



Buddhist Resources for the Children's Sabbath

The resources to support Buddhist participation in the *National Observance of Children's Sabbaths* weekend and movement include the following, most of which were compiled by Vanessa Goddard Zusei of the Zen Mountain Monastery in Mount Tremper, New York.

The resources offered here are:

- ◆ Buddha's Birthday Celebration: Sample Service
- ◆ Additional Liturgy
- ◆ Zen and War: Adapted from John Daido Looi Roshi's commentary on Priest Xixian's "I Am Watching" Koans of the Way of Reality
- ◆ "Great King Goodness," a jataka tale by Rafe Martin
- ◆ A description of Zen Mountain Monastery's Zen Kids and Teens Program

Additional Buddhist resources for the Children's Sabbath may be accessed through the Children's Defense Fund website at www.childrensdefense.org/childrenssabbaths, including "*The Journey of Not Taking a Step*," a Dharma Talk by Geoffrey Shugen Arnold Sensei, *Transmission of the Light, Case 7*, "*Micchaka*." Also be sure to read Abbot Roshi's reflection in the Faith Voices section on page 49.

Buddha's Birthday Celebration: Sample Service

Generally defined, liturgy is an affirmation or restatement of the common experience of a community. In theistic religions, liturgy reaffirms one's relationship with God. In Christianity this is expressed through an emphasis on one's relationship with Jesus, while in Judaism there is a focus on reconnecting the individual with the teachings of the Old Testament. In Zen the question of a divine being is not central and, instead, the emphasis is on the ground of being, the buddha nature, which is not separate from the nature of the self.

All of Zen's rites and rituals are constantly pointing to the same place, to the realization of no separation between the self and the ten thousand things. Zen liturgy is *upaya* (skillful means). Like *zazen* (seated meditation) and all the other areas of Zen training, it functions as a way of uncovering the truth that is the life of each one of us. Skillful means are necessary because each one of us, just as we are, is already perfect and complete. We lack nothing. What we seek is exactly where we stand, yet this truth has to be realized as the functioning of our lives. For liturgy to function, it first must be wholeheartedly engaged.

Buddha's Birthday, traditionally known as *Wesak*, offers an opportunity for Buddhist communities to not only include children in their service, but to have them be the main participants in the celebration of the founder's birthday. In the Mountains and Rivers Order, this service is celebrated at the same time as Easter.

Buddha's Birthday Service

Chants:

Heart Sutra

Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, doing deep Prajna Paramita,
clearly saw emptiness of all the five conditions,
thus completely relieving misfortune and pain.
Oh Shariputra, form is no other than emptiness,
emptiness no other than form.
Form is exactly emptiness, emptiness exactly form.
Sensation, conception, discrimination, awareness are likewise like this.
Oh Shariputra, all dharmas are forms of emptiness;
not born, not destroyed, not stained, not pure, without loss, without gain.
So in emptiness there is no form,
no sensation, conception, discrimination, awareness,
no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind,
no color, sound, smell, taste, touch, phenomena,
no realm of sight, no realm of consciousness,

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no ignorance and no end to ignorance,
no old age and death and no end to old age and death,
no suffering, no cause of suffering,
no extinguishing, no path, no wisdom, and no gain.
No gain and thus the bodhisattva lives Prajna Paramita,
with no hindrance in the mind; no hindrance, therefore no fear.
Far beyond deluded thoughts; this is Nirvana.
All past, present, and future buddhas live Prajna Paramita
and therefore attain anuttarasamyak-sambodhi.
Therefore know Prajna Paramita is the great mantra,
the vivid mantra, the best mantra, the unsurpassable mantra.
It completely clears all pain. This is the truth, not a lie.
So set forth the Prajna Paramita mantra,
set forth this mantra and say,
Gate! Gate! Paragate! Parasamgate! Bodhi Svaha! Prajna Heart Sutra.

Dedication (Liturgist):

*Buddha nature pervades the whole universe, existing right here, now.
In reciting the Maha Prajna Paramita Heart Sutra
We dedicate its merits to:
The great master Shakyamuni Buddha Daiocho,
the all pervading and everlasting Three Treasures,
all arhats and bodhisattvas, mahasattvas
and their relations throughout the dharma worlds.
May our sincere vows to accomplish the buddha Way be realized together.*

Echo:

All buddhas
throughout space and time,
all bodhisattvas mahasattvas
Maha Prajna Paramita.

