

# Reflections



Winter Issue  
February 2010  
Vol. 3 Issue 1

*A Quarterly E-Magazine of the Buddhist Sangha of Bucks County*

Three disciplines for progress  
on the Buddhist path are  
study, reflection and meditation.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Editor's Comments .....	1
The Four Dignities .....	1
In Memory of Carl Tatro .....	2
Bodhisattva Vows .....	3
Buddha Goes to the Movies..	4
The Way of Wisdom .....	7
Contact Us! .....	11

**“Never use the  
power of the word  
against yourself.”**

*The Voice of Knowledge*  
by Don Miguel Ruiz

## Editor's Comments:

*2010 has arrived and is moving along at a rapid pace. The moments fly and we each must assess how to best use each hour of each day. Walking through those hours with joy and peace are gifts we give ourselves. May the articles in this issue aid you on your journey.*

– Dan –

## The Four Dignities

In Tibetan Buddhism the Four Dignities are mythical animals which represent various aspects of the Bodhisattva attitude, strength or power, protection, confidence, fearlessness and cheerfulness. They are characteristics we all strive for.

**THE GARUDA**  
**Main quality is**  
**Wisdom**



The Garuda is daring and fearless and abides in the north. With great strength and power it soars beyond without holding back. It symbolizes freedom from hopes and fears, the vast mind without reference point. It is a powerful antidote to the negative influences.

A large mythical bird or bird-like creature that appears in both Hindu and Buddhist mythology. They combine the characteristics of animals and divine beings, and may be considered to be among the lowest devas. The exact size of the garuda is uncertain, but its wings are said to have a span of many miles. This may be a poetic exaggeration, but it is also said that when a garuda's wings flap, they create hurricane-like winds that darken the sky and blow down houses. A human being is so small compared to a garuda that a man can hide in the plumage of one without being noticed (Kākātī Jātaka, J.327). They are also capable of tearing up entire banyan trees from their roots and carrying them off.

*continued on next page*

## In Loving Memory of Carl Tatro

My journey this year has been a long good bye to my husband, Carl. Alzheimer's Disease robbed his brain and then his body. My friends at the Sangha, the Dharma, readings of Buddhist literature and mostly, meditation, were there for me when everything closed in and threatened to rob me of my sanity.

Living in the moment is exactly what an Alzheimer's patient does. Every day is new and interesting (to a degree) for them, because in many instances, a friend, a pet, a meal, a shower or the sky is not remembered from the day before. So you see, I was able to learn from him in many ways.

The most heartbreaking loss for me was when he no longer knew who I was...although he knew he was with someone he trusted. He was my best friend, my muse and my sweet loving husband for more than 28 years.

My hope for everyone is to live each day as if it is your last with your loved one, and most of all, as if it is *your* last day.

Metta, Eloise Tatro

### THE SNOW LION

Main quality is ***Fearlessness***



The Snow Lion resides in the East and represents unconditional cheerfulness, a mind free of doubt, clear and precise. It has a beauty and dignity resulting from a body and mind that are synchronized. The Snow Lion has a youthful, vibrant energy of goodness and a natural sense of delight.

### THE TIGER

Main quality is ***Confidence***



The Tiger abides in the South, symbolizing unconditional confidence, disciplined awareness, kindness and modesty. It is relaxed yet energized; resting in a gentle state of being that has a natural sense of satisfaction and fulfillment, referring to the state of enlightenment.

*continued on next page*

“The aim of life  
is to live,  
and to live means  
to be aware -  
joyously, drunkenly,  
serenely,  
divinely, aware.”

Henry Miller

**THE DRAGON**  
Main quality is  
**Power**



The Dragon thunders in the sky with the sound of compassion that awakens us from delusion and increases what we can know through hearing. Dragons have the power of complete communication. Just as we do not see sound, we do not see dragons -- at least not usually.

