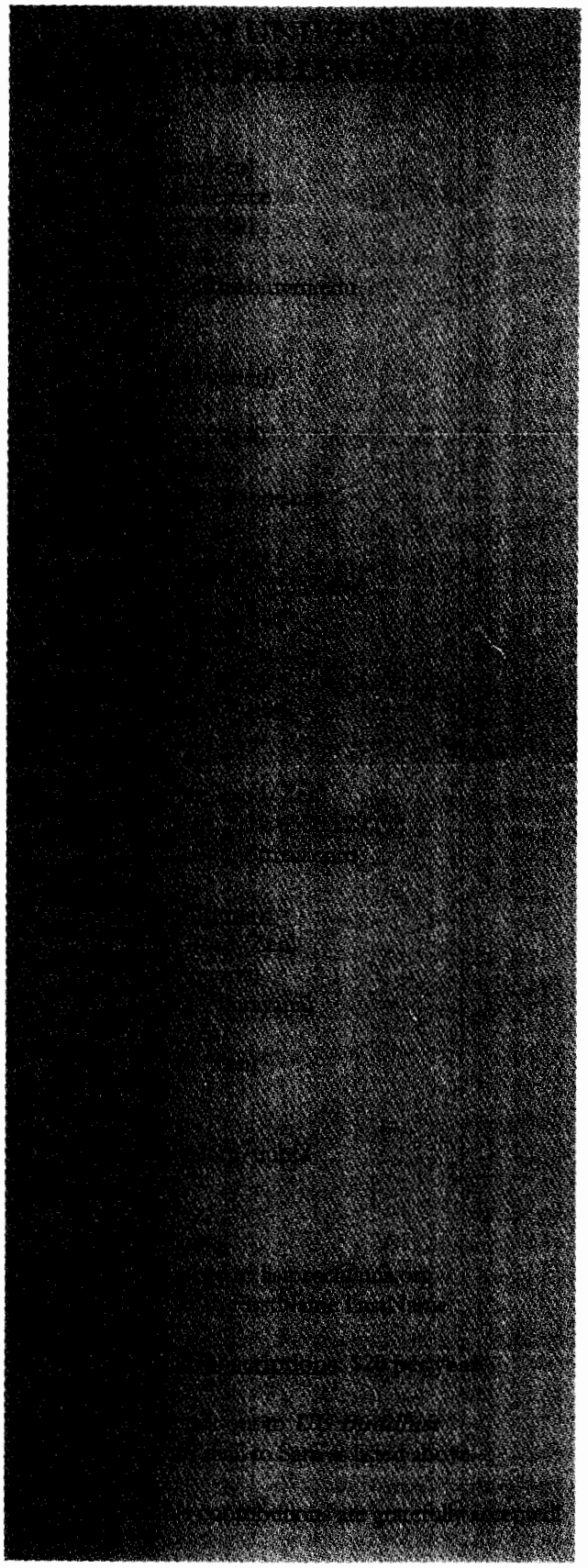
Editorial Insights

Happy new year! I hope this latest edition of *UU Sangha* finds you and your loved ones safe and in good cheer. In honor of the death of the old year and the birth of the new, we've focused this issue around the perennial Buddhist concept of rebirth. Robert Oliva discusses the concept of nirvana, the final release from the round of rebirth in traditional Buddhist philosophy. Well-known Buddhist and folktale author Ruth Tabrah tells us about her rebirth as a Buddhist after following the call of the Dharma one wet Hawaiian night. Jay Alagia's background in Buddhism and Hinduism means that rebirth has been stitched into the fabric of his present life since the beginning. And Jeanne Dusy has offered a poem on the meaning of the rainbow body of enlightened beings.

In my travels I've encountered a wide range of UU views on the concept of rebirth or reincarnation. Some take it literally, while others offer more metaphorical or psychological explanations; one common interpretation I hear is that rebirth takes place from moment to moment, as thoughts arise and pass away—the you that is here now is not the same you that was here five minutes ago.

Tibetan Buddhists often stress that in the infinite cycle of rebirths all beings have been our own mothers at some point. By envisioning other people, even those who oppose us or cause us harm, as our own doting mothers, we are led to relinquish attachment to ourselves and develop compassion for all beings. Ultimately, whether rebirth is a scientific or metaphoric reality, this view of universal compassion and co-identity is one that we can learn a lot from on the path to awakening.

For our next issue, due out in April, we'll be taking a look at Buddhist stories. What is your favorite Buddhist myth or story, and why? How do legends, jatakas, folktales, and other Buddhist narratives fit into your life and practice? Are stories originating thousands of years ago in Asia still relevant in 21st Century America? Will there be new stories told to disclose the wisdom of a new age of Buddhism in new cultural spheres? How do myths act to communicate meaning and truth in a Buddhist setting? We'd like to hear your thoughts. Submissions on this, or any topic relevant to Buddhism and UUism, are welcomed at jwilson403@hotmail.com. Take care!



