A Year of Loving-Kindness, Joy and Equanimity

Five Turnings, An Asian Feminist Journey

Dr. Hyun-Kyung Chung, Professor of Ecumenical Theology at Union Theological Seminary, spoke to the relationship between Buddhism and Christianity, spiritual expression and feminism. Born in South Korea, Hyun-Kyung considers herself both Buddhist and Christian. She pursues theology “for the flourishing of life--life in all its forms, all its fullness.” One of the outstanding characteristics of her teaching is sheer vitality: her life force so fluently expressing itself through her words, and flowing into creative theology. Dr. Chung spoke on March 1st, the day Korea celebrates its freedom from Japanese occupation--and this lecture was held on the opening day of Asian Awareness month. Cosponsors included: the Protestant Chaplaincy, Religion Department, Office of Religious and Spiritual Life, Women’s Studies Department, East Asian Languages and Literature Department, Asian Advisors’ Office, Peace and Justice Studies Program, and Peace Coalition. A dinner for cosponsoring faculty and selected students followed, at the College Club, which sparked plans for several future collaborations.
Awakening to Freedom, Linking Spirit Across Differences:

Hilda Ryumon Gutierrez Baldoquin, author of Dharma, Color and Culture, spoke May 2nd, on the ways that, through connecting with our spirit, we realize that freedom is as close as the intimacy of our breath. Ryumon is a Soto Zen priest, who has had the good fortune to train with two of the foremost women teachers in American Buddhism: Blanche Hartmann, of San Francisco Zen Center, and Pema Chodron, of Gampo Abbey. Ryumon also has over twenty-five years experience in diversity training, and currently leads retreats for people of color across the country. Ryumon led a meditation for Wellesley Buddhist Community in the evening, with a question-and-answer session that went one hour beyond schedule, the audience so deeply connected through both meditation and Ryumon’s clear Dharma teaching. This was an official event of Latina Month.

RETREAT at TEMENOS

At the end of the semester, Wellesley Buddhist Community went on a weekend retreat at Temenos, a retreat center in western Massachusetts. Practice included meditation, lively kido chanting with percussion instruments, and meditative walks along hiking trails. We took a field trip to the nearby Cambodian temple, and the Nipponzai Myohoji Peace Pagoda, renowned for its strong focus upon an engaged Buddhist practice, including annual mindful peace walks that raise awareness of social issues in their communities.
**Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction**

We are running a six week non-credit class on mindfulness based stress reduction, in Fall and Spring terms, to offer meditation techniques to the wider college community.

In April I had a wonderful opportunity to meet Jon Kabat-Zinn, the founder of mindfulness based stress reduction, at a talk he gave at M.I.T. Invited to ask a question, I began with the image of the mandala: in a mandala, the center and sides are not separate. In the same way, what is going on inside us is always connected to the outer world. In Kabat-Zinn's new book, Coming to Our Senses, these connections are explicit. Teaching in higher education, there is often a Cartesian split that takes place between mind and body, between knower and known. Wouldn't it be transformational, if education created space for recognising the connection between what is going on inside, and what goes on around us?

Kabat-Zinn began, "You already know the answer to that," then elucidated a beautiful and compelling vision of the Renaissance which would be made possible by such a change. The brightness of this vision filled the entire room. The talk was complete.

After the talk, Kabat-Zinn created an opportunity for us to follow through on these statements with a larger conversation, encompassing my mindfulness based stress reduction teaching, our shared Korean Zen connection, and the work of Education as Transformation at Wellesley. I expect to actively build upon this mindfulness based stress reduction work in the next year with a course that incorporates these principles of self reflective awareness, to be proposed before the Curriculum Committee for credit.

**Welcome to Wellesley Buddhist Community!**

I returned to Wellesley College fifteen years ago, to share with my Wellesley sisters the joy and freedom that meditation has brought me. My own practice is grounded in Zen—I ordained in Korea in 1993 under Zen Master Seung Sahn—but I enjoy and draw on the diversity of our entire tradition. Our ongoing activities include Weekly meditation and discussion Monday nights, 7 to 8:15 p.m. and weekly sittings, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 12:30 to 1 p.m. For more information, or to be added to our weekly e-list, please contact me at: jsunim@wellesley.edu, or:

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