---

## **Bodhisattva Vows**


by Taitaku Pat Phelan

There's a story about two monks – I think in a Catholic monastery – one of them noticed the other one smoking during evening prayers and said, “Why are you smoking? When I asked for permission to smoke while I was praying, I was told, ‘No. When you pray, you should only pray.’” To which the other man responded, “Well, I asked if it was alright to pray while I was smoking.” There is a subtle difference in emphasis: do you smoke while you are praying, or do you pray while you are smoking? We hear it said that, “when you sit zazen, you should just sit, and when you chant, just chant.”

Renewing our intention to wake up as we go about our activity is a way to bring practice into our daily life. We start wherever we are, with whatever we're doing, by fostering our intention to wake up, or by fostering our determination to untie our knots for the benefit of all beings. This is the Bodhisattva Vow. The Bodhisattva vows, out of compassion, not to enter nirvana until all beings have entered nirvana. This means the Bodhisattva practices not for her or his enlightenment alone, but for the enlightenment of all beings. The Bodhisattva vows to remain in this world of ignorance and confusion, vows to be willing to experience whatever living beings experience, until all beings are liberated.

Sometimes we say the bodhisattva's vow as, “Sentient beings are numberless, I vow to save them,” or “I vow to liberate them,” and sometimes we say it as, “Beings are numberless, I vow to awaken with them.” I've also heard it translated as, “Beings are without end, I vow to be one of them.” This reminds me of a retreat I read about. Tetsugen Bernie Glassman is a Zen

*continued on next page*



## **Buddha Goes to the Movies**

### **“A Single Man”**

*Starring Colin Firth , Julianne Moore, Nicholas Holt, Matthew Goode, Jon Kortajarena*

This movie is based on the novel by the same. The novel was written by the famous gay author, Christopher Isherwood. It is set in Los Angeles in 1962. A college professor has lost his long term lover / partner and is battling with grief and struggling to find new meaning in his life. The movie addresses the issue of how we see- or more accurately do not see - minorities and their psycho-social emotional needs. It forces a look at equanimity or the lack of it not just on George -the grieving professor - but others marginalized and unacknowledged by society. Beautifully done the movie does justice to the spectacularly well written book.

*continued on next page*

teacher in Yonkers, NY, who trained with Maezumi Roshi at the Zen Center of Los Angeles. For several years now, Tetsugen’s group has been involved in providing job training and developing housing for homeless people. Last spring he led a retreat on the streets of New York City. For two to five days the participants ate in soup kitchens, slept in the streets, sat zazen twice a day together outdoors, and, they said, spent most of their days looking for a place to relieve themselves.

Usually, when we think of helping others, we think of giving them something: food, shelter, money, health care, or education. These are certainly necessary; but what is the most important thing to have or to give, and can it be given? For me, mental stability or mental health is the most important quality. We could say that enlightenment is the ultimate mental health.

Many of us know people whose physical needs are met, or are even quite well met, who live in mental torment. Of course, when someone lacks food, or shelter, or medicine, it affects their state of mind. I’m not suggesting that we don’t need to help people in this way. But we can also benefit beings by meeting them, by being open to them, by seeing them and accepting them just as they are, without pulling back or closing ourselves off. In Buddhism, the meaning of compassion is wishing to relieve the suffering of others. The root of all suffering is duality, feeling separate. When we meet others as our self, we support nonduality. I think one of the ways to express compassion is to not turn away – from the suffering of others, or from our own pain. When we try to protect ourselves from pain, our own or someone else’s, we build barriers which reinforce our feeling of being separate.



During Tetsugen’s retreat, the participants didn’t work in a soup kitchen or a shelter, although I think his group also does that at other times. They joined the homeless people in their activity of being homeless. The most common response from the participants in the retreat was that now when they see homeless people they see them as people. They no longer avoid looking at them, or see them as a blur, or label them as Homeless People. To some extent, this retreat is about helping others by changing our attitude

*continued on next page*

## “The Cove”

*Starring Richard O’Barry ,  
Simon Hutchins, Mandy  
Rae-Cruickshank, Lirk Krack ,  
Davis Rastovich*

