

Anthroposophy & Buddhism

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Buddhism and Anthroposophy – A Dialogue

First Meeting in Hue from March 3 to 8 2001



by Ha Vinh Tho

In the last decade, initiatives inspired by Anthroposophy have been developing rapidly in several Asian countries. In relationship to that, the “Anthroposophical Asia Pacific Conferences” have become important yearly events, where many of the friends involved in these projects, have gathered and

worked together on the specific issues connected with the growing interest for Anthroposophy and its practical applications in the East.

One of the themes that has been present during all the conferences is the challenge to work out of Anthroposophy in countries with a Buddhist cultural background as Japan, Thailand, Korea or Vietnam.

Another aspect of this question is the growing interest for Buddhism in the West, where more and more people looking for an inner path turn towards Buddhism for inspiration in meditation, ethics and spiritual guidance.

The Goetheanum in Dornach has organized in the past years two summer conferences on the world religions in connection to Anthroposophy. During the conference in summer 2000, on the theme of “The esoteric streams in the world religions”, Ha Vinh Tho and Lisi Ha Vinh – who have been developing curative education projects in Vietnam for the past ten years – met with several members of the executive committee of the Anthroposophical Society to discuss the question of Buddhism and Anthroposophy. It appeared in the course of the conversation that, if anything serious should come about on this very complex question, it would be necessary to create a research group of motivated people having a real and deep connection with these two streams.

As a result of this meeting, they accepted the task of acting as a focus point for such a research project, by organizing a first meeting on this theme to be held in Vietnam in March 2001.

The idea was to start with a small group of people sharing this interest, and having a personal connection with both Buddhism and Anthroposophy. The intention was to be less than twenty persons for the first encounter, as it seemed important to begin in a modest manner and to let this project grow in an organic way. Finally, eleven people were able to come together in Hue, Central Vietnam.

Originally, we had planned to spend half the days in Buddhist temples to meet with local monks and nuns, and the rest of the time should have been dedicated to conversations amongst the participants.

Three weeks before the meeting, the political situation became very tensed in Vietnam, regarding religious issues. Vietnam and the U.S.A. have signed a commercial agreement in July 2000 under the former American administration, but this treaty can only be implemented if both, the American Congress and the Vietnamese parliament sign it. The new American administration is less inclined to sign this agreement; moreover, religious groups in America have approached congressmen to ask them not to sign if the Vietnamese government did not improve the human rights situation and specifically the religious freedom in the country.

The Vietnamese government reacted very strongly to this, accusing America to interfere in their national

The temple hall of the Tu Hieu Pagoda in Hue





Our group at the Thien Mu Pagoda near Hue (from left to right): Lisi Ha Vinh, Hans van Florenstein Mulder, Ha Vinh Tho, Sato Masaki, Abhisiree Charanjavanaphet, Wallapa Kuntiranant, Hans van Willenswaard, Benjawan Gularb, Michaela Spaar, Sara Ciborski and Urs Schumacher

sovereignty, and rejecting vigorously any accusation concerning human rights violation and limitation of religious freedom.

In Vietnam, several religious groups, both Catholics and Buddhists, have taken this opportunity to voice their discontent with the policy of the government and the authorities have replied by tightening their control over religious activities.

We happened to have planned our meeting exactly as all this was happening. As most of our curative education projects in Vietnam are in partnership with local religious groups, we had to be very careful not to endanger our work by confronting the authorities. Besides, any group of foreigners who was not simply tourists, but were interested in social and religious questions was very suspicious regarding to the situation.

Therefore, our meeting had to be organized in a different way, and although we still managed to meet with several Buddhist monks and nuns, we were not as free to move about as we had hoped to. But this very fact gave the meeting a very interesting dimension, as we were able to have a first hand experience of the complex reality. It is simplistic to imagine a Christian West on one side and a Buddhist East on the other. As we experienced, in a country like Vietnam, the official ideology in Marxism, a Western system of thought, and Buddhism is often considered as a dissident and potentially dangerous philosophy.

In a way, the meeting with the country itself was an important part of our meeting. We were able to experience many aspects of its culture: traditional medicine, martial arts, Buddhist meditation, classical

court music, architecture, and last but not least, Vietnamese cuisine.

In our conversations, we tried to deepen our understanding of both the Anthroposophical and the Buddhist spiritual path. We also looked into some widespread misconception concerning Buddhism, without trying to deny the real differences between both streams. We also exchanged about the social, structural, economic, ecological, educational and spiritual problems mankind is facing in the beginning of the new millennium, and tried to sense what contributions both approaches could offer in this context.

It was only a first step on a long path, but many deep questions were addressed, and the necessity for an ongoing research on these themes was obvious for all participants. Where and when the next meeting will come about has still to be decided, but the will to continue this work was clearly formulated.

Each participant agreed to write a contribution to share some aspects of the meeting that was most relevant from his or her point of view.

Specific research themes are still to be elaborated, and could serve as a basis for the continuation of our work (for example the questions on pages 13 and 14).

For us, it was a wonderful opportunity to share some of the work we have done in Vietnam in the last years with friends coming from many parts of the world, and they could also experience the complexity of the situation we are facing. We were deeply thankful for their openness, the depth of their interest and the valuable contributions each one made during these days.

Ha Vinh Tho

Renewal through Encounter

Interest in the other person or thing stands at the beginning of any successful encounter. Such an attitude of openness accompanied our meeting in Hue, Vietnam, last March, when we from Asia, Europe, New Zealand and the U.S. came together to discuss how there could be more dialogue between anthroposophy and Buddhism.

One central question that concerned us was how an exchange between East and West can take place with dignity. How can the two ways of thinking (determined in the West by an I/world, either/or duality and in the East by non-duality and inclusiveness) meet as equal partners? Both the “progressive” West with its capitalist values, and the bogged down, decadent traditions in Asia have come up against

boundaries. Both East and West need renewal, each in their own way. Asian countries for example must find their own way between tradition and progress without sacrificing their identity.

During the advance of globalization it has become ever clearer that a change in thinking is needed. The future requires a mutual, responsible awareness of the world from us all, in which we learn from one another, exchange experiences and mutually inspire one another. Renewal occurs through forms of encounter that respect the dignity of the other person. We seek each other in freedom and discover a mutual path.

One important aspect that is shared by both anthroposophy and Buddhism is that an ethical attitude needs to underlie all action. Both

paths indicate that a change in external structures can only be achieved once an inner transformation has occurred. Therefore, ethical individualism as a basis for dialogue between the two streams could prove to be fruitful for us all. Bridges could be built.

