

The Inner Passage

by: ko shin, Bob Hanson, Poet & Photographer
& His Friends

Enjoy!



KOSTEN

[Signature]
D. Jansen

The Inner Passage

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Some of this poetry will be on You Tube:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/zenman1940>

Ko shin's Blogs:

<http://chasingwindmillswwhynt.blogspot.com/>

June 2010

<http://adharmabumreportingfromnaropa.blogspot.com/>

June/July, 2011

www.2011adharmabumreportingagainfromnaropa.blogspot.com

These pages are dedicated to my family and friends, especially, Karen, Adia, Alessandria, Houston, Natasha, Seth, Finn, Elisa, Tanya, Willie, Anika, William, Orlando, Elena, Davy, Akila, Zak, Dan, Katie, Liv and Jack.

I want to thank in a special way my grade school & lifelong friend Roger Sween and his wife Pat. Roger took the time to read through the draft and edit and make wonderful suggestions. Also many thanks to Brandy Lennert, whose skills as a graphic designer were very needed and helpful!

There are so many, thanks, especially:

Julie, Lisa, Anne Waldman, Jaime Manrique, all my colleagues and teachers at Naropa each summer, the fine friends at Woodland Pattern Book Center on East Locust in Milwaukee, the Appleton Reading group, Vicki and the gang at the Princeton Public Library, the Thursday Morning "group", Ed Ruen, James Mosley and the Hairy Potter, Mark Diamon, all push me, encourage me, and correct me. My life has truly been graced and blessed. My teachers of Zen, Tozen Akiyama, Tonen O'Connor, & Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat, deep bows of gratitude.

Before Enlightenment, I chopped wood and carried water
After Enlightenment, I chopped wood and carried water
Wake Up
(Old Zen saying)

Many thanks to Roger Sween, lifelong friend, Bruce Dethlefsen, the present Wisconsin State Poet, Jaime Manrique, & Tyrone Williams, two of my teachers at Naropa University, 2010 & 2011 respectively, Gerald W. Bertsch, Poet and friend, Ralph Singh Rakieten, a friend from the Sikh Village of Gobind Sadan in India, E. J. McAdams, Poet and friend from New York City, Karen J. Ingvaldstad, my partner and wife, David Harris, Poet and friend, and The Brothahood, a Muslim Rap Group I met at the Parliament in Melbourne, December, 2009, James Mosley a colleague and friend from my days at Hephatha Lutheran Parish until now and Ed Ruen, a long time friend. and colleague, and Carlos Soto-Román, Naropa SWR, 2011, gave me permission to use their poems here. Enjoy!

Learning another spiritual path by three shots in the night, and death....

He heard three shots. It was late and given where he lived, not unusual. The shots were close; at least they felt that way. Jimmy ran to the window and carefully pushed the curtain back and saw a body lying on the sidewalk, just down the block from his two-up. He ran to call 911, but the sirens were already loud, maybe coming just around the corner from the precinct.

He ran back and took one more look, Oh god he thought, that looks like Ali, his high school friend and classmate.

He grabbed his coat and ran down the stairs and out into the street. Ali was gone, dead at a very young age.

Jimmy knew that Ali and his family were often the brunt of cultural & religious hatred. It seems, people, if they meet someone different, think their dangerous, or something. Since 9/11 it had gotten worse. "Why? Why my friend, was a Muslim?" The Hood was so culturally mixed. "It doesn't make sense" He thought.

It was a sad night, Jimmy hardly slept as I am sure as his neighbors experienced the same sense of fear, loneliness and anger. Everyone knew that someone in the hood was not happy with an Arab family living nearby. Could that be the reason, or was it theft or a promise broken. Ali was a friend to everyone.

Everyone showed up for the funeral at a Mosque on the other side of the city. It was nice, the burial was really an experience, lowering Ali into the ground and the prayers so for Jimmy, different as funerals go. What a way to learn and experience another spiritual practice. Three shots, a young life, what now? Jimmy took the bus home, a strange sense of quietness over took him. He had learned something about life today, death has a lesson for all of us. Three shots, silence broken, life taken, & life continues...Ali

(Read at the Student Reading Week Three, SWP, Naropa, 2011 and edited by Classmates and Dr. Williams)

A morning practice continues...

The candles are lit,
The smoke rises from the incense
The many Buddha's sit quietly, on the small altar,
joining me...
Counting the breath, the air comes in and then it goes out,
IN, I am awakened, OUT, I am filled with this moment,
Connected with all beings...reality...

Looking out into the forest,
Two deer come along, nibbling on the leaves and branches
So quiet, they are a gift of this meditation.

Then the morning ride, cold, bright, sun is up
Three young deer playing in the ditch along the road,
Finally, they run into the forest, freedom
Two large geese, suddenly, they noisily take flight
The sound of their voices ring through the air
The woods and wet lands, nearby,...freedom

When do we feel freedom ourselves?

A Poem by Dr. Tyrone Williams:

Severed Haikus

Wish you were there

where a flowerpot sits in the window, panting,

tongue hanging out, a

leaky faucet drumming its desperate aimless message

Dr Williams teaches at Xavier University and was Workshop Guide;
Week Three at Naropa University Summer Writing Program, 2011,
this poem is used with permission.

A Poem By Carlos Soto-Román

Afuera la palabra

es el antídoto.

Aunque en realidad

la palabra y el silencio

son la muralla del vacío.

Algo así como el límite

del desconcierto.

Outside, the word

is the antidote.

Although in fact

word and silence

are the walls of the void.

Something like the limit

of bewilderment.

Carlos Soto-Román was born in Valparaíso, Chile. He is the author of *Philadelphia's Notebooks* (Otoliths, 2011). He curates the cooperative anthology of contemporary U.S. Poetry *Elective Affinities*. He lives in Philadelphia, PA. Philadelphia, September 24th, 2011, I, Carlos Soto-Román, authorize Bob Hanson to use the poem of my authorship included in this document for the purposes he deems appropriate.



The steps of a Temple, Japan

Japan 1977-1991

What did you say, sugar? I had only been in Oubari a week or so

Sent to the store for sugar
I was a bit nervous, not scared...
I had been to the local market in this village
High in the mountains of Hokkaido before,
Always with someone who knew some Japanese,
This time, I was alone...
I loved going into this market, it had everything you would ever need to
Live high in the mountains, in a closed down coal mining village
The smells of food, oil, machinery, everything was wonderful...
So I bought the sugar after a real search,
And some help, from a kind elderly man,
I took my sugar home, feeling real good about my venture
But, it was salt,
Do you understand everything, I sure don't....

Oubari Mountain snows, so far away

Seem never to melt
The beauty feeds my heart

New Years Eve, 1977

Snow of course, very deep, sake also
Merry making, walking to the Temple at midnight
108 sounds of the Temple Bell
Welcoming another year
Aussie friend, lost in a snow bank going home
Sake wins!

(We found him, very happy and cold)

Steam cleanses the whole being

Six pm village time, all is well
The snow continues to fall,
The hot baths are open, the village gathers
It is dark already,
The hot steamy water
The chatter and silence
Wash down, rinse off, and slowly enter the caldron of new life

Outgrowing Your Self

It seems most of our life is about growing up

We outgrow our sneakers, pants – progressively, first our legs – and then the ever increasing waist band – and our shirts as our reach gets increasingly longer

Along the way we are chided to outgrow our bad habits – though we may attract a few others before we're done

But we never really grow up until we outgrow our self

A seed planted long ago in rugged ground sprouts and pushes through

Life is such a struggle with the outer world – we neglect the inner world of light

We're cultivating and fertilizing only one bed – the plant may grow – but the flower wilts

Allow our flower to unfold – let go the shackles of the self – and shine

Shine for all to see

In the beauty of your Divine Name.

Ralph Singh, Sikh writer and friend, used with permission.

The large black birds of Oubari

The crows were large, raven like in size and character,
They were known to take a fruit from a child's carriage, a table and
even a bag of fruit sometimes.

Why are they here, in Oubari?

It was WWII, the Korean miners were forced to come here, work in the
many mines in place of the Japanese, so they could conquer the
world, or so they thought. There was a rebellion in Oyubari, all the
miners were killed and their bodies, left in the mines...the large black
birds are the spirits of the miners,
No wonder, no one harms them....

Yellow snow?

It snows from mid November until May in Oubari
The roads have high walls of snow along the way
I saw a bus of men stop one morning, going the other way,
On the way back I saw where they stopped that morning,
Why, there were 10 or 12 yellow holes in the wall of snow...
That's really a pisser isn't it? Ha!

The Color Orange

When I see Orange

I often think of oranges, my juice in the morn

The color of the monks robes many places in our world, compassion,
And even the color around some temples, Community.

On Wall Street, orange has become the color of oppression,
herding the crowd of peaceful demonstrators, the orange fence.
The trap by the Cops for a few Cops to mace young people,
Who, speaking their freedom are showing their concerns for our future?
Denial by those who spray out of anger and power...

Justice will win out

Freedom will be ours

Power to the people

Love the Orange, the juice, the monk, the temple, the justice...



Couple by the Sea

New Year's Day on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea in Cannes France, taken as the sun set on a beautiful day sometime in the 1980's by ko shin.

An Interrupted Sigh by Gerald W. Bertsch

Our nation will not be allowed
the relief of a collective sigh
while angry voices continue
to cheapen our shared ideals
by insisting on their own
short-sighted victory.
This is our ninth day
in the Garden as we watch
the fruit spoil on the ground.

We've dare our Creator to visit
judgment on our greedy desire
to have everything for ourselves.

So, we walk the parapets of disaster
confident we'll not lose our footing
when the widowed soul grabs for
our swanky skirts and we pretend
we don't hear a child cry for milk
and grain to fill her swollen belly.

9/8/11 Gerald W. Bertsch He is a Wisconsin poet with four books in print including, "In This Land, Prairie" published by the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia and "A Taste of Ice Cream in the Rain" published by The First Congregational Church UCC, Sheboygan, WI. Permission is granted to Bob Hanson to include "An Interrupted Sigh" in this book.



Bus Stop in Rural Spain

A day long bus trip to Seville to catch a plane, a brief stop for that small cup of strong coffee only the Spaniards can give you. Even though this is years ago, in the '80's, I remember many moments of this trip, and some pictures I took of the country side.

On the steps of the Temple

It is getting harder to reach down and slip on these sandals...
Temple after Temple, the sandals came off and on again...
Sacred space everywhere, humility in ones actions not just thought....

As I leaned over and put on my sandals,
the monk watching the temple that morning, had come out and
watched me carefully.

When I stood up, he offered me his arm to walk down the many steps.

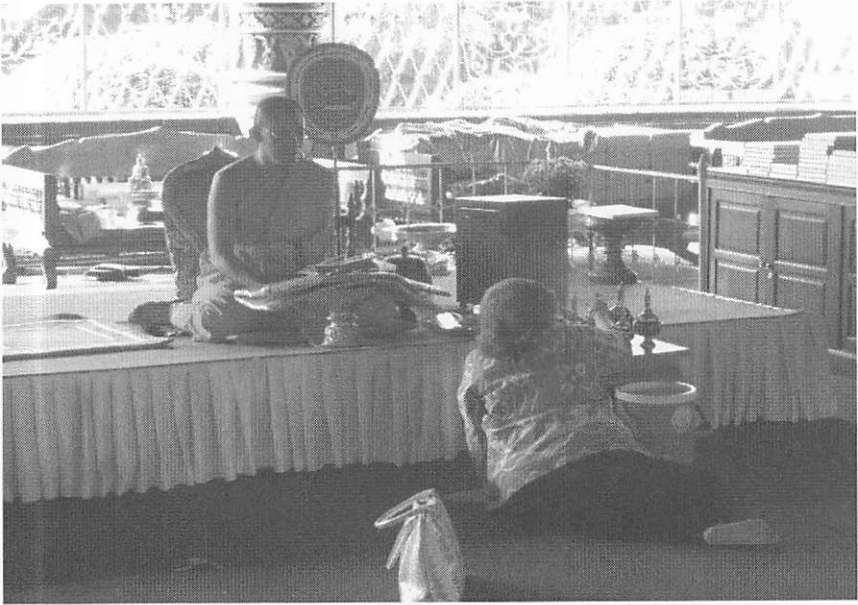
I was so surprised at this act of kindness
I kindly said its ok, I can make it and he smiled...