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that the atman exists, that it is real or permanent, is a false view. But to maintain that it does not exist is also a false view. The nature of nirvana was such that it defied definition and was beyond existence and non-existence.

I would say that in the early Buddhist experience, nirvana is the ending of the cycle of unhappiness by the extinction of desire, hatred and delusion. Nirvana is an unconditioned consciousness into which the adept enters and lives a new life. The *Dharma-skandha-pada* defines nirvana by way of negation: it is without form, without limit, without outflow, without beginning, without attachment, without end, without arising, without clinging. It also describes nirvana as absolute reality, the other shore, being wondrous, serene, permanent, secure, ultimate. The *Catuhsatya-nirdesa* defines nirvana as without decay, without loss, without equal, without obstacles, without want, unparalleled, immeasurable, without affliction.

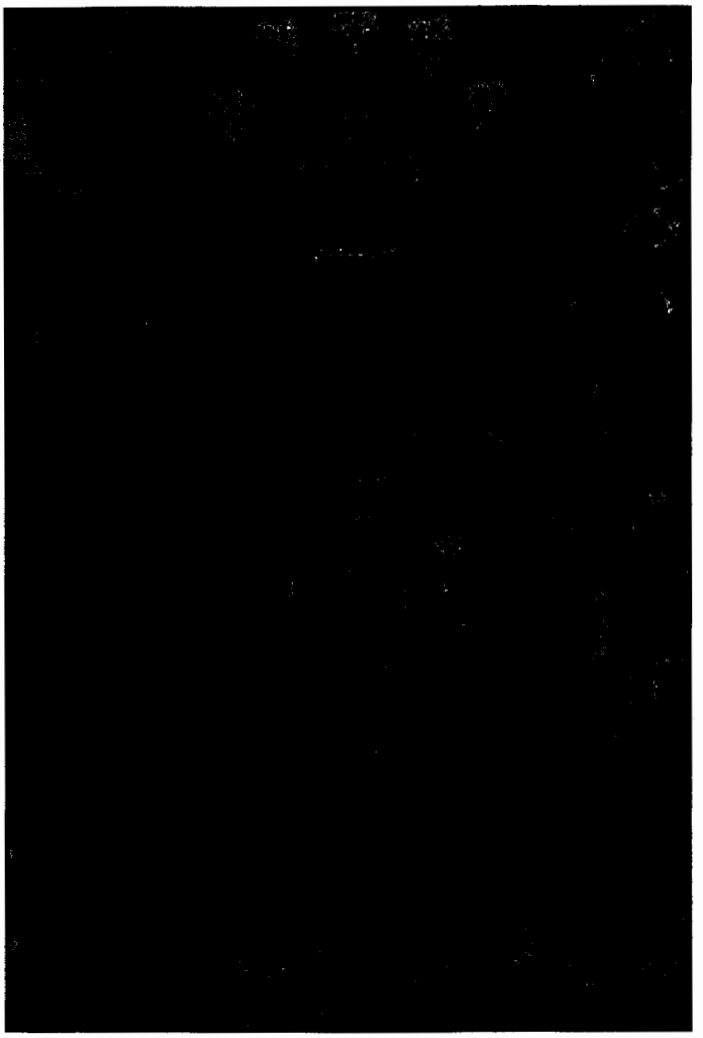
The Mahayana

By the second century C.E. Buddhism was undergoing a significant change. Many of the key elements in Buddhism were being elaborated and reworked into a system known as the Mahayana. The Mahayana presented a new sense of nirvana informed by its rather complex view of reality.

In the second century of our era the great dialectician Nagarjuna formulated the theories of sunyavada (emptiness) and dependent origination. Nagarjuna was writing in response to the many interpretations of self-nature that had arisen in the centuries after Sakyamuni Buddha's death. The writings of Nagarjuna are found in the Madhyamika and are the basis of the Mahayana. His writings contain the primary themes of refuting self-nature, the examination of dependent arising and the teaching of emptiness. To understand the Mahayana idea of nirvana we have to briefly discuss Nagrajuna's philosophy.

Emptiness and Dependent Origination

Nagarjuna states that all reality is empty. But this is not nihilism. Emptiness is not Being over and against non-Being. It is not a transcendent God distinguished from the world, nor is it somethingness versus nothingness. It is not spiritual reality contrasted with ordinary life. Emptiness is not found outside oneself. It is not found inside oneself. If one could say it was here or there it would be relative and thus not ultimate reality. Emptiness is limitless and infinite. It cannot be captured and defined.