If different cultures and streams want to enter into dialogue, then actual people need to meet – not systems or institutions. Why should I withhold acknowledgement and respect for the unfamiliar just because it is different from me or even opposite? Would I lose my identity or authenticity by entering into something different? Would I really lose, or would I gain? A fruitful encounter has the open gesture of giving and taking.

Michaela Spaar

Diary of our Meeting in Vietnam in March 2001



by Michaela Spaar

3rd of March: Arrival in Hue, Hoa Sen (Lotus) Hotel. Hans, Urs and Michaela were meeting with Tho and Lisi in the early afternoon. Later, Hans and Wallapa arrived. Tho told us why our program had to be changed. Background information about the actual situation in Vietnam. Walk through the French quartier. Dinner in the Grand Hotel with traditional court music.

4th of March: Meditation session with walking meditation in Tho's house. Excursion to Thien Mu Pagoda by bicycle. After lunch and rest time meeting at tea time in Tho and Lisi's house: résumé about Vietnamese history. The first common dinner with traditional royal cuisine in a restaurant nearby. Abhisiree, Sato, Benjawan and finally Sara have arrived.

5th of March: Embark on a boat trip on the Perfume River. Visit of Thien Mu Pagoda, the emperor's tomb of Tu Duc and a shamanistic temple. Lunch on the boat. Introduction Meeting. In the afternoon visit to the Dieu De traditional clinic and discussion with the director, the monk and doctor Thich Tue Tam. A small Tai Chi presentation with Thich Tue Tam, Ha Vinh Tho and Lisi Ha Vinh. Meeting at Tho and Lisi's house.

6th of March: At 8 o'clock to the Thuan Thanh School. Visit of the three classes with handicapped children, a project by Tho and Lisi. Discussion with the school director, the director of the education department in Hue and a teacher. Afterwards, trip to the center for elderly ladies at Tinh Duc

Pagoda. Visit of the insense stick workshop. Invited for lunch by the nuns. In the afternoon presentation of Vietnamese Kung Fu and discussion with the master of the Kung Fu Club. Meeting at Tho and Lisi's house. Dinner on a boat with traditional court music. All of us put candle lights (with a wish) on the river.

7th of March: Morning Meditation, walking meditation and dharma teaching in the Tai Linh Pagoda, a vocational training project. Sumptuous breakfast. Departure of Abhisiree and Sato. At 11.30 a.m. departure for Hoi An. One-hour-break at the seashore in Lang Co. At 5.30 p.m. arrival in the Hoi An “Beach Ressor Hotel” near the coast. Meeting in the hotel. Dinner at “Café des Amis” in Hoi An.

8th of March: Meeting. Departure of Wallapa and Hans. Shopping in Hoi An. Small meeting. Departure of Benjawan. Full moon celebration and “Women's Day”.

9th of March: Departure of Hans, Sara, Urs and Michaela back to Hue. Tho and Lisi stay in Hoi An.

10th of March: Hans, Sara, Urs and Michaela spend a whole day in the Tu Hieu Pagoda (the root temple of Thich Nath Han) where our meeting was originally planned. Michael, Sara's son, showed us the buildings and explained many things. The monks invited us for tea and lunch time. We could observe the two daily ceremonies at 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.

11th of March: Departure of Hans and Sara to Ho Chi Minh City.

12th of March: Departure of Urs and Michaela.

Our Personal Relationship to Buddhism and to Anthroposophy



by Lisi Ha Vinh

It is our last day here in Vietnam. It is getting hotter and hotter everyday and I almost miss the cold and rainy weeks in February! In the three months that we have spent here, the week of our meeting around the theme “Anthroposophy and Buddhism” has had, for me, a very particular “color”. We work

here in Vietnam, in a Buddhist country, on and off for the past 10 years. Some of our colleagues from Camphill, Switzerland, have come to help us, giving courses and support our initiatives, but our main partners here have nothing to do with, or know very little of Anthroposophy. So actually it was the first time we could share some aspects of our life here with a group of friends coming from an Anthroposophical background.

We all came together at a very special moment, as Tho has already described in his introduction. It was probably the most difficult moment for us since we are involved in the curative work in this country. The political situation was very tense and many of our close friends and work partners were under suspicion and through that, our work here was endangered.

We had to be very cautious in our meetings with our Buddhist friends. We did not want to bring them into trouble, neither our guests from abroad. At first when Tho and me had prepared this week, our plan had looked quite “perfect”, but then had to become, through the outer circumstances, much more humble and simple.

What is the meaning of this? Maybe it is too soon to know, but I feel that something important took place for us here, through this very special coming together at this very special moment.

When introducing ourselves at the beginning of the week, sitting under the high pine trees in the garden of the most lovely emperor tomb, I first noticed that we all spoke of our very personal relationship to Buddhism and to Anthroposophy. Everyone has his own story, his own destiny, his own background, and this has brought us together here with similar questions.

Very few people have a life without influences coming together from different cultures and religions. Throughout history it has been like this, but in the modern times this is getting even more complex and widespread. We all carry deep in our beings questions, aspirations and when they are touched through a meeting, a book, a conversation or sometimes some other event in our lives, we wake up to these questions again. When we are touched deeply we do not ask ourselves theoretical questions. This human encounter, this book, simply speaks to me and gives answers to my aspirations and to my quest.

Somebody in our group mentioned a meeting with the Dalai Lama, someone else mentioned her son becoming a Buddhist monk, and someone else mentioned a meeting with a Waldorf kindergarten teacher, which opened their mind and heart for a new influence in their life. These events are not abstract! They happen

between people. They happen through a relationship that gives you the feeling: here I meet somebody or a thought that can help me to understand my life in a better way, or here I meet somebody or a thought that touches me and I want to understand it more.

Many of you know the story of the father who left his son alone at home. While he was gone there had been a fire in the village and when he returned his house was burnt down and he only could find some bones of his son in the ashes. He moaned his son terribly and worshipped his memory day and night. But in fact his son had not died in the fire but had been kidnapped and managed to free himself after some time. He returned home knocking on his father’s door saying: “Father it is your son, please open the door.” The father was so convinced that his son was dead that he refused to let him in, even chasing him away, thinking that someone was making a fool of him.

If we are too convinced of having the Truth, Truth might knock on our door in the most unexpected way and we too might send it away, thinking that we know it all already!

