

Winter Words from the House of Peace

We the people of Fukushima want to share our suffering, responsibility and hope...How can we build a new world that is the polar opposite of one reliant on nuclear reactors? Nobody knows the full answer to that. What I think we can do is for each one of us, in complete and total earnestness, to think with our own minds, make sure to open our eyes wide, decide what we can do, and act on it, rather than following what someone else has decided. Ruiko Muto, Fukushima, Japan

A year has passed since more than 20,000 people of Japan were swept away from life on this Earth in a raging tsunami.

A year has passed since hundreds of thousands of Japanese survivors were swept into the cataclysm of uncontrollable nuclear meltdown. The unprecedented tragedy of 3/11/11 that saw the landscape of death erupt in the midst of fertile farmland continues to cause us to stagger in disbelief, to whisper prayers of accompaniment for the anguished victims, to shout with rage at the unbridled release of nuclear demons.

A year has passed, and the depth of the disaster has continued to be concealed. Recently returned from the Fukushima area, our Buddhist brother, Venerable Kato, can barely describe the pain of his people. He explains to us that in Japan the people and the land are one.

When the land is gone, condemned to radioactive death, where shall the people go? They are the land. The land is their soul. How can they go on?

Fear, helplessness, grief converge. The sacred Earth of countless generations past is poisoned, destroyed for generations to come.

A year has passed, and during it our Venerable Kato, together with the monks and nuns of Nipponzon Myhoji, gathered the wide, loving community connected with the New England Peace Pagoda near Amherst, Massachusetts for a sacred ceremony: the Inauguration of the new Temple. Rising from the ashes of the first Temple, burned to the ground shortly after its completion in 1987, this new building has emerged "created by forces that would ray down from the Heavens to this place in North America, in a country in desperate need of its presence... a place to enshrine what is most sacred: an expression of the one infinite cosmic Temple where the summons is heard by earnest seekers: **Each human being is a Temple. Each one of us is a Temple.**" (from Carrie's Opening Words at the Inauguration)

It is all connected: the violation of the sacred land of Fukushima; the pleas of the struggling survivors for clear thinking and courageous deeds with eyes wide open; and the Eye-Opening Ceremony of the Sacred Altar of the New Temple of the New England Peace Pagoda.

Another venerable brother at that glorious October 2nd ceremony on that holy hill in Western Massachusetts brought it all together. Dr. Vincent Harding, close friend and speech-writer for Dr. Martin Luther King, beamed his radiant smile and incomparable wisdom upon us. Surely his encouragement, his faith, his own remarkable endurance reaches to Fukushima and beyond --- reaches to the very core of our commitment to build that new world --- that timeless Temple that will enshrine in sacred safety the heart of each human being.

From the sacred mountain Dr. Harding lifted our spirits saying,

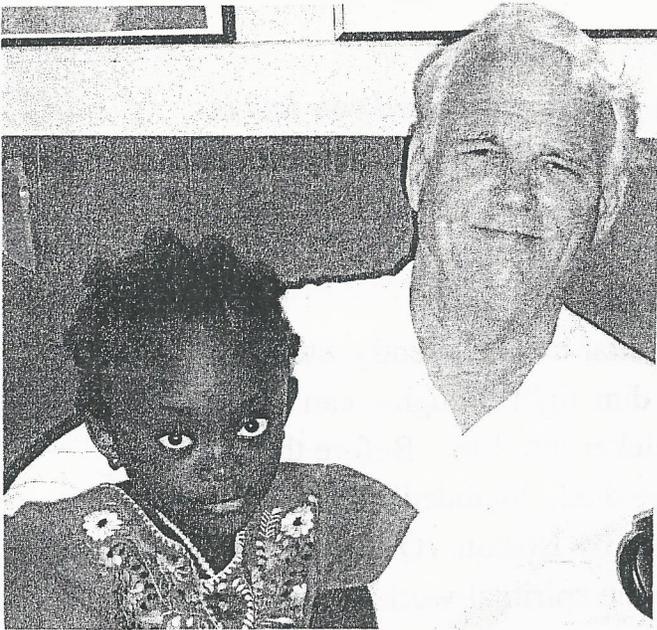
**My brother Martin often used to say: "We've got to organize goodness!"
Now I want to say to you: you are not alone. Please know that in every place there are sacred gatherings... sacred because we are sacred, sacred because the search for peace is sacred, sacred because the desire to live in unity with one another is a sacred desire. Something powerful is being developed It is about the temples that you are, and I think the possibilities that you represent are magnificent. You are surrounded by a host, a crowd of women and men who spent their lives organizing goodness. You are not alone. And therefore you are not accountable just to yourself. You are accountable to all those you have gone before you, who have worked hard before you, who had to work through stuff that you only can think about! They are now depending upon us to keep going...to keep on keeping on!**

We bow before the witnessing host, the goodness, the Temple of each one's life.