What struck me for the rest of my Temple walk through the old city of
Chiang Mai, was the natural way this happened

not a commandment,
not a rule,
not for merit,
or a star in his crown,
but out of compassion, a deep comprehensive kind of love,
unconditional, unmerited, unmeasured, love for all beings.

Thanks my friend,
Your care and this lesson that will not leave my heart or mind, no merit
or reward, but a human act, a practice, oh that it can be ours.....

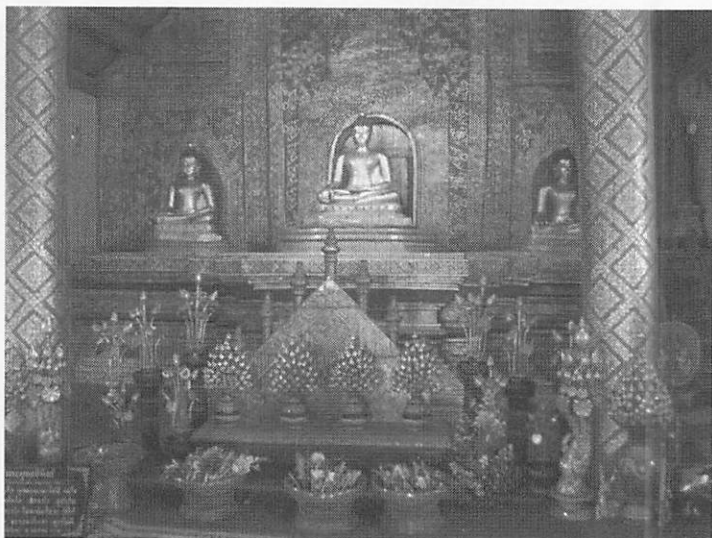
(Edited and read during Writing Program at Naropa University, summer, 2011)



Returning with a Poem

I wrote *"On the Steps of the Temple"*
Because the monk in this picture acted out of
Compassion towards me on the cool January morning,
in Chiang Mai, near the old city.

I returned on a hot and muggy day in May,
to give the poem, and the picture to him.
It was a bit strange, but wonderful...
He did not speak English,
I did not speak Thai
But the language and spirit of compassion,
made everything clear...deep bows brother monk.



*Temple walk, January, 2011, Chiang Mai, Thailand, the old City,
Standing present to the Dharma as a path, a culture, a way of life.*

The Food Chain The Night Before Last
By Karen J Ingvaldstad

It had been a beautiful spring day...
maybe a bit early in the month of march.
Sleep was restful and easy until
Some being's life was found to give life to the food chain.

It was terrifying
and woke me abruptly!
It lasted only seconds or maybe minutes
But I'd never heard it before
So loud, so painful, so quick, so over.

Twice in one night
I was abruptly awakened
Maybe five hours apart.
I cannot forget what I cannot even describe.
I give thanks to the eater and the eaten
But
Reality shakes me with the rawness of it.
The sacred art of giving one's life for another.
It does not go away
It does not leave me alone.

Karen Ingvaldstad, is a Hospice Chaplain, Interfaith Pastor, and ko shin's wife and has give permission to use this poem here.

What will you do when the trains went by?

It was a cold winter during the War
It was Germany and the trains kept going by
How did they know the box cars were full of people, stacked like bags of flour?
Going to their death? Screaming for help...
What can I say?

What would we do when the trains came by?
And heard what we thought were cries for help
Or the wheels rubbing against the cold metal tracks
One Church, by the tracks, in this small village, even planned the hymns during the times the trains went by near this sacred place; no one could hear the cries for help...

What about the trains that goes by for us these days
The person of color, the Muslim, the Hmong family down the block
The gay or lesbian teen that lives in fear of his or her classmates & parents and church, mosque or place of spiritual practice...

What are we doing when the trains go by?

Poem to Palestinian Mother in response to a picture of rockets landing on children and families, supported by the government of the USA and others...to be read slowly.

trails of smoke
falling into my village

not the trails of angels but of violence
against my family, my neighbors even those I do not get along with
why?
Why?
why?
trails of smoke from the rockets
killing the innocents
trails of smoke in the sky
run for cover
pray for peace, yes, peace
and maybe quiet...

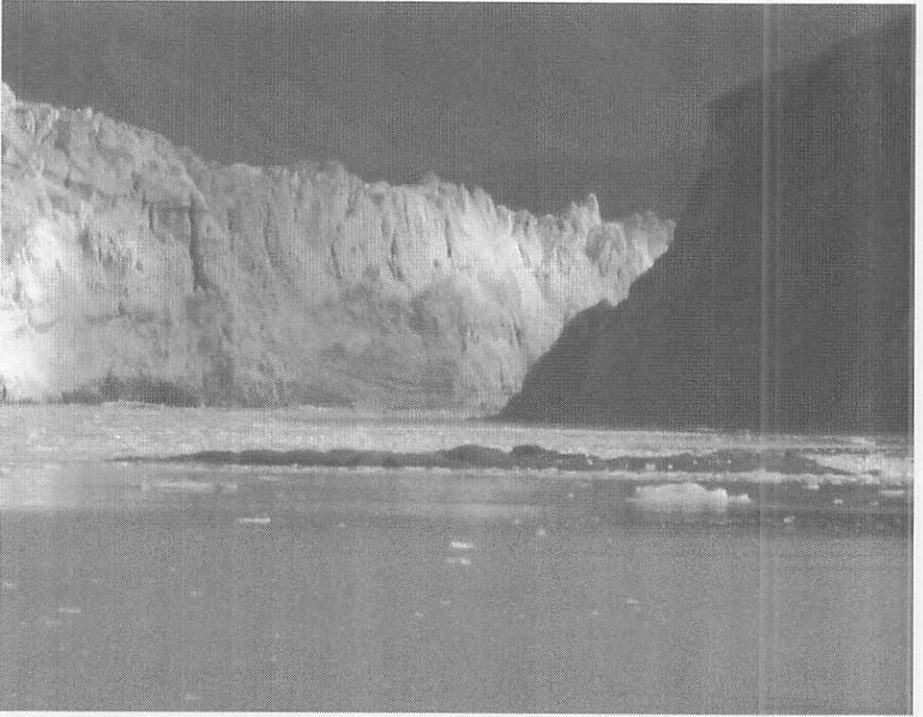
A poem by Bruce Dethlefsen:
White Stallions

the children of the street
must see themselves
in the greasy puddles of the forenoon
in the sundown storefront windows
in the luster of the shoes they shine
must see themselves
in the reflection of a customer's sunglasses
in the tears of the old women
in the shadow of the bus

the children of the street
must see themselves
flying purple kites on sunny beaches
dining with the family after church
riding white stallions

the children of the street
must see themselves

This poem is written by Bruce Dethlefsen, Wisconsin Poet Laureate, 2011 – 2012.
This poem was written years ago about the street children of Guatemala where
Bruce worked for peace and used with permission.



Hubbard Glacier, Inner Passage, Canada

All is interconnected. How come we try to disconnect all the time? Race, culture, religion, maybe the place we are in when we hear "Spirituality" is a better place. However, the word makes people get upset, they cannot turn off their cognitive self, and let their mind float like the spirit. And be the truth not say it...or figure it out, or compare it, which is better or stronger, tough shit folks, hate to remind you all, we are all interconnected, ONE.

One human family with the universe, one universal being with all the creatures and stars of the universe created in the face of our mother, God.

The Rights of Pressures by Roger Sween

I am not permitted to linger,
even with what is most intimate.
My favored thoughts with which I slip to sleep
give way each dawn to fresh demands -
work, spouse, the care of the body, house, garden, yard.

The mind flickers over the day's distractions,
pressures that exert their rights for attention, action, resolution
in actions achieved by wells of energy and concentration.

On the ride home, moments of asylum follow.
What today brought me to my best?
What instead becomes my fondest wish?
Which tomorrow fits me better?
And will it?

Later, in supper conversation,
I might loosen the tangle of priorities before nightfall
when once more ought escapes into the options called
what if.

Roger Sween quit 40 years in the library and information profession to read and write, only to find civic duty's demands for volunteers. He is a lifelong friend of Robert Erling Hanson to whom he grants the use of this poem, previously unpublished.

What a day, what a moment

Thanks and praise to all who made this possible as we cry out in this moment, the pain of living, the pain of tsunami, of judgment instead of grace...

Rejecting some, welcoming others, and not all...

When did Jesus reject anyone? Why do we?

Called to love, bring justice and peace to our world... yet so many are left out? Why?

My neighbor, a stranger, Muslim, Jew, Buddhist, Sikh, Hindu or Jain
Lutheran or Baptist, or whatever

Where is the separation? In our hearts and souls or in our doctrine and interpretation?

"Never think that I believe I should set out a "system of teaching" to help people understand the way. Never cherish such a thought. What I proclaim is the truth as I have discovered it and "a system of teaching" has no meaning because the truth can't be cut up into pieces and arranged in a system." -Diamond Sutra

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For me, my clan, it is the heart and soul that welcomes. All else is created to separate not to deepen. I am here today to empower the heart of all so that Peace can run down like a river.

Join me, Walk with me, Guide me

Help me, but only from the heart and soul of your being

not the things that separate us,
because we are all different.
Oh well, what a moment, this one,

Many thanks, but now I must warn you...
My sisters and brothers on the path...
Here comes the next one...how will we receive it...
How will receive the human being who comes down the path to meet
us?

God is good...all the time... All the time...God is good!

"Better than a thousand useless words is one word that gives peace."-

Buddha

Conversation is wonderful

With anyone, even strangers
We seem to know one another
Although we have never met
What do you suppose that is?
Humanity

Books draw us in
Pages filled with ink
Watch out!
Something might change you....

Early morning fog
Is more than a blanket
Yet one realizes
The beauty behind the fog
As we realize the beauty behind the person we dislike.

WALT WHITMAN SELLS A POEM

By David R. Harris

Walt Whitman walks
Singing of himself
Among fields of myriad corn
To another unpainted farmhouse
Fashioned from logs not even debarked
Next to a barn of new-sawn lumber
With no need to knock because of a fiercebarking
Handlicking large blackbrown dog:
"I'm Walt Whitman, poet,
Looking for supper and a night's bed.
I slept last night in a hay mow.
In payment, I will read you my book of poems.
It's called 'Leaves Of Grass,'"
And the sunburnt farmer, equally tired, shirt out,
Perhaps having hayed all day
Or watched the new calf die,
Sees his wife's eyes sparkle,
His four or six kids, bashful, looking on
And he remembering TV won't be invented for a century yet:
"Our cattle is mighty pertikaler.
Don't know as how they'd like
A poet sleepin' in their hay.
Best come in."

David Harris ran out of red ink after 32 years of reading student essays and poems at Rochester (MN) Community and Technical College and entered the Witness Protection Program at an undisclosed location in Wisconsin. He writes plays, musicals, British situation comedies, T-shirts, and short fiction like this. He graciously gives permission to his friend Bob Hanson to print his Walt Whitman poem. Whitman did not return phone calls.

They look like two rocks
No, they're larger than that
Small rock formations in the passage
One has been carved by time as a miniature city
Oh, what nature can do when we leave it alone?

Rings around the mountains
Like wedding rings
A ceremony of the earth,
It's relationship to the entire universe.
The sun now breaks through
A beam of life, a hope,
Not for just a nice day,
but the symphony of the earth and all the sky.

Realization
Enlightenment, Nirvana
Great effort goes into these for you and me
This morning, the fog, the sun breaking through
The mountains and hills everywhere, the water, Peace
Reminds one of old Zen adage
"Before enlightenment I chopped wood and carried water
After enlightenment I chopped wood and carried water"
Under, behind, above the fog of our journey is light...the Buddha dwells
in all the universe

Keep the fire burning keep the spirit hot
by James Mosley
Don't put it out, you'd better not.
You know the fire, really is the key.
How do I hold it grab it and make it real to me?