Through the events here in Hue during the meeting I was very much awakened to the role of challenging society through a truly spiritual attitude. Here in a communist country the free spirit is looked at as a danger for the system. In our consumerist societies it should also be the same that a free spirit challenges the materialistic and market oriented system. A system is always afraid of a freethinking mind. Our societies, may it be in the East or in the West, need to awaken to the reality of the free human being. We, in the West do not have so many lessons to give to the societies in the East concerning these questions. We all are here and now at the threshold of a new consciousness!

To meet with people who have similar concerns, even if their cultural or religious background is a different one than our own, can only enrich and fortify our own humanity. I felt a feeling of brotherhood of the modern men and women with our Buddhist friends standing upright and challenging the system, like the young man on the Tien An Men square in Beijing with his little plastic bag in front of the tanks (do you remember this famous picture?). This, for me, truly meets the aspirations of the philosophy of freedom.

Many other things have been discussed and I am looking forward reading the reports from the other friends that had joined the meeting. But I really want to thank them having shared this eventful time with us and I hope that this more “humble” spirit that inaugurated this study will continue to accompany the future work.

Lisi Ha Vinh

Hue April 4 2001



To find the Way of Balance



by Benjawan Gularb

It was the first time for me to travel to Vietnam and to join the meeting with people who have Anthroposophy as background. At first, I assumed that my knowledge would be not enough and that it would be very important for this meeting.

But I was wrong. The schedule took me to appreciate the beauty of Vietnamese culture in a small ancient town. I felt as if I were in the past and the past was still alive. Everywhere I visited, everyone who smiled at me and whom I smiled at and talked to made me recall my ancestors. My hometown was in the countryside but I grew up in the city. Although I lived in the city but I had many chances to live with my grandparents. That was only one opportunity to see. Today, everything is still clear in my mind and my memory. I saw how my grandparents live. I heard what they talked about. There was not any wall separating us from each other, from nature outside and there was not any wall separating our family from others. My world was bigger and bigger and I could go for play further and further as I grew up. It was not many times that I heard that they talked about Buddhism but they know how to live with nature and they prepared the food for offering to the monk at the temple without expecting the results. Once, I went to my grandmother's home after not having visited her for few months, I saw that she put the sandal only on the right foot while walking despite that she normally doesn't wear any shoes in the house. I asked her: "Why did you put on the sandal on your right foot?" She said: "This foot doesn't like the wood... it doesn't like the soil, too. It prefers the shoe." Actually, her right foot is hurt and can not walk on the rough floor but her answer teaches me to practice to separate the self from the situation and to see what is happened as it is.

All ancient places that are very fine and beautiful touched my mind. What I cannot forget and I love to tell my friends about Vietnam is the temple. The first step when I walked into the temple, I touched the loving kindness and the strong Buddhism. I could feel that Buddhism in Vietnam is strong and could overcome many obstacles for very long time. The Dharma still is a part of life and of the society. In the temple, I felt that peace was around me and my inner-self could touch the peace. The teaching that the monk gave us is simple to understand and practical. Such practice is simple but it needs the strong consciousness. The monks and nuns are mindful and respect the others. Even their behavior can also teach us the good spirit.

I recall my country, Thailand. Bangkok, where I live, is the central city of Thailand that gathers the people from different provinces, cultures and



intelligences. But when different people come to live in Bangkok, all of us become the same. We dress in Bangkok style, sing Bangkok songs and have the same capacity. Bangkok dominates all regions in the country. The communities, culture and tradition gradually meet the end. Television and education influence our thoughts and lives. We leave our old way of life and become humble to be farmer and become proud to be employees for the companies and corporations. But however those are not the answer of the good life.

I take long time to be awakened to see that we are the victims of consumerism which stands at another side of Buddhism. Many temples become the place where the people look for the lot and fortune by making merit but not the place for enlightening.



When I first met the Anthroposophy, I found that it was the answer apart from religion teaching. It should answer every question. Every school should become Waldorf. But I still love my ancestor's way of living, teaching, thinking. I cannot keep the one I

know, while I abandon another one I may not know. I don't want to believe in Buddhism as same as I don't want to believe in Anthroposophy. I don't want to cage myself to any thought for looking for the truth. The truth always is there. The question is where is the truth. I stop looking for the answer but I go on my working and learning every moment.

Although I feel sad that I do not continue my grandparents' knowledge and that I do not live in the traditional way of life, I would like to support the way to resurrect our ancestors' intelligence and look for the way to keep, leave, protect and accept in the way of balance.

The meeting in Vietnam makes me clear in my mind and encourages me to keep learning sincerely. At the meeting, I listened more than I spoke, I spoke with low voice and my English listening is rather weak, even though, my friends tried to listen to me and encouraged me with kindness. I would like to thank all of them and our organizers who tried much to make this meeting real. We cannot miss anyone there, isn't it?

Benjawan Gularb

Not Comparing, but Connecting



by Abhisiree
Charanjanaphet

After meeting in Vietnam, all of us are far away from each other. But everything in my mind is still bright until today. After this wonderful meeting, I went to the U.S.A. and then to Japan. Today I am in Thailand.

Sato and I talk to each other about what we have got from the meeting. As for us, we were very happy since we started to plan our travel. Vietnam is very close to our country but its atmosphere is quite different. We felt free since the beginning when we thought to come to join the meeting that was different from the other. Normally, we join the meeting for learning and taking in (compared with breathing in) but here, in contrast, we breathed out. It was like leaving at first and the things came in our mind later.

This meeting fills us the understanding. For Anthroposophy, I am always learning from working in my classroom as teacher, following Waldorf education. For Buddhism, it is a part of my way of life. My family brought me up with an explanation following the Dharma in Buddhism. I also had ever observed religious precepts with the white clothes dressing. Learning from Buddhist's Dharma and family, I understand and I feel that I am lucky to be born and learn the things in this way.

Working as kindergarten teacher and studying Waldorf education help me to see my inner-self deeper. That is not different from my practical religious precepts to which I have been accustomed.

Working with the children helps me to separate between an emotion and responsibility. I can be conscious even when I am angry. Loving kindness is above any emotion. I learn the way to keep natural and normal state so that I can be kindergarten teacher. When I did anything that was too much or too little, the children did not want. The middle way is the only one ideal that let my work smooth.

I understand that my action will be most useful for children when I work without self-ego. That is because this way of act gives me the wider vision that helps me understand many things more easily. Playing marionette, if I play with my selfness, it seems to be very difficult because the children want to see the puppet, not me.