In the 1960’s Richard O’Barry had a glamorous and well paying career as the trainer for popular TV show Flipper. For those of us who can remember the show it created a fascination with Dolphins and birthed the mega million dollar industry of Sea Parks, dolphin parks and so on. Which has lead to the horrendous slaughter and unimaginable cruelty to a species that is close to or perhaps surpasses humans in intelligence and range of emotion. Richard O’Barry has now dedicated his life to protecting them. Dolphins possess self awareness, and suffer greatly under the greedy hand of dolphin, porpoise, and whale hunter / killers. This movie documents the annual slaughter of thousands of these creatures in Taiji Japan where they are brutally rounded up. Places like Sea World and other tourist attractions buy the ones they want and the rest are ruthlessly killed. They are considered pests that eat too many of the ocean’s fish.

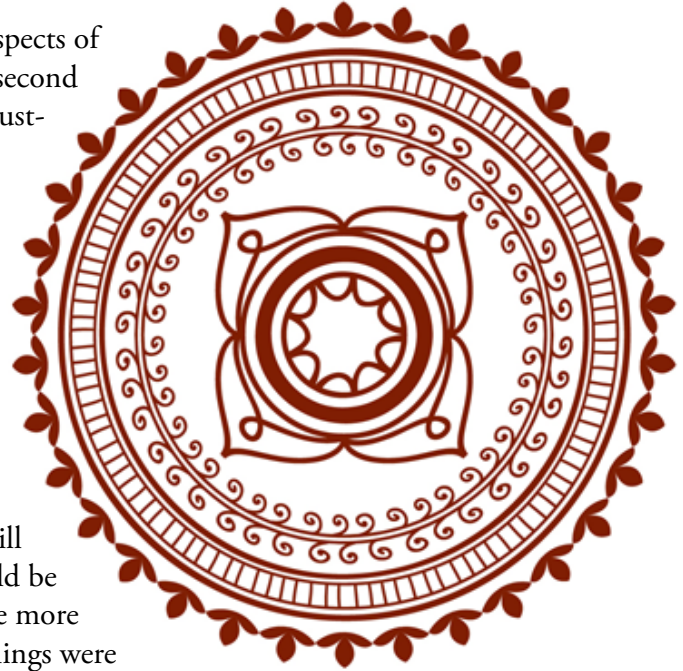
towards them. I’ve heard that Tetsugen worked with the homeless not just to benefit them, but also because, in helping them, he gained access to parts of himself that he had been shut off from. Being open to the difficulties of others can help us open up to the difficult parts of ourselves or our past. The enlightened way to give is to give because there is no difference between their need and my need, between their pain and my pain, between their joy and my joy. So, “Beings are numberless, I vow to be one of them, to be one with them.”

There are three other aspects of the Bodhisattva Vow. The second vow is, “Desires are inexhaustible, I vow to put an end to them.” By “desires” we mean both the big, passionate, overwhelming desires, like the ones we see in the movies, as well as the small, subtle cravings, or wants. When things are going well, or when we are feeling fairly content, our tendency is still to imagine that things could be better, if we had just a little more than what we have, or if things were just a little bit different from the way they

are. This wanting keeps us in a subtle state of unrest or dissatisfaction. This underlying state of dissatisfaction is propelled by our judgement and comparative thinking. Whenever we feel dissatisfied, there is craving, and ignorance is the root of craving – ignorance of the truth, or the way things really are. We have replaced the word “desires” in our translation with the word “delusions,” which includes desires and all kinds of confusion. “Delusions are inexhaustible, I vow to end them.” The phrase “to end them” can also be translated as “to cut through them,” or “to penetrate them”. Our effort in practice is not to stop desire as much as it is to cut through delusions, to see through our delusions, to see our delusions for what they are. Thich Nhat Hanh translates the second vow as: “The causes of suffering are without end; I vow to end them.”