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Jizo Shingon Dharani

Jizo Bodhisattva is considered to be the protector of children. This chant is accessible for most children and young adults to do on their own or as part of the Buddha's Birthday Service.

OM KA KA KABI SAM MA E SOWA KA

(Chanted repeatedly until abbot and all children have poured water on baby Buddha and offered a flower in bowers set up especially for the service)

Dedication (Liturgist):

The pure Dharmakaya neither appears nor disappears.

The vows of great compassion seem to come and go.

On this anniversary of Shakyamuni Buddha's birth,

We respectfully call together the Sangha.

In reciting The Jizo Shingon Dharani,

And in offering flowers, candlelight, incense, sweet water, cake and tea,

We dedicate their merits to:

The birth of the great master

Shakyamuni Buddha

And appreciate the supreme wisdom

of the Tathagata;

May it endlessly pervade everywhere,

And may we maintain and carry forth the Dharma together.

Echo:

All buddhas

throughout space and time,

all bodhisattvas mahasattvas

Maha Prajna Paramita.

Additional Liturgy

Services: *Observe Buddha's Birthday, making the sangha's children a central part of the service. Create a short version of the meal gatha to chant with your children or children's groups before each meal or snack time.*

Meal Gatha

First, seventy-two labors
brought us this food;
We should know
how it comes to us.
Second, as we receive this offering,
we should consider whether
our virtue and practice deserve it.
Third, as we desire
the natural order of mind
to be free from clinging
we must be free from greed.
Fourth, to support our life
we take this food.
Fifth, to attain our way
we take this food.

First, this food is for
the Three Treasures.
Second, it is for our teachers,
parents, nation,
and all sentient beings.

Third, it is for all beings
in the six worlds.
Thus, we eat this food
with everyone.
We eat to stop all evil,
to practice good,
to save all sentient beings,
and to accomplish
our Buddha Way.

Children's Version

Thank you to all who brought this food.
May this food feed all children in the
world,
and may we grow strong
to love and help one another.

Zen and War

Adapted from John Daido Looi Roshi's commentary on Priest Xixian's

"I Am Watching"

Koans of the Way of Reality

Note: A dharma discourse is a formal talk given on a koan (lit. "public case") in a Zen meditation hall or *zendo*. A koan is a seemingly paradoxical statement designed to short-circuit the intellectual process and point directly to our awakened or buddha nature. Because these talks are not meant to be understood intellectually, they are said to be "dark to the mind but radiant to the heart." In this case, the discourse was given by John Daido Looi Roshi, founder of the Mountains and Rivers Order of Zen Buddhism and abbot of Zen Mountain Monastery. Though this recorded dialogue is more than a thousand years old, Daido Roshi's commentary—elucidating the place of compassion and the importance of social action in Zen—is both timely and relevant.

The Main Case

Xixian Faan of Lushan was asked by a government officer, "When I took the city of Jinling with an army troop, I killed countless people. Am I at fault?"

Xixian said, "I am watching closely."

The Commentary

Priest Xixian's response, "I am watching closely" is at once fat-headed and misguided. He has missed an opportunity to cause an evil that has already arisen to be extinguished, and to cause good that has not arisen to arise. Both he and the general deserve thirty blows of my stick.

Governments and rulers are traditionally driven by power, politics, and money, and are usually not inclined toward clear moral commitments. However, for a Zen priest to avoid taking moral responsibility when asked is inexcusable.

Enlightenment without morality is not yet enlightenment. Morality without enlightenment is not yet morality. Enlightenment and morality are non-dual in the Way. One does not exist without the other. Nirvana is not beyond good and evil as is commonly believed. It is a way of living one's life with a definite moral commitment that is practiced, realized, and verified within the realm of good and evil itself, yet remains undefiled by them.

Koans of the Way of Reality is a collection of koans compiled at Zen Mountain Monastery over the past 28 years. It includes both koans that appear in the traditional koan collections, as well as writings taken from other sources and treated as koans because of their relevance for modern Western Zen practitioners.

Setting aside impostor priests and phony followers, you tell me, how do you transform watching into doing, the three poisons into the three virtues? More importantly, what is it that you call yourself?