Because of having experience in Buddhism and learning Anthroposophy in working, a question comes to my mind. That is: When there will be someone talk about this, not comparing but connecting. I found that there was something that was connected to each other.

We would like to thank the organizers for choosing the special place where is full of creative power and after-clap of the fighting for freedom and where I could touch the unity of people's spirits. In addition, the rich culture including the tasty fine food is so impressive that I can smile whenever I think of them. The organizers have the eyes of beauty and art. I found that their seeing is full of art. From the projects that they are working, we appreciate and realize that their generous and charitable mind cannot be caged! Their good spirits are expanded generously. The things they have worked for the handicapped children let me perceive that there are the power of love and compassion around me. *Abhisiree Charanjanaphet*

The Humanitarian Approach in Vietnam



by Wallapa and Hans

We arrived in Vietnam with curiosity for many reasons: the history of the Vietnam war; the conflict between communism and capitalism and the influence of the works of Thich Nhat Hanh who is well recognized by us here in Siam [Thailand] as "the third way towards peace". His literature

and his teachings on a Buddhist approach toward violence in his homeland offers a lot of opportunities for self-critical reflection to his Vietnamese fellows and people all over the world. In addition the seminar on "Buddhism and Anthroposophy" in itself is a groundbreaking dialogue. Lastly we both now are more and more working in social development programs in rural communities, and have a keen interest to learn from our friends, Lisi and Tho, about their work in Vietnam.

We do realize that Vietnam in many ways is still a legacy of war in which the Communist party has

succeeded in liberating the country from the occupation by France and the USA. At present the military state still has to ensure its power towards the people by controlling over the freedom whether in religion or all kinds of belief systems. However the lack of trust in their own people can be transcended in many cases and that has been shown in our short visit during March 3–8, 2001. We have seen the work of Lisi and Tho and found that it is very encouraging how they both apply the humanitarian approach to overcome the lack of freedom and trust from the state but rather work directly with the people and likeminded persons inside and outside the country.

We spent the first few days to familiarize with the culture of Vietnam and as participants among ourselves. The 11 of us were Hans Mulder from New Zealand, Urs from Switzerland, Michaela from Germany, Sara from the USA, Abhisiree & Sato and Benjawan from Baan Rak Kindergarten, Siam, Hans van Willenswaard & Wallapa from Siam; Lisi & Tho from Switzerland as the hosts. Our visits to a series of



After the meditation with a visiting monk and a group of nuns

temples, tombs nearby Hue and the information that we received from Lisi and Tho were very helpful and allowed us to understand some characteristics of the culture of Vietnam in a very short time. But most of the time we have been occupied by program visits which we would like to elaborate here with great admiration:

Thuan Thanh primary school. Here the teachers apply their small means to facilitate their students and the children in need of special care. The playground is used intensively for outdoor activities by all children of the whole school. The teachers have warm relationship with their students which is the foundation for all genuine alternative education. They may need some skills to help improve their work. And we have been informed that a few teachers here will be sponsored for teachers training in Waldorf education very soon.

The next visit was *Dieu De medical herb clinic*, a self-sufficient hospital. The clinic has herbal gardens to provide material for producing their own medicines. The leading doctor, venerable Thich Tue Tam, is a Buddhist monk (Theravada tradition) using eastern holistic medicine to understand body, mind and spirituality. The knowledge of balancing Yin and Yang, the elements of life, the flow of Chi, the herbal medicine etc. are the traditional way of healing. We had some questions on how the clinic handles serious patients who may need operation or patients who have serious and dangerous diseases. The answer was that in many cases they have cared for serious patients by themselves here at this hospital.

The following visit was the *house for elderly women within the Buddhist Temple Tinh Duc*. The social fabric in Vietnam proved to be strong, the nuns have operated this center with compassion and with the support from Lisi and Tho. There are productive units as food processing, notably soy bean products, tofu, sauce etc. for their meals and they make incense for their own use and for sale.

A Buddhist temple including a handicraft training program; we had an opportunity to spend the morning to do meditation at this temple in Hue. Joining walking meditation with a visiting senior monk and a group of nuns, we walked so slowly as much as we can. The walking is in silence, no conversation, rather paying attention to your feet and focusing only at the present

moment. After the walking meditation, we had an opportunity to have an inspiring talk with the senior monk and the nuns. The monk answered our questions on several subjects relating to Buddhism. His “Dhamma teaching” suggests us to find the right motivation for our work.

The same kind of teaching is also exemplified in the book ‘Compassion or Competition’, a report about the forum of business persons with His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, two years ago. His Holiness said to the business people that it is not the business but it is the motivation of doing the business which counts. The book has been translated in Thai language.

Along these above mentioned program visits we have had several discussions within the scope of Buddhism and Anthroposophy.



Thuan Thanh primary school

We finished our trip in Hoi An, a small city near the coast with a lot of old-style Vietnamese buildings. No wonder that it makes the city interesting for tourists, there are a lot of restaurants, hotels and souvenir shops offering services and products. But it is lucky that there is still no high-rise building yet.

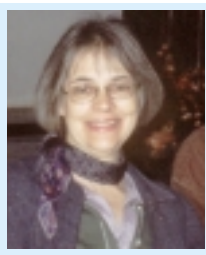
The evaluation session started with sharing impressions, comments, and any plans for the future to follow-up from this meeting.

Wallapa Kuntiranont & Hans van Willenswaard

We will have a meeting with our friends in Siam who spent this visit together and will find a chance to hold some activities relating to this meeting. And we will organise a gathering on alternative education at the end of this year entitled “Alternative Education – Its role in transforming society”. It is an international gathering towards a culture of peace and non-violence for the children of the world. The gathering will take place during November 26 – December 1, 2001 at Moo Ban Dek Childrens’ Village School in Siam. Before the meeting starts, we will have an edu-tour visiting the northeast of the country to study rural community activities, schools and children programs. After the gathering we will organise a two-day symposium on “Holistic Education and the Sciences” in Bangkok during December 2-3. And if anyone is interested in learning some inspiration from the nature, they can consider to take part in the Solidarity Forest Walks during December 28, 2001 to January 9, 2002. The yearly walk has been organised for almost six times since 1995. While the international gathering on alternative education of this year will be the 3rd time since 1997.