The third vow is, “Dharma Gates are boundless, I vow to master them”, or, “I vow to enter them.” “Dharma Gates” refers to the “knowledge of all modes,” or all the methods of practice that lead to awakening, which are numerous as there are people. Dharma Gates also means the Buddha’s teaching or Buddhist doctrine. In Buddhist doctrine, there are 84,000 delusive paths. Each path, if we practice with it, may become a path of realization, a door to enlightenment. Dogen’s disciple, Koun Ejo said, “Even if 84,000 idle thoughts arise (in zazen), each and every thought may become the light of

*continued on next page*



## Lama Gursam RETREAT



**Save the Dates**  
**Friday May 21, 2010**  
General Talk 7-9 pm  
**Saturday May 22, 2010**  
Day Long Retreat  
Held at the  
**Makefield Friends  
Meetinghouse**



prajna, the light of non-discriminating wisdom.” I remember Katagiri Roshi saying that our problems are Buddha’s gift to us. He explained that the parts of our lives that go smoothly are much harder to bring our practice to, while painful or difficult situations demand our attention, demand that we practice. So our delusions and our practice go hand in hand.

The fourth vow is, “Buddha’s Way is unsurpassable, I vow to attain it,” or, “I vow to become it.” The way of Buddha, Buddha’s practice, Buddha’s enlightenment, anuttara samyak sambodhi – the unsurpassed, complete, and perfect enlightenment – is inconceivable. We are never separate from it, yet, we need to practice in order to realize it. We vow to become, to embody this inconceivable realization. This vow is also translated as, “Buddha’s Way is unsurpassable, I vow to follow through.” Sometimes when people hear these vows, they become discouraged. They feel that the vows are too idealistic, that they are impossible to achieve. Why should we promise, why should we vow to do something that is impossible? What is the usefulness in doing this?

In Buddhism we say actions are done through body, speech, and mind. Each action is a cause carrying some momentum which produces an effect. When we take these vows, an intention is created, the seed of an effort to follow through. Because these vows are so vast, they are, in a sense, undefinable. We continually define and redefine them as we renew our intention to fulfill them. If you have a well-defined task with a beginning, middle, and end, you can estimate or measure the effort needed. But the Bodhisattva Vows are immeasurable. The intention we arouse, the effort we cultivate when we call forth these vows, extends us beyond the limits of our personal identities.

How are we to practice these vows? One way is to investigate or to ask yourself, “How can I save all beings while driving my car? How can I awaken with all beings while taking my coffee break? How can I see through delusion while buying groceries?” Katagiri Roshi said, “How do you save all sentient beings? By chewing your food quietly during the zendo meal so you don’t disturb the person next to you.” Asking the question, “What does this vow mean?” is another way to practice with these vows. When we dedicate our activity to the enlightenment of all beings, each action supports enlightenment. Whether you investigate “saving all beings,” or dedicate your activity to waking up, both bring our attention to our intention.

## The Way of Wisdom

by Edward Conze

Spiritual progress depends on the emergence of five cardinal virtues — *faith, vigor, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom*. As we progress, new spiritual forces gradually take over, until in the end the five cardinal virtues dominate and shape everything we do feel and think.

**1. Faith:** Faith is called “the seed,” and without it the plant of spiritual life cannot start at all. Without faith one can, as a matter of fact, do nothing worthwhile at all. This faith is much more than the mere acceptance of beliefs. It requires the combination of four factors — intellectual, volitional, emotional and social.

1. Intellectually – In any kind of religion some assumptions are taken on trust and accepted on the authority of scriptures or teachers. Generally speaking, faith is, however, regarded as only a preliminary step, as a merely provisional state. In due course direct spiritual awareness will know that which faith took on trust, and longed to know...

“As soon as  
you trust yourself  
you will know  
how to live.”

J. Wolfgang Von Goethe

Watermelons  
Green Buddhas  
On the fruit stand  
We eat the smile  
And spit out the teeth

Charles Simic



What then in Buddhism are the objects of faith? They are essentially four: (1) the belief in karma and rebirth; (2) the acceptance of the basic teachings about the nature of reality, such as conditioned co-production, emptiness, etc.; (3) confidence in the “Three Refuges,” the Buddha, the Dharma and the Order; and (4) a belief in the efficacy of the prescribed practices, and in Nirvana as the final way out of our difficulties...

