

# UU Sangha

Volume: VI Number: 2

Journal of the Unitarian Universalist Buddhist Fellowship

Spring 2002

## The Enchanting World of the Lotus Sutra

By Gene Reeves

I want to focus on the story dimension of the Lotus Sutra, on the Lotus Sutra as a genre that makes extensive use of dramatic stories. I believe that everything taught in the Lotus Sutra is for the purpose of re-orienting the lives of its hearers and readers. Its teachings are not primarily for giving us interesting ideas, or for adding to our store of knowledge, or for teaching us doctrines to believe or affirm. The teachings of the Lotus Sutra are aimed at changing people's lives.

In this sense, the Lotus Sutra is as much, or more, an earthly, bodily, 'physical' text as it is a spiritual one. It aims not merely for spiritual experiences, but change in behavior. In Chapter Twelve, the Bodhisattva Accumulated Wisdom says, "I have observed that in the [whole] world there is not even a spot as small as a mustard seed where [the Buddha] has not laid down body and life as a bodhisattva for the sake of the living." The Lotus Sutra has to do with laying down one's body and life.

It is a book of enchantment. It uses a variety of stories, including its famous parables, to draw us into its world, a world in which, if we truly enter it, we are likely to be transformed.

### Chapter One

A Chinese/Japanese term often used for "introduction," is more literally an "entry gate." That's exactly what the first chapter of the Lotus Sutra is. It's a gateway through which one can enter a new and mysterious, enchanting world, a world of the imagination.

The opening scene is on the Sacred Eagle Peak. It's a real place on a mountain in Northeast India. I've been there. But as well as being an actual, physical and



Ever imaginative, the Lotus Sutra describes how children building sand-castle stupas and sincerely offering mud pies to the Buddha accumulate merit to achieve Buddhahood.

historical place, the Sacred Eagle Peak of the Lotus Sutra is a mythical place.

The place that we visited, the geographical place, is like a platform set on a steep mountainside, perhaps three fourths of the way up the mountain. Above and below it, the mountain is both steep and rough. It's not the kind of place where one could sit and listen to a sermon or lecture. And the clearing itself wouldn't hold more than three dozen or so people at one time.

In the Sutra this little place is populated by a huge assembly, with thousands of monks and nuns, and lay

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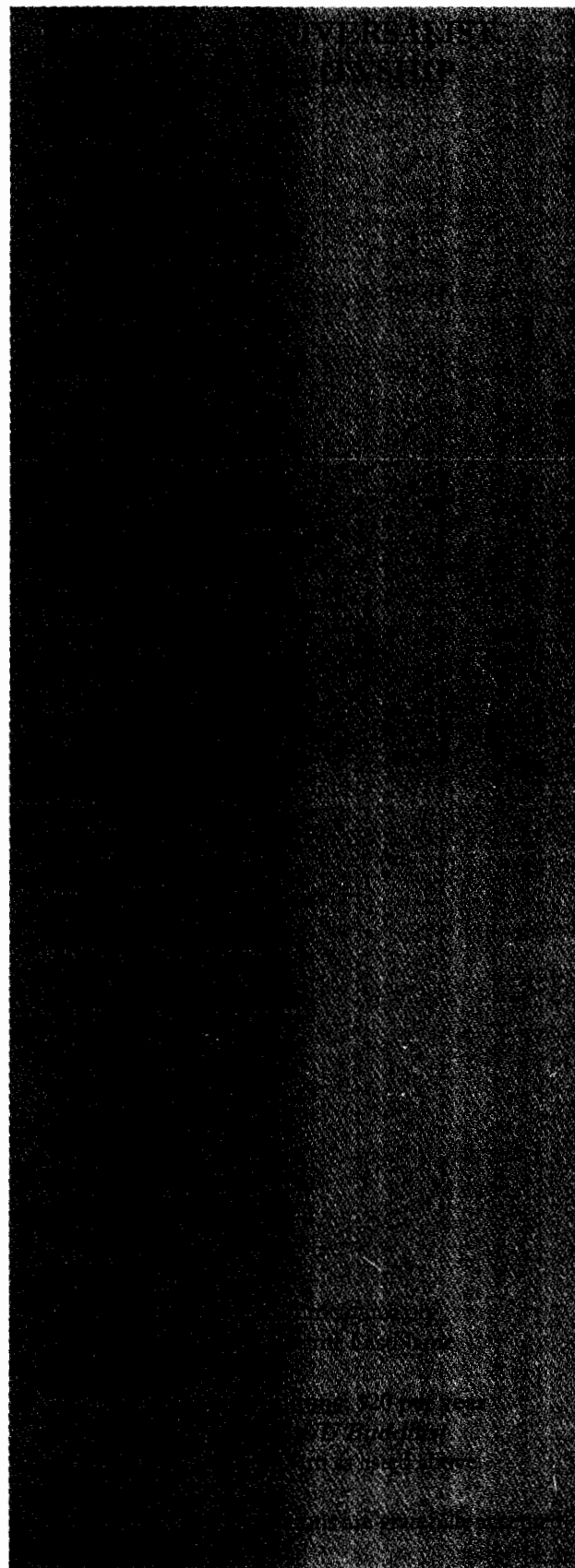
## Editorial Insights