*Carrie Schuchardt
March, 2012*



Dr. Vincent Harding and Carrie Schuchardt, New England Peace Pagoda, Oct.2, 2011



Uele!

The current is very strong.

Olele! olele!

Row. Row.

Eh eheho, eh eh eheho,

Come! Come!

The courageous one.

Come.

(a song from the Congo)

We shall here call her "Papillon" --- the butterfly --- the courageous one who survived severe illness, family separation, and untold difficulties to travel with her Mother from the Congo to the House of Peace. Like the butterfly of her favorite song, Papillon has radiant wings --light filled airy carriers of her powerful child-wisdom. When she arrived her strong upright head was hiding a growing tumor which a team of Mass.General Hospital experts were ready to work with. Summer brought two successful brain surgeries and so much more! For the beauty of the Butterfly is contagious, and other bright spirits came to share in the healing process. Zoe from Ipswich High School brought her friends each week to sing and play and teach and learn. Christina made many trips to the nearby playground. As always our healing House of Peace team of Mary Ellen, Barbara, Joseph and Geraldine gave precious time, space, care and prayer for these blessed guests.

James of the House of Peace kept his guitar at the ready giving our Papillon songs and dances, while our co-worker, Windsong, offered translations for the Mother and child. In such a moving and healing way, our many friends at the Sisters of Notre Dame in Ipswich, some of whom had lived and worked in the Congo, befriended our special guests. Other friends, old and new, brought toys, games, clothes, plantains and more!

Six months passed quickly. School began, and Papillon and her Mother found a family nearby with whom to share the next stage of their journey, making space here for the next child.

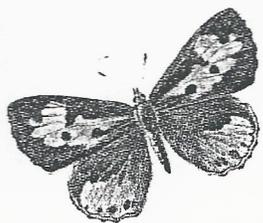
What have we experienced, we often ask, as such mysterious, heroic beings pass through our lives?

Something, we would guess, about the Butterfly. And so very much more about strong currents and the courage to row until one arrives home.

When we look at a butterfly's wing we actually have before us earthly matter in its most spiritualized form....

The butterfly's whole attention.... is centered on joyous delight in the color of its wings.... So also can we marvel at its fluttering joy... this joy in the spiritualizing, fluttering about in the air.

(R. Steiner, Harmony of the Creative Word)



A New Partnership

There are two types of pain. One, when someone hits you and you feel it. And the other is when your big brother dies and your heart breaks.

Alexandra, age 5

It began in many places, but two come to mind:

One: the tiny chapel at the House of Peace has its altar candle silently, steadfastly accompanying our efforts, day and night. In its dim light thoughts can become clear and strength for newly discerned deeds can flicker into life. Before this light we regularly sound out the names of those who have died. Included are the victims of murder and violent crime from the streets of nearby Boston. Questions come: How can we address these ones newly passed into the spiritual world without also seeking to support the family members and friends left behind?

Two: the Dever-McCormack School, Dorchester, Massachusetts --- a large classroom --- another steadfast light, this one Teacher, facing 100 students daily, in four classes of 25 each--- Social Studies the subject. But questions arise: who of these 7th graders are family members or friends of the ever-increasing numbers of homicide victims in this part of Boston? Is it the withdrawn sad boy in the back? The often teary girl near him? The ever-distracted one who never can settle into study, never complete an assignment?

Where does all that grief and loss and fear and anger go when a young teenager suffers the death of a relative or friend? How can these survivors be supported?

Ethna Riley, Carrie's daughter, grew up in the House of Peace. Her foster-siblings had survived war in many nations. Now, in her fifth year teaching World Geography in the toughest landscape of Boston, she committed last year to find a way to connect with the often-hidden sorrow and pain of her bereaved students. She outlined her vision for this group as follows:

- 1) To offer a time and place in which students who have suffered loss due to violence can receive support in dealing with the impact of violence on their lives through discussion, art, projects, and other activities.
- 2) To allow students to create a community of solidarity and understanding with other students who have had related experiences.
- 3) To empower these students to be leaders in peace-building, conflict resolution, and violence prevention within the DMC school community and our home communities as well.

On February 28, 2012, after months of planning and dialogue led by the Carrie-Ethna, mother-daughter team, "Steven's Circle" was born! Fourteen excited middle-school students of the McCormack School, carefully selected from teacher recommendations, a written survey, and parent wishes, crowded into the faculty conference room hardly aware that history was being made --- that a new threefold partnership had begun.

First, the school itself, encouraging this unique effort to address the grief of students while empowering them to address the issues of violence in their communities.