2. Volitionally – ...faith implies a resolute and courageous act of will. It combines the steadfast resolution that one will do a thing with the self-confidence that one can do it. The opposites to this aspect of faith are timidity, cowardice, fear, wavering, and a shabby, mean and calculating mentality...

*continued on next page*

**“Change  
is not made  
without  
inconvenience  
even from  
worse to better.”**

Samuel Johnson

3. Emotionally – ...faith is an attitude of serenity and lucidity. Its opposite here is worry, the state of being troubled by many things. It is said that someone who has faith loses the “five terrors,” i.e., he ceases to worry about the necessities of life, about loss of reputation, death, unhappy rebirth and the impression he may make on an audience...

4. Socially – ...and that is more difficult to understand, faith involves trust and confidence in the Buddha and the Sangha. Its opposite here is the state of being submerged in cares, which spring from either social pressure or social isolation. By placing one’s reliance on spiritual forces one gains the strength to disregard public opinion and social discouragement. We cannot claim that we fully know the doctrine of karma and rebirth to be true. We take it partly on faith. And this faith of ours is maintained less by our dialectical skill as by the virtues of patience and courage. Life nowhere offers a one hundred per cent security, and for our convictions least of all.

One last word about tolerance, without which faith remains raw and unsure of itself. It is a perpetual trial to our faith that we should constantly meet with people who believe differently. We are easily tempted to wish this irritant removed, to coerce others, if only by argument, and to annihilate them, if only by dubbing them fools. Intolerance for people of other faiths, though often mistaken for ardor, betrays nothing so much as doubts within oneself.



**2. Vigor:** Little need be said about the need for being energetic if one wants to achieve something. Without vigor, without strenuous effort, without perseverance, one obviously cannot make much progress. The fact that faith and vigor are virtues does not, however, imply that they are good all through, and that, regardless of the consequences, they should be strengthened at all times. Excess is to be deprecated, even in virtues. All the five virtues must be regarded as one whole. Their balance and harmony is almost as important as the virtues themselves.

They support each other to some extent, but they also stand in each other’s way. The one must sometimes be used to correct the excess of the other. In this way, concentration must come to the rescue of the latent faults of vigor. When vigor and energy have it all their own way, tranquillity is in danger. We all know people with a large dash of adrenalin in their blood, who are always busy, perhaps even “madly efficient,” but not particularly restful. Vigor by itself leads to excitement, and has to be controlled by a development of concentrated calm.

*continued on next page*



Similarly, faith alone, without wisdom, can easily become mere credulity. Wisdom alone can teach what is worth believing.

**3. Mindfulness:** Mindfulness is desirable everywhere, like a seasoning of salt in all sauces, like the prime minister in all state functions. Hence it is said: ‘The Lord has declared mindfulness to be useful everywhere, for the

mind finds refuge in mindfulness and mindfulness is its protector. Without mindfulness there can be no exertion or restraint of the mind.

If one were asked what distinguishes Buddhism from all other systems of thought, one would have to answer that it is the dharma-theory and the stress laid on mindfulness. Mindfulness is not only the seventh of the steps of the holy eightfold path, the third of the five virtues, and the first of the seven limbs of enlightenment. On occasions it is almost equated with Buddhism itself. So we read at the beginning of the

Satipatthana Sutta<sup>9</sup> that “the four applications of mindfulness are the one and only way (ekayano maggo) that leads beings to purity, to the transcending of sorrow and lamentation, to the appeasement of pain and sadness, to entrance upon the right method and to the realization of Nirvana.”