Once upon a time. . . Long, long ago in a galaxy far, far away. . . Thus have I heard. . . Some words immediately conjure an attitude of wonder, imagination, and openness to new possibilities. They relax the dualistic, logical mind and invite us to release our attachments to truth and fiction so that we can enter into sacred stories and discover the deeper wisdom they contain.

Joseph Campbell is well known for his research into the teaching and healing properties of myths and legends. Among the many cultures and religions he studied, he discovered great depth and meaning in the stories of Buddhism. Over more than 2,500 years Buddhism has developed an incredible variety of fantastic, humorous, insightful parables and tales. From the early Jataka tales to the life of Milarepa and the biographies of crazy Zen patriarchs, Buddhism has used story-telling to illustrate important concepts and values, passing them on from one generation to the next in an entertaining form that could be understood by monastics and laypeople alike. Therefore in this issue we focus on Buddhist stories and what they offer us.

I once read a book by Rafe Martin called *The Hungry Tigress*. Martin retold many wonderful Buddhist legends in English, bringing to life again in the West. But he also went further and created his own modern Jataka tales. He showed how writing our own Buddhist fairy tales could convey the Dharma in a new world and culture, that it isn't bound to any time or place or held captive inside sacred books from the past. Inspired, I wrote some "Jataka" tales myself, one of which I share with you in this issue. I hope that this may lead others to write their own UU Buddhist tales, both to discover their own insights and to pass the torch on to our children and others.

Our next issue is due to come out in July. As the common wisdom one hears these days seems to stress divisions between different religions or countries, we'd like to take a look at interdependence and relationship. How does a Buddhist view the oppositions of the "freedom-loving world" vs. the Axis of Evil, or the idea of clashes between supposedly separate and independent civilizations? Do Buddhism and Unitarian-Universalism have something to offer us that goes beyond the dichotomy of self and other? Submissions on this, or any topic relevant to Buddhism and UUism, are welcomed at [jwilson403@hotmail.com](mailto:jwilson403@hotmail.com).



## Letters to the Editor

Jay Alagia (Volume V, Number 1, "Why I Believe in Rebirth") no doubt understands the Buddhist religion much better than the UU position. I doubt that anyone can speak with authority for the UU position, but I wish to share some of my own thoughts from this perspective.

Alagia says, "Many persons who do not believe in rebirth tend to think in terms of only one life to live, so indulge the sense." Probably. But that is not where I stand. I don't live this life as I do for any reward in the hereafter. I live the way I do because it seems the good and right thing to do. There is some satisfaction in living. My life is my reward, if you want to put it that way.

I do not believe that our personalities come from *our* past lives, but from the lives of those who have preceded us, genetically and spiritually (not to mention the influences of those around us after we are born and the choices we make in the light of fears, desires, and experiences). We could think of it as "spiritual genes" being passed along from generation to generation. These genes, both spiritual and genetic, aren't cast in concrete. Their growth is nurtured or thwarted by the individual in his or her own spiritual growth or failure to grow.

Don Keefauver  
Hendersonville, NC

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Thank you for the UU Buddhist Fellowship newsletter. It is like an oasis in the desert. I have enjoyed each issue and learned greatly. Keep it up.

Nina Stohey  
Cincinnati, OH

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Thanks so much for all of your good work. The publication gets better and better.

Carol Fuller

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*Letters to the editor are welcome at [jwilson403@hotmail.com](mailto:jwilson403@hotmail.com) or Jeff Wilson, 403 Knob Court, Chapel Hill, NC 27517. UU Sangha reserves the right to edit letters for space and content considerations. For problems with your subscription write to [strumbore@uumin.org](mailto:strumbore@uumin.org) or Sam Trumbore, 405 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12206.*

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people, 80,000 bodhisattvas, and in addition a large number of gods, dragons, chimeras, centaurs, titans, griffins, satyrs, pythons, and holy wheel-rolling kings. Already, just from the listing of such a population, we know we've entered a realm that is special, even magical.