Second, the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, originators of a brilliant curriculum for this program. This Dorchester-based center of teaching and learning for families impacted by violence and for those serving their needs is uniquely suited to the inspiration of this fledgling group. Founded in 1994 after the death of fifteen year old Louis, caught in the cross-fire of gang violence as he was on his way to a peace meeting, this remarkable Institute has accompanied countless families from the time of the violent death of a loved one, through wakes and burials, into the timeless abyss of grief and on into healing. Their seven Principles of Peace are a rainbow-colored portal to this new group: Love-Unity- Faith-Hope-Courage-Justice-Forgiveness.

Third partner: The House of Peace. Through the unexpected generosity of close friends of our work the project could be funded --- not only financially, but with a kind of social energy that can warm and support this work at every turn.

And so a new space is delicately formed --- a circle of chairs, a plant so carefully watered in the center, and on its own altar-like table a tall, silent beeswax candle burning as games are played, stories are told, resolutions made, friendships formed. The thoughts of many ---- faculty and staff of the school, colleagues of the House of Peace and Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, grateful family members and other students surround it all, tender seed that it is, so fragile, so needed, so full of promise.!



Louis D. Brown Peace Institute



Dever-McCormack K-8 School



The House of Peace

Keeping the Festivals

The rhythm of Season and Festival is fundamental to life in community. Carefully preparing and celebrating "Festive Moments in the Cosmic Order" lies at the heart of our task.

This outline of some of the House of Peace activities, many of them united with the work of the Anthroposophical Society of Cape Ann, is an invitation to all those who would want to join us at any time. (Please call us for information and confirmation: 978-356-9395)

- **Study Group:** focusing on the work of Rudolf Steiner, one book at a time. Alternate Monday evenings, October through May, 7:30 – 9:00pm at Cape Ann Waldorf School.
- **Summer Lecture Series 2012:** Rudolf Steiner and the Threefold Social Order, Monday evenings, 7:30 – 9:00pm, July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 at the House of Peace.
- **Carla Mattioli Painting Classes:** Thursday 4:30- 5:45pm, 8 weeks, beginning April 12. Fall sessions begins October 1. Using chalk pastels to draw from nature, and wet-on-wet watercolor painting in celebration of the seasons and the Goddess Natura.
- **Lecture by Dr. Broder von Laue** June 21, 2012 – 7:30pm at House of Peace
- **Festival of All Souls**, November 2012, 7:30pm at the House of Peace
- **Festive Celebrations:** St. John's(June), Michaelmas (Sept), Christmas, Easter....
- **North Shore Coalition for Peace and Justice**, alternate Weds, 7:30-9:00pm
- **Veterans for Peace**, first Saturday breakfast meeting each month, 9:00-11:00am
.... and more. **Welcome! Please invite friends to join these community initiatives.**

In Memoriam

Know the spiritual world!

Then, among the many other blessings that humanity will gain will be this:

that the living and dead will be able to form a unity. Rudolf Steiner

In the hush of every pre-dawn Thursday we gather in the small House of Peace Chapel. It is a quiet time, a deep time, a time set apart for a powerful work: "Staying Connected" to those who have died. The steady flow of souls crossing over --- those near to us as family and friends and colleagues; those cut down in the violence of our city streets; those perishing in every form of natural and un-natural disaster --- this cloud of beings so recently entering life after death encompasses us. In verse and reading and prayer we respond with accompaniment and thought-filled stirrings of the heart.

Our annual Festival of All Souls stands as a sign of this work. On November 11, 2011 (Veterans' Day) we devoted our All Souls Evening to all those who have died in war. As in past years, a mighty chorus from the New England Conservatory of Music, conducted by our beloved friend and composer, Lyle Davidson, gave voice to the mystery of it all. A most profound and reverent, prolonged silence followed the final Requiem! It echoes still, as we gather each Thursday dawn to remember, to stay connected.

With gratitude to our Stars

*The Creator knows the number of the stars
And calls them each by name.*

Psalm 147

As we celebrated our 21st Birthday in June 2011 we found ourselves all a-wonder! How incredibly far and wide the House of Peace circle has stretched! How vast the ocean of goodness that keeps our ship afloat and how thankful the crew that always and ever seeks strength to welcome new passengers aboard. How steady the "galley laden unto the highest board," with an ever-present and merciful Captain who guides this vessel through every storm.

We thank you for the thoughts and advice you offer, your quiet prayers and hearty greetings, the unexpected drop-offs of food and clothing, furniture and supplies, the gifts of financial contributions, each one so large in the eyes of we who cherish them.

With your donations we have purchased clothes, food, toys, and medications for our guests in need. Emergency gifts to former refugees experiencing setbacks have been offered. This 285-year-old house has been maintained, and all who seek shelter have been welcomed. So many gifts! They all combine to support this remarkable journey of a humble, steadfast community.

Each evening we pause and step out into the night to seek the Evening Star. And in our own quiet, deeply thankful way, we too call you each by name.

Enclosed is my gift for The House of Peace:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Amount _____