The Wheel of Life, a classic Buddhist portrayal of the round of rebirth, from which Buddhists seek to escape to nirvana.

All things are empty and arise dependent on one another. There is no autonomous arising and falling. All arising is based on a relationship to something else that has arisen or fallen. For example, you are looking for a new car. You cannot find a car that is not in some way related to other new cars or is in relation to older cars. Or if you look up a word in the dictionary you discover that it has multiple meanings in relation to other words and meanings. It even has a history and is presently changing in usage. This is true of your life as well. You need food and air and a mother and father to live. You also live in a society of multiple relationships. No man is an island.

If this is so, the Mahayana philosophy holds that

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the nature of Buddha is something we all share. The Buddha's nature is not different from our own. We are all related to one another. We are all empty and inter-related. We all live and die. We all change and evolve. We all create lives and think new thoughts. None of us has an autonomous existence separate from each other and the universe. From this doctrine of interrelationship comes forth the dominance in Mahayana of the bodhisattva ideal.

The Bodhisattva Nirvana

According to the Mahayana, the bodhisattva sees all reality as empty and all things as having Buddha-nature. We all share in the same emptiness, normal sentient beings and Buddhas alike. In the *Vagracchedika* it is said of the bodhisattva that it is her role "never to abandon all beings, and to see into the truth that all things are empty." In Mahayana Buddhism there are limitless bodhisattvas and they need not be monks or ascetics. The inherent wisdom of the Buddha is present to all of us. We all are Buddhas. The bodhisattva refuses to enter nirvana for the sake of bringing all beings out of suffering and to enlightenment. The enlightenment experience is one of compassion, of deep and profound empathy for the plight of the world. I would say that in Mahayana the ultimate goal of attaining nirvana has been overturned. The goal is now to forever help others and to forsake nirvana. In a sense then the image of the solitary monk attaining nirvana is surpassed.

Attaining Nirvana

Technically speaking, in Mahayana the goal of nirvana has been replaced with that of attaining enlightenment or bodhisattvahood. The final goal becomes not self liberation, as was the case in early Buddhism, but sacrificing the ultimate in order to serve all sentient beings. The bodhisattva is one who is perfectly tranquil and serene and yet active on behalf of all. She is a person emptied of self. Buddhism steadfastly refuses to allow any hint of self to enter through the door.

A person who understands emptiness is like the ocean or the sky. According to Mahayana Master Jen-chun "the sky symbolizes purity, freedom or liberation, and something of the highest order, or supreme...The Chinese character that we translate as 'sky' can also mean empty space." Empty space is limitless. There are no obstructions. Birds can fly through empty space without obstacles. Empty space can contain everything. And similarly, a person who is empty has obliterated boundaries and selfishness. In Ch'an Buddhism this kind of person has no fear of losing; there are no more obstructions to being fully present. In contrast, most of us do not experience life as empty, we are still holding on to what we think is ours: our lives, our money, our families, our personalities and our careers. Again, Master Jen-chun: "When you have such attachments, your whole being is obstructed by them. It is like being tied up. You cannot move around. You are enclosed, enslaved, and in bondage." When we are free of attachments we can move and emerge and be like empty space: free and limitless. We can be happy and serve all sentient beings. This is the bodhisattva.

Nirvana is not a place, it does not exist, it is not a thing. It is not a metaphysical essence sustaining or grounding our existence. Nirvana is empty, limitless and infinite. It is all things and yet nothing. In Ch'an Buddhism, nirvana is our original face; it is our Buddha-nature. But it is not an essence; it is not a soul. Nirvana is reality itself yet it is totally other than what we know as reality. To say that we enter nirvana is not quite accurate. To say we attain nirvana is somewhat misleading. It is an awakening to the boundless truth that transcends time and space. A truth beyond all duality of "us" and "them." The vexations of life have been put aside. We stand rooted yet free. Simply put, nirvana plays a central role in Buddhism because it is our awakening. It is the awakening of freedom and compassion.

Personal Speculations on Nirvana

It appears to me that in one sense nirvana is the overcoming of self-centered desire. As long as we remain alienated from reality and act from desire and craving we suffer. Every desire results in suffering. Along with Thomas Merton, the Trappist/Zen monk, I would say that every movement of self increases this pain. All of our attempts to end the suffering are movements toward suffering. Even our desire to not move toward pain is a movement toward it. There is no possible way of imposing stillness through our will and desire. Nirvana is unattainable through any self-actualization or self-fulfillment. It is not the experience of oneness with the divine or the universe. Where there is an autonomous self there can be no final peace and liberation. This is so because our self and reality are fractured. We live in the illusion of duality.