The Capping Verse

*Utterly devoid of abilities, the guide can't lead;
lost in self-deception, the evil one can't find his way.
Take off the blinders, set down the pack and see
beyond god masks and devil masks, there is a Way.*

Buddhism is normally understood as a very peaceful, even pacifist, religion. But this was not the case in World War II, when Buddhism was deeply integrated into the Japanese war machine. At the time, Buddhism played for the Japanese a role similar to that of Christianity for the Christian crusaders of the Middle Ages, or of Islam for Islamic militants of today: It was a religious, ideological justification of violent acts and the assumption of a position of superiority and dominance.

How did this happen? And what changed in Japan afterwards, if anything?

The main case reads: *Xixian Faan of Lushan was asked by a government officer, "When I took the city of Jinling with an army troop, I killed countless people. Am I at fault?"* Xixian was a successor in the lineage of Fayuan, one of the five great Zen schools in China. Xixian was asked by a government officer, probably a general, "When I took the city of Jinling"—the capital of China at the time—"with an army troop, I killed countless people." I added a footnote to that line which says, "To kill and destroy is easy. To affirm

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life and nourish is difficult.” Of course, when you have an army of trained soldiers, it's easy to annihilate unarmed civilians. Then the government officer asked, “Am I at fault?” The footnote reads, “Cause and effect are one. How can you not know?” Evil actions result in evil effects. Good actions result in good effects. What you do and what happens to you are the same thing. This is pretty basic Buddhism. How could the officer not know?

Xixian said, “I am watching closely.” The footnote: “Stop watching and close the gap, and then there won't be anything to protect.” What did Xixian mean by “I am watching closely”? Was he offering a teaching or did he simply give a mild response that would not offend the warrior? Either way, it was definitely not a good enough answer. Definitely not intimate enough.

The commentary says, “Priest Xixian's response, ‘I am watching closely,’ is at once fat-headed and misguided.” It was a thoughtless answer. How could he have answered then? What would *you* have said to that general? Remember, he was asking for instruction. The Fayan School was said to be the first to employ koans as an instructional method. How about giving the officer a nice koan on the precept, *Do not kill*? “He has missed an opportunity to cause an evil that has already arisen to be extinguished and to cause a good that has not yet arisen to arise.” Good actions produce good effects. But there is no guarantee. Let's say that an elderly woman is standing at a curb and a boy scout comes up to her and says, “Here ma'am, let me help you across.” But instead of being grateful, she starts swatting him with her pocketbook, yelling, “Let go of me! Don't touch me!” and the boy scout gets arrested for molesting an elderly woman. Clearly, trying to do good is no guarantee.

“Governments and rulers are traditionally driven by power, politics, and money and are usually not inclined toward clear moral commitments.” If you don't understand this statement, just turn on the evening news or listen to a few political debates. They'll teach you about power, politics, and money.

“However, for a Zen priest to avoid taking moral responsibility when asked is inexcusable.” When we think of holy wars, western religions always come to mind. The God of Exodus ordered the extermination of the Canaanites. The instruction, according to the Bible, was to show them no pity. The commandment, “Thou shalt not kill,” apparently did not apply to the slaying of gentiles. In 1095, Pope Urban the Second ordered the crusaders to Jerusalem to kill the enemies of God. He said, “A horrible tale has gone

forth and a cursed race, utterly alienated from God, has invaded the lands of the Christians. Tear that land from the wicked races and subject them to yourselves.” In response, the people began shouting, *Deus volt! Deus volt!* “God wills it.” This then became the battle cry of the Crusades. In two days, Christian soldiers slaughtered 40,000 Muslims they saw as non-human filth. Nowadays, Islamic terrorists proclaim, “God is great!” as bombs explode the world over in the name of God and religion.

On the other hand, Buddhism has always been seen as a religion of peace. How many times have we heard that there's never been a Buddhist war? And beyond that, there are well-known examples of Buddhist pacifism. It is said that when the Shakyas kingdom was threatened with invasion, the Buddha sat in meditation in the path of the advancing soldiers and stopped the attack. We also know that the Indian king Ashoka converted to Buddhism and dissolved his army. For hundreds of years, peace reigned on the land and the Buddhist teachings were promulgated. Ashoka's stone edicts still exist as proof of his remarkable achievements. Later, when the dharma traveled to Tibet, the barbaric tribes were pacified. And in our own century, during the Vietnam War, Buddhist monks set themselves on fire to protest the fighting.