Wallapa Kuntiranont & Hans van Willenswaard

How to mediate between Buddhism and Anthroposophy?



by Sara Ciborski

The theme 'Buddhism and Anthroposophy' plays an increasingly significant role in my life, enough to entice me to use precious vacation days and subject myself to 25 hours of air travel – twice – in order to be in Vietnam for this meeting.

But it was worth it ten times over! And being there turned out to be more important to me than even the meeting's theme and content. Vietnam is an amazing, inspiring country. It is – to quote my copy of the Rough Guide – “an incredibly resilient nation” with “an intoxicating sense of vitality and optimism.” I'll say more on that below.

My personal connection to Buddhism is through my son Michael, who six years ago became a Buddhist monk in Plum Village in France, the home monastery of Vietnamese spiritual leader Thich Nhat Hanh. Michael attended Waldorf schools for 12 years and has a fervent anthroposophist for a mother. At 29 he is a deeply committed Buddhist practitioner who acknowledges anthroposophy as a shaping force in his destiny.

The meeting was superbly planned and organized by Tho and Lisi. They made it possible for us to have an intimate, if brief, encounter with the culture and politics of Vietnam, while at the same time meeting each other and coming to appreciate the common soul concerns that could bring 11 people from all parts of the globe together in Hué for 5 days.

We were meeting in response to three realities: (1) the growth of anthroposophical initiatives, especially Waldorf education, in Buddhist countries; (2) the indisputable attraction that Buddhism has for growing numbers of spiritually striving westerners; and (3) the wish of some anthroposophists to find ways of working with “socially engaged” Buddhists on social, economic and ecological problems brought about by the global economy. And I think we understood that this was a beginning of what will be an extended effort to discover how to best go forward in each of these three contexts.

We also discussed our personal questions around the theme. My own concern was and is how to mediate between Buddhism and Anthroposophy in two distinct situations in which I frequently find myself. In the first situation, I am talking with my son and other Buddhists and I am trying to explain Anthroposophy (with the implication that it offers something useful to Buddhism). In the second situation, I am talking with anthroposophists who are critical or dismissive of Buddhism, and I am trying to defend Buddhism.

In the first situation I am motivated by my experience that Buddhism is in some ways inadequate as a spiritual path for today. In the second situation I am motivated by my experience of the validity and value of Buddhist practice and its convergence, in many respects, with Anthroposophy. My experience

and knowledge of Buddhism is limited to Thich Nhat Hanh's mindfulness practice, and this makes both situations uncomfortable.

Sharing this dilemma with a group of people, all of whom are exploring their own personal bridge between Anthroposophy and Buddhism, was very helpful. We didn't have time to discuss at length the question of how to answer the critical anthroposophists, and the question hangs: How much of their criticism is justified, if any, and how much arises from misunderstandings or insufficient knowledge? I hope that the answers will come out of our future work. Personally I am convinced that a rapprochement can be achieved between Anthroposophy and Buddhism without diluting or compromising anthroposophy (which is what is most feared by my critical friends at home).

Later we made a list of misconceptions about Buddhism commonly held by anthroposophists and non-anthroposophists alike, misconceptions that may contribute to the negative views that I have encountered. Some of us will be working on this list, and through this work I hope eventually to be able to represent Buddhism accurately and intelligently in discussions with anthroposophists.

By a miraculous coincidence my son Michael was part of a group of 10 monks and nuns visiting Thich Nhat Hanh's root temple in Hue, Tu Hieu monastery, the very week that we were there. We had been prevented by the political situation from meeting there as a group, but we could go as individuals. And so I went to Tu Hieu, along with Urs, Michaela and Hans, to spend a full and very special day among the monks, with Michael as host. Like Plum Village, Tu Hieu is a place of love, light, life and joy. Some 40 monks live and study there surrounded by tall pine trees, moss-encrusted ancient stonework and lovely gardens.

But even this special day, like the meeting before it, was eclipsed by the bracing adventure of just being in Viet Nam. Before the trip I had read several books, but

Almost a “family reunion” in the Tu Hieu Temple (from left to right): Firm, Sara, Michael and a senior monk





Flocks of school girls in their white traditional dresses

nothing prepared me for the visual feast, the sheer excitement of it. The extreme contrasts of an ancient traditional society in transition to fast-paced modernity kept me off balance. I was enthralled at every turn by the ceaseless stream of mopeds and bicycles cascading along city streets (in Hué we rented bicycles and joined the stream – there are few street lights and making a left turn requires a certain nerve I didn't know I had). No one wears helmets, but many people wear masks against the fumes. Flocks of school girls in their white traditional dresses (long tunics with slits up the side worn over loose long pants) ride bikes holding hands, oblivious to traffic on all sides. The Vietnamese are young, beautiful, slender, graceful and (apparently) healthy. Over half the population is under age 16. We could feel the energy and life forces. People are for the most part very courteous, except for the aggressive street vendors on most city streets.

Notwithstanding government paranoia about religious dissent, Vietnam is an increasingly open society. Private enterprise and foreign investment are encouraged, and, to quote the Rough Guide again, “a high fever of commerce grips the nations.” Viet Nam is swarming with tourists as well as business people, mostly from Japan, but large numbers also from Western Europe and America. Even with a tiered pricing system for overcharging foreigners, almost everything is obscenely cheap – we stayed at a luxurious hotel in Saigon for less than \$20 a night, routinely had gourmet dinners for under \$5. Good quality, inexpensive silk clothing is everywhere for sale.

In Viet Nam the Viet Nam War is called the American War. Hans and I visited the War Remnants Museum in Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City), where we joined crowds of tourists gawking at photographs of some of the worst atrocities of the war. Every major town in Viet Nam has a war museum or monument, and the litter of rusting American ordnance is everywhere a common sight (the very first thing you see upon landing in Saigon are long rows of abandoned U.S. helicopter hangars lining the runways). Vietnamese people are very warm and curious toward Americans, and seem to bear no resentment or anger for a war that ended only 25 years ago with over 3 million Vietnamese dead, and the spraying of dioxin-based chemicals over 40 percent of South Viet Nam's

land, among other effects. Instead, they are delighted to meet us, and eager for any opportunity to practice English, which everyone is desperate to learn.

In a short report I really can't do justice to the country or to the feelings it stirred up in me: the spectacular beaches, the constantly disorienting and indecipherable linguistic environment, heart-breaking poverty, dubious sanitation, the apparent fearlessness of death exhibited by all cab and bus drivers, food wonderful in its variety and its taste subtleties (I had no trouble maintaining my usual rice-based, non-dairy vegetarian diet, even though the Vietnamese eat lots of fish and meat, including snake and dog).

