

asked, "What does this 'M' stand for?"

"Mu!!"

The monk ran out, and the next morning at interviews, everyone wanted an enlightenment pill.

That is checking mind: the mind that is bound up in constant evaluating and comparing.



And lastly, we have holding mind. A man I know in the psychology department at U.S.C. tells this anecdote to his patients when they are caught by this kind of energy.

A man and woman got married, and they seemed to get along very well until one day they argued about how to open letters. The wife said it was proper to use a knife; the husband said to use scissors. This argument escalated over the years until eventually they no longer spoke rationally to one another. One would say, "Knife!" and the other would reply, "Scissors!"

One day they went out on a boat, and the man bent over to pull up the anchor. The woman saw her chance. She got the paddle and POW! Over the side he went. He could not swim, so he started to sink. The first time he came up she yelled, "Knife!" He said, "Scissors!" and sank again. The second time, "Knife!" "Scissors!" Gurgle, gurgle, gurgle. Third time, "Knife!" "Scissors!" And she hit him over the head with the paddle. She then peered intently into the water and could barely make out his fingers making a scissor motion as he sank all the way to the bottom.

Even until death this holding mind can possess us.

Bob Moore, JDPSN, is guiding teacher of Dharma Zen Center in Los Angeles; Empty Gate Zen Center in Berkeley; and Seattle Dharma Center. □

The knowledge of the ancients extended a long way.

How far did it go?

*To the extreme point where some believed
that nothing existed.*

*Others believed that something existed,
but it had no limit.*

*A third group believed there were limits,
but no distinctions.*

*When distinctions were drawn,
preferences began,
and the Way was injured.*

Chuang-tzu

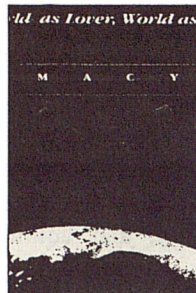
*It is wise, listening not to me but to the logos,
to agree that all things are one.*

Heraclitus

Book Reviews

Books In Brief

Reviewed by Mu Soeng Sunim



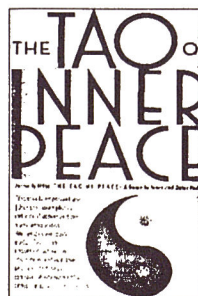
World as Lover, World as Self
Joanna Macy
Parallax Press, Berkeley, 1991

Joanna Macy is one of the best-known spiritual social activists in the country. Her activities have ranged from leading nationally-known workshops on "Despair and Personal Power in the Nuclear Age," to doing field

work in Sri Lanka in a Buddhist-inspired community development movement, to being a scholar of Buddhism. The present book is a collection of many talks and magazine articles addressed to a wide range of audiences. As she says of this varied collection,

I have put into it an equally varied assortment to convey what I have been about . . . so many pieces of my life that reflect the pursuits of my heart and mind. . . . These talks and writings stem from that portion of my life that has been shaped by Buddhist thought and practice.

This book can be useful to contemporary American readers who wish to integrate their Buddhist practice with concerns for social issues. Macy's concern is not with any particular issue but rather how we approach any issue at all. The chapters in the book are focused on the fundamental Buddhist teaching of dependent co-arising. Macy insists that to apply this teaching to our life is to consider our world and its creatures as nothing less than an extension of ourselves. It is only in such an approach that we create a community of intentionality and mutual help.

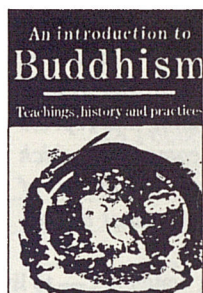


The Tao of Inner Peace
Diane Dreher
HarperPerennial, San Francisco, 1990

Judging by the spate of books on Tao Teh Ching in the last couple of years, it would seem that this venerable Taoist text is the latest spiritual "flavor of the month." The author has traveled the linear trajectory, especially the northern California

variety, of political activism of the sixties, human potential movement of the seventies, and New Age entrepreneurship of the eighties. As she says, "My friends and I tried very hard to be peaceful. But something was missing. The conflict remained." That would seem a perfectly valid reason to adapt Tao Teh Ching to a peculiar New Age blend of "trying to find peace." On page 105, you can read that the color yellow "stimulates the intellect and activates our personal power," and "I wear red when I want to increase my energy." Presumably, it would be useful to become a Tibetan lama and wear red robes all the time!