These are all positive examples. This is the way we think of Buddhism. But there's also a dark side to our heritage—namely the Japanese Zen establishment's dedicated support of the imperial war machine from the late 1800s through World War II. This is very complex terrain.

In 1939, Zen Master Harada Sogaku made the statement, “If ordered to march, ‘tramp-tramp’... or shoot ‘bang-bang’—this is the highest manifestation of the wisdom of enlightenment, the unity of Zen and war. It extends to the furthest reaches of the holy war now underway.”

Harada Roshi preached that, “It's the essence of truth that the Japanese people are chosen people whose mission is to control the world. The sword that kills is also the sword that gives life.... Comments opposing the war are foolish opinions of those who can see only one aspect of things and not the whole.”

Kodo Sawaki, one of the great Soto patriarchs of this century, was an evangelical war proponent. In 1942 he made the statement: “It's just to punish those who disturb the public order. Whether one kills or does not kill, the precept of forbidding killing is preserved. It is the precept forbidding

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killing that wields the sword. It is the precept that throws the bomb.” The precept that throws the bomb? That’s pretty astonishing abuse of Zen language. He also insisted, as did other Zen teachers, that killing done without thinking, in a state of no mind or no self, was an expression of enlightenment. This statement is lifted right out of *Bushido*, the way of the warrior:

It's easy to become self-righteous about this, because we don't have a clue what it meant to live in a country closed off from the rest of the world, whose only information came from propaganda, newspapers controlled by a government calling westerners heathens, murderers, and so on. And there the Allies were, justifying those statements by dropping bombs on Tokyo and on the temples.

The next line of the commentary reads: “*Enlightenment without morality is not yet enlightenment.*” Enlightenment is the realization of our identity with the ten thousand things. Not similarity. Not equality. Identity. My body and your body, my mind and your mind are the body and mind of the universe. When this truth is realized, our consciousness transforms into *prajna*, or wisdom. With wisdom, compassion is born. And since all things are my self—since what happens to all things happens to me—I’m compelled to take care of all things. That’s compassion. How we do this is what the moral and ethical teachings of the Buddha, the precepts, are all about. Indeed, the precepts are the definition of the life of a Buddha.

“*Enlightenment without morality is not true enlightenment. Morality without enlightenment is not complete morality.*” Despite the statements made by some writers as Zen was first taking roots in this country, Zen is not beyond morality, but is a practice that takes place within the world. It is a religious tradition based on moral and ethical teachings that have been handed down through the mind-to-mind transmission, from generation to generation.

“*Enlightenment and morality are non-dual in the Way. One does not exist without the other.*” They are of necessity interdependent, mutually arising. “*Nirvana is not beyond good and evil, as is commonly believed. It is rather a way of living one's life with a definite moral commitment.*” A moral commitment that comes from vow. Our vow is to live our lives as buddhas, to realize all sentient and insentient beings alike as one’s own body and mind, and then to act on that realization, to actualize that realization. And the only place that nirvana can be realized is within samsara. Just like enlightenment and morality, they are non-dual in the Way.

“*Setting aside impostor priests and phony followers, you tell me, how do you transform watching into doing, the three poisons into the three virtues?*” What do the precepts say about the transgression of the precepts? How do you turn the three poisons into the three virtues?

In 1992 the Soto School officially issued a statement of repentance, particularly with regard to the massacres in China. The statement said, in part: “The Soto School is a religious organization that supported Japan’s acts of aggression in China under the pretext of overseas missionary activities. It supported Japanese militarism and even participated actively in that militarism. This is extremely regrettable from the standpoint of religious persons. Unless the negative legacy of our school becomes the object of clear self-criticism, it will remain impossible to take the stance of opening our hearts toward other peoples in the spirit of true exchange.”

Atonement is definitely the first step. But it must be followed by communication with the victims and forgiveness. This process is completed by the commitment and vow not to commit evil again, to truly live in accord with the moral and ethical teachings.

The commentary concludes, “*More importantly, what is it that you call your self?*” That’s the whole point. If we recognize who we really are and realize that it’s not limited to this bag of skin—that it’s not limited at all—then there’s little doubt what our responsibility is to future generations, to the future of Buddhism.

*Utterly devoid of abilities, the guide can't lead;
lost in self-deception, the evil one can't find his way.
Take off the blinders, set down the pack and see
beyond god masks and devil masks, there is a Way.*

Utterly devoid of abilities, the guide can't lead. For whatever reason, Xixian abdicated his responsibility and, by ignoring the opportunity to teach, created a karma that continued into 20th century Japan.