What then is “mindfulness”? The Abhidharma, guided by the etymology of the Sanskrit term (smṛiti from smṛi, “to remember”), defines it as an act of remembering which prevents ideas from “floating away,” and which fights forgetfulness, carelessness and distraction. This definition by itself, though correct, does not really make the function of this virtue very clear to us today. The theoretical assumptions which underlie the various practices summed up in the word “mindfulness” are too much taken for granted. What one assumes is that the mind consists of two disparate parts — a depth which is calm and quiet, and a surface which is disturbed. The surface layer is in perpetual agitation and turmoil. The center, at the bottom of the mind, beyond both the conscious and the unconscious mind as modern psychologists understand it, is quite still. The depth is, however, usually overlaid to such an extent that people remain incredulous when told of a submerged spot of stillness in their inmost hearts. In most cases the surface is so turbulent that the calm of the depth can be realized only in rare intervals.

Mindfulness and concentration are the two virtues which are concerned with the development of inward calm. The principal enemies of spiritual quietude are: (1) the senses; (2) the movements of the body; (3) the passions, wants and desires; and (4) discursive thinking. They have the power to be

*continued on next page*



## Dust of Snow

The way the crow  
Shook down on me  
The dust of snow  
From the hemlock tree  
Has given me heart  
A change of mood  
And saved some part  
Of a day I rued

Robert Frost

## Those Winter Sundays

by Robert Hayden

Sundays too my father got up  
early  
And put his clothes on in the  
blueback cold,  
then with cracked hands that  
ached  
from labor in the weekday  
weather made  
banked fires blaze. No one  
ever thanked him.

I'd wake and hear the cold  
splintering, breaking.  
When the rooms were warm,  
he'd call,  
and slowly I would rise and  
dress,  
fearing the chronic angers of  
that house,

Speaking indifferently to him,  
who had driven out the cold  
and polished my good shoes  
as well.  
What did I know, what did I  
know  
of love's austere and lonely  
offices?

enemies when: (1) they are not subjected to any discipline; and (2) when the ego identifies itself with what takes place on the surface of the mind, participating heartily in it, and the illusion arises that these activities are “my” doings, “my” concerns and the sphere in which “I” live and have my being. When thus busy with worldly things, we have neither strength nor freedom. In order to conquer these enemies of spiritual quietude we must: (1) withdraw the senses from their objects, as the tortoise draws in its limbs; (2) keep watch on our muscular movements; (3) cease wanting anything, and dissociate all wants from the ego; and (4) cut off discursive thinking.

Mindfulness is the name given to the measures which we take to protect the patch of inner calm, which may at first not seem very large. One, as it were, draws a line round this domain and at its boundaries keeps watch on trespassers. The expectation is that conscious attention will disintegrate the power of the enemies, diminish their number, and dissociate them from the ego. However diverse in nature the numerous exercises which come under the heading of mindfulness may seem to be, they all have in common this one purpose, that of guarding the incipient and growing calm in one's heart.



First, as regards the sensory stimuli, there is the “restraint of the senses,” also called the “guarding of the doors of the senses.” For two reasons sense stimulation may disturb inner calm: (1) because it gives an occasion for undesirable states, like greed, hate, etc., to invade and flood the mind; (2) because attention to the sensory world, however necessary and apparently innocuous, distracts from the object of wisdom, which is the emptiness of dharmas. One cannot grasp what is meant by “restraint of the sense dominants,” if one regards it as quite a natural thing that the mind should dwell on sense-linked objects.

The capacity of sense-experience to compel the mind to act in a certain way is greatly diminished if each sensory stimulus is examined at the point

*continued on next page*



## Contact Us!

**REFLECTIONS** is seeking submissions. Everyone is invited to contribute. Submission topics can include but are not limited to the following:

Letters to the Editor and suggestions.

Poetry (any style)

Articles about your spiritual journey and reflections

Buddhist thoughts on a contemporary movies, novels or other books.

Review of Buddhist Literature (books, magazines, etc.)

Information on Buddhist resources and area events.

Deadlines for submission for the Spring 2010 issue is April 15, 2010  
SEND SUBMISSIONS TO:

BSBC19067@yahoo.com

Also use the above email address to sign up friends who would like to receive REFLECTIONS on a regular basis.

where it passes the threshold of consciousness. It is not so bad that one should see things, hear sounds, etc., but it is a threat to spiritual health when one gets interested and entranced, when one takes up what is seen and heard and seizes on it as a sign of what matters.