This book does to Tao Teh Ching what Wall Street did to Musashi's "Book of Five Rings" and Sun Tzu's "Art of War" a few years ago. The "Tao of Inner Peace" is a harmlessly pleasant book but smacks too much of spiritual materialism. Nonetheless, if one were to practice all the suggestions contained in book, chances are one could find some peace, however provisional and transitory.



An Introduction to Buddhism
Peter Harvey
Cambridge University Press,
New York, 1990

This book is one of the growing number of books providing a general survey of Buddhism and its history and beliefs. The publishers claim that it is intended as a textbook for students of "Religious or Asian Studies," but it lacks the elan and the elegance of Prof. Richard Robinson's classic "The Buddhist Religion." The writing is often pedestrian and at times reads like a hastily arranged catalog.

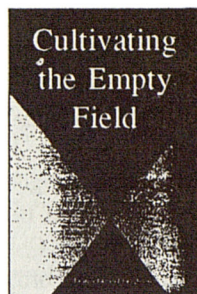
The strongest chapters in the book are on devotion, ethics, monastic sangha, and meditation techniques throughout Buddhist history. These topics tend to be given low priority in similar books; for that reason alone this text is a welcome addition. However, the section on Buddhism beyond Asia is rather disappointing. The author, a British professor, seems to lack a first-hand familiarity with the tremendous variety and vitality of Buddhism in America. Overall, "An Introduction to Buddhism" remains a useful, preliminary compendium of information about Buddhist practices and beliefs.

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Cultivating the Empty Field

Translated by Taigen Daniel Leighton
North Point Press, San Francisco, 1991

American interest in Zen has been aroused primarily through the Rinzai (*Chinese: Lin chi*) lineage and its koan



system. Shunryu Suzuki Roshi's endearing "Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind" remains one of the very few books to expose American students to "shikantaza" (just sitting). Shikantaza is the practice of Soto Zen, the other significant surviving school of Zen in China and Japan. While Dogen studies have become almost a cottage

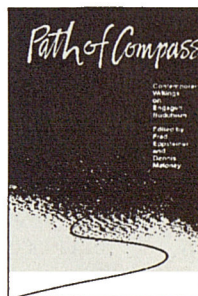
industry in graduate schools in this country, little information is available in English on the great Chinese masters of the Soto Zen school.

"Cultivating the Empty Field" is a translation of the "Extensive Record" of Zen Master Hongzhi Zhengjue (*Chinese: Cheng-chueh*), the great Chinese master of the twelfth century (1091-1157). Hongzhi's influence on Dogen was profound, and in the excellent introduction, the translators trace the various strands of Hongzhi's influence both in China and Japan. This very short translation is profoundly moving and a delight to read. □

The Path of Compassion: Writings on Socially Engaged Buddhism

Edited by Fred Eppsteiner.
Buddhist Peace Fellowship and Parallax Press, 1988

Reviewed by Eric Kolvig, Ph.D.



Why review a book this old? It is an important one, more timely than ever. This was the first major work on socially-engaged Buddhism, and it is still the best primer on the subject.

There is no way to sum up this compendium of splendid variety and texture by twenty Western and Asian writers. But these words from Gary Snyder's brilliant essay sound one of the book's major themes: "The mercy of the West has been social revolution; the mercy of the East has been individual insight into the basic self/void. We need both."