We don't know much about the Indian origins of the Lotus Sutra, but we do know that it was produced in Northern India by monks, and it is very likely that many of its first hearers and readers would have known perfectly well that Sacred Eagle Peak was in actuality much too small for the kind of assembly described at the beginning of Chapter One. We are to understand from the very beginning, in other words, that this is a story, not a precise description of historical events, but a mythical account of historical events. It's meant not just for our knowledge, but also for our participation. It invites us to use our own imagination to participate in the Sutra's world of enchantment.

When I told a friend that I was working on the Lotus Sutra, he responded that he'd read it a long time ago and couldn't remember much about it, except that it contained a lot of "miracle stories." There is, of course, a sense in which that is correct. The Sutra does have a great many stories of fantastic or supernatural events of the Buddha's and various bodhisattva's divine powers. But one thing these stories do not and cannot do, it has always seemed to me, is to function as "miracle stories" in the Christian sense of that term, i.e., as stories that can be used to "prove" something about the intervention of supernatural power in history.

The stories in the Lotus Sutra, or at least many of them, are so fantastic, so imaginative, so unlike anything we have experienced, that they cannot possibly be taken for history or description of factual matters, or stories about actual historical events. The reader of the Lotus Sutra knows from the very first chapter that he or she has entered an imaginary world quite different from what we ordinarily perceive. And if the stories are successful, the reader will come to understand that he or she is empowered to perform miracles.

### **Affirmation of the concrete**

In chapter one the Buddha entered deeply into meditative concentration. Then, to prepare the assembly to hear the Buddha preach, various omens suddenly appeared—flowers rained down from heaven on everyone, the earth trembled and shook, and the Buddha emitted a ray of light from between his eyebrows, lighting up eight-

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een thousand worlds to the east, so that the whole assembly could see these worlds in great detail, including their heavens and hells, all their living beings, and even their past and present Buddhas.

Surely we are being advised here that we are entering a different world, and a different kind of world, a world that is at once rich in fantasy and at the same time anchored in this world.

Enchantment, here, means a certain kind of fascination with the ordinary world. It means finding the special, even the supernatural, within the ordinary world of our existence. It means seeing this world itself as different, as special—as important and valuable. And this means that our lives—how we live and what we do—are important, not only for ourselves, but also for the Buddha and for the entire cosmos.

Thus, the Lotus Sutra opens up this world as a magical world, a world in which flowers rain down from the heavens, drums sound by themselves, and Shakyamuni Buddha lights up all the worlds with beams of light. It is a world in which an illusory castle-city provides a resting place for weary travelers, in which a stupa emerges from the ground so that a Buddha from long ago can praise



The stupa of Many Treasures Buddha emerges from the ground, one of the central stories of the Lotus Sutra.

Shakyamuni for teaching and preaching the Lotus Sutra, where the Bodhisattva Wonderful Voice, with his nearly perfect, giant, and radiant body, from another world makes flowers appear on Eagle Peak and then comes through zillions of worlds with 84,000 other bodhisattvas to visit Shakyamuni Buddha and others, or where Universal Sage Bodhisattva comes flying through the sky on his white elephant with six tusks to visit this world.

## The Dharma in Stories

The chief way in which the Lotus Sutra enchants is by telling stories—parables and similes, accounts of previous lives, stories of mythical events, and so forth. Though there are various ways of counting, it contains two dozen or so different stories. In the Sutra a great many traditional Buddhist doctrines are at least mentioned, such as the four holy truths, the eight-fold path, the three marks of the Dharma, inter-dependent origination, the twelve-link chain of causation, the six perfections, and so forth. Even one of the Sutra's most emphasized teachings, the one vehicle of many skillful means, is initially presented as an explanation of why there is such a variety of teachings within Buddhism. There are plenty of teachings or doctrines in it, but if we want to approach a fuller understanding of what the Lotus Sutra teaches, we had better pay attention to its stories, and not merely to propositions within them or to sentences which explain them, but also to the overall thrust and function of the stories within this very unusual Sutra.