Lost in self-deception, the evil one cannot find his way. The general’s delusion is understandable, in a sense. He was just doing his job. But the very fact that he asked that question implies that he had a sense that something wasn’t right.

Take off the blinders. Set down the pack. This instruction applies to both Xixian and the general. The blinders are the things that obscure our vision. The pack is all the stuff that we carry that identifies us. It’s who we think we are. It’s the years of conditioning that we drag around with us.

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Beyond god-masks and devil-masks, there is a Way. What is that way? For many Zen students, the most difficult aspect of all of this is to face the words and actions of these highly esteemed teachers. These men were living buddhas, fully enlightened people. Yet simultaneously, they were swept away by nationalist delusion. They knowingly perverted Buddhism and Zen teachings and exhibited a total lack of compassion and wisdom. They participated almost directly in the death of tens of millions. There's no greater abuse of the dharma than that. How can we reconcile these overwhelming contradictions?

This is our koan. What kind of Zen are we prepared to practice? There's a tendency for us to be naïve and uncritical, but the Buddha never taught that we should give up our rational intelligence. Actually, Zen has always taught us to keep questioning. The great doubt is the cutting edge of what our practice is about. But for too long we've accepted eastern teachings with a childlike naïveté. It's important to be critical of what we're letting in.

Don't just believe what you hear. Practice and verify. My Zen can't be taken away from me, because it's not dependent upon anything from the outside. It's my own realization.

Not my teacher's. Not his teacher's. Not the Buddha's. Not the lineage's. It's my own realization. That's what I trust. And you should find that trust in yourself.

Spiritual traditions have always gone through periods of light and dark, brilliance and corruption. Zen is one of the truly great traditions in the history of religion, but it will only continue to survive genuinely if we can face our demons and transform poison into nourishment. That's what receiving the precepts is really about. It's in your hands and in my hands. It has nothing to do with the history books. It has nothing to do with words and ideas. It has to do with how we live our lives. Nothing else.

John Daido Loori is the founder and spiritual leader of the Mountains and Rivers Order of Zen Buddhism and abbot of Zen Mountain Monastery, as well as a lineage holder in both the Rinzai and Soto Schools of Zen. Devoted to maintaining the authenticity of these traditions, Daido Roshi is known for his unique adaptation of traditional Buddhism into an American context, particularly with regard to the arts, the environment, social action, and the use of modern media as a vehicle of spiritual training and social change.



Great King Goodness

by Rafe Martin

Note: The jataka tales are a collection of stories about the Buddha's previous births in the animal realm. A traditional part of the Buddhist canon found in both Pali and Mahayana texts, the jatakas are not merely folktales for children, but parables that can awaken adults to their own potential for compassion and selflessness.

Once, long ago, when Brahmadata reigned in Benares, the Buddha came to life as the child of the queen. They named him Silava, or "Goodness." Prince Goodness he was called. When he was sixteen, his father, the king, died, and he became king in his place—King Goodness.

His first act as king was to have six platforms built from which to distribute gifts, one at each of the city's four gates—north, south, east, and west; one at the city's center; and one at the palace gates. From each of these he regularly distributed money, medicines, food, silks, and jewels to all those who came.

He regarded all the people with such loving kindness that he felt towards each one of them as a parent feels towards a beloved only child.

Now, at one time, it was discovered that a certain minister of King Goodness had taken for himself money set aside by the king for the poor. This man, the king also learned, mistreated all who tried to question him about it, using not only harsh words but dealing out blows as well. King Goodness spoke to the minister and reasoned with him, but the minister simply denied it all. "I have done no wrong!" he exclaimed, "and will not remain here to be mistreated!" Gathering his wealth, he left the kingdom and crossed the borders into the neighboring land of Kosala. And there he rose in influence and power until he was that king's advisor.

One day the minister said to the King of Kosala, "Sire, the city of Benares is like a ripe honeycomb, easy in the taking. Its wealth is great. Its king is feeble. Send your soldiers into the city. Take the palace, the treasure, all. The king has no force to withstand you. His goodness has made him weak."

But the King of Kosala was suspicious. "You have left Benares only recently yourself," he said. "You are a spy for King Goodness! Yes, I see it all now! This is a ruse to destroy me. Upon entering the city, my forces will be ambushed. You are conspiring with King Goodness!"