We need both, but getting both is not going to be easy. As several of these writers point out, our spiritual tradition generally does not support our doing both. According to the Pali canon, the Buddha himself was an exemplary social activist: challenging the oppressive caste

system, describing the causes of social ills and the means to social well-being, detailing guidelines for good governance, intervening in wars in an effort to make peace, insisting on ethical action as the necessary foundation of liberation.

Though early Buddhism was a force for social good, for various historical reasons the social impulse of Buddhism was squelched when it moved from India to China and from there to Korea and Japan. Since then, according to Robert Aitken and others in this book, Buddhism has tended to accept or ignore the tyrannies and injustices of whatever political systems it has been obliged to live with. Worse, it has often made unholy alliances with those tyrannies to become part and parcel of abusive power. Hence the sad irony of Buddhist temples training samurai to kill and be killed with perfect equanimity. Even today Japanese temples contract with corporations to train new employees for obedience. This failure to oppose oppression has tended to lock Asian Buddhism out of most modern social revolutions.

Add to this failure yet another — detailed in an essay by the Thai scholar-activist Sulak Sivaraksa — and you get some notion why the Buddha's Dharma has been dying out in the East so rapidly in our century. Sclerotic Asian Buddhism has not been able to cope adequately with the linked modern ills of colonialism, urbanization, industrialization, and materialism.

Most of us Western Buddhists have adopted Asian Buddhist attitudes toward authority and politics. What price does the world pay for our apolitical attitudes and social passivity? "The ancient teachers did not live in a world as ruined and miserable and precarious as ours," writes Nelson Foster. "We cannot know how they would have responded had they felt the urgency of the atomic age." To be awake in this grievous age is to feel that urgency. Writer after writer in this anthology eloquently calls us to realize our complete interconnectedness with all that is, to move off our duffs, and to express the truth of the living Dharma through compassionate action.

Compassion is the natural and spontaneous bridge between contemplation and fulfilling our Bodhisattva vows by acting to relieve suffering. "The philosophy is kindness," writes the Dalai Lama. Just this is the basis for a Buddhist liberation theology. To tranquilize our minds is not enough in these times, says Thich Nhat Hanh; it is not the Way.

The explosion of bombs, the burning of napalm, the violent death of our neighbors and relatives, the pressure of time, noise and pollution, the lonely crowds — these have all been created by the disruptive course of our economic growth. They are all sources of mental illness, and they must be ended.

"The teaching itself is poisoned if it is not embodied in

the world," argues Nelson Foster. "The hungry need food dharma, the tortured need justice dharma, and the besieged need peace dharma. If we can help and do not, then we have falsified the Dharma, and all our 'protection of the teaching' is a vain, elitist exercise."

Gary Snyder's three-page piece in this collection is a masterpiece of succinct power, worth in itself the price of the book. It could serve as the manifesto of engaged Buddhism:

There is nothing in human nature or the requirements of human social organization which intrinsically requires that a society be contradictory, repressive, and productive of violent and frustrated personalities . . .

The joyous and voluntary poverty of Buddhism becomes a positive force. The traditional harmlessness and avoidance of taking life in any form has nation-shaking implications. The practice of meditation, for which one needs only "the ground beneath one's feet," wipes out mountains of junk being pumped into the mind by the mass media and supermarket universities. The belief in a serene and generous fulfillment of natural loving desires destroys ideologies which blind, maim, and repress — and points the way to a kind of community which would amaze "moralists" and transform armies of men who are fighters because they cannot be lovers.

This is a fine, important book. But watch out — to live these teachings is to risk your life.

Eric Kolvig lives in Leverett, Massachusetts, and teaches Vipassana meditation. □

*Those who make distinctions fail to separate;
those who argue fail to divide.
How can this be?
The sage cherishes all things within his heart;
ordinary people discriminate between them
and display their discriminations to others--
but those who make divisions do not see clearly.*
Chuang-tzu

*There is only
the merging, change
and exchange
of things that have merged
and their self-nature is only
a matter of words.*

Empedocles