These stories are the primary skillful means through which the Lotus Sutra invites us into its world, its world that is at once our own world, albeit seen and experienced differently. But it goes without saying that not everyone will welcome such an invitation or read the stories in this way. Some will reject them as supernaturalistic miracle stories. Others will see them as nothing more than the intra-Buddhist polemics of more than 20 centuries ago. Some will judge them to be nothing more than quaint filler for a text which, as a kind of snake oil, only seeks to promote itself. An invitation into an imaginative world can always be turned down or rejected. A religious text will not function as a religious text for everyone. There is no compelling science or logic to lead one into the world of the Lotus Sutra. Good reasons to stay away can be given. But there is an enchanting dimension, perhaps even a kind of seduction, in such stories.

## Affirmation of language

There is no shortage in Buddhism of words ex-

pressing distrust of words. There's some of that in the Lotus Sutra as well, but not a lot. Words are never quite up to the tasks we give to them. We can never put into language just what it is that we see, or feel, or think. Our experience is always vastly richer than we can express. Yet words are what we have; they are part of the rich world that is given to us. Like nothing else, they make it possible for us to travel across vast distances of both space and time. And they can invoke a certain kind of concreteness.

It is not very clear to me just how it is that stories function to affirm the concrete. Is it merely that they are less abstract in some way than doctrines? "Everything is impermanent" is, after all, about as abstract (and as metaphysical) as one can get. Stories do have a kind of concreteness about them, more flesh and blood in them. But I don't think that is the complete account of how they can function to elicit the concrete.

Perhaps it is that to tell a story is to trust words, despite the fact that they are unreliable both in the sense that they are inadequate to the tasks of expressing or describing and in the sense that a speaker or writer can never know what kinds of associations or connotations will be suggested to the reader or hearer. But words are, for many purposes, the best communication tool we have. Sometimes there is communication: questions get answered, feelings shared, descriptions used, images aroused, moral and practical purposes served.

Of course story telling is not the only or even primary function of words. So this does not tell us very much about the power of stories to express the concrete. I think what is special about stories in this regard is that they use concrete images. The images of a burning house each of us has when reading that parable in the Lotus Sutra may be different from each other, but each is concrete in that it is an image of a particular house, and not at all like the abstract notion of "house."

Concrete images are, of course, in our minds. There is no need for me to have seen any burning house, much less any particular burning house, for a house to burn in my mind, as a kind of reality created in part by the words on the page. The image, in a sense, testifies to the efficacy of words, it provides evidence that words can make things live, at least in our imaginations.

If words can evoke images of concrete imaginary realities, can they not evoke images of concrete, non-imaginary realities as well? Can they not, in other words, help us to be in touch with the concrete world which always envelopes us? If so, might it not be the case that stories, by being concrete themselves, function to draw our attention to the concrete, to the world of everyday plants and people, houses and vehicles?

In many ways the Lotus Sutra is an ornery book, a book which stretches beyond, and sometimes even makes fun of, the tradition in which it lives. It surprises. But it does so primarily in its stories, in stories which force us to think, for example, about what it means to tell the truth, or what it means to be a bodhisattva, or a Buddha. And its stories elicit a creative response from the hearer or reader.

### Invitation to Creativity

What is the purpose of all this enchantment and magic. Entertainment? In one sense, yes! It is to bring joy to the world. Stories are for enjoyment. But not only for enjoyment. In a great many of the stories in the Lotus Sutra, especially in those which are used to demonstrate the meaning of skillful means, it's important to recognize that what is being demanded of the reader is not obedience to any formula or code or book, but imaginative and creative approaches to concrete problems. In the Sutra a father gets his kids out of a burning house; another helps his long lost adult son gain self-respect and confidence through skillful use of psychology; another father pretends to be dead as a way of shocking his kids into taking a good medicine he had prepared for them; a rich man tries to relieve his friend's poverty.

Creativity requires imagination, the ability to see possibilities where others see only what is. It is, in a sense, an ability to see beyond the facts, to see beyond the way things are, to envision something new. Of course it is not only imagination that is required to overcome problems. Wisdom, or intelligence, and compassion are also needed. But it is very interesting that the problems encountered by the Buddha figures in the parables of the Lotus Sutra are never solved by the book. No one pulls out a Sutra to find a solution to the problem confronting him. In every case, something new, something creative, is attempted; something from the creative imagination.

