

May 22, 2009

Dear friends,

It is the end of exam week, when our community departs for the ten directions, expressing the teaching, "Everything changes." There is so much for which I feel deep gratitude: it is a true honor to share this path with all of you.

Of all the gifts, the panel we held this Thursday stands out among them as a shining treasure: three alums, speaking about the joy and insight of their life paths, and the ways these practices are a vehicle for learning, which awaken us to our "need for connection and community" and ground us in the truth of who we are. The bright energy in the room-- its sense of connection and community-- reflected this. So our parting words are taken from the panel:

Q. In Amherst, Diana referenced the need we have, to change our way of life for a future to be possible. Contemplative practices support this shift. In order to do the outer work, we have to do the inner work. Could each of you comment on this?

Diana: We're really seeing the end of the industrial age. The industrial revolution is over, and with that, the end of the view it perpetuated: our mind as a machine, our body as a machine, etc. We need to move into an entirely different consciousness, and social system, in which we follow the rules of nature: we learn, appreciate, follow and understand the laws of nature. That kind of shift in consciousness can happen relatively quickly, only if people find someplace within themselves, that is a touchstone for attaining that truth, and insight that the way we are living now, just can't continue. It has to be a birth of consciousness within individuals. It can happen very quickly. I happen to think it has started already and that you all are a part of that.

When I gave this talk in Amherst—for years I have said, in order to create a world our that is safe for our grandchildren. The second part has been theoretical except now, I have a grandson. To hold him and sit with him is the most profound meditation that you can possibly imagine: thinking about his life. Our work is to make the world safe for him and for all the world's children, all the world's creatures. If this isn't the most profound teaching I

have discovered within Buddhism I don't know what is.

Mary Gottman: I will continue on President Walsh's talk, and her words on the paradigm shift. With all the upheaval going on, we are in a time of *Kairos*, which stands for crisis. Institutions must change. There will be, according to my thesis study and research I've done following graduation, a way out of Kairos. I am one of the people who believe that this change in consciousness will bring us out of it. What we will need to do is to stop rushing around. Simplify, lower our amount of consumption; there are many things we can do. Meditation is an important part of this. We need to change our way of life. And less is more.

Tsunmala: Many people ask me, what can we do. I respond, look at the human mind. It is so powerful. Look at what we have created with the human mind. We can create or destroy the world just like that. We have to decide whether we are going to use our human mind to create cause for happiness or suffering. So it is very important to remember we have that potential within us because of our mind. His Holiness often talks about "universal responsibility". That starts with us. The only mind we can change is ours. We can never change another's mind. If you walk around the world, you have two choices: to cover the earth with leather, or to put shoes on your feet. The result is the change. When someone said to Mother Teresa, "I can't do the work you did", she replied, "My entire work started with one person." And so we have to remember, even though we may feel like we cannot make a difference, we can. It starts with mindful awareness. The definition my teacher gives of *Dharma*, is "to expand your mind to think of others." When we expand our mind to think of others, we have compassion for others. We think about how what we are doing is going to impact them. If everyone thought about that, the essential shift happens. That will make a change.

On this note:

A peaceful heart makes a peaceful person

A peaceful person makes a peaceful family.

A peaceful family makes a peaceful community.

A peaceful community makes a peaceful nation.

A peaceful nation makes a peaceful world.

--Maha Ghosananda

Please find attached, a new booklist, for your summer reading--
We will keep up the Monday evening sits for Seniors until June first, and the
noon sits until June 15th.
We will have sitting this week MONDAY 12:30- 1 pm and WEDNESDAY 12:30- 1
pm, and MONDAY 7- 8:15 pm.

May you be filled with loving kindness. May you experience the innate
joy of being alive--
May your hearts and minds awaken; may you be free!
all the best in the Dharma

Ji Hyang