But this is not all that can be said about nirvana. Considering the Mahayana idea of the bodhisattva, it seems to me that nirvana itself is attained only in its refusal. The bodhisattva, in refusing to enter nirvana, attains it in an entirely new way. The refusal is the attain-

ment. Without compassion for all sentient beings there really is no nirvana. By accepting the responsibility for the liberation of the world the final goal is attained. There can be no liberation for one without the liberation of all. Truly, the world (samsara) and liberation (nirvana) are one. There is no duality. There are no natural and supernatural realms over and against each other.

As long as we thirst and cling and see ourselves as autonomous and separate from one another we falsify our reality and cannot awaken. Again, as Thomas Merton, said so profoundly just before his death: "When man is grounded in authentic truth and love the roots of desire themselves wither, brokenness is at an end, and truth is found in the wholeness and simplicity of nirvana...Were we capable of a moment of perfect authenticity, of complete openness, we would see at once that nirvana and samsara are the same." The illusion is over. At this moment of authenticity we overcome our brokenness. We are perfect awareness, perfect freedom and perfect compassion, nirvana.

Robert M. Oliva, CSW is a licensed New York State Clinical Social Worker with over twenty years experience in psychotherapy, wellness and stress management. Bob is a member of the Unitarian Univeralist Church of the Larger Fellowship and the Roman Catholic Church.

Crossing the Bridge

By Ruth Tabrah

The night on which I began to walk across the bridge from being a Unitarian to becoming a Shin Buddhist remains vivid in my memory now, forty-five years later, as I write an autobiography to which I have given the working title "Listening to My Life."

For me, everything that matters, my real life, began that night in the summer of 1956 when I first encountered Buddhists and Buddhism. I was thirty-five and that August had come from the Pacific Northwest to make my home in a remote plantation district on the Big Island of Hawai'i.

Midsummer nights in Kohala were often so still we could hear the boom of surf hitting the cliffs two miles below our house. However, the boom one night in late August was a different sound—the deep throb of huge drums drawing us to get in the jeep and follow that boooooom to its source, the small wooden temple of Kohala Jodo Mission. We parked among the dozens of cars edging the temple grounds where a double circle of kimono-clad dancers moved with grace around a wooden tower decorated with bamboo and orchids. At the base of this tower were the drums that had drawn us here and on the high platform of the tower was the sound system where several elderly singers enjoyed nips of whiskey between numbers.

Some of the dancers had taken refuge from the misty rain under the roof that kept the long flight of temple steps dry. To one side of the temple building was a graveyard where a few families moved quietly under umbrellas. Strings of miniature lanterns gasped and flickered, lighting the special offerings on the graves. Red flowers lacquered with rain. A large and perfect mango. A bottle of Primo beer. A small plate of food. All offerings that I later learned were gestures of affection for the deceased, a joyous remembrance at this special Buddhist memorial celebration of O-Bon.

"Come inside!" urged a friendly voice as the misty rain suddenly became a downpour. Cautiously we made our way up the steps through a forest of slippers, leaving ours in an unused bit of space. Hesitant because everything I saw was so strange to me, I entered my first hondo (Buddhist worship hall) and experienced my first taste of a Buddhist atmosphere.

Rows of donation slips brushed in calligraphy

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Blind Men Crossing a Bridge

Hakuin Ekaku c.1760 CE

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were clipped to a line strung along one wall. Great sacks of rice were propped against the raised altar with its gilded statue of a standing Buddha who seemed to be gesturing "come, come just as you are." Fragrant tendrils of smoke rose from the dragon-handled bronze incense burner. Gold hanging lamps illuminated the offerings of flowers and special sweets.

I was struck by the formal beauty of the altar and the informal ease with which old men and women, shy teenage girls in tight obis, and people of every age sat in the pews comfortably chatting, drinking tea and sodas, gossiping and giggling, just being who they were. No one seemed bothered by the shouts of little children running up and down the aisle. Like everyone else in this temple they seemed to feel completely at home. Amazingly, quite unexpectedly, I felt the same way, as if I had found the place where I belonged.

That feeling was still with me some time later when I received a letter from an editor at Beacon Press, the Unitatian-Universalist publishing house, who knew and liked my writing, asking if I would do a simple book on Buddhism for their series "The Church Across the Street." I replied that in my total ignorance I doubted I could do what she asked. That editor was not to be discouraged. She reminded me that I now lived in a very Buddhist territory (Hawai'i was not yet a state). My beginner's mind would be invaluable in writing the kind of book she wanted. "Won't you try?" she pleaded. I would and did.

Later, when I became familiar with Shinran's powerful, poetic *Shoshinge*, I saw that persistent editor as having been like one of Shinran's teachers, the tenth century Tendai monk Genshin whom Shinran describes as having said, "Amida Buddha is always chasing me, never letting me go!"