Anthroposophy lives in Viet Nam through Lisi's and Tho's personal commitment to social change. I know we were all impressed and inspired by the number of projects they have worked on, some of which we visited. They have created special classes for handicapped children in a primary school in Hué, trained the teachers and continue supervising the program. Several years ago they arranged for two Catholic nuns to take the four-year curative education course in Camphill Perceval in Switzerland; these nuns now run an orphanage for severely handicapped children in Saigon. Lisi and Tho have fund raised for and organized the building of sanitation facilities for a retirement home for indigent elderly women in Hué. They have created and are running a home-based program to help families with disabled children in rural areas. They are trying to obtain funding and official approvals to found university programs in curative and special education in Hanoi, Saigon and Hué. This is only a sampling of their projects.

They explained to us that in all their work here they never impose anthroposophical or even western frameworks, but rather try to empower Vietnamese people to find their own voice and their own forms. Surely, they are providing us with good models and inspiration to work effectively, as anthroposophists or even just as westerners, in Asian countries.

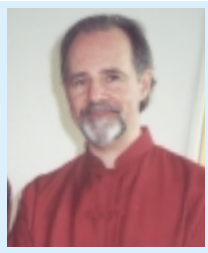
We firmly agreed that we would continue meeting on this theme. The group could well expand to include interested people who were unable to attend this time. Another meeting may be scheduled for next fall in Europe, followed by one in the spring or summer of 2002, possibly near Thich Nhat Hanh's new monastery in Vermont (where my son is now living). I would be happy to help organize a meeting there and need to hear from people interested in attending what dates are possible.

We also agreed that in future meetings we will focus on narrower themes and come prepared having done research. Tho suggested the theme of ethical individualism as a common ground for anthroposophists and Buddhists to work together on social problems. I would add two other possible themes: *the experience of the Self in Buddhism and Anthroposophy*, or: *side-by-side guidance in anthroposophical and buddhist meditation practices*.

I very much look forward to our next meeting, wherever its location in the world and whatever the theme.

Sara Ciborski

Finally we visited the Monastery



by Urs Schumacher

On Friday, 9th March 2001, after the “official” end of our meeting in Hoi An, Sara, Michaela, Hans and I rented a mini bus to travel back to Hue to share a last weekend together. On Saturday we took our last chance to visit the Thu Hieu Pagoda, Thich Nhat Hanh’s root temple in Hue. Since we had

been prevented by the political situation from having our meeting there, we decided to go as individuals. So we took a taxi to the monastery and we were wondering that our driver had to ask some people on the street for the way. Finally, we arrived at the main entrance gate hidden in a wonderful pine forest. Slowly and quietly we walked through the door into the garden of the monastery, walked around the lovely lake behind the



The gate with one of the lakes in the temple garden

gate and climbed up the steps to the buildings surrounded by tall pine trees and moss-encrusted ancient stonework. Soon a monk was greeting us and we asked for Sara’s son Michael. He was part of a group of 10 monks and nuns visiting Tu Hieu monastery the same week that we were there. With Michael as host we explored the buildings and the surroundings. The monks invited us for tea and refreshments and later for lunch. So we stayed for the whole day among the monks.

The wonderful atmosphere of Tu Hieu (created by the monks with their mindfulness way of living, by prayers, ceremonies, dharma teachings) is healing and refreshing for the visitor who is open for it. It’s really a place of love, light, life and joy. Every quarter of an hour a “bell of mindfulness” is sounding and immediately every action stops. People who just were talking stop at once, smile and breath slowly in and out. Those who just have been walking or working also keep standing still for two or three seconds, smile and breath slowly in and out as well. Everybody is reciting (inwardly) the gata [mantra] “Listen, listen, this wonderful sound brings me back to my true self!” And this kind of practice of mindfulness goes on from morning to evening every 15 minutes! Once one is used to it it’s really a wonderful and refreshing practice. I think it could be very helpful for us too.

The “spirit” of Thich Nhat Hanh was easily to recognize all over the place. A large picture of him is hanging on a wall in the dining room for guests. Some monks and also some people working in the kitchen asked us if we have met “Thây” or if we have been to Plum Village in France. So far Thây’s work is still suppressed in Vietnam. His books and tapes are banned and confiscated. Nevertheless, the monks are not losing hope and they have build a nice little house as a future home for Thây – just in case he will be able to “come home” one lucky day.



The ceremony at 11 a.m.

At the same time there was a dharma teaching for lay people going on. Michael explained us that originally it was planned for about 500 people, and that the government put pressure on the monks and threatened the lay people with the loss of their jobs if they attend this teaching. So finally there were only about 50 people attending...



Thich Nhat Hanh

At least we had the chance to catch a glimpse of this very special place. A future meeting in a place like this would definitely be most helpful to learn more about the buddhist way of practice (how it *really* is) and a chance to deepen the understanding of the different spiritual traditions of the east and the west.

Urs Schumacher



A monk with novices of the Tu Hieu Pagoda; in the background Sara’s son Michael, on the right two nuns of the visiting delegation from the USA.

Discover how we all have the same Striving



by Hans
van Florenstein Mulder

For me this first contact with Vietnam was very important and moving. This visit was a real awakening. Is it only now that I have the courage to face what has happened in Vietnam in the years since 1945? A lot of inner work and courage is needed to start on the path of redeeming the past. I feel a tremendous

responsibility towards that process but also realize that I have to see how destiny will work for me to contribute towards this.

From our excursions in Hue it was wonderful to see how much culture there lives in Vietnam and how important it is that this culture is not overrun and replaced by the culture of globalization and consumerism. These influences are already visible in Ho Chi Minh City and tourist centres like Hoi An.

Engaged Buddhism may well be a valuable counterforce. In this context I am at present familiarizing myself with the work of Sulak Sivaraksa from Thailand, an engaged Buddhist, known as one of Asia's leading social thinkers and activist. One of his latest initiatives is the "Spirit in Education Movement" reported on by Hans van Willenswaard at our meeting. In the foreword to Sulak's latest book "Loyalty Demands Dissent", an autobiography, His Holiness the Dalai Lama writes: "Sulak and I share a conviction that if we are to solve human problems, economic and technological development must be accompanied by an inner, spiritual growth. If we succeed in fulfilling both of these goals, we will surely create a happier and more peaceful world". We also have the legacy of Gandhi and the work of Thich Nhat Hanh to help us in this process.