"No, Sire, no!" exclaimed the minister. "Never."

"Really," said the king. "Do you take me for such a naïve simpleton? I can see it all, I tell you! And I think that perhaps a little torture will bring out the truth for all to see. Guards!"

"Sire!" exclaimed the minister. "Please, wait! If you doubt me, just send a raiding party across the border. Let them attack an outlying village of King Goodness's realm. Then see what he will do!"

So a raiding party was sent. After robbing, beating, burning and looting, they were at last captured by King Goodness's soldiers, brought to Benares, and set before the king.

"My children," asked King Goodness, "why have you done such terrible things? Why have you robbed and beaten others? Why have you burned their home?"

"We were hungry!" they said. "We needed money, and we were paid to do it."

"My children," said King Goodness, "if you need food, money, clothing, whatever, come to me in the future and I will give it to you. You need not harm others. Such actions only harm yourselves." And giving gifts to the astonished men, he set them free.

"As you see, Sire," said the evil-hearted minister when those men had returned, "Benares is a honeycomb, a ripe plum. The king is intoxicated with his own goodness. He has no power to resist. Attack, my Lord, and take the kingdom from the hands of this weakling."

"Wait," said the King of Kosala, "not so fast. We shall try this again." So another raiding party was sent closer yet to the capital. Again violence was done. And again, these men were captured and brought before King Goodness.

"My children," he asked, "why have you done these things?"

And again the men said, "Why, we needed money and were paid to do it!"

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Then King Goodness again said, "Come to me in the future and I will help you. But do not harm others. By such actions you grievously harm yourselves." And giving them gifts, he allowed these men, too, to return to their homes unharmed.

"You see, Sire," said the minister. "Didn't I tell you! He is a weakling—and a fool. Attack!"

"Wait," said the king, suspicious still. "Third time tells all."

So yet a third group of men was sent, and this time they struck in the heart of the kingdom on the very streets of Benares. Yet once again, even they returned telling the same tale. They too had been given gifts by King Goodness and released.

Satisfied at last that King Goodness was, indeed, a thoroughly good king, the King of Kosala raised his army, mounted his war elephant, and set off to capture the ripe, golden honeycomb that was Benares.

That afternoon, as King Goodness sat upon his throne with its legs carved like those of an antelope, he turned to his bodyguard of one thousand champions standing there. Each of those men was an unbeaten warrior, loyal, strong, and disciplined. And King Goodness said, "My children. It is war. I can feel it. You must be prepared." And those one thousand champions shouted, "Give us the order, Lord, and we will destroy any army. We will drive them back, take their king captive, and secure our borders."

But King Goodness said, "No violence, my children. None. Let them enter the kingdom. Let them enter the city. Let them enter the palace and yes, even come into the throne room itself. But you must be prepared. No one shall lift a hand in violence. Is that understood?"

And those mighty warriors, so strong in their discipline and their dedication to that great, good king, all, to a man, answered, "Yes."

Then the army of the King of Kosala entered the land and none opposed them. They marched into the city of Benares. No army of warriors stopped them. They mounted the steps of the palace and shattered the great bronze doors. Still no weapon was raised against them. They marched into the marble throne room of the great King Goodness. There sat King Goodness on his golden throne, surrounded by his one thousand champions. "Remember, no violence, my children," cautioned the king. "No thoughts of anger or hatred. Let thoughts of charity and love alone fill your hearts." And even as the men of Kosala laid rough hands

upon him, he cautioned his champions, over and over, "No violence, my children. None." And so great was the discipline of those one thousand champions that not even one broke form in anger to destroy the enemy host.

Then the great King Goodness and his one thousand champions were all brought to the graveyard. Their weapons were taken from them and all were buried up to the neck in the earth. The ground was stamped down around them. And, as the sun set, they were abandoned there.

Darkness fell. The night grew chill. Towards midnight furtive shapes gathered, pacing nervously in the shadows. The jackals had come to devour fresh corpses. As they slunk forward, King Goodness said to his men, "Let your hearts be filled only with love and charity, my children. More powerful than any weapon is the desire for goodness."

When the jackals came close, the king and his men gave a great shout. At once the jackals turned and fled in terror. But, after a time, when nothing more happened, they returned and drew closer again. Then once more King Goodness and his men gave a great shout. And once more the jackals fled in fear. But, again, finding no one giving chase, they once more crept near. Then, for the third time, the king and his men raised their cry. But this time the jackal leader barked, "These are only prisoners, condemned men, trapped and helpless. Let us go forward and devour them."