I was the author of a best-selling novel but I had never tried non-fiction. Where to begin? I checked out the three books on Buddhism in Kohala's small public library. Reading the dry, ponderous texts by Edward Conze, Maurice Percheron, and Christmas Humphreys was not easy, but as I read and re-read their explanations of Buddhism over and over, I felt that doors and windows were opening in my mind. I kept getting glimpses of a way of life and thought different from any I had ever known.

Those first years while trying to learn enough about Buddhism in order to write about it "Dharma" was a word, not yet a treasure in my life. The Buddha's Eightfold Path rendered in Victorian English described an idealized existence quite different from my own. The Four Noble Truths, when I first read them, were incomprehensible. Impermanence made me feel uneasy and above all I did not much like the insistence on life as suffering, although I had to admit to myself it had often been so for me. To discover Shinran's Pure Land teaching of Amida Buddha's Name and Vow, of unconditional acceptance just as I am, was an enormous relief. For a long time, however, Amida seemed an enormous obstruction in my path due to mistaken ideas that Amida Buddha was like the Christian God and Amida's Pure Land was like the Christian heaven. These ideas kept surfacing in translations made by early Christian missionaries in Japan who used their own religious vocabulary.

The great advantage of my living in Hawai'i was that our Buddhist Study Center brought the best Shin teachers from Japan, Europe, and the mainland for their annual summer sessions. That is still so. Each new teacher expands my understanding and appreciation of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism and its basic story of the mythic bodhisattva Dharmakara, whose name means "Storehouse of Dharma." Having heard the teachings of Lokesvararaja, the Buddha who is always freeing the world, Dharmakara resolved to become a Buddha like him. After eons of difficult practices he fulfilled his bodhisattva vows and became Amida, the Buddha all Buddhas praise, whose Pure Land assures Buddhahood and enlightenment, the peace of Nirvana to each and every one of us. To me, this is the assurance we repeat in awe whenever the nembutsu, "Namu Amida Butsu," wells up from deep in our hearts and minds.

Ruth Tabrah is the author of many books on Buddhism and Hawai'i, including The Monk Who Dared *and* The Red Shark.

Rainbow Bodies

By Jeanne Desy

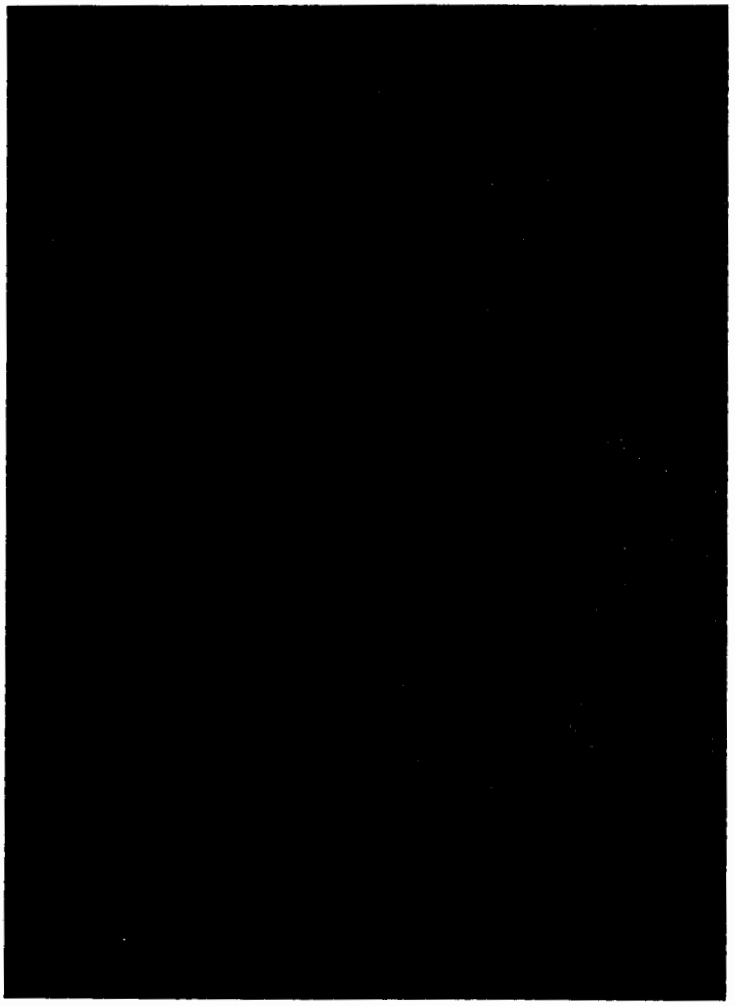
I believe in resurrection,
not just bodies rising again,
changed as ice turns into rain,
and rain to cloud, but
in miracles wrought by love.

