



TAIL OF THE OX

VOLUME 15, ISSUE 3

DECEMBER 2010

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Dear Sangha and Friends, Re-reading the submissions for this issue of the Ox, I was, once again, struck by the generosity and commitment to practice of our Sangha. I am touched by the degree to which our Dharma brothers and sisters are willing to open themselves up to us and to share their experiences, as they walk the path with quiet resolve.

In her piece Food for the Hunger Banquet, Carole Ferrari writes openly and movingly of the tremendous capacity for giving of so many local farmers in response to her request for food donations. In Canoe Sesshin, Mark Pioro reflects on the challenges and rewards of a sesshin spent under the stars and the rain! Jim MacKinnon with contributions from his wife, Sue, and Sudarshana Kapleau paints a beautiful remembrance of Maitreyi Kapleau, while Marylin King reminds us of the power of words to inspire and motivate in her review of Ani Tenzin Palmo's *Reflections on a Mountain Lake*.

And what would an issue of the Ox be without the contributions of some most delicious recipes with special thanks this time 'round to Sara Salih and Candice Eisner.

Finally, describing her experiences of teaching Tai Chi to Seniors, the challenges and rewards that come from such efforts, and the parallels to Zen practice, Barbara Lamb encourages us all (regardless of where we *think* we may be in our practice) to sit up straight, take a deep breath, and begin.

~ Bruce Roberts



IN THE COMMUNITY

Food For The Hunger Banquet

by Carole Ferrari

AS I WRITE THIS PIECE I have begun asking farmers for food donations for the Hunger Banquet. I work with farmers throughout the growing season. I am a baker and they are

my neighbours at the farmers' market where we sell our goods together. I buy my ingredients from them, so in a very tangible way they make my baking possible. Generally, even if it is for

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Food...



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a really good cause like the Hunger Banquet, asking for donations makes me nervous and I feel awkward doing it, but the farmers are almost always overwhelmingly generous. The job ends up being very easy, and very inspiring. Everyone gives something. Some give so much that I don't know how to thank them enough. It is so heart-warming it brings me to tears thinking about it. I am grateful that I get to work with these people.

I get emotional because I see how hard it is to make a living as a farmer, especially a local, small scale organic farmer, which is the kind of farming my farmer friends have committed to. They do it because industrial agriculture is problematic in many ways and they are trying to

find a better way. But it is very difficult work, very risky work, and it's not supported by the government like industrial agriculture is, and it is not supported by the vast majority of eaters out there, so it's very difficult.

And yet they give as if they have so much to give.

In *The Art of Loving*, Erich Fromm elucidates what it means to give. "In the sphere of material things," he says, "giving means being rich. Not he who has much is rich, but he who gives much." He also notes that "poverty beyond a certain point may make it impossible to give, and is so degrading, not only because of the suffering it causes directly, but because of the fact that it deprives the poor of the joy of giving." What a succinct description of why the Hunger Banquet is so important. It is a cruel irony that the vast majority of the poorest people in the world are the people who work to harvest our food.

Asking for food donations in the face of such generosity is humbling. I try to ask without feeling bad, without judging the situation, but that can be confusing for me. When I told the market manager what I was doing he suggested I go ask Sue*, a very small scale farmer whose farm is entirely carbon neutral as she doesn't use any mechanized equipment. He said she had really nice squash. But I felt I couldn't ask Sue for a donation, it would be asking too much of

someone who is already giving so much of her body, of her everything, to the food. He responded that, yes, she probably couldn't afford it, but that she was a good person. He knew that she would give. Is it fair to ask, when you know you're going to get too much in return?

I feel tremendous gratitude to the farmers. It is wonderful to have our meal chant that is an expression of gratitude and a source of solace. "This meal is the labour of countless beings. Let us remember their toil." ♦

**Sue is not the farmer's real name.*



Canoe Sesshin

by Mark Pioro



7HIS SEPTEMBER I attended the Centre's second ever canoe sesshin. Following much planning and preparation, eight participants, including Sensei, departed from the Centre to Algonquin Park, for five days of paddling, portaging, and camping, together with Zazen, Dokusan, and Teisho.

The water was calm as we entered Smoke Lake to travel Algonquin's "Southern Circuit", though there were storm clouds not far off. After a long paddle, we reached our first portage point. A wrong turn led us through a winding, muddy path to Ragged Lake. We were away from civilization, and I could

hear fellow sesshin participants whispering in their canoes down the lake. The rain caught up with us just before reaching camp. It was an intense first day!

The rain came and went over the next two days. I found it frustrating at times, though it also helped me to stay focused and to practice resilience. It never rained during the times scheduled for sitting and Teisho, meaning that we could all sit together in the open, rather than separately in our tents.