And this time they came on and did not turn away.

King Goodness could see the jackal leader padding forward. Ears erect, it stopped, sniffed the air cautiously, then came on again. In the brightness of the moon's light its eyes glinted and its teeth gleamed. Then King Goodness raised his head, exposing his throat, as if seeking a quick and easy death. The jackal king, sniffing cautiously, came closer still. Then, seeing no danger, it lunged forward. But before its teeth could grip, King Goodness grabbed the fur of the jackal's throat with his own teeth and held tight. Terrified, the jackal king lunged this way and that, struggling to break free. It pulled and tugged desperately back and forth and from side to side, moving the king as it did so and loosening the earth around him. The wild scabbling of its claws dug up and loosened the soil even more.

At last the jackal king broke free and ran off, howling, into the night, followed by his pack.

Then King Goodness, rocking back and forth in the loosened soil, broke the hold of the earth which had been stamped down around him. He worked his arms free and

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at last climbed up out of the burial ground, free. Then he worked to free his companions. As each man was released, he too worked to free others, so in a short time all one thousand men were again free.

Now, as it should happen, a corpse had been left lying in that graveyard extending across the territory of two goblins. Each goblin claimed the greater portion of that corpse as its own. Their argument grew more heated, worse and worse. Then, at the point of coming to blows, one of these two goblins said, "In this graveyard stands King Goodness, a truly righteous man. Let us bring the corpse to him. He will divide it fairly for us." And to this the other goblin agreed.

Dragging the corpse by a foot, they approached King Goodness and asked for his help. "Certainly," said the king. "But I am, as you see, covered with dirt. I must bathe first."

Then, just like that, with their magical powers the goblins made the king's own golden bath, filled with scented water, appear. Straight from the palace where that usurper king slept, they brought it magically through the air. When King Goodness was clean and refreshed, the goblins brought his own robes to him, the very robes which had been laid out for that usurping King of Kosala. They brought him perfumes in a golden casket and garlands of fresh flowers laid out on ivory fans. Then the goblins asked if there was anything else he might require. "Well," said King Goodness, "I am hungry." And just like that, at once, fresh-cooked rice flavored with the choicest curries and the finest spices and herbs lay on a golden plate before him. The goblins also brought his own golden cup, filled with rose-scented water, for him to drink, straight from the usurper's table. Then King Goodness, well satisfied, had but one more request. "My sword," he said, "rests by the pillow of my bed. Bring it and I will now fulfill your request."

At once the great sword appeared. Then King Goodness set the corpse upright and with a single stroke split it perfectly. The goblins were overjoyed! The king washed the blade and girded on his sword.

The goblins ate their fill, and when they were done, glad of heart and filled with gratitude, they asked King Goodness if there was not something else they might yet do for him.

"If you would set me in my bedchamber where the usurper lies and also bring my men into the palace, I would be well satisfied," said King Goodness.

In an instant it was done.

King Goodness stood once again in his own bedchamber and looked down upon the sleeping form of that usurper, the King of Kosala. Then, raising his sword, he struck the sleeping king upon his side with the flat of the blade. The King of Kosala awoke and saw, by the light of the lamp burning there, his enemy, King Goodness—or his ghost—standing beside him sword in hand. And the King of Kosala was terrified! Summoning his courage he asked, "Are you man or ghost?"

"Man," answered King Goodness, "even as you are."

"How did you enter? It is impossible," said the King of Kosala. "The gates are guarded. The doors are barred. The halls patrolled. What's more, you were left as food for the jackals. Yet you stand here sword in hand, robed in splendor."

Then King Goodness told the whole story in all its detail.

Then the heart of the King of Kosala was moved and he cried aloud, "Sir, this is wondrous! I called myself a man, was blessed with a man's shape, with a man's heart and mind. Yet, for all that, I did not know the worth of your goodness, while even these blood-drinkers, these eaters of carrion flesh knew it! I will never plot against you again! I swear it!" Then he swore an oath of friendship with King Goodness, swore it on his own sword, and he begged, too, for the king's forgiveness. Then he had King Goodness lie down in safety upon his own bed of state, while he stood by the doorway guarding the great king from danger.