Although intellectually one knows that Vietnam is still a communist country, it only became real to me when in Vietnam. Especially with the difficulties that arose from the ratification process of the bilateral trade treaty between the US and Vietnam, caused by the accusations of breaching Human Rights and Religious freedom in Vietnam. Here we had a real experience of the repercussions.

It was a privilege to meet old friends and to make new ones; all with such different work experience, background, race and culture and to discover how we all have the same striving. It would be wonderful to continue working with this group in the future.

As we encountered the difficulties it was impossible to have an experience of the life of the monks in the temple. Therefore, I was grateful we had the possibility to visit the Tu Hieu Pagoda in Hue after the conference on Saturday 10th of March.

The three steps of Buddhist training: generosity, ethics and mindfulness reminded me of the Threefold Commonwealth. It certainly inspires me to work on their commonality. The hospitality, peacefulness, dedication for the well being of the community and the outer/inner activity of the monks still serves as a model

of harmonious living for us lay people in our hectic and chaotic life style of the West. Even if we could only create short moments of inner peacefulness and inner reflection during our working life we would be so much better prepared for our challenging tasks in the world.



Daily Ceremony at the Tu Hieu Pagoda

I am grateful for Sara's contribution articulating some of the criticisms of Buddhism voiced by some of the members of the Anthroposophical Society. It appears very timely, especially with the growing interest for the anthroposophical initiatives in Asia, to make a serious study of what esoteric Buddhism stands for. This can only happen through unbiased, warm interest and serious study for which we should make time available if waldorf schools, curative work, biodynamic agriculture etc. are to be successful and to take root in Asia. Urs and I have already had two meetings while in Dornach in April to look at these criticisms.

In these reflections I like to finish by expressing my admiration for the work Tho and Lisi have done for the Vietnamese people. It was a privilege to visit some of the initiatives that exist now and that bear the fruits of their generosity; time and financial assistance. Also I like to express my gratitude of their willingness to prepare and host the meeting in Hue. It was clear that they have put their heart and soul into it. Also a word of thanks is appropriate for the moral and financial support of the Vorstand at the Goetheanum for this meeting.

Hans van Florenstein Mulder



Projects in Việt Nam

In 1991, Ha Vinh Tho and Lisi started their work in Việt Nam by sponsoring a 14 years old girl from a very poor family. Without support, she would have had to quit school, but with a help of only 5 \$ a month in the first year (this amount gradually increased in the course of time), she was able to finish high school and then graduate from University. Today, ten years later, she has a good position as a manager in the central post office in Da Nang, and supports her family.

I. Projects that already exist

- Creation of “Eurasia Association for the development of curative education in Việt Nam”
- Fundraising for scholarships for poor children in Hue
- Building a kitchen, sanitary and bedrooms for street children and orphans in a Buddhist temple: Dieu Giac near Saigon
- Finding sponsor for the children of Gieu Giac
- Building kitchen and classrooms for a day school for handicapped children in Saigon under the direction of a Buddhist monk
- Finding sponsors for the handicapped children of this school. This project has now ended
- Training two catholic nuns in Perceval Camphill Seminar for curative education
- These two nuns are now in charge of Phu My, an orphanage for 380 handicapped children, and for a day school for 120 handicapped children in Saigon
- Participation in the training of the staff at Phu My
- Support for the creation of a life and work community for handicapped youths with tea and coffee plantation in Bao Loc
- Environmental project : “1000 trees for Việt Nam”
We organized a action to sponsor trees in order to help reforesting an devastated area in the high hills of South Việt Nam. With the money collected through this project, we also build a forestry school for hill tribe youths, and created a tree nursery
- Training courses in curative education in Saigon, in the last 4 weeks course held in Phu my, we had 162 participants. We were able to hand out a certificate created in partnership between the Camphill Seminar, Phu my orphanage and the social department of Ho Chi Minh City
- Three months internship of a Vietnamese psychiatrist in Camphill Perceval, Dr. Doan translated “Children in need of special care” into Vietnamese. The book has been edited last summer
- Creation of two classes for mentally disabled children, and one class for deaf and mute children within Thuan Thanh primary school in Hue. This includes financing the building, and all the other costs, designing the project, interviewing the children, training the teachers, supervising in the classes, inviting foreign experts, following the evolution of the project. The school has started in November 2000
- Creation of a center for severely disabled children in Thuy Bieu Village, near Hue. This school will begin operate in April 2001. This project includes the same aspects as the last one. This and the next project are in partnership with a Buddhist nun, Su Co Minh Tanh, and an American Professor, Dr. Allen Sandler

- Creation of a home based program to help families with disabled children in Thuy Bieu Village. This project is inspired by the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) approach. It consists in training trainers, who then go in the villages to train parents, teachers and other community workers in the work with disabled children
- Construction of several houses, a kitchen, sanitary and a clinic for acupuncture and traditional medicine in a home for elderly ladies (up to 100 years old) within the Buddhist Temple Tinh Duc
- Surgery program for physically disabled children: club foot surgery and other rehabilitation programs
- Exchange program for Vietnamese doctors to train in Switzerland in the field of rehabilitation

Further projects to be (hopefully) finalized in a near future

- Creation of four vocational training centers for disabled (mentally and otherwise) youths in Hue. The plan is to have 2/3 street children or youths from very poor families, and 1/3 handicapped adolescent.
- Participation in the creation of University programs in curative end special education: B.A. and M.A. in Hanoi, Saigon and Hue. This project is in partnership with the Old Dominion University in Virginia, USA.