The legends of old Tibet proclaim
that the highest saints, when they die,
leave only hair and nails and clothes
in a heap. Their bodies turn to light.

Rainbows play, the sky sparkles for miles.

These tales are told so often they must be true:
those who love profoundly are renewed.
The stone is rolled away,
an angel stands in the empty cave.
Only the story survives, a faint
imprint in a discarded shroud.

Jeanne Desy has received an Ohio Arts Council fellowship and several national awards for her fiction and scholarship. She co-facilitates two UU Buddhist groups at the First UU Church of Columbus.



The Rainbow Body of Padmasambhava
Tibetan thangkha painting, date unknown

Why I Believe in Rebirth

By Jay Alagia

I was born and raised in India as a Hindu, so I am a Hindu Buddhist-UU. Rebirth is in my blood. In Hinduism, Buddha is accepted as a reincarnation of Vishnu, and his teachings were absorbed into Hinduism.

I believe in rebirth because Buddha says that there is rebirth. From what I have read, before he achieved nirvana, the first experience that came to him in his meditation was the knowledge of all his past lives. The second experience was the knowledge of the past lives of all creatures. After this he achieved awakening. The Indian sages before Buddha, who meditated and obtained firsthand knowledge far exceeding common knowledge, recognized rebirth as a given fact in their writings. This tradition of meditation and gnosis has been prevalent in India for thousands of years and many people have experienced this it.

Recently research has recorded many cases of recollections of past lives by children. For instance, see the website www.reincarnation.8k.com. My memory of my own previous births doesn't include names and forms, but does include my conditioned responses to the environment and the creatures I meet.

Belief in rebirth makes it easier for me to practice non-attachment to sensual pleasures and to cultivate spiritual growth. Many persons who do not believe in rebirth tend to think in terms of "only one life to live, so indulge the senses." Death to them seems the opposite of life and so dreadful. They are in greater hurry to accomplish their goals because their time is limited. But, spiritual growth cannot be hurried. Death to me is just a door to go through to new life.

Belief in rebirth provides easy acceptance of variations in the personalities of children and grown ups. All beings are not born equal. Each brings to the world a unique level of spiritual growth. Some, such as the Buddha and Ramakrishna, can attain realization because of their accomplishments in past lives. Rebirth explains prodigies, and also animal-like amoral behavior. I saw in my own children different levels of spiritual beginnings that could not be explained to me by genes or nurture. I believe that genes only affect the body and not one's mind, intellect, spiritual level, and conditioned responses to worldly events. Genes don't change as we grow older. We change. Everything other than the body is carried

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over from past lives.

Jay Alagia is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix.

The Paradox of Unity

By Patrick Bruckhart

I often hear people say things like "all are one" or "all paths lead to one," etc. I believe that people who say these things have the best of intentions, but sometimes they make these statements too lightly. Thus, I like to make a distinction between over-simplifications and monism on a more sublime level.

Relatively speaking, differences do exist. Some people, classes, races, etc., have certain identities and/or needs that are unique to them. I think that it is important to respect these unique needs. This is my simplistic understanding of "diversity."

I offer the following analogy. I am an advocate for people with mental illnesses or "problems relating to themselves and other people." One of the problems in this type of advocacy is a clash between the interests of the family members of people with mental illnesses and the people with mental illnesses themselves. This is largely because the family members control the largest, most powerful lobbying/educational organization in the country. Through this group's efforts, and a movement that the family members spawned, the interests of these two groups have become confounded in the minds of the public as well as legislators and policy-makers.

This is not to suggest that there needs to be strife between family members and people with mental illnesses. However, each has its own unique identity and needs and each needs to differentiate itself from the other. Again, to me this is a matter of respecting diversity.

I do not believe this process has to be divisive. I believe that respect for a person's or group's unique identity and needs is the very basis for the mutual respect that is necessary to build unity and end division—paradoxically. In fact, I believe this respect for diversity is a necessary precursor to unity.

What I mean by using this idea of monism (all are one) lightly or as an oversimplification is using it as an excuse to avoid the actual work of diversity—the process of respecting people's and group's unique identities and needs and developing mutual understanding.

On the other hand, on a more sublime, or ultimate, level I believe we are all one. While we may not have the same faith, social class, skin color, cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations, physical abilities, or skills for relating to ourselves and other people, we are all human beings. We have the same human body, mind, and basic psychological make-up. This is our common bond. The other differences are ultimately superficial.

Thus, ultimately I agree that we are all one, but to arrive at this point we must first engage in the paradoxical process of understanding and respecting each other's differences.

Patrick Bruckart is a member of the UU Community Church of Glen Allen, Virginia and a practicing Tibetan Buddhist.