Keep the fire burning keep the spirit hot,
don't want to leave this experience saying Oh I forgot.
You know it's the change it's called transformation
Morph yourself into a new creation.
So keep the fire burning keep the spirit hot.
Pursue your happiness.
Make life your success
Dream, believe and pray then let God do the rest.
Keep the fire burning keep the spirit hot don't go to sleep on life keep
your eye on the prize, life ain't no sleeping cot.
You can travel the dark pathways with out fear, no flashlight needed,
claim the victory, you've got the light, you've already succeeded
Keep the fire burning Keep the spirit hot it's got to last a long time, so
map out your plan, your story, your plot.
Put your work into constructing your pathway, so you know what to do
and what to say.
Keep the fire burning keep the spirit hot, will the fire go out, definitely
not.
Remember now you are a legacy in the making changing the world one
person at a time, that my fellow spirit is earth quaking.
I promise to keep the fire burning and to keep the spirit hot This light in
me the new me , it's a trust I'll never drop.

James Mosley currently works at the ALMA Center in Milwaukee. He is serves as a Men Ending Violence and, fatherhood instructor, mentor and elder to Men in it's Prison Re-entry and Wisdom Walk Program. James has been in the field of community organizing and community services for over 40 yrs. He is a grandfather to six children and young adults and father to four adult children 41-33yrs. Permission is given to **Bob Koshin Hanson** to include my poem Keep The Fire Burning Keep The Spirit Hot by James E. Mosley in **Bob Koshin Hanson's** publication of poetry.

The land below the plane

**Changes every moment
What a universe
Listen to the beat, see it
The land
The sea
The clouds
Breathe in, breath out...
Live**

**Someone once said,
If you search for love you will never find it
I think if you be who you are
You will find what you are looking for
Many times over**

**Be patient, be open, and be free
Life is not a goal, but a path
The path that never ends
All creatures, interconnected are on this path with you
Judge not, listen, feel and act...
Then you will find and share your dream.**

**Falling trees filled the earth
Where a home will soon be
The cranes sing of freedom**

**Did you know?
The top of trees
Have many branches
And they itch**

The chime rings

The body quiets
chair or blanket
The candle, incense, the breathing
Can't hear, but it is there
The chime rings,
Three times: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha
Silence, into a deeper Silence
.....
A chime, a knee pops, a foot is asleep,
Yet you are in the moment

Two Hands, Justice, coming soon, justice now...

It was on 24th and 8th Avenues
Two humans holding hands,
Walking in front of me, talking
Giving off love and trust,
it was warm and muggy time,
They entered the Metro Entrance
Many doors are not open to two loving people holding hands in our So-
ciety, where is the justice
For two men holding hands on 24th and 8th Avenue...
Where is justice beyond the Metro for lovers?

Killing Hope or allowing it to live....

Yes, we can say
Every time a person of fear and hate
Kills someone, like Dr Tiller, or Stephen T. Johns, the guard
At the Holocaust Memorial

We come closer to killing our hope

It is amazing, the Republican Party, plays into the hate
Holding up the Supreme Court Nominee

It is all about fear,
It is all about racism
It is all about hate

It is all about hope
It is all about freedom for women to decide
It is all about welcoming all people into our hearts and community.

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Artist: The Brothahood
Album: Lyrics of Mass Construction
Song: Journey Within

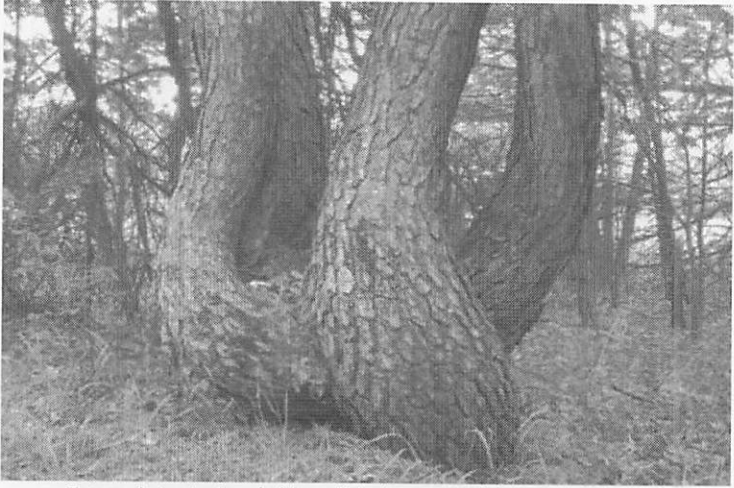
[Jehad]

In the name of Allah, most Gracious, most Merciful...

Sleepwalking in a world that's so cold
Don't know where to turn
Right turn, left turn, I yearn for some sort of guidance
Confusing flusters bounce in my throbbing mind
Where can I find a guide to take my hand?
Lead me in the way of the perfect creation
He, who is guaranteed paradise but still weeps
Standing long in the night with hurt feet
Our blood at the moment is dirt cheap
Spilling on the land, spilling on the sand
Where is my iman?
Please, take me by the hand wake me from this sleep
Convert this solid rock inside my chest
Lacking purity and softness
I need a rest from this busy world to find myself
Forget my wealth, my spiritual health, it needs some help
Where are you?
I need some help before I'm judged
I need to help myself get help

Because the lazy beast which is myself
Lacks motivation..lacks the patience..lacks instigation
Where do I look? Or will he find me?
I want be at the Lote tree.. Don't walk past
Try to fast so I can build up inventory
But where's my sincerity?
Now that...that's a different story
The words that travel through my vocal chords to my tongue to
articulate
Then transmitted to the listeners in a different state
We hope. We hope and we pray that we form a pathway
That links us in this world and the next
So that we can help each other, as a sister or brother
Am I up for the glory and the fame?
No. I just want my name to be mentioned
Don't want to be questioned
I want his pleasure but want to live forever
Nervous to meet my creator
I feel like a traitor
Will he be pleased or disappointed in my behavior?
I don't know...
Why do we act how we do?
Diseases of the soul, the heart
Is sensitive to all that it surrounds
Vulnerable to smell sight and sound
Yet we throw ourselves into places where the receiver
The qalb finds discontent
discontent and we don't repent
blackening, and slowly killing its will to be content
The cure is remembrance...
Which will recompense in a way that we can't comprehend...
Ya Rab, make us of those who you are pleased with
A gift which lives not in the mist but in a life of reality
Please Allah accept our prayers, accept our du'aa and our charity
Truly yours.

The Brothahood are Muslim Rap Artists from Melbourne Australia, used with permission.



Trees, intertwined, like all beings, Neshkoro, Wisconsin



Frozen in Violence

Pine needles, frozen by rain in mid winter
Crackle as the cold wind blows through the trees around us
The now is like old flat bread
Breaks into pieces as it swallows your feet and snow shoes

In fact, it is possible to slide on the snow shoes and fall, but the fall is not hard, as one breaks through to the soft, old snow below

Violence is frozen in time in Palestine
People dying in their own homes and their streets
Violence is frozen, the sounds of rockets, bombs and bullets
All around us, even here in the woods
One can feel the air as the bullets go by to their target in Gaza

How we un-freeze violence?
How does one melt hatred? Fear?
How does one wake up an old generation misled by lies and stories of Greed and power between Israel (no spiritual relationship to the Israel of The Torah) and the United States Government (no relation to what is in the constitution or the declaration of independence)
A change in leadership
A commitment to peace
Conversations around a new way not just changing old ways and structures that have not brought peace

The pine needles are melting now; the tree is feeling its freedom again, the snow is soft again, the snow shoes, again, sink into the snow as you create a new path in the forest and wet lands...
How do we find peace where there is none?
The wounded
The dead
The scared ones
The children
The elders
Yes, Israel exists; most of its people abhor the violence, frozen in time
Thousands demonstrate for peace, no one listens, sound familiar
America?

Oh, I threw some salt on the ice this morning
I heard the frozen ice begin to crackle and fall apart
Salt on the wounds, no that is not it
But the salt of peace, love and justice
Stepping in between those who fight out of hate, greed and power on both sides, those around the world who want to CUT OFF the conversation because their side is right the others do not exist.

Gaza exists

West Bank exists

Palestine is a state

The violence frozen in time and history will melt, is melting

Not with guns or rockets made in or paid for by the USA

Not with breaking through the sacred land of others or trying to fence
in your neighbors, but act and think and live in peace.

As I write this on a frozen morning in the woods

The US has blocked the UN again for peace

Why do we block efforts for peace even when they look possible?

We are afraid of the frozen violence and risk of a meltdown of violence,
we love our power

I suppose I should stop this journey now

It is too painful

Today let us chant and pray for peace in Gaza and the world,
that the frozen presence of violence as the answer will melt.

Deep rivers run through our lives

Often we do not know the source or the ending

Our spiritual practice is a way we ford the rivers of our consciousness

Or we build bridges

But so often we destroy the bridges

Deep roots

Empower a tree to be taller, thicker, stronger

There is more than one family of roots in a large beautiful tree

The diversity of our spiritual journey

The many part of the Path

Give us hope and life

How can we deny our interconnectedness with all nature and the uni-
verse?

Yet, we act as though we control the earth and all its gifts

Now is the time

Now is the time

This moment, is when we must transform our ways

Deep rivers
Deep roots
Interconnectedness
Hope and Peace...

early May 12, 2008

Two Sides – where is justice?

It seems so simple,
Bob, there are two sides to this story
we write poems, we speak out for justice
but, "two sides?"
In the name of justice, or the Zionist goal,
to run all who are not like them off the land
shut up Bob, there are two sides
yes, two, oppression and freedom
children mind you, just children, are dying...
oh, yes, two sides, hate and love
I do not have to choose a side, for there is only one
in the land we call Holy, peace, freedom for all peoples
and stopping Israel from its own killing fields.
children mind you, only children, dying,
It's so simple, no violence and freedom for all.
One state, many people's, why, we continue to separate and not bring
together?
Peace, Peace, Peace...

The rain falls
Or is it snow?
Silence is the way

A moment of deep mindfulness
A difficult moment
No response in the moment

The sand hills are sleeping now it is quiet in the woods
it is very quiet peaceful the stars are so bright
may your heart be quiet now love

Remember old negatives?

You could print the picture backwards,
you could play with the image
I feel like an old negative sometimes how about U?

The sound of thunder

Yet the ice falls into the cold water
Thousands of years of being frozen
Yet free at last

I saw it

a fat robin, resting in the naked bush
how satisfied he looked
so filled with the worms and the bugs of the earth
I sit, also over weight, fat you say
satisfied?
not really
wondering, knowing what I know, feeling what I feel,
how does one act with skillful means
so that justice will flow like a river, everywhere,
when national issues, interest, fear and even hatred block justice
stop all peoples from being free, safe and loved.
Oh fat and happy robin, let us learn from you
as the bush fills out, green, and as spring brings new life,
may this world be filled with hope...may you find hope, somewhere...

Man, I am really comfortable here today

It is quiet here

Can't even hear the heavy doors that close people out or in

That's right I am really comfortable here today

Know where I am dude? Sister?

In a prison, in the place where the Buddha's come and sit

Quiet, that's right no bull shit, just Dharma,

How can one be comfortable here?

In a place where you are brought here for unskillful means?

Yea, that's it, letting go, sitting quiet, and listening to your breath

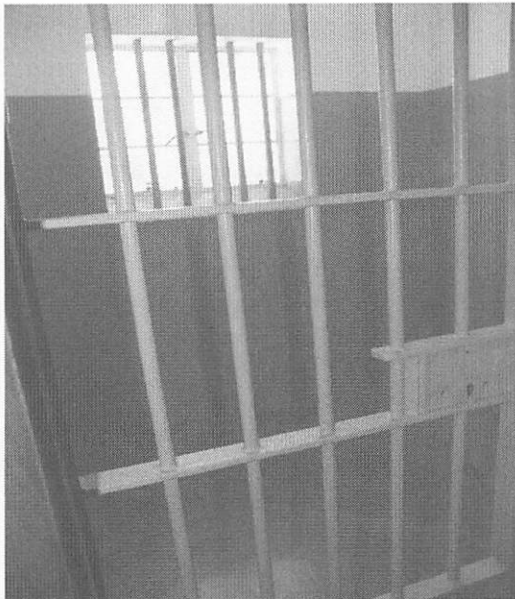
Are you comfortable where ever you are?