Dream for the future

- Creation of a cultural, spiritual and professional exchange research and dialogue center between East and West in Hue



Research Questions Anthroposophy and Engaged Buddhism

by Hans van Willenswaard & Wallapa Kuntiranont

(First draft – 17th May 2001)

Subjects	Questions	Projects / action
1. Education	<p>What can be the role of Waldorf Education within the broader context of ‘Alternative Education’, and Education Reform in Thailand and Asia?</p> <p>How can Anthroposophy and its concept of ‘Spiritual Science’ contribute towards transformation of Universities and lifelong learning in Asia?</p>	<p>Translation in Thai of ‘Natural Childhood’</p> <p>International Gathering on “Alternative Education” 26 Nov – 1 Dec 2001</p> <p>Partnership with the International Development Studies programme of Chulalongkorn University (Start in 2002)</p> <p>Networking/co-operation with “Alternative Universities” and Cultural Centers (Hue!)</p> <p>Symposium ‘Holistic Education and the Sciences’ at Chula University 2–3 Dec 2001</p>
2. Agriculture	<p>What are similarities and differences between the practice of EM (Effective Micro-organisms) as part of Natural Farming and the application of Bio-dynamic preparations (and especially the ‘starter’ as developed by Ehrenfried Pfeiffer)</p>	<p>Conversion project with small-farmers group near Ubon Ratchatani (“Assembly of the Poor”)</p> <p>Workshops on “Goethean Science”</p>
3. Business	<p>How can we arrange and manage participation of village-producers in our company Suan Nguen Mee Ma?</p> <p>How can our experimental company play a role in developing small-scale economic exchanges and co-operation in S.E. Asia, Asia and worldwide?</p>	<p>Training programme for women’s weaving group and farmers (see above)</p> <p>Small scale cotton and natural fertilizer (etc.) ‘revolving funds’ for villagers</p> <p>Call for sponsorship of 10% of company shares by shareholder who wishes to transfer ownership to villagers step-by-step</p> <p>Translation in Thai of ‘Managing Partnerships: Tools for mobilizing the public sector, business and civil society as partners in development’</p>
4. Threefolding	<p>How can the spiritual reality of “Threefoldness” be recognized, understood, practiced both from the perspective of Anthroposophy and Socially Engaged Buddhism?</p>	<p>A booklet (to be published in English, Thai, Dutch) based on ongoing study and field-research</p>
5. Culture, Politics	<p>Can Anthroposophy (and its ‘struggle’ with Threefoldness) contribute to the discourse on new approaches to formulating and constituting “the Third Way” (between Capitalism and Communism?) as a problem-solving socio-cultural concept in the Age of Globalization?</p>	<p>Support for Sulak Sivaraksa’s pioneering involvement in organizing the Bandung II meeting in 2005 (Bandung I in 1955 was the founding meeting of the non-aligned countries) and networking</p> <p>A small scale exploratory meeting in Bali, 4–5 August 2001</p>
6. Finances, organization	<p>How to finance research and how to organize our research group?</p>	<p>Organisational support for the next meeting (in Thailand?)</p>

Questions and Concerns at the Interface of Buddhism and Anthroposophy

This is a list (by Sara) of common misconceptions and notions about Buddhism that give rise to negative, critical attitudes towards it. – Sara, Hans and Urs have already begun to exchange thoughts about these difficult points of view. In no way it is possible to give “the one and only” answer to every point. We realised that it is very difficult because first of all one has to learn how to understand different terms/conceptions. Therefore it’s also most important to understand *the real meaning* of Buddhist texts. – So many different answers are possible ...

Views, Misconceptions and Notions	Possible answers (or counterquestions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tendency among Westerners to elevate Eastern spirituality is sentimental. We as anthroposophists have to stand up as thinkers. Buddhism (in spreading to the West) is undermining the task of the West to develop our thinking capacity. 	(This way of “thinking” is not fair.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buddhism is nihilism. 	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tibetan Buddhism is decadent. 	Study Tibetan teachings ...
1. <i>Notion:</i> Buddhism teaches that the world is Maya (illusion).	Not the world itself but the world <i>as we usually see it</i> is an illusion because we’re not looking deep enough.
2. <i>Notion:</i> Buddhism teaches that our task is to seek liberation and release from the world through the extinction of desire.	It depends on the different motivations of Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism.
3. <i>Notion:</i> Buddhism teaches the transcendence of spirit and the negation of life in the world, and that individual lives are not important.	Probably a concept of Hindu????
4. <i>Notion:</i> Buddhism teaches that there is no self, meaning no separate self. Everything, even self, is interdependent.	This is mainly a question of the right terms or the right explanation.
5. <i>Notion:</i> Buddhism teaches that all is emptiness, and emptiness is the ultimate reality.	Look at the books of Thich Nhat Hanh, Georg Kühlewind, Zoran Perowanowitsch and many others.
6. <i>Notion:</i> Buddhism has no idea of the Word as a principle that invites you into a world of meanings and of beings, and no idea that, for example, a plant or a rock means something and is ultimately a being.	In Buddhism mantras are very important. The value of a mantra is the deeper meaning of it. – The spirit is the source of all things. (Interbeing)
7. <i>Notion:</i> Buddhism does not recognize or teach about the evolution of consciousness.	?
8. <i>Notion:</i> Buddhism teaches that we cannot know anything for sure, and therefore does not try to answer questions about the meaning of life, the origin of the cosmos, the origin and nature of evil, karma and reincarnation in the individual life.	?
<i>This list (by Sara) of misconceptions and notions is only the beginning of a long research work we really have to do during our next meetings in order to find the right insight into these complex themes.</i>	<i>Sara has already begun to formulate some possible answers. But I preferred to list only some short notices. As Hans and I have seen during our meetings, we’ll need much more time to work out all these things seriously. (Urs)</i>

The Eight Verses on Transforming the Mind

by Geshe Langri Tangpa Dorjey Sengey

With a determination to achieve the highest aim
For the benefit of all sentient beings,
Which surpasses even the wish-fulfilling gem,
May I hold them dear at all times.

Whenever I interact with someone,
May I view myself as the lowest amongst all,
And, from the very depths of my heart,
Respectfully hold others as superior.

In all my deeds may I probe into my mind,
And as soon as mental and emotional afflictions arise –
As they endanger myself and others –
May I strongly confront them and avert them.

When I see beings of unpleasant character
Oppressed by strong negativity and suffering,
May I hold them dear – for they are rare to find –
As if I have discovered a jewel treasure!

When others, out of jealousy,
Treat me wrongly with abuse, slander and scorn,
May I take upon myself the defeat
And offer to others the victory.

When someone whom I have helped,
Or in whom I have placed great hopes,
Mistreats me in extremely hurtful ways,
May I regard him still as my precious teacher.

In brief, may I offer benefit and joy
To all my mothers [all beings], both directly and indirectly,
May I quietly take upon myself
All hurts and pains of my mothers [all beings].

May all this remain undefiled
By the stains of the eight mundane concerns;
And may I, recognizing all things as illusion,
Devoid of clinging, be released from bondage.

Taken from the book:
Transforming the Mind. Eight Verses on Generating Compassion and Transforming your Life by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.
Published by Thorsons 2000

This is a basic tibetan teaching that speaks for itself.

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