Of course, creativity is not always successful. In the first parable of the Lotus Sutra, the parable of the burning house, before the father comes up with an effective way to get his kids out of the burning house, he tries some things that don't work. He shouts at his children, telling them to "get out." He considers forcing them out by wrapping them in robes or putting them on a tablet and carrying them out. And when one approach doesn't work, he tries another. Or consider, perhaps as a better example, the parable of the hidden treasure, the gem in the hem, in Chapter 8. Here a rich friend tries to help out his poor friend by sewing an extremely valuable gem into

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his robe. And this does not work. The poor man doesn't realize that he has this great treasure until he is told so in a subsequent encounter with his rich friend. The possibility of failure is always a part of any creative effort, requiring additional creativity.

We don't find mistakes in all the stories by any means, but in many there is still an element of surprise, creativity and inventiveness. The guide along the difficult way conjures up an illusion, a castle in which the weary travelers can rest. The Dragon princess presents the Buddha with a priceless jewel. The Buddha Excellent in Great Penetrating Wisdom, after achieving supreme awakening with the help of many gods, surprises everyone by waiting twenty thousand eons before preaching the Lotus Sutra, which he then proceeds to do without resting for eight thousand eons. Then (exhausted?) he retreats into deep meditation, forcing sixteen bodhisattva-novices to teach and explain the Sutra for eighty-four thousand eons. Clearly there is a lot of imagination at work in the creation of these stories.

Creativity involves being free from karma, from past actions. In the Indian context in which Buddhism arose and the Lotus Sutra was compiled, this was especially important. A religiously based, rigid caste system apparently forced many to despair. Many became resigned to a Hindu fatalism that said that everything is as it should be, and that if you follow the rules you may be able to be born in better circumstances for your next life. Buddhism offered a way out of this system of thought and social structures, a new world in which one could exercise the imagination, in part at least to gain control of one's life.

But fatalism is by no means unique to India. In the West it could take the form of debilitating doctrines of divine omnipotence and providence. Liberation from such fatalism is important. But creativity is needed not only for breaking the bonds of such karma. People can be victims of other kinds of karma, of dull habits, or of lack of self-confidence and shyness, or of terrible mental states. People can also be victims of abusive parents or siblings. And people can be held in bondage by unjust political or social systems.

Creativity and imagination form a path to liberation. That's why the Lotus Sutra invites us into a world of enchantment—to enable us to enter the path of liberation, a liberation which is always both for ourselves and for others. This first chapter of the Lotus Sutra is not an order, it's an invitation to enter a new world and thereby take up a new life.

Gene Reeves, a UU minister and former head of the Meadville/Lombard UU seminary at the University of Chicago, is the International Advisor and regular dharma preacher for Rissbo Kosei-kai's International Buddhist Congregation (IBC) in Tokyo, Japan.

## Buddhist Stories in Early UU Religious Education Materials

By Frank E. Robertson

The earliest Unitarian Sunday school curriculum that introduced Buddhism was probably written by Rev. Jenkin Lloyd Jones of Chicago in the early 1870s, printed in "The Sunday School," a magazine published by the Western Unitarian Sunday School Society. Volumes I, II, and III, edited by Jones, are largely Biblically based, but also help the child see "The Father" in nature, humankind, and great teachers like Buddha and Jesus. In 1893, Jones authored a series of stories under the general title *Seven Great Teachers of the World* with questions for study and discussion which include "Buddha" among Zoroaster, Moses, Confucius, Socrates, Jesus, and Mohammed.

In 1883, Unitarian Rev. Charles Carroll Everett had published *Religions Before Christianity: A Manual for Sunday Schools* under the sponsorship of the Unitarian Sunday School Society, Boston, containing a chapter on Buddhism. Aspects of Buddhist practice and belief are introduced to young people (monastic life, transmigration, Nirvana, etc.). One of Everett's more affirming statements is as follows: "The character of Buddha, so far as we know anything in regard to it, was one of extreme beauty. He united in a remarkable degree strength and gentleness. None were so lowly that his sympathy did not reach them." (p.23) Everett was highly respected and a professor at Harvard Divinity School.

In 1909, the series of books called "The Beacon Series" was published by the Unitarian Sunday School Society. It included among its twenty works, *World Stories* (ages 6-9) by Joel H. Metcalf and *Comparative Studies in Religion: An Introduction to Unitarianism* (ages 14-18) by Henry T. Sechrist. The former includes three Buddhist stories: "The Great Renunciation," the story of the life of Siddhartha; "True Divinity," a Jataka tale on the Moon Prince; and "A Lesson for Kings," a Jataka tale on Brahma-datta and Malika. In the notes, teachers are urged to read Unitarian Rev. James Freeman Clarke's *Ten Great Religions* (1883) for

more information about Buddhism.