I bet!

Think about a cell, the cell we all live in...

What does it mean to let go and be free not from your cell but in it?

Freedom, yes, oh freedom!



Yes, a cell, Nelson Mandela's home for 27 years, Robin Island, off Cape Town SA



I have been the throne, photo by a friend used with permission!

Cold metal on the bottom

That's what it was, no toilet seat, just shiny metal
Cold, and strange
But that's how our inmates sit on the throne
More inmates than any other country in the world
Cold metal on the bottom, that's it

It was a strange experience, not because there was no toilet seat,
My poetry teacher gave us an assignment
Go for a walk, sit somewhere for awhile
Then write some things down

I do that all the time, but not on cold metal on the bottom?
I was sitting in meditation with the men, in the chapel, in the prison,
Nature called, and when you are my age you learn to answer in the
moment not sometime soon....get it?

The chaplain gave me some choices, I guess because I'm not an inmate
So I entered the door with a sign on it, **inmates only**
There it was a metal throne without a seat

I paused only a second, nature was yelling by now
And so I sat on the cold metal with no seat
Teacher, you ask how did I feel ?

Hm, relived and free...who needs a seat...

Just be, yes just be...

Yes, there are many kinds of books,
Sacred ones, funny ones, some good some not so good
Sitting in the coffee shop of Barnes and Noble

A sister down the way, covered in respect
Reading her Koran during Friday Prayer time at a Mosque
A Hindu and Buddhist Journals at my side
A Palestinian poet in my hands
What a world!

Oh that all this could bring peace everywhere
Not discord and violence

People of the book, the path, the mystery

Who is reading the sacred writings these days?
Who listens to the winds of the four directions?

Who allows the smoke of the incense or the pine, tobacco, sage ,
The smudging of the native people,

Carry our prayers and chants?
Who wants to be free?

Yes, the sister has a highlighter in her hand
Maybe you and I are highlighter's of the sacred, the
Spiritual paths...

Highlighting the sacred word
To remember
To listen
To come back to the source

Yes we are called back in every moment
To whom we are, to sacred words, to loving words
To challenging words, to directive passages
Be more human, love your neighbor
Be more compassionate, do unto others
Just to be, yes to Be...



New York City, Ground Zero, Early January, 2002

Two Pillars of Light where something else was...

I wonder sometimes, where does the light come from?
the sky or the ground? Lights to guide or to reveal?
we all know from the back ground, what this light points to a violent
event, and sadly a violent response
but let me tell you something down the street from these powerful pil-
lars of light is a man, dressed poorly, has not shaved for weeks, he has a
tin cup, he is begging for help
from you and me, oh yes the lights, they will be on and off, in sunlight
we will not see them as clearly, if at all, but our brother, he and many
others right near the lights,
call for our compassion...there are women and children also, without a
roof over their head, silently screaming for help, hungry, weak,

the two pillars of light, may they guide us to compassion for all the
people of this earth...and never fade away.

next life, already...or just death?

It was one of those warm, early summer days...
Thank God for the fans in the Chapel where the Dharma Brothers meet
and sit, and chant, and walk meditatively and talk...

But this was not a "normal" one
One brother sat with the Chaplain, sad looking, almost in tears

Just heard the night before, "Mom is gone" only 52 years
"I knew she was sick, but I figured (and wouldn't we all)
She would be ok"

"I can't be there", hold my sisters hand, my other siblings don't seem to
care or know what do"

The Sangha arrives, the men are always happy to be together, to sit...
But then I mention our brother's sadness and loss, and another speaks
up, "my mom had a serious stroke two days ago, she's in Mississippi, it
is harder not knowing, than accepting her death..." tears, some anger, "I
want to hold her hand, do something, I can't"

Needless to say, we had a deeply healing sit that afternoon...

What's going on here?

I am not critical here of the fact; inmates do not go home for the death of even their parents, at least not in these prisons. There were unskillful actions that the inmates participated in to get in this place, they know that all too well...

But how does one handle death?

Have you thought of yours? I sure have thought of mine, at least after this afternoon with my Dharma Brothers...

We are reminded at times like these, Death is not the end, and prison is not the end, unskillful acts that hurt others, are not the end!

We are reminded, it's the path stupid!

It's the way, sister, brother, whoever...

This confluence of events, mom dying and mom near death That woke us all up; we are all Buddha's, awakened ones, not with answers, or words that take away the pain, the anger, the loss, or fill the void...but a reminder, this is real, this happens to all of us, to all creatures.

Can we avoid it, no, but we can journey through these dead filled moments, as life...

We can't fool folks, where one line says she is with God or Jesus, Then say, he is asleep, at rest in the Lord, And then say "on the last day..." he and she will.....

This is all very confusing, my loved one is gone, dam....

Bull shit, sorry

The vet said to me when Mickey was put asleep, when I asked is he gone, "Mickey is already in his next life" Dam, why didn't someone say

that to me when Dad died, or as I held Mom's hand and Karen sang to her as she started her next life? Where was the vet, or the priest?

Hey, Dharma Brothers, I write this because I mourn with you as do all who read this,

Don't fret,

 don't worry,

 sit brother,

 be silent and listen,

 and know, in this moment,

You are blessed, you are free,

 the bars, the bells, the guards are only temporary,

As are the bars, and the hindrances for all of us...

This life and the next are real....let it go, you are ok,

Peace...comfort...compassion...Gasho!



A path to where? It's the path, stupid

Why are we so busy?

Stop

Listen

This morning I smell
the coffee beans
roasted
dark and rich
May this day
be filled with
a quiet in the midst of
the noise of this time...
Like the beans, may our
lives be rich, deep and
flavored by hope...

Standing water

Raindrops never stop,

Somewhere there is the sun

Warm sun, no rain

ducks on the bike trail crazy changes to all life

How will we cope, keep walkin'

stay in the moment, stay on the path

who am I?

yes, it is a stone's throw to the pond
it's a stone's throw to the tree
the Buddha
the Bird Bath
it is even nearer to one's heart
where the compassion grows
and never dies
it just lives on
in all we do
in all we say
in all we be
yes, it's a stone's throw or less to the next step...



The Buddha feeds the birds, squirrels and deer; are our lives, a feeder for someone?

Four Neshkoro pops, January, 2009
(in the tradition of Kerouac American pops)

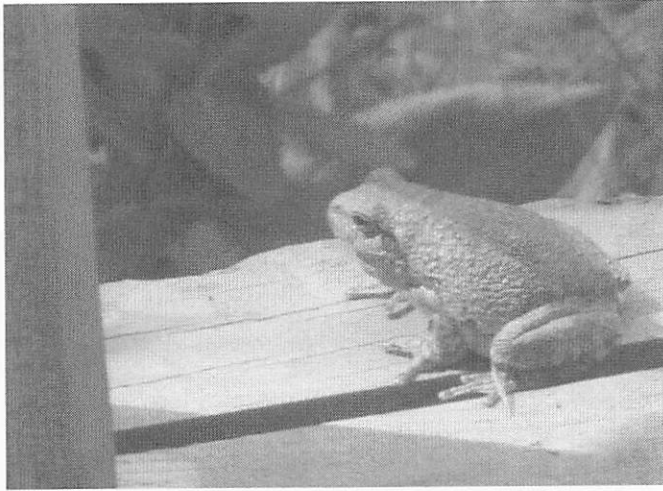
sleeping cat
peace from within
love comes forever

I can't live last night's sunset
I have only today
the moment the moment
my freedom
my responsibility

another year
another river to cross
another mountain to climb
what strange things we say
to tell ourselves we are farther on the path
but I am on the path with you Karen
I look forward to the next river the high mountain and the path
with you.
I love you, happy day of your birth

(a poem for my wife, Karen on her Birthday)

the moon has risen
the angel appears
the cat is here, in her box
love is made
I will never forget the
connection,
the feeling
the joy
happy day of your birth
I can feel it now.....



My friend, Buddha the Toad, a morning visit

The Spirit of Street People

Street people sing to the tune of diesel engines
and auto horns-words and melody a fine integration
of living people and hot machines-happening in a
kind of big tent with three rings.

Street people dance to the music of tires squealing
on hot pavement, brakes rubbing steel on steel, feet
happy with the freedom of being "downtown."

Street people pray- a fast moving communion with
city brick and glass-joined by a parade of naked
eyes looking out, feeling the soul of the city-
worshipping fantasy and maybe God.

Ed Ruen is married to Katie, they have four children
and seven grandchildren. Permission is granted to use this poem here.

local verse, where is your poem my friends?

because, all creatures have a fire within
that creates, yells, cries or laughs a line or two
that brings us all together as one...this day of thanks.

this day has a sorted history,
not sure we have ever heard the real tale,
how native folks and the invaders, opps settlers. ate that meal in fall...

we have not heard all that is true about the plague the invaders
brought...or the fact that slaves from Africa join with tribes to hold the
land for all...in one "colony"

how is it we give thanks in a context of stealing an entire land from
those who did not see themselves owning it, but taking care of it for
the Four Winds, the powers of the sun, the moon and earth...the divine

Oh, sorry, the poets of burden, speaking to the truth, dam it, it seems
to just come out, if you let it...

I still like this day, this idea of giving thanks
Something our whole live is about...right?
The abundance of the harvest, our families, friends and all!
Take a moment sometime soon,
to write your poem of thanks,

Not for what has happened only, or the future dreams,
but this moment, the gift we are to each other and all...
Thanks for being here with us, and you know that we are one
with all the creatures of this universe,
and say I am Thankful...peace "we need to stop taking and give as a na-
tion...and people"



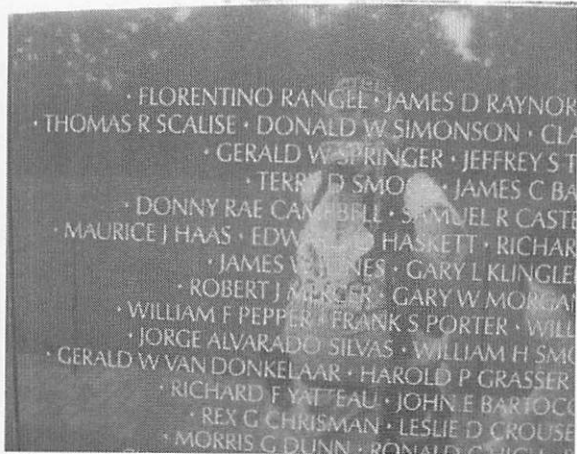
National Cathedral, Washing, DC, Baptism Basin, & a cup of coffee

Excuse me, Holy Water please...

Oh sorry, I thought you said, "coffee please"

Well, which is the holy water anyways? "Oh my goodness" (Norwegian for "Oh Shit")

Coffee please. "Was I baptized at coffee after church with coffee daddy?" Some might think so; it's had the hell boiled out of it too!



The Warrior Poet, at the Wall in Washington DC, Sept. 2009

A reflection in the black stone, just a picture you say

No I was not in Nam, but I served those who came back in bags and their loved ones

Yes, my name is not here, but all our names are...

Our names will be on the stone for Iraq, Afghanistan, Congo, Sudan, Palestine, slavery, Native people, Japanese internment, and on and on... What does it mean to build peace, for all people...think about it, chant for it, pray to whomever you pray...

I remember a "Nam" funeral; the man who came back in a bag was one of ten siblings... His sisters and brothers sat by ages with the young parents at each end, the bookcases of time and love,

The Marines came up so slowly, stood at attention and saluted their comrade, so slowly and then returned to their seats...

I thought this would never end, then the taps at the grave, it stays with you for hours and days, no recording then, the real thing...