Sensei's talks were on Zen Master Dogen's Mountains and Rivers Sutra. Sensei emphasized how being in nature strengthens us. I found this true for myself. It was my

first portaging experience. We had to paddle with exertion. My pack was heavy. Though I struggled to make it through the portages, by the end of the five days, I was getting the hang of it.

When traveling, setting up camp, cooking, doing dishes, or sitting, each moment presented an opportunity to practice mindfulness. Our surroundings opened up this practice in a profound way: being in nature, sitting by the campfire, hearing the loon cry, and seeing all the stars one clear night.

It was also a chance to work in a different way with Dharma brothers and sisters. Un-

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Canoe...

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like in a traditional sesshin, we had to communicate out loud, and help each other physically in various situations. Relying on each other in this way occasionally meant dealing with irritation and frustration, though such moments passed.

Around the third day, we adventurously decided to take an unplanned route through a creek to our next destination. Halfway there, we were blocked by beaver dams and shallow water. We retraced our steps, and reached our next campsite after a total of seven portages. We later agreed that it was a worthwhile experience getting off the beaten path and traveling through the marshlands that

play a vital role in our ecosystem.

Over the last two days, the sun was out. On our last night camping, the sesshin format ended, allowing us to talk freely, enjoy each other's company, and sleep in the next morning (until seven am). We spent our last afternoon enjoying lunch in Huntsville.

Thanks to one of the participants, Seppo, who took photos, we were able to share some of our experience with the rest of the Sangha at a talk given by Sensei the following week.

The whole experience helped me to value nature. Since then, I've been taking advantage of opportunities to be outdoors, and I'm also looking forward to the next canoe sesshin! ♦



Remembering Maitreyi Kapleau

by Jim MacKinnon

Last summer, many Zen Centre members attended the funeral of Maitreyi Kapleau a long-time friend of the Centre and the wife of the late Roshi Philip Kapleau

Maitreyi was one of those amazing people you may have the rare privilege to meet, who exude a sense of true grace and serenity. She was invariably warm and gracious with everyone she met, and left them feeling inspired, refreshed, and, in some sense, really appreciated. There was a quality about her which was, for want of a better word, deeply 'spiritual'. Very rounded, but something more.

Maitreyi was born Joan Delancey Robinson, the middle of three sisters born in Winnipeg, Manitoba. She remembered, as a child, being fascinated by all things Indian and having a sense of a deep connection with that amazing country.

When she attended the University of Toronto as a young adult, to study art and archaeology, Delancey continued her fascination with India, and made friends with students from that country.

In the mid-1950s, a good friend of hers went to India to do peace work, and invited Delancey to visit her at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry, a small coastal town south of Chennai, in South India.

One day, as they were taking their finished lunch trays to be washed after the Ashram meal, her friend introduced her to a pleasant young American man, visiting the ashram from Japan. After a whirlwind courtship, Delancey joined Philip Kapleau in Japan and they were married at an ancient Zen Temple in Kamakura. Zen practice became a central part of her life, and the young couple actually spent their honeymoon in sesshin.



Part of Delancey's sesshin experience is recounted in the *Three Pillars of Zen* in the section on "DK, a Canadian housewife."

Delancey and Philip Kapleau's daughter, Sudarshana, arrived some months later. While in Kamakura, Philip and Delancey were busy with zen practice and the writing of the book, *Three Pillars of Zen*. During the course of some ten years in Japan, her daughter attended a Japanese school, becoming proficient in the language. Delancey also acquired some proficiency in Japanese. Sudarshana remembers going with her mother to show such visitors as Sri Chinmoy and Lama Govinda the Daibutsu in Kamakura.

Sensei Kapleau, as he became, returned to North America some years later, his family following a year later. In 1970, Delancey and her daughter moved to Ottawa, where one of her sisters was living. They frequently visited Rochester, where Philip Kapleau was busy developing what was to become the largest Zen Buddhist

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Maitreyi...

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community in the United States.

Delancey had been a student of Yasutani Roshi, in Kamakura. As it happened, her sister in Ottawa headed a Sri Chinmoy meditation centre there. After meeting Sri Chinmoy on several occasions, Delancey became his student. A few years later, now Maitreyi, she moved to Toronto to start a new Sri Chinmoy Meditation Centre there.

Many older members of the Zen Centre have fond memories of Maitreyi and her daughter visiting the Centre, especially at receptions for Roshi Kapleau on his frequent visits. Maitreyi was a real presence.