In *Comparative Studies In Religion: An Introduction to Unitarianism*, teachers help teens sort out their beliefs in the context of exploring a variety of beliefs, including some from world religions like Buddhism. There is a brief comparison of Christ to Buddha, but the bulk of the book is devoted to the history and commonly-held beliefs of Unitarianism. Chapter eighteen introduces Universalism.

Another series of Sunday school books was developed by the Unitarian Sunday School Society between 1912 and 1935 called "The Beacon Course." Among the twenty-one books is *Heroic Lives* (ages 10 and 11) by Albert R. Vail and Emily McClellan Vail that includes the story of Buddha's life. It is probable that Universalists were using that book, for there had been a growing cooperation between the two faith groups. Universalists became a formal part of the curriculum development process with the Unitarians in the late 1930s.

There are ten Buddhist stories in *From Long Ago and Many Lands* (1948) by Sophia Fahs. It was one of the more popular books of the New Beacon Series and its stories were not only used for a course for children about age nine, but were used in intergenerational services. Among the Buddhist stories are tales of Buddha's birth and quest for enlightenment, a story about King Ashoka, and four Jataka tales.

Teens experienced more exposure to Buddhism from the New Beacon Series' book *Questions that Matter Most—Asked by the World's Religions* (1954) by Floyd Ross and Tynette Hills. Also during that period, Universalist Rev. Alice Harrison put together a guide for leaders of Junior High youth on World Religions.

Buddhist stories continued to be used down to the present day by Unitarian Universalists in their religious education programs. One example is the Buddhism units in the multimedia kit *World Religions* (1987) by several authors under my leadership. There are many other examples, and there are some UU congregations who not only include Buddhist symbols among other symbols in the design of their buildings but celebrate some Buddhist festivals. Such inclusions of Buddhist and other heritages of the world's religions in UU congregational life are not widespread but appear to be growing. Perhaps the UU Buddhist Fellowship could recommend at least one Sunday per year when all UU congregations would be urged to celebrate our Buddhist heritage, with appropriate educational resources provided.

For information on the UU RE History Group, contact Frank Robertson at [robertsonfe@aol.com](mailto:robertsonfe@aol.com).

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## The Story of Big Fellow

By Jeff Wilson

**T**hus I have heard:  
Long ago before your grandmother's grandmother was born, there lived a great king called Five Weapons. King Five Weapons was famous for defeating the horrible monster Sticky Hair, and for ruling his kingdom so well that if an old lady dropped her purse in the street, everyone would rush to be the one to pick it up and hand it back to her.

One day, a messenger came to King Five Weapons and told him, "Sire! We are in desperate trouble! There is a huge monster roaming the land, eating people and cattle everywhere he goes. His name is Big Fellow, and he is the brother of Sticky Hair. We have tried to chase him off, but he is too large. You defeated Sticky Hair all by yourself—now you must come and free us from Big Fellow!"

King Five Weapons kissed his wife and little children, and got on his royal elephant to go and meet with Big Fellow. He traveled through the woods and over many streams. Finally, he found a place where there were no animals and no people. Bones lay strewn about everywhere, and the broken weapons of fallen warriors littered the ground.

King Five Weapons got down off of his elephant and strode ahead alone. He rounded a big rock, and there was Big Fellow himself, standing next to the path to catch his supper. The monster was so large that King Five Weapons couldn't see his head—it was lost in the clouds above. His body was covered with dirty hair, and his feet were so big that the royal elephant could take a nap in the shade of his smallest toe.

King Five Weapons called up to the creature in his loudest voice, "Hey, have you seen the monster called Big Fellow?"

The monster heard King Five Weapons, and bent down to look at him. As his head cleared the clouds, his huge yellow eyes came into sight, searching the ground below for the source of the call. His mouth was so large you could drive a chariot through the spaces between his sharp teeth.

"I AM BIG FELLOW!" bellowed the monster.  
"CAN'T YOU SEE HOW HUGE AND GREAT I AM?  
I AM EVEN LARGER THAN THE GODS THEM-

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SELVES!"

"You are indeed a big fellow," said King Five Weapons, "But you are no god. The gods are kind to people and to animals, but you chase them and eat them."

The monster roared, "I AM TOO A GOD! PEOPLE FEAR ME! I AM HUGE AND GREAT, AND IF I WANT TO EAT THEM, NO ONE CAN STOP ME! I AM THE MOST POWERFUL THING IN THE WORLD!"

King Five Weapons shook his head. "You say you are powerful, but you are really very weak. Your mind is weak, and so you do not understand that you are just a mortal creature like us all, and will some day pass away. And you may be able to control other creatures, but you cannot control yourself. You are a victim of your own hungers and desires, and they are infinitely more powerful than you. You may be able to catch anyone who wanders down your path, but can you catch your own mind?"

The monster beat his chest with his fists, making a sound like thunder that shook the whole countryside. "I AM THE MOST POWERFUL THING IN THE WORLD! I CAN CATCH ELEPHANTS AND DRAGONS! HOW HARD CAN IT BE TO CATCH MY OWN MIND? TELL ME HOW, AND I WILL SHOW YOU! AND WHEN I AM DONE, YOU WILL BE MY SUPPER!"

King Five Weapons did not become scared. He taught Big Fellow how to meditate in order to follow his mind. The monster sat down and crossed his enormous legs into the lotus position, knocking over several tall mountains in the process. Then he set about catching his mind.

Big Fellow sat chasing his thoughts, minute after minute, hour after hour. But just when he believed he had mastered them, they would slip away again. Meanwhile, he became very hungry, and considered eating the little human anyway. Then he realized this hunger was more powerful than himself, and tried to control it. But he could not. Finally, he had to admit that he was not the most powerful thing in the world.

The monster sighed. "YOU ARE RIGHT, I MAY BE BIG, BUT I AM NOT AS POWERFUL AS I THOUGHT. YOU MUST BE A WISE MAN— PLEASE TEACH ME HOW I CAN LEARN TO CATCH MY MIND AND CONTROL MY DESIRES."

Then King Five Weapons taught Big Fellow about the Four Noble Truths and the law of karma. The monster nodded and said, "YES, IT IS TRUE, EVEN FOR SOMEONE AS BIG AS ME, THERE IS SUFFERING. I AM SO LARGE THAT I CANNOT HIDE

FROM THE WIND AND RAIN, AND BUGS NEST IN MY HAIR WHERE I CAN'T SCRATCH THEM. I AM ALWAYS HUNGRY, AND EVEN IF I EAT A WHOLE VILLAGE OR A WHOLE HERD OF DEER, IT ISN'T ENOUGH. BUT HOW CAN I STOP KILLING LIVING CREATURES? I AM SO LARGE THAT I MUST EAT PEOPLE AND ANIMALS, OR I WOULD STARVE. AM I DOOMED TO FALL INTO HELL FOR THESE EVIL ACTS?"

King Five Weapons shook his head. "There is always a choice in life. If you practice your meditation diligently, you will realize the truth."

Big Fellow vowed not to stop meditating until he achieved understanding. He sat for hours, and then for days, and then for weeks. He became very, very hungry, but he kept his vow and kept meditating. The seasons changed, and gradually the animals came back to the forest. People from all around came to see the meditating monster, marveling at how King Five Weapons defeated him without even drawing a sword.

Finally, the monster realized that he was part of the world, and that the world was part of him. He relied on the sun and the moon, the rain and the wind, and all the living things on Earth, and he had no right to harm them.

Big Fellow opened his eyes. To his amazement, everything around him looked gigantic. He had shrunk! He hadn't eaten in so long that his body had shrunk all the way down to human size. And now he had a human-sized ego to match.

King Five Weapons came to visit him, and Big Fellow said, "Thank you, wise King. Now I have realized that size and strength do not make a person powerful, but only control of desires and compassion toward others. And now that I am the size of a human, I do not have to kill living creatures to eat. I will never harm another person or animal again as long as I live."

And he didn't.

*Jeff Wilson is the editor of UU Sangha and a web columnist for Tricycle: The Buddhist Review.*

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## UU Buddhist Practice Groups

To be listed, a group must have both a Buddhist and a UU connection. If you'd like to have yours included here please contact the editor, Jeff Wilson (see page 2 for email



and postal address). Due to limitations on space, we can only list the group's name, address, time you meet and a contact person.

## ***United States***

### **Alabama**

Huntsville UU Meditation Group  
UU Church of Huntsville  
2222 East Governor's Drive  
Huntsville, AL 35801  
Virginia Burroughs: 256-776-9329

### **Arizona**

Desert Lotus Zen Group  
Valley Unitarian Universalist Church  
1700 W. Warner Road  
Chandler, AZ 85224  
<http://www.vuu.org/zen/>  
Laurie Herring: [herring@primenet.com](mailto:herring@primenet.com)

### **California**

Acorn Family Sangha  
PO Box 190  
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Ken Renwick: [ken@acornfamilysangha.org](mailto:ken@acornfamilysangha.org)

Davis Unitarian Universalist Buddhist Meditation and Study Group  
Unitarian Church of Davis  
27074 Patwin Road, Davis, CA 95626  
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Costa Mesa, CA 92627  
Rayna Hamre: 949-646-4652, [arinna2@mailcity.com](mailto:arinna2@mailcity.com)

San Mateo UU Meditation Group  
Unitarian Universalists of San Mateo  
300 E. Santa Inez

San Mateo, CA 94401  
Lance and Ann Miller: 650-340-9698,  
[lanmill@earthlink.com](mailto:lanmill@earthlink.com)  
<http://homestead.com/meditationgroup/uubf.html>

UU Meditation Circle  
First UU Church of San Diego  
4190 Front Street  
San Diego, CA 92103  
Erene Rallis: 619-295-5622

### **Colorado**

UU Pueblo Church Buddhist Group  
Unitarian Universalist Church of Pueblo  
110 Calla Avenue  
Pueblo, CO 81005  
David Cockrell: 719-546-3409

### **Connecticut**

UU Buddhist Wellspring  
The Universalist Church of West Hartford  
433 Fern Street  
West Hartford, CT 06107  
Bert Mayo: 860-346-6240

### **Florida**

The Buddhist Fellowship of the UU Church of Fort Lauderdale Florida  
UU Church of Fort Lauderdale  
3970 NW 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue  
Oakland Park, FL 33309  
<http://www.uucfl.org/buddhist/index.htm>  
Mary Teslow: [maryteslow@aol.com](mailto:maryteslow@aol.com) or  
Joe DeAngelis: 954-973-1337

### **Maryland**

Mindfulness Practice Group  
UU Church of Annapolis  
333 Dubois Road  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
Rev. Fred Muir: 410-266-8044,  
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### **Massachusetts**

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First Unitarian Society  
1326 Washington Street  
West Newton, MA 02465

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Rev. James Ford Sensei: 617-527-3203,  
janandjames@attbi.com

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Unitarian-Universalist Church  
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Vineyard Haven, MA 02568  
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### **Mississippi**

UU Jackson Sangha  
Unitarian Universalist Church of Jackson, MS  
4866 North State Street  
Jackson, MS 39206  
Church Office: 601-982-5919  
Rob Andrews: rob@jam.rr.com  
<http://www.uujackson.org/sangha>

### **New Hampshire**

Second Congregational Society Buddhist Study Group of  
Concord  
Second Congregational Society UU Church  
274 Pleasant Street  
Concord, NH 03301  
<http://www.buddhistgroup.homestead.com>  
Gene Taylor: 877-682-4535, buddhism@ureach.com

### **New York**

Buddhist Explorers Group  
The Community Church of New York (UU)  
40 East 35 Street  
New York, NY 10016  
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Open Spirit Sangha  
Community Unitarian Church of White Plains  
468 Rosedale Avenue  
White Plains, NY 10605  
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The Universal Sangha of Buffalo  
Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo  
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Buffalo, NY 14222  
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### **North Carolina**

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UU Fellowship of Raleigh

3313 Wade Avenue  
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Eno River Buddhist Community  
Eno River UU Fellowship  
4907 Garrett Road  
Durham, NC 27707  
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Unitarian-Universalist Church of Greensboro Meditation  
Group  
Unitarian-Universalist Church of Greensboro  
5603 Hilltop Road  
Jamestown, NC 27282  
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### **Ohio**

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First Unitarian Church  
536 Linton Street  
Cincinnati, OH 45219  
David Mohler: 812-537-4741, dmohler@seidata.com

Meditation Group  
UU Church of Kent  
228 Gougler Avenue  
Kent, OH 44240  
Liz Erickson: 330-673-2152

### **Pennsylvania**

Central Pennsylvania Buddhist Fellowship  
c/o Dan Cozort, Dept of Religion  
P.O. Box 1773  
Dickinson College  
Carlisle, PA 17013  
Dan Cozort: 717-245-1385

Mindfulness Meditation Group  
Unitarian Church of Harrisburg  
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Harrisburg, PA 17113  
George Hellmann: 717-236-6749,  
jghellmann@mindspring.com

Zazen & a Mindful Meal  
UU Church of Lancaster  
538 W. Chestnut Street  
Lancaster, PA 17