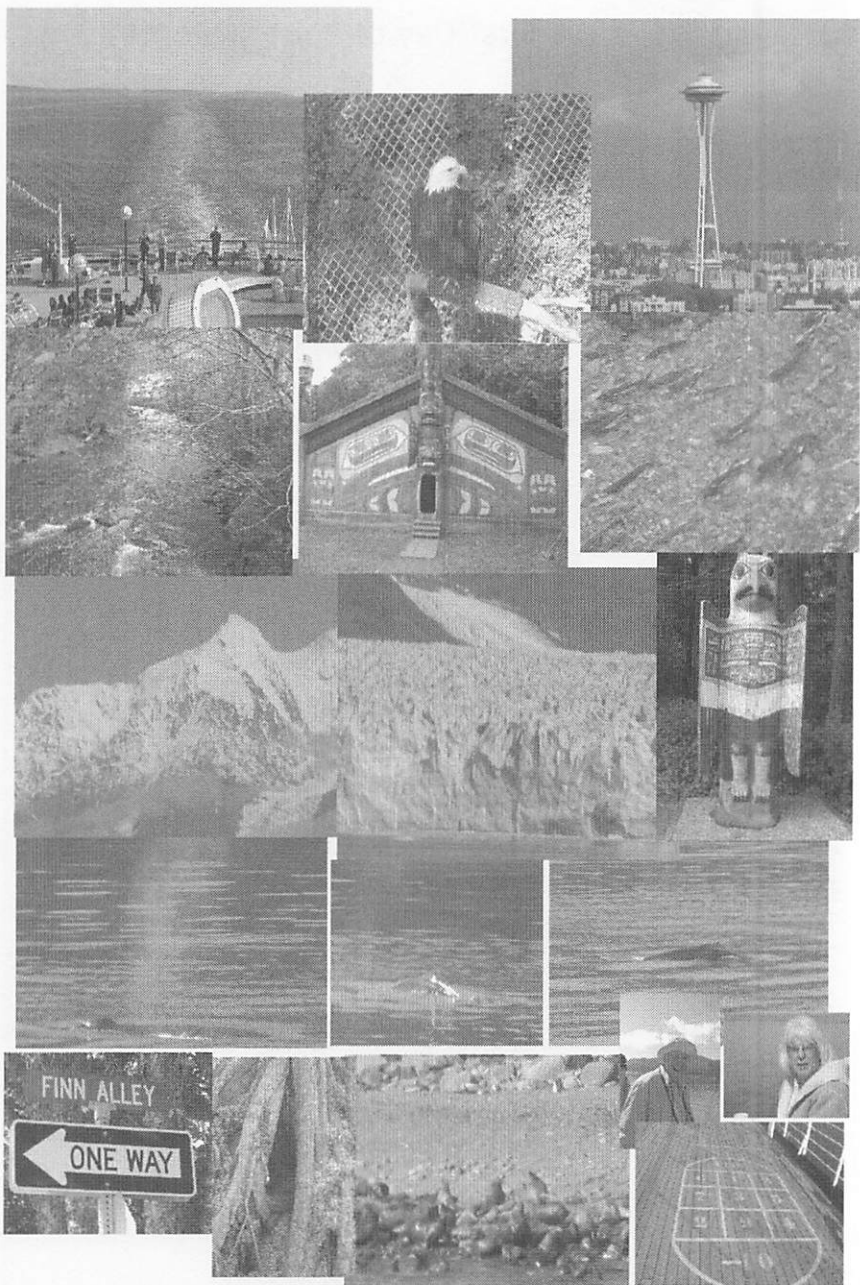
The question is always, it seems, did he die in vain, what bull shit, the issue is he died; he is not here to care for and play with his nine siblings For another war that should not have been fought...when will we learn...? When will we learn?

April 1, 2011 First Day of Poetry Month, 2011

I'm writing
I'm wondering
When will the flowers come?
What! I have to, what?
"Plant seeds, stupid!"

Often I go into a place where the doors are made of steel
When the doors close,
There is a banging sound, I can't forget...
I wonder how my Dhamma Brothers can be free in a cell.
But then I think, How can I be free when I go out through those doors
again...

Eighteen people, adults and teens, some even younger
Gathered to read, write and hear poetry...
What an amazing sounds, all beings are poets,
The words flow, the emotions, the laughter, the seriousness
The images of nature, of people, of events all melted down
To poetry, a gift of the gods, the spirits, the universe.



*A collage of the journey through the Inner Passage, Canada,
August/September, 2009*



Where's the car honey? Katrina aftermath, 9th District, New Orleans

Just a minute honey, I will get the car

Oh yea!

Strange things happen when the wind blows and the water rises.

Where is the help? Many months later, it is still coming. Why? When?
Katrina!

Tragedy in pictures, mementos

Four floors

Six million Jews, Homosexuals, Jehovah Witnesses, Union folks and
commie's

In the name of cultural purity, religion and greedy power

Yes, it was over 60 years ago

Yet what do we hear today from the right

The republicans, the Christian Evangelicals,

Hate, fear mongering and violence....

What is the difference in Palestine?

I witnessed on YouTube, a baby boy die of an operable heart condition,
died because his parents could not get him to a hospital in Israel
because of the Occupation...

What is holocaust my sisters and brothers, tell me please....so we can
"never let it happen again"!

After a visit to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC

The Last Supper.

How many times have you been at a last supper?

We never think of things like this, until it has happened. You don't plan it; it is a spiritual gift, like being in this world and the other world at the same time...

Richard was my Father-in-law, Karen's Dad, a wonderful chap, eighty nine, never giving up, but frail, tired, yet wanting to be with his family, his great grandchildren, as he was a few weeks ago, here at our home in the woods.

I sat next to him that night & he was having a hard time.

Often when he visited, we would help him from the car into the house, but, he would insist to go under his own power, but this night Steve and I had to carry him he could not walk...

As we sat and ate he began to shake, he could not eat, and maybe he did not want to.

Twice I gently took his hand, he stopped shaking for a moment, his His hands were warm, gentle, yet frail.

His granddaughter came over and held his head in her hands, and whispered in his ears, word of comfort.

We did not know then, but we felt this was our last supper with Dad...

As Richard, "Pops" for me, drove off that night, I said "we love you dad, he smiled, but his eyes looked off, somewhere... he knew...

Only a few days later Richard would pass over, in his sleep, for some it is the poetry of a final sleep, but for others, for me, Richard was beginning another journey, a path to where, we do not know, the Other World, yes, but always in the midst of this one.

Why is it? I can still feel the warmth of "Pops" hands tonight. That's what is wonderful about Last Supper's. They are never forgotten, yet cannot be repeated, only remembered.

There is a hope in these grace filled events that fill our empty spaces at least for the moment.

There is no outside power that creates these events, even though this was our Last Supper with Dad, Grandpa, Great Grandpa, it was a moment we can have again right now, in our memories, as we remember Dad, but also are always mindful of our last meal...

Those dam rivers never stop, do they?

I ask more often than I want to, why am I here?

Why are we here?

Recently, streams, rivers, have been on my mind, they are always moving even under the ice... up our way even trucks fall through the ice into the flow...

No ice fishing on a fast moving stream, no holding on to a special moment for you or me,

just keep going... I keep wanting to go back, do you too?

Maybe it is growing old, I don't know..... re-capture a special time or moment, impossible, all we have is this moment....

Well, welcome, to the strange sense

Of being in another world in the midst of this world.....we are who we are and avatars we choose at the same time,

our spiritual consciousness is like the river,

But, have you noticed, someone always wants to build a dam,

Like religious beavers, blocking the flow, the growth, the deepening....with dogma and bull shit, the truth they say....to slow down the flow,

Everybody likes the flow but wants to block it in some way.... Judge it, change the direction of our path

My daughter sent a message recently on Yahoo, then I saw her avatar, I said that ain't you Honey, she said yes it is....

I forgot the avatar; the other image of her points to her...it is not just a security thing....

We choose an avatar to point to who we are, what or who is our avatar or avatars.....yes I know it's a movie in wrap around 3D,

do we need to wear glasses to see reality? To see our avatar's?

I think of the aboriginal sisters and brothers we met in Melbourne, recently, they talked about their "dream walking" is not something you forget, but live in each step, your vision, I want to be a dream walking human being, will you join me on this journey?

We need to dream walk, walk about, remember our ancestors, the land, the earth, all beings...

And then it ends, or does it, maybe this is only the beginning, we will see

The earth shakes, in a moment life changes, it is incomprehensible, the tragic events of this universe, the earth quakes, the people of Haiti...

I still smell the smells of New Orleans after Katrina...the water marks, the symbols on the side of the houses, how many animals found, how many people died, how many were rescued, One always hoped for numbers on the live side, they weren't.....

I saw the same symbol being placed on a building in Haiti, the international symbols of life and death...everywhere

No more, please...I can see the death on the shore line of the Tsunami in South East Asia

The coffee plantations of Sumatra destroyed...

Ha, ha Starbucks, raise your price again, but do not give more to the farmer

I remember the streets of Detroit, eleven tornadoes in a few moments, one evening,

The trees are gone, the rich and poor lost everything, those with much, could replace, the poor are poorer...

I think of our sisters and brothers in Gaza, Palestine, invited out of their houses by the gunpoint or dragged, and then a Caterpillar and its blade made in the USA wrecks the home, not a house, a home...in the name of peace, we stand my, our avatars cry for Haiti, South East Asia, Detroit, Gaza, Iraq, Afghanistan, Burma, Tamales, Native peoples everywhere...

Yes, we cry for you Haiti, we will never forget the pain, the loss, the fear, the needs...

Stand tall, sisters and brothers, be comforted by the loving spirit of this world and all creatures who care for you

Your history of oppression and fighting for justice, we will continue to walk with you, now and always,

What is important in this life? This flowing River....

This event reminds us, human life is, relationships are, serving the neighbor is our task...the whole world, peace...

Death is everybody's business, Right?
Why are we surprised when it visits?



Forest Buddha

Yes, you say you are on a path
Well here it is, in the woods with many Buddha's
sitting there all the time
The scats everywhere, see them?
Trees moving with the winds,
The fog, even in late afternoon
A new season is upon us, scats and all

Now further on the path
A Buddha,
A feeding station for the birds and the squirrels
Here she is in all her beauty,
a small chickadee is checking us out
This is her base, her food, what is this strange human doing here?
As always not a question of this is my deck,
This is our world;



Look, the path takes us to another Buddha
He is the oldest, sitting in all his glory
Waiting for us to check in
Just sit
Just sit
A breath
Another one
Just sit
Quiet, silence, no movement, on a mat or a chair or on the tree stub
The bell rings a solid tone
The deer hear it but cannot see so well
It is time walk through the fog, in meditation for the universe
Sitting is healing
Healing is acting
Acting is compassion



This elder Buddha sends out a wave of compassion, peace and justice
Even though in this late winter afternoon
The tub for corn for the deer is empty,
The deer feed square for the winter is almost gone,
Scats everywhere
And the spring birds are beginning to call out, listen
It is the dharma of the earth
No didgeridoo, the earth in its wetness and silence
The air and trees with the sounds of the birds,
Give us all that deep sound of love of all sentient beings...
The path leads one to many places, here off the road
The Buddha welcomes the visitor, the stranger, the FedEx person
Just sitting, smiling, and affirming who you are in that moment,
Sitting on a rugged tree stump, cold from the snowy time yet warm with
the heart of compassion
What can we learn from the forest Buddha's?
Listen for a moment, the moment is all we have.

Hah, I can hear the message of the trees, the animals and the Buddha
Be quiet, breath; count those ins and outs of your lungs and body
It is all we have, let go, yes, of all, and receive all
The quiet forest Buddha's never leave, yet we seem to want to move all
the time



The path. Not always clear, but the bodhisattva's walk this foggy way,
The forest Buddha's say nothing, but are present and I love to talk,
about what?
The forest Buddha's just sit, be, live, this moment
We are all forest Buddha's, yet to be discovered in our own conscious-
ness
This moment
This life
This time
Wake up!

The Human Story

Tradition, it happens often and with some regularity
Listening to the Dalai Lama, live from India
A story that has been told for thousands of years

Every people have a story
The injustice is that often we stop people from telling their story.
We force them to hear our story
The story of oppression, of power, not compassion...