***Entirely present in the moment,
Maitreyi slowly savoured every
bite.***

In recent years, with her health beginning to fail, a number of Sangha members and friends got to know Maitreyi in a more intimate way, thanks to Sangha member Karen Stenning taking the initiative to help organize a group of regular visitors.

One of those who had the privilege of spending time with Maitreyi was my wife, Sue. Sue recalls:

I didn't have the opportunity to visit Maitreyi many times, but she made a big impression on me.

Maitreyi was an invariably gracious lady. Even though she didn't recognize me (and would never recognize me after a number of visits due to short term memory loss), she was always happy to have company. Her trust surprised and amazed me. She would get in the car for an outing without worry about who I was and why I was taking her anywhere. I would say, at Sudarshana's direction, that I was a friend of Sudarshana's, and that seemed to be enough

for Maitreyi.

Maitreyi was also entirely present in the moment: if she was eating ice cream or chocolate cake, she would slowly savour every bite. I would be watching the time, concerned about getting Maitreyi back to her residence in time for her dinner, but Maitreyi was enjoying where she was and what she was doing; she was not to be rushed. Her patience and attentiveness was a lesson for me.

Every time we went out, Maitreyi would ask the same questions: Do you paint?

No, I don't, I'm not very good at that kind of thing.

*Maitreyi: You **must** paint!! Just pick up some paint and a paintbrush and **start!** Do you meditate?*

No, I don't.

Maitreyi: Oh... Have you been to India?

No, but it's at the top of my list.

*Maitreyi: You **must** go right away. It's magical.*

Maitreyi loved nature. This past spring, she and I had a wonderful visit to the cherry blossoms in High Park. We stood amongst them for about 45 minutes. As we turned slowly around in the middle of the trees, enjoying the fact of being surrounded by the blossoms, Maitreyi closed her eyes for a moment, lifted her chin toward the sky and breathed in the moment. "This is positively scrumptious!"

I will never forget her.

Even as she suffered from a debilitating illness, Maitreyi retained her characteristic poise and graciousness. It is hard not to imagine that this was at least in part the product of years of spiritual practice. Maitreyi was always up for an outing, and was charming with visitors. She loved the colours and sounds of the Temple Night when she came last spring.

An extraordinary life, and an extraordinary person.

We are all the more fortunate for having had her among us, and were so very grateful to have the opportunity to help send her off on the next stage of her remarkable journey. ♦

~ In Review ~

Reflections on a Mountain Lake – Author Ani Tenzin Palmo by Marilyn King

One of my favourite books, one that I dip into a great deal is *Reflections on a Mountain Lake* by Ani Tenzin Palmo. What first intrigued me, even before I read it, was learning that she had spent twelve years in retreat in a cave on a mountain in Nepal. To our Western minds this sounds amazing, if not quite believable. So I hunted up the book and bought it.

This amazing and very believable book that Tenzin Palmo has written is soundly practical and very down-to-earth. In her efforts to raise funds in order to build a Buddhist Monastery for women near Dharamsala, she toured the world giving talks, listening and responding to people's questions. Out of this tour arose her book.

Each chapter begins with a talk given by her and is followed by a series of questions from members of the audience and her answers. I was at first surprised at how plain her talks were; but after reflection, realized that this woman is not an academic but one who is wholeheartedly com-



In in order to raise funds to build a Buddhist monastery for women, Tenzin Palmo toured the world.

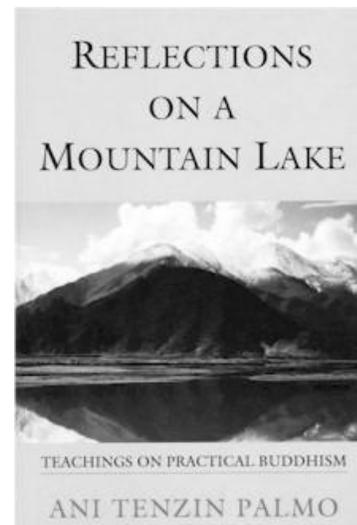
mitted to realizing the truth of reality. The result, of course, is wisdom.

In her chapter on Ethics and Training, a questioner asks: "If all religions have similar codes of ethics, why is Buddhism so special?" She replies: "All religions tell us not to harm others and to be good... One of the things that is special about Buddhism is that it doesn't just tell us to love our neighbour as ourselves, it tell us how to do it. It gives us techniques for developing loving-kindness and compassion." Practical.

On the subject of Karma she tells us that no matter what our actions, our self-justifications are of no use.

They are not the point. The point is the underlying motivation. If our actions are motivated by clear understanding, love, or generosity, then there will be positive results. In other words – we'd better be quite clear as to why we are acting. Sometimes I find it hard to realize just why I am doing something. It pays, it seems, to reflect deeply on our reasons for doing something. This is good advice.