When the morning came, the King of Kosala had the drum sounded and gathered all his men. Then, in full sight of his army and of all the people, he announced, "I thought I was a great king and that this man here, the King of Benares, was a weakling and a fool. But in one night, all is changed. My only concern was for power; my only recourse violence and war. But King Goodness is far greater. The forces of heaven and of earth are on his side! That is greatness indeed!" Then, turning to King Goodness he said, "Great King, rule in peace. My men and I shall keep watch over your borders. I will use my might to protect your realm as well as my own." And passing sentence on the treacherous minister, he departed with his army of men and his war elephants, back to his own land.

Seated in splendor upon his golden throne with legs carved like those of an antelope, beneath a great white parasol, King Goodness looked with joy upon his people and upon his one thousand mighty men. "If I had not

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remained true,” he said to himself, “if I had not persevered fearlessly in goodness, both the people of my own kingdom as well as those of the kingdom of Kosala would have suffered greatly. At this moment what joy arises in me! How could any victory gained through violence or war compare with it!”

And speaking from his heart, he said to the assembled people, “Never doubt it. Effort in goodness will be rewarded. Even if you don’t see how it may work out,

persist in goodness. The fruit of such perseverance is sweet indeed!”²⁸

Rafe Martin, a practitioner of Zen Buddhism for more than 25 years, is the author of numerous award-winning books and recordings for children and adults. His books and recordings have won him several prizes, and he has been featured at the National Storytelling Festival, as well as at schools and libraries, conferences and festivals throughout the United States and around the world.

²⁸ “Great King Goodness” from *The Hungry Tigress*, by Rafe Martin. Copyright 1999 by Rafe Martin. Used by permission of the author, www.rafemartin.com. *The Hungry Tigress* is available through Yellow Moon Press: www.yellowmoon.com.



Zen Mountain Monastery Zen Kids and Teens Programs

The Zen Kids' Sunday Program is a once-a-month, three-hour play practice for children and their parents. Children are exposed to various aspects of Buddhism and Zen training (i.e., liturgy, meditation, etc.) in a way that is best described as the "back door approach." Emphasis is on observing and feeling the inner and outer worlds and how they interrelate, rather than on form or discipline, so many of our activities include the teachings of Buddhism yet do not refer explicitly to them.

The morning revolves loosely around a particular theme. After a short period of caretaking (work practice), we often venture forth to explore the natural world surrounding the Monastery—its woods, streams, ponds, fields, wetlands, plants and animals—and come back to transform these experiences into some expression of art such as music, poetry, storytelling, crafts, theater or movement. Snacks are followed by playtime in the meadow and, weather permitting, with sledding or swimming in the river. The program ends as we join the community for lunch.

By participating in the Zen Kids Program, children and parents of the sangha create their own personal relationship to Zen Mountain Monastery and to Zen practice, as well as awareness of and respect for our environment.

The Zen Teen/Pre-Teen Program includes children who have "graduated" from the Zen Kids Program and into adolescence. It is, therefore, specifically geared to those in this critical and tender developmental period.

In offering basic instruction in meditation, liturgy and Buddhist history, we hope to provide support and nourishment that will promote healthy self-exploration, appreciation of the power of problem solving, and community, as well as lay the groundwork for a life fully lived for the benefit of all beings. The tools we use are art projects, basic liturgy, meditation, Buddhist history, appreciation of the Monastery's varied wildlife, and right action.

Adolescence is a critical and tender period in the life of human beings when their relationship to the world is being forged in the fire of feelings of inadequacy and sexuality, and the models of youth come from the violent world of television and other forms of mass media. In the midst of this turmoil, how does a Bodhisattva navigate the world? Why are the moral and ethical teachings of Zen Buddhism important? Are they useful? If so, how? Working with Monastery staff and one of the Zen teachers, the kids have a chance to explore these and other questions.

Our challenge at Zen Teens is to help the teens feel that Zen practice is truly their own, not just their parents'. Our challenge is to help them explore the very questions they are asking in a way that respects their unique identities and manifests their true nature. In a world that seems to become more confusing by the minute, with messages from every which way telling them who they should be, we hope to instill in the Zen Teens one message, and one message only: Trust yourself.

For more information on the Zen Kids and Zen Teens programs, please contact Zen Mountain Monastery's registrar at registrar@mro.org, (845) 688-2228 or visit their website at: www.mro.org/zmm/visitingzmm/youthprograms.php.