Who am I?
I find that the issues, the ideas that have turned my wheel in the past
no longer have much meaning for me...
The story seems to be a changing

I have thought about the reality called a "cloud of witness" That often
fill my mind and speak to me
They are the voices that speak to me on this journey called life. on the
path I have chosen walk...

We have seen spirituality or practice telling us what to be,
Not allowing us to discover who we are and who we can be.
It is not a practice but an answer

When the question is really the base of it all, what's your question?

A season comes...

The days grow longer,
We are always moving towards spring, then fall,
Life is a cycle like the seasons
But never the same
And then, suddenly, in a breath of a moment, the moment
It ends
And then it begins, how do we know when it ends...

Realization

Enlightenment

Nirvana

Great effort goes into these for you and me
This morning, the fog, the sun breaking through
The mountains and hills everywhere, the water, Peace
Reminds one of old Zen adage
"Before enlightenment I chopped wood and carried water
After enlightenment I chopped wood and carried water"
Under, behind, above the fog of our journey is light...the Buddha dwells
in all the universe

The coffins float down the Mississippi

Where do they go? Heaven?

Yes, New Orleans!

Falling trees filled the earth

Where a home will soon be

The sand hill cranes sing of freedom

The chime rings

The body quiets

chair or blanket

The candle, incense, the breathing

Can't hear, but it is there

The chime rings,

Three times: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha

Silence, into a deeper Silence

.....

A chime, a knee pops, a foot is asleep,

Yet you are in the moment

Ground Zero

The Dust remains, an empty hole
A sacred burial ground, but now,
New rail tracks, new life,
but still Ground Zero.

Thousands were there, that Sunny Fall Morning,
Looking, Crying, Silent,
Hanging on to loved ones who were gone
I might not go back again,

This sacred place
Cannot be An Excuse for more War or Vengeance
But Peace, Healing, understanding, Only Peace...

A Poem by Jaime Manrique: Letter to M. Elvira

From your home
on top of a hill
the Caribbean phosphoresces
beneath your feet.
You ask about
the wintry nights
in my frozen town.

On clear nights
from my back yard
as a kind of smoke signal
I baptize the stars
with names that begin
with the first vowel of your name:
Eliza, Edith, Eloise, Elvira.

Tonight
the wind blows
scrimps of powdery snow
and I realize

I've written this poem before.
Who says that time passes?
It moves neither forward nor backwards
nor remembers the lines
I wrote years ago.
The stars are neither closer
nor farther away.
I am the one
who keeps moving
farther and farther
away from here.

Jaime Manrique lives in New York. His new novel, *Cervantes Street*, is forthcoming in 2012. Ko shin has permission to place this poem in "Inner Passage"

There always seemed to be hobo's at the door...

Maybe our address was in a tunnel or two, written on the walls in paint,
with a sharp rock, who knows, but it was there,

They came because Dad sent them down to the Granite Café for a free
dinner or breakfast,

There always seemed to be hobos at the door...

But one sunny afternoon in the spring, I came home to find my Auntie
Emma sitting with this Santa like figure at the picnic table dad had built,
having the time of their lives, I watched and smiled, she can handle it I
thought, a Hobo and my great Aunt having a party...

There always seemed to be a hobo at the door...

But most of all I remember biking to the Train Station on the north side
of town, and hiking back in the woods on the other side of the tracks,
where there was a large dip below a hill, with a fire in the middle and a
group of hobo's cooking their food, and drinking from bottles of booze I
suppose...

They always welcomed us; the hobos were our friends...

There always seemed to be hobos at the door, and now we were at theirs.

Later I found out, some wanted to be on the road, on the trains, wanted to be hobos,

Others had bad luck, lost everything, and were searching, like we all search...I suppose, a few were thieves, dangerous, but that did not seem to bother us.

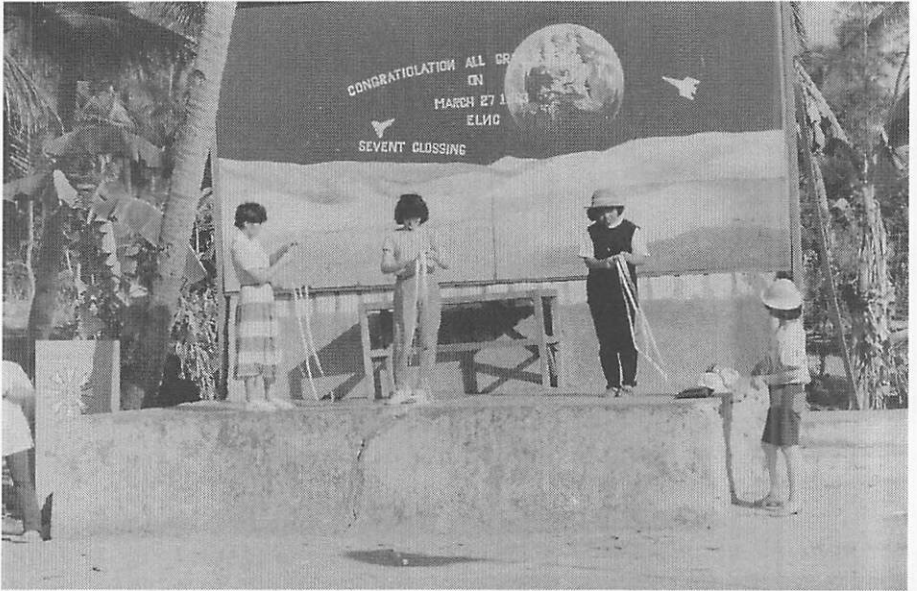
Heard Larry Penn recently, an old folk singer and story teller, do his thing. He reminded me of the hobos I met...

It's been a long while, but maybe we are all hobos if we really think about it, Bodhisattva's, Buddha's holding back to serve others on their search...a kind of spiritual hobo...

Remember, wake up, there are always hobo's at the door, and they might be us!

Ko shin, Bob Hanson September 15, 2011

Villages, Cities Everywhere Stand Up and Build!



Preparing for a celebration near Cebu, Philippines, a Human Development Project of the ICA, late 70's and early 80's...

Even though this is a book of poetry and pictures, I felt that the poetry of organizing should be here too, thus, a reflection on the work of the Institute of Cultural Affairs in the essay. I was a member of the staff for a few years and a volunteer for many more, and continue my interest in this fine community today. I hope you enjoy the poetry of hope and new life in the midst of our realities today! Ko shin

These are the Times, We are the People!

There was a time when those words were being said, shouted across the globe, villages and neighborhoods in India, Kenya, the west side of Chicago and elsewhere. It was a time of crisis but time of hope. I feel we are at that time again. It is a time for grassroots organizing and a time for communities and neighborhoods to transform themselves on behalf of all.

There was a sense, that the models we were building were only helpful if they could be repeated in another place. The process was not just for my place, my community, but for everyone's. I still feel that way. These words are a reflection of an experience and how it molded my life as an organizer, a pastor, a poet, a business person and citizen of the world.

It all began again in my mind as I was reading the report of Shantumbu, Human Development Project, Consultation Summary Statement, Nov.28-Dec.4, 1976 in Shantumbu, Zambia, that I was part of with about 30 others. A group of nine villages, 30 minutes, 16 kilometer road south of Lusaka, the capitol of Zambia a community of 1,500 people who were then in a survival mode, few working in the city, but living off the rich plateau of this beautiful country in Africa.

I remember the two weeks I spent there well. Living in a tent just behind the tents where we met with the community for a week. The setting was peaceful, yet in the hills south of us we could often hear the guns and could see the smoke of the Rhodesian war. With people from all over Africa and the world coming to this remote place to empower people to rebuild their lives and be a sign of hope for all of the third world. I led workshops that first week under a tree with the writing board up against that tree. A question would be asked, and by the time we had it translated into Soli the language, of the villages, and two or three other languages, we would have the answer. My team was the economic development team made up of farmers and charcoal burners who sold their bags of charcoal and a few crops in the Lusaka markets.

The first morning we gathered under the tent to discern the vision for the people of these villages, a process that gave people permission to dream. They saw the need for *meeting physical needs*, which included village road, a health clinic, business center, pure waters, better housing and more. They wanted to move towards, *increasing farm produc-*

tion working together on commercial farming, land development and developing better farming techniques. The third area of their dreams and vision was towards, *promoting village co-operation* education from preschool to secondary education, adult and women's education and organization as well as a local justice system for security. This was their dream. But that dream cannot be a reality without a serious look at what is blocking their vision.

So the second day of our consultation with village people we struggled with the contradictions, those forces that were blocking the dreams. We were not just listing problems, but finding the underlying blocks to the operating vision. These are the deep currents of history in any community that are often difficult to discern and name. Over one hundred and fifty statements were created by the people as they moved towards the third task of creating the practical proposals that will break up the contradictions and fulfill the vision. The term "proposal" refers to the strategic plan of action formulated indirect response to the Underlying Contradictions. Here people of the villages and consultants from many fields of social, economic and political background broke into teams and began the work of doing the dreams.

There were twenty-one proposals. They dwelt with Shantumbu's physical development, fiscal foundation, commercial production, agricultural output, social activities, health practices and functional education. We are now into the third day of our empowering consultation with everyone at the table, or in the tent.

On Thursday, our 4th day together we began the task of creating a tactical system that is practical actions required to implement the proposals. Tactics describe and rationally organize the actions required to do the projects the villages had created.

We have learned over the years, in hundreds of villages and neighborhoods that social change, justice occurs through the doing of the tactics rather than grasping the vision or forging the proposals of your community or mine. In Shantumbu there were twenty five tactics and some 219 sub tactics. There were eight areas of action beginning with *agricultural production, village building, and practical training, ensuring continuous external support, community life, essential services and business expansion.*

By this time of the week, the preparations for the closing celebration Saturday afternoon were on the way and the leadership of Shantumbu was already working with their citizens to begin a preschool on the next Monday and turn over the first dirt for the Cooperative Community Farm. Connections were being made daily and relationships secured for education, health care and pure water with local, regional and national government agencies. So Friday, when we began the step that brought the Actuating Programs into being, twenty one programs with budgets, lists of needs and ways to have the people trained and engaged were created and some were already being started. Then the drums of celebration and joy began to beat and Saturday was a day of celebration and hope. As the National Dance Group from Lusaka came out of the bush to dance the folk stories of the Soli people, of the fight for liberation that had ended less than ten years before, we all began to dance and sing long after the sun had set. In fact as I crawled into my sleeping bag that night the drums could still be heard, as we all knew something had happened this week, transformation of local community was a reality, and we knew in our hearts and souls, that the future was open.

Now this is one place, and it is a place where I and others were part of the fun. I remember the same kind of event in a small village not far from the 38th Parallel in South Korea, going to sleep with gunships flying over head watching for people coming in from the North. Yet the same joy was present, as we came to the end of the week. I worked and lived in a village in Hokkaido in Japan, where this same process had taken place. People had a vision and a way to do it, to realize their dreams.

You will have to forgive me, but I feel the sage in me is coming out as I continue the process of unpacking my memories of community development and transformation. I have been engaged in that process for over 44 years. I have been lucky to have been part of community reformulation in the states, Japan, Korea, Zambia, South Africa, and the Philippines. If my memory serves me well, there were some foundational things we learned and worked with as we demonstrated human development around the world. The story of Shantumbu was a story about process. For that human process to work on behalf of all, we need to remember the pillars of community building.

I am reminded of a song we would sing, whose chorus went like this:

Who will dare create a new future?

Who will dare respond to the need?

All the world look' round for a new sign

The cry for one to risk the deed.

Who will dare to create the new future here or wherever you live? Who will risk the deed? It is not difficult to see neighborhoods, five to ten block areas, creating their vision and developing their plan for their turf. It is not hard to imagine these plans being brought together in a city wide celebration of new life. We have been taught to think some system or government program will do it, but we know we will. Local leaders trained by local folks, a process that demands everyone be at the table, a demonstration of new life.

Come, build a future caring and free,

Working together, to build community.