The practice of mindfulness is not confined to taking note of what enters the mind by way of the sense-organs. One also tries to determine what is allowed to enter.

Secondly, as regards the muscular movements of the body ... It is important to mindfulness that one should consciously notice the position and movement of the body when walking, eating, speaking, etc., and suppress and correct those movements which are uncontrolled, hasty and uncoordinated. This practice can, it is true, not be carried out at all times. .... And, of course, we should not forget that the mindful attention to muscular movements includes the breathing practices, which are a most fruitful source of insight.

Where we have to face the disturbance of the passions and of stray thoughts in general, the defense of our inward calm becomes more difficult. What matters to a Buddhist is that he should be strong in faith, vigor, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom. A mindful man is well informed about his own mental condition. His capacity for introspection is highly developed. And his interest in his own mind will not really make him self-centered as long as he remembers that he has to deal with the rise and fall of impersonal processes. In addition, in the case of the higher mental states, rational clarity is imperative if constant self-deception and wasteful groping in the dark are to be avoided.

**4. Concentration:** Concentration (samadhi) continues the work of mindfulness. It deepens our capacity to regain the peaceful calm of our inner nature. In its simplest form, concentration is the narrowing of the field of attention in a manner and for a time determined by the will. The mind is made one-pointed, does not waver, does not scatter itself, and it becomes steady like the flame of a lamp in the absence of wind. Without a certain degree of one-pointedness no mental activity at all can take place. Each mental act lasts, strictly speaking, for one moment only, and is at once followed by another. The function of concentration is to provide some stability in this perpetual flux. *continued on next page*



This E-Mag's purpose is to nurture the Buddhist practice of reflection and contemplation. It is sponsored by the Buddhist Sangha of Bucks County; however, opinions of the authors and contributors are not to be construed as official policies or positions of the Buddhist Sangha of Bucks County; unless clearly and expressly stated to be so.



**5. Wisdom:** And so we come to wisdom (Skr.: prajna; Pali pañña), the highest virtue of all three stages of wisdom, (1) learning about what tradition has to say concerning the psychological and ontological categories which form the subject-matter of wisdom; (2) discursive reflection on the basic facts of life; and (3) meditational development...the wisdom which consists of learning and reflection should not be despised. The main stream of Buddhist tradition has always greatly esteemed learning.

The second stage, after learning, is reflection, which is an operation of the intellect. Even the relative beginner can greatly increase his wisdom by discursive meditations on the basic facts of life. Finally, it is on the level of mental development (bhavana) that this meditational technique reaches its maturity, and then it does, indeed, require the aid of mindfulness and concentration. To the average person nowadays "wisdom" seems to denote a compound made up of such qualities as sagacity, prudence, a well-developed sense of values, serenity, and sovereignty over the world won by the understanding of the mode of its operation. The Buddhist conception of "wisdom" is not unlike this, but more precise.

Wisdom may be held to concern itself with three possible topics: (1) true reality; (2) the meaning of life; (3) the conduct of life. Buddhist tradition assumes that the second and third depend on the first. In its essence wisdom is the strength of mind which permits contact with the true reality. It is because ignorance, and not sin, is the root evil that wisdom is regarded as the highest virtue. Wisdom is the capacity to meditate in certain ways about the dharmic constituents of the universe. Objects are not what they appear to be. Their true reality, in which they stand out as dharmas, is opposed to their appearance to commonsense, and much strength of wisdom is required to go beyond the deceptive appearance and to penetrate to the reality of dharmas themselves.



---

### *Buddhist Sangha of Bucks County*

Meeting every Monday evening  
at the Friends Meeting House  
65 North Main St. Yardley, PA 19067  
Service and Meditation 7pm - 8pm  
Group Discussion and Tea 8pm - 9pm  
All are welcome to attend.  
Visit [www.buddhistsangha.com](http://www.buddhistsangha.com)