Metta-Physics

By Rev. Mary Grigolia

Metta is loving kindness or compassion for self and all beings.

During a recent meditation prayer, I said, "Take a few moments to bless yourself; to wish yourself well." Afterwards, a participant shared that although he was able to wish others well, to hold them in his heart and mind with compassion, he was having a hard time doing this for himself.

We are taught that it is better to give than to receive and to love our neighbors as ourselves. For most of us, this condemns our neighbor to pretty shoddy treatment.

In Buddhism there is a saying, "Compassion starts at home, within yourself." You can't send loving kindness to another until you cultivate it toward yourself. Recognizing the vulnerability and yearning within ourselves enables us to reach out to others.

I'm not advocating ignorant narcissism.

I am advocating cherishing our own bodies, life purposes, boundaries, needs, and sense of integrity.

In this season of new beginnings, let's start to give ourselves the gift of kindness and of self-reflection so that the gifts we give others may be gifts of gratitude, joy, and commitment with no strings attached.

Rev. Mary Grigolia is Assistant Minister at the Eno River Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship.

UU Buddhist Practice Groups

To be listed, a group must have both a Buddhist and a UU connection. If you'd like to have yours included here please contact the editor, Jeff Wilson (see page 2 for email and postal address). Due to limitations on space, we can only list the group's name, address, time you meet and a contact person.

United States

Alabama

Huntsville UU Meditation Group
UU Church of Huntsville
2222 East Governor's Drive
Huntsville, AL 35801
Virginia Burroughs: 256-776-9329

Arizona

Desert Lotus Zen Group
Valley Unitarian Universalist Church
1700 W. Warner Road
Chandler, AZ 85224
http://www.vuu.org/zen/
Laurie Herring: herring@primenet.com

California

Acorn Family Sangha
PO Box 190
Soulsbyville, CA 95372
http://www.acornfamilysangha.org/
Ken Renwick: ken@acornfamilysangha.org

Davis Unitarian Universalist Buddhist Meditation and Study Group
Unitarian Church of Davis
27074 Patwin Road, Davis, CA 95626
Dick Warg: 530-662-1669, rjwarg@ucdavis.edu

Monterey Peninsula Mindfulness Practice Group
UU Church of the Monterey Peninsula
490 Aguajito Road
Carmel, CA 93923
Nancy Melton: 831-647-9155
blossoming.nancy@mindspring.com

San Mateo UU Meditation Group
Unitarian Universalists of San Mateo
300 E. Santa Inez
San Mateo, CA 94401
Lance and Ann Miller: 650-340-9698,
lanmill@earthlink.com
http://homestead.com/meditationgroup/uubf.html

UU Meditation Circle
First UU Church of San Diego
4190 Front Street
San Diego, CA 92103
Erene Rallis: 619-295-5622

Colorado

UU Pueblo Church Buddhist Group
Unitarian Universalist Church of Pueblo
110 Calla Avenue
Pueblo, CO 81005
David Cockrell: 719-546-3409

Connecticut

UU Buddhist Wellspring
The Universalist Church of West Hartford
433 Fern Street
West Hartford, CT 06107
Bert Mayo: 860-346-6240

Florida

The Buddhist Fellowship of the UU Church of Fort Lauderdale Florida
UU Church of Fort Lauderdale
3970 NW 21st Avenue
Oakland Park, FL 33309
http://www.uucfl.org/buddhist/index.htm
Mary Teslow: maryteslow@aol.com or
Joe DeAngelis: 954-973-1337

Maryland

Mindfulness Practice Group
UU Church of Annapolis
333 Dubois Road
Annapolis, MD 21401
Rev. Fred Muir: 410-266-8044,
minister@toadmail.toad.net

Massachusetts

Henry Thoreau Zen Sangha
First Unitarian Society
1326 Washington Street

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West Newton, MA 02465
Rev. James Ford Sensei: 617-527-3203,
jan_sf@hotmail.com

Martha's Vineyard Vipassana Meditation
Unitarian-Universalist Church
238 Main Street
Vineyard Haven, MA 02568
Jo Rice: 508-693-2827, jscotrice@capecod.net

New Hampshire

Second Congregational Society Buddhist Study Group of Concord
Second Congregational Society UU Church
274 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301
http://www.buddhistgroup.homestead.com
Gene Taylor: 877-682-4535, buddhism@ureach.com

New York

Buddhist Explorers Group
The Community Church of New York (UU)
40 East 35 Street
New York, NY 10016
Gary Jacinto: 212-267-2694

Open Spirit Sangha
Community Unitarian Church of White Plains
468 Rosedale Avenue
White Plains, NY 10605
Bice Wilson: 914-946-1660, bicew@aol.com