➔ **The whole community needs to be involved from the first day.** It is easy for us to go to those who are always at the table and forget they might not represent everyone. It has always been hard work to organize and empower community. Those who are leaders in the economic, social, cultural, spiritual and political life of any village needs to be encouraged to be part of the movement for change and new life in a city or town. In Zambia, all those dynamics were present at the invitation of the nine villages that called for a consultation and planning event

➔ **You begin with the dreams, the vision of the community and build the comprehensive strategies from vision not issues. The strategies need to be comprehensive; you deal with all the issues.** The Economic, Political and Cultural dynamics of the community need to be part of the plan. The ideal community would be where these three dynamics are balanced. But now as in the 70's the economic is the tyrant, the imbalance is in the economic and the weakness is in the political. The cultural life of the community is often not honored but is the foundation of any change.

→ **Discern as a community, what are the sign posts, the demonstration projects that bring hope while the big programs are being worked out?** This is where we choose the projects or issues that bring the community to its feet for change. I remember in Korea, the village merely placed a sign where the preschool was going to be and it became a sign of hope and brought a sense of accomplishment to the community. Later building was built by the community and a pre-school came into being. The sign was not just another sign, but a symbol of a vision and a plan laid by the people.

→ **Celebrate, celebrate, and celebrate.** I think the events I remember in my life are the celebrations. The birthdays, weddings, funerals and special family events help us all to remember who we are. It is the same for community. We need to celebrate who we are. We are often limited to our own faith events, but needs to celebrate with all people, and learn to honor our differences as well as our common ground. At the end of each of these consultations, the celebrations were the final signature of new life and a decision.

The Kabir reminds us, “Wherever you are is the entry point!” So we are at the beginning of an exciting time in our community, nation and world. How do we gather the people and begin the process where each neighborhood can dream and build a plan for their “hood?” When do we begin to train local people, ourselves, to lead these events where people can work through their vision and blocks and build a strategic plan for the whole city and area?

As an Inter Faith community, a diverse community, how do we draw the new maps of how to live and work in harmony and justice? We are not talking about taking the old and making it new. We are talking about a new understanding of what it means to be community and to live in justice and peace. The Power of the Sacred Word events are helped us in Syracuse when I was there, to relate in tolerance and spirit, the Dialogue Circles to Heal Racism, are a process that allow us to deal with the structural and personal plague of racism and change the way we see life and others. As we act in hospitality to welcome the refugee, and care for the senior and fight for the rights of those in care we hear the cry, a cry for justice and peace. Now is the time, we are the people to

be engaged in the hard risky work of neighborhood renewal, house by house, person by person. ¹

I thought my days as an organizer were in the past. But the task is never finished. These words are but reflection, of an engaged life. I pray these reflections can help all of us to see and hear where the next risk needs to be taken, as a city, a neighborhood and as citizens of the world. Freedom!

There is - a people

Born of - new spirit

Hope is emerging - cries of the earth

Hear them – awakened

See them – engaging, wake up!

This article was written in 2002 when I was Executive Director of the InterReligious Council of Central New York in Syracuse, NY (now, Inter Faith Works). It has a city flavor to it, but these same principles are for all communities.



The Academy Ecumenical Institute, Fifth City, Chicago, 1970-71

¹ **Power of the Sacred Word** is a four to six session event where people of different faiths share the reading of their sacred word, and the community listens, takes time for meditation and then talks how that word touched their lives and spiritual journey. This program has been created by ko shin, Bob Hanson and is available for your community. **Dialogue Circles** are a program that has been very successful in Syracuse, NY under the leadership and guidance of **InterFaith Works**, a large interfaith organization in that city and area. It is a six week program where diverse groups of people come together under well trained leaders and talk about how they can bring an end to Racism in their lives and their community.



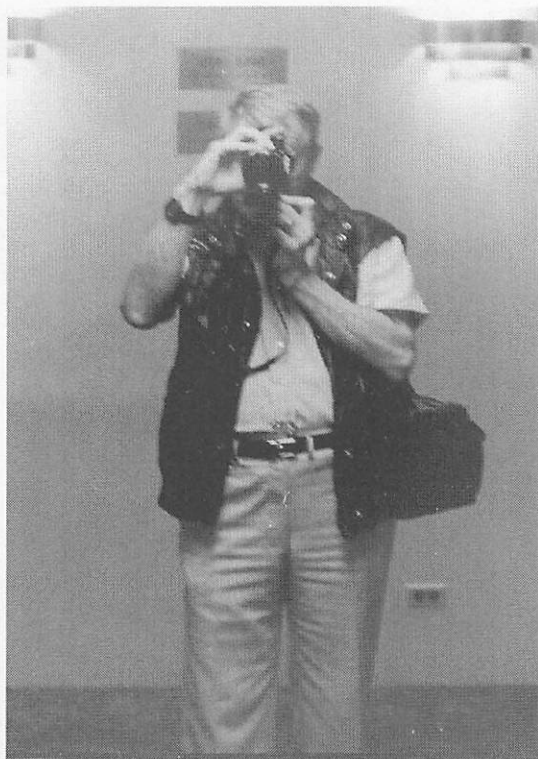
Business Planning Training and Course, Okinawa 80's



The Human Development Project, Shantumbu, Zambia, 1976

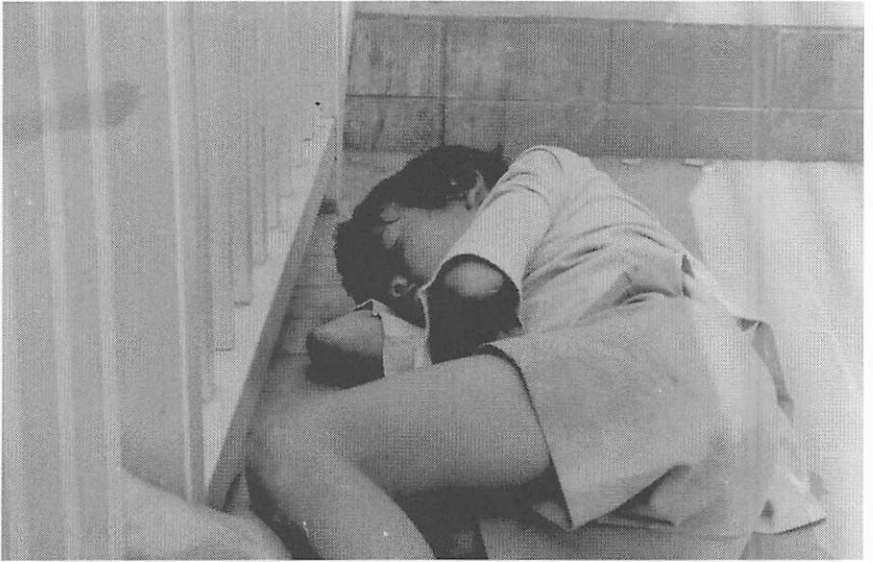
These are the Times, We are the People!

Photos, by ko shin





The Smiles of the poor, light up our world



The Sleeping Poor,
Walking bridge in Bangkok, Thailand, late 1980's



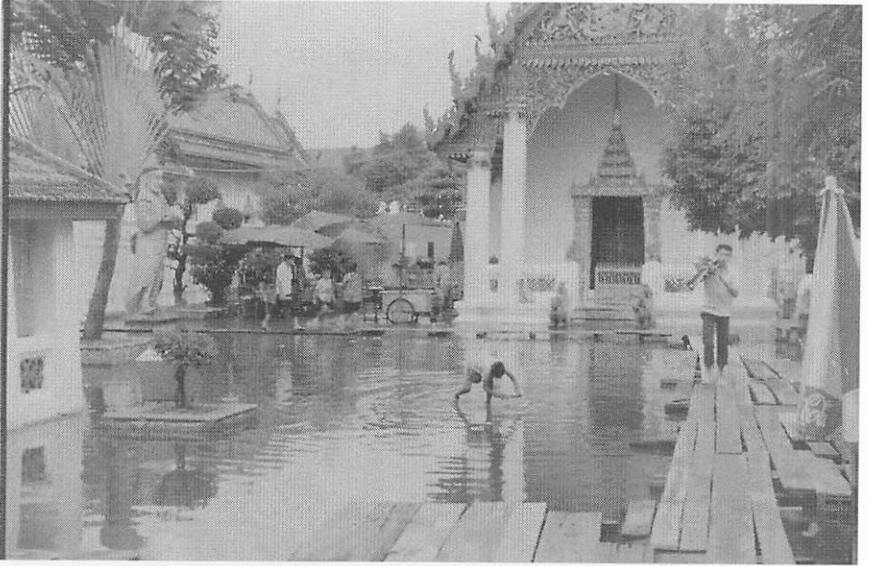
Young children at the Cebu Project



The champion!



Silence, Peace, Freedom!



Flood time, Rainy Season Bangkok, Thailand, 1980's



One has to be serious, all those steps...A Temple, Japan



Wat (Temple) Phrathat Doi Suthep, 300 steps, Thailand



Cherry Blossom Time, Kyushu, Japan



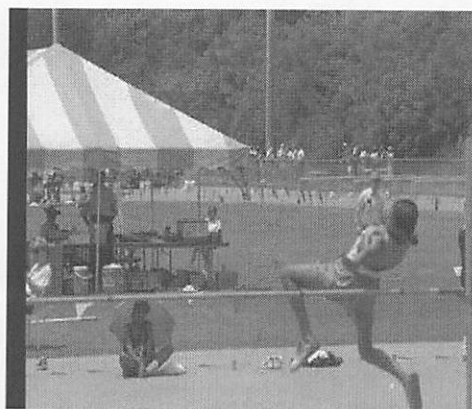
Strike, 80's New York City



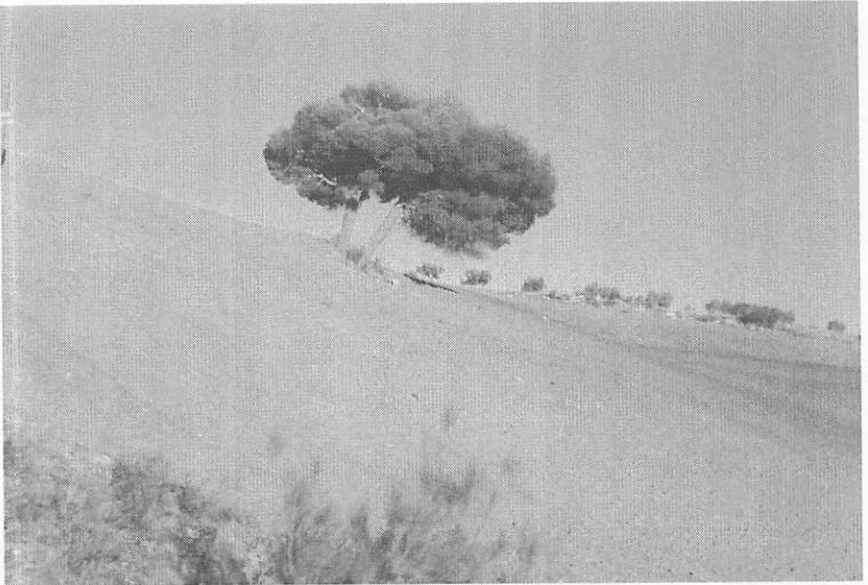
Demonstrations, Madison, WI 2011



Well, it's the Nap not the Place!