Tenzin Palmo's book can be found all over my house. That is, I seem to grab it and take it with me to dip into when I sit to rest. I choose it often. It refreshes me and encourages me to stick to it. It reinforces everything we are being taught at the Centre; and that can be only good. ♦





Ox in the Kitchen

Vegan corner — by Sara Salih

Tofu Marinade

I "veganized" this recipe from one of the Tassajara cookbooks (they use honey instead of maple syrup: you can even leave it out altogether), and now it has become one of my favourites. It's delicious baked or fried, or even uncooked if you are feeling hungry!

¼ cup olive oil
 ¼ Dijon mustard
 1-2 tablespoons maple syrup
 ¼ cup tamari
 3-4 cloves garlic, crushed
 One block of tofu, cut into smallish triangles or cubes

Combine the marinade ingredients in a small bowl. Place the tofu chunks/triangles in a large container, preferably one with a lid, then pour the marinade over it and stir carefully (or put the lid on and shake!) Marinade for at least an hour, or even several days. You can fry the chunks in a tiny bit of olive oil, or spread them evenly on a baking tray and bake for 30 minutes at 350F. You will need to turn them once or twice.

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Multi-tasking vegan cupcakes

I had advised my eleven year-old niece against multi-tasking (during one phone conversation she was doing her math homework, watching T.V. and talking to me!). But on another occasion there I was making cupcakes while I chatted to her, since I had guests coming. Perhaps that's why I reached for the kamut flour instead of the white flour, and by the time I realized my mistake, it was too late. To my surprise, the cupcakes rose, and tasted delicious, so now I think I can claim this as my own recipe! These cupcakes "multi-task" in lots of ways: they are delicious, ethical, and sort of healthy.

1 cup soy milk
 1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar
 ¾ cup granulated sugar (you can use less)
 1/3 cup canola oil
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 1 cup kamut flour
 1/3 cocoa powder
 ¾ teaspoon baking soda
 ¾ teaspoon baking powder
 ¼ teaspoon salt

Preheat the oven to 350F and line your muffin pan with paper liners. Whisk the soy milk and vinegar in a large bowl and leave to curdle for a few minutes. Then add sugar, oil, vanilla and beat together. In a separate bowl, sift the dry ingredients together. Add the wet ingredients, and fold/beat until there are not too many lumps. Spoon into your cupcake liners so they are ¾ full, and have a niece/nephew/son/daughter handy to lick the spoon. Bake for 18 to 20 minutes until a small knife comes out clean. Place on a cooling rack and let cool completely. Then ice with Ganache topping.

Ganache topping

¼ cup soy milk
 About a cup of dark semi-sweet chocolate, broken into bits. You can use chocolate chips.
 2 tablespoons maple syrup or agave

Heat the soy milk in a small pan, then remove from the heat and add the chocolate and maple Mix until the ganache is smooth, then ice your cupcakes!

With thanks to Vegan Cupcakes Take Over the World.



More vegan recipes

by Candice Eisner



Vegan Squash Bisque

Use homemade vegetable broth for this for better flavour. Or, use good tasting broth with a low sodium content.

For Thanksgiving this year I used a combination of delicata and acorn squash, but use whatever variety you like!

Soup

5 pounds of winter squash of choice
Oil of choice for roasting
6 cups vegetable broth
2 teaspoons thyme
Salt and pepper to taste

Cashew Cream

1 1/2 cups raw, unsalted cashews
1 1/2 cups vegetable broth

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

Peel squash, chop off the ends, then cut in half and scrape out the seeds. Place the squash halves on a baking sheet, cut side down, and coat lightly with oil. Bake for 20-40 minutes (depends on the size of your squash) until tender and lightly browned. Flipping the squash may be required part way through to prevent burning.

While the squash is cooking, put cashews into a blender with half the vegetable broth. Pulse them together until mixture is blended but still chunky. Add in the remaining broth, then turn the blender on high. Blend for about 2 minutes or until the mixture is very smooth.

Remove cooked squash from the oven and transfer to a large soup pot. Break the squash up into smaller pieces with a wooden spoon and add the six cups of vegetable broth, thyme and black pepper. Bring to a boil over high heat, then turn the heat to medium and simmer for 20 minutes, covered.

To blend the soup— Use a stick/hand blender you trust. Or, transfer the mixture in batches to a regular blender and blend until smooth. Then transfer it back into the pot (if you used a regular blender) and add in the cashew cream*, stirring well to combine. Taste the soup for seasonings and add salt and pepper if needed.