North Carolina

Community of Mindful Living-UUFR
UU Fellowship of Raleigh
3313 Wade Avenue
Raleigh, NC 27607
Joyce Gad: 919-233-3910, gadabout2@yahoo.com

Eno River Buddhist Community
Eno River UU Fellowship
4907 Garrett Road
Durham, NC 27707
Steve Seiberling: 919-968-4445, sseiber@email.unc.edu

Unitarian-Universalist Church of Greensboro Meditation Group
Unitarian-Universalist Church of Greensboro
5603 Hilltop Road
Jamestown, NC 27282
Bill Patterson: 336-218-0810, wfp@triad.rr.com

Ohio

First Church Sangha
First Unitarian Church
536 Linton Street
Cincinnati, OH 45219
David Mohler: 812-537-4741, dmohler@seidata.com

Meditation Group
UU Church of Kent
228 Gougler Avenue
Kent, OH 44240
Liz Erickson: 330-673-2152

Pennsylvania

Central Pennsylvania Buddhist Fellowship
c/o Dan Cozort, Dept of Religion
P.O. Box 1773
Dickinson College
Carlisle, PA 17013
Dan Cozort: 717-245-1385

Mindfulness Meditation Group
Unitarian Church of Harrisburg
1280 Clover Lane
Harrisburg, PA 17113
George Hellmann: 717-236-6749,
jghellmann@mindspring.com

Zazen & a Mindful Meal
UU Church of Lancaster
538 W. Chestnut Street
Lancaster, PA 17603
Phil & Paula Gable: 717-295-3041, pgable@redrose.net

Texas

Northwoods Sangha
Northwoods UU Church
1370 North Millbend Drive
The Woodlands, TX 77380
http://www.optimlator.com/hzc/northwoods.htm
Dwight Hatfield: 281-298-8419, hatfid@slash.net

Vermont

Black River Sangha
Unitarian-Universalist Meetinghouse
21 Fairground Road
Springfield, VT 05156
Richard Ryoha Dunworth M.R.O.: 802-228-2476,

dunworth@ludl.tds.net

Zen Meditation Group
C/o The Rev. Robert Senghas
54 Rivermount Terrace
Burlington, VT 05401
Rev Robert Senghas: 802-658-6466,
rsenghas@worldnett.att.net

Virginia

The Buddhist Fellowship
UU Church of Arlington
4444 Arlington Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22204
Michael I. Roehm: 202-332-7236, mroehm@earthlink.net

The UCN Buddhist Connection
Unitarian Church of Norfolk (UU)
739 Yarmouth Street
Norfolk, VA 23510
Eileen Francis: 757-497-4047, eafrancis@home.com

UU Reston Church Buddhist Group
Unitarian Universalist Church in Reston
1625 Wiehle Avenue
Reston, VA 20190
Contact: Mel Harkrader-Pine (703) 707-9332,
melhpine@aol.com

Vipassana Meditation Group
Mt. Vernon Unitarian Church
1909 Windmill Lane,
Alexandria, VA 22307
Forrest Tobey: 703-660-0028

Washington

Michael Servetus UU Buddhist Fellowship
Michael Servetus UU Fellowship
4505 E 18th Street
Vancouver, WA 98661
Marvin Benson: 360-695-1858, bensonjmlaw@juno.com

Wisconsin

Buddhist Unitarian Universalist Group
First Unitarian Church
1342 N. Aster Street
Milwaukee WI 53202
Andy Agacki: 414-771-2490, agacki@execpc.com

Madison Insight Meditation Group
First Unitarian Society
900 University Bay Drive
Madison, WI 53202
http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/2140

Canada

British Columbia

Karuna Meditation Society
North Shore Unitarian Church of Vancouver
2050 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C., V7S 1H3
Michelle Mills: 604-874-4093

Ontario

Buddhist Practice Group
First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto
175 St. Clair Avenue West
Toronto, Ontario M4V 1P7

May I be a guard for those who are protectorless,
A guide for those who journey on the road.
For those who wish to go across the water,
May I be a boat, a raft, a bridge.

May I be an isle for those who yearn for landfall,
And a lamp for those who long for light:
For those who need a resting place, a bed;
For all who need a servant, may I be their slave.

May I be a wishing jewel, the vase of plenty,
A word of power and the supreme healing;
May I be the tree of miracles,
And for every being the abundant cow.

Like the earth and the pervading elements,
Enduring as the sky itself endures,
For boundless multitudes of living beings,
May I be their ground and sustenance.

Thus for every thing that lives,
As far as are the limits of the sky,
May I provide their livelihood and nourishment
Until they pass beyond the bonds of suffering.
—Shantideva, *Bodhicharyavatara*, 8th century CE

UU Sangha
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405 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12206-2604

Return service requested

UU Sangha

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