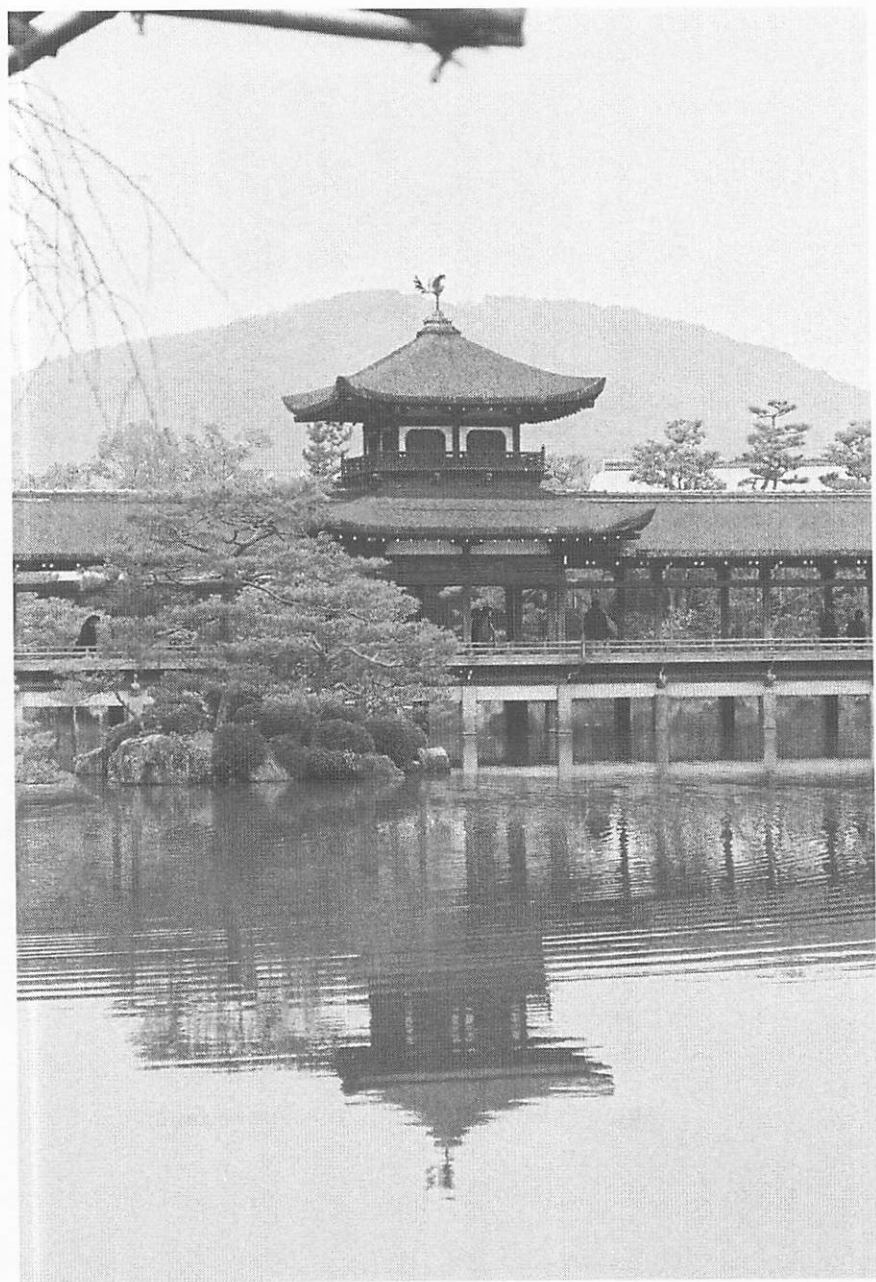
Adia winning the High School State Championship, in TN!



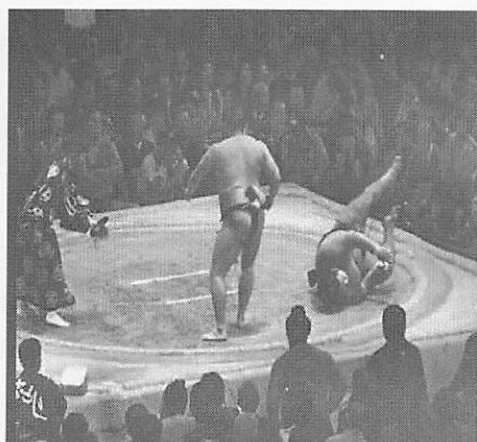
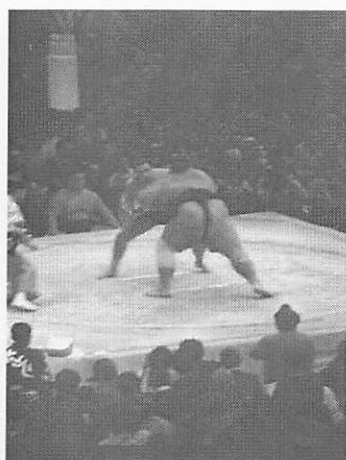
Olive Trees in Spain



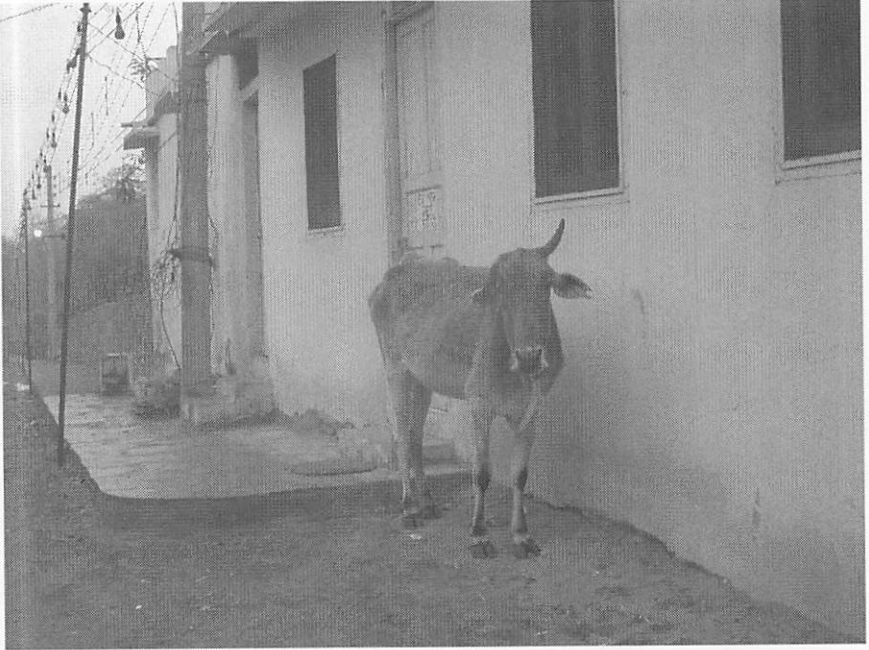
Kobenhaven, Denmark in the morning....



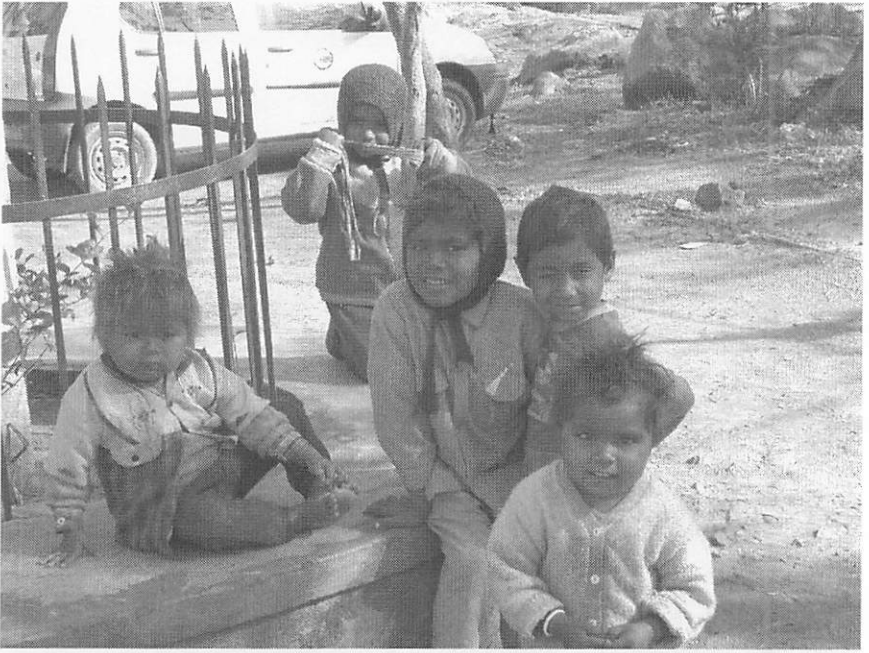
Silence and Beauty



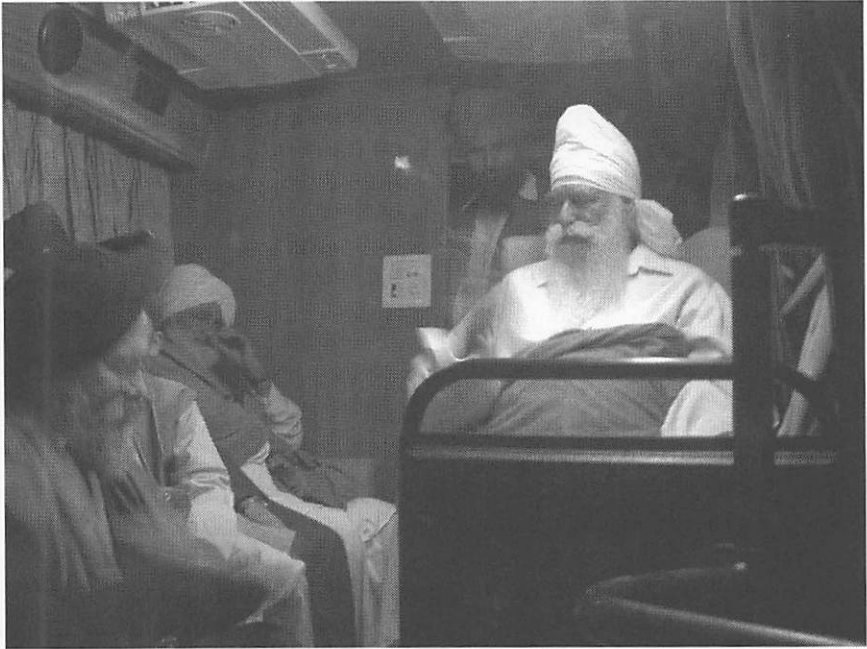
Sumo Fall Tournament, in Fukuoka Japan



This fine sacred creature greeted us each morning as we walked to breakfast in Gobind Sudan, India



Children of Gobind Sadan, India



“We will obey God's Will only when we meditate. Through meditation, we will understand the enlightened wisdom of our prophets and their messages. “

Baba Virsa Singh
Gobind Sadan, India

About the Author

ko shin, Bob Hanson, was born in 1940 to Hjalmar and Helen Hanson in Green Bay, WI. As far as he remembers, he has lived at 40 different addresses in his life so far, and traveled around the world. He is a graduate of Granite Falls High School, the Kilowatts, St. Olaf College,

and Luther Seminary in St. Paul. His older brother J.D. lives in Minneapolis.

Bob and his family, traveled to Japan together and served in the Order Ecumenical as well as earlier at Hephatha Lutheran Parish, where Bob was baptized in the spirit and discovered what real prophetic ministry and service was about. After Bob left the ICA Staff, he continued in Japan and worked for a small chemical company as international marketing director, and taught English conversation in many venues', returning to Milwaukee on February 25, 1991. Bob continued his ministry soon after that in 1992.

Karen Ingvaldstad and ko shin were married in 1994. Karen has been ordained as an InterFaith Pastor, and now works as a Hospice Chaplain. Bob has been a practitioner of Zen Buddhism since 1992, taking the Precepts Ceremony in 2001 in Syracuse NY. He and his wife, Karen, are engaged in inter faith activities locally, regionally and with the Council of the Parliament of World Religions. Bob also volunteers for the Meditation Program of the Milwaukee Zen Center in four prisons twice a month not far from his home.

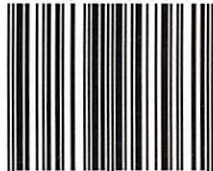
They have a beautiful blended family of five adult children and twelve grand children. Life is one large gift for Bob, and for his family. This book is a way he shares his muses, and spirit, many deep thanks to all of you for your friendship and support. Deep bows and compassion to all!



ko shin, Bob Hanson

Standing with one of the many Buddha's
at Wat Mahatha Sukhothai
Historical Park, Sukhothai, Thailand, May, 2011.

ISBN 9781467947961



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