Reserve about 1/4 cup of the cashew cream and use it to garnish the soup. Drizzle a bit on top of each serving, or draw patterns with it if you like!

Banana-Blueberry Gluten-free, Vegan Cake

This cake has a muffin-like texture and is good as dessert or for brunch.

The secret to gluten-free baking is to use a combination of flours to give the final product good texture and appropriate density. Xanthan gum takes the place of gluten in many gluten-free recipes, helping to bind things together so the baked good will be less crumbly. Vegan baking often involves egg replacer powder, which is a combination of starches and leavening agents. A popular one is made by Ener-G and is both gluten-free and vegan. All of these items can be found at most health food stores or even at many major grocery chains often in the organics section.

In a large bowl, beat the following until well combined:

3 medium bananas, mashed (preferably organic)
egg replacer powder for 3 eggs, whisked with hot water until frothy
1 tablespoon real vanilla extract
1 tablespoon agave nectar or maple syrup
1/2 cup light olive oil
1 1/3 cups light brown sugar

To that mixture, add:

1 cup sorghum flour
1/2 cup millet flour
1/2 cup buckwheat flour
1/2 cup corn starch
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon xanthan gum
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg



Mix until smooth. Then add:

1 heaping cup of blueberries (if using frozen berries, defrost them first and pat them dry)

When combined, spoon batter evenly into a well greased Bundt cake pan and bake for 40-50 minutes, until the cake is lightly browned and a toothpick inserted comes out clean.

Cool completely before turning out onto a serving plate.

Carry Tiger to Mountain: Tai Chi with seniors

by Barbara Lamb

SIT UP STRAIGHT in your chair, take a deep breath, and begin." A Tai Chi class at Cedarvale Terrace is underway. Coming to Tai Chi preceded my Zen practice by a number of years. It was an expectation of senior students at the Toronto Tai Chi Association that we become volunteer instructors, as a way to repay our debt of gratitude to our own teachers, as well as to further our practice, for it is by teaching something that we truly learn it.

I led a variety of classes before Cedarvale, but none of these could fully prepare me for teaching in a nursing home. As a high school student, I had been a volunteer visitor at a senior's residence



and found the experience uncomfortable and depressing, so it was with some trepidation that I took on the Cedarvale class fifteen years ago.

The first challenge was one of adaptation. Since I had previously instructed "able-bodied" adults, I needed to find ways to make the exercises accessible to people with diverse mobility issues. This practice of *upaya*, skillful means, is ongoing. New class members need to be assessed, and continuing students followed in their progress as they age. Skillful means are also required in working with a medley of personalities, and learning how to communicate with people who may be frightened or angry due to dementia.

Despite the compassionate support of recreation staff at the facility, at the beginning I often felt ineffectual and frustrated. This is like the early stages of practice, when we may believe we aren't getting anywhere. I wondered if Tai Chi, and particularly the instructor, had anything to offer the residents. Finally, I just decided that if nothing else, at least it was something for people to do on a Tuesday morning. This can be a turning point in Zen practice too, where we drop the judgments about how we are progressing, and vow to just carry on, regardless.

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*In even a light snow, we can see
The three thousand worlds.
Again a light snow falls.*

~ Ryokan

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Seniors...

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Later, working through some emotional distress in my own life, I would come to class, look into the aged eyes of the participants, and feel comforted. Those eyes had seen and endured so much. Some withered arms bore tattooed numbers from concentration camps. Many residents came to Canada as refugees. All were living now in an institution, away from family, friends and all they had known. And yet their courtesy, humour and curiosity shone through. I learned a deep lesson about patience and grace.

This appreciation led to the third phase of the experience. One day I watched a long-time participant struggling to master a move, and it struck me: these aren't old people filling in time before lunch. These are Tai Chi students. They are here to learn. Recognizing their zeal has



They are here to learn. There is utter silence; the concentration as deep as that in the zendo.

made me a more demanding teacher. I show new moves, and the class rises to the challenge. There is utter silence; the concentration as deep as that in the zendo. People's willingness to work, to learn, and to try new things, even at age 99, fills me with admiration. I'm also grateful for the ongoing reminder of the inevitability of aging, illness and death as a spur to press on with deep questioning.

A few years ago, at a pivotal time in my Zen training, I considered dropping the Tai Chi class to have more time for zazen. How fortunate that Sensei advised me to continue. The experience of teaching at Cedarvale Terrace grows weekly in richness and depth. Anyone who volunteers knows that we get far more out of it than we put in. And yet, no one gives, no one receives, and nothing is given.

Sit up straight in your chair, take a deep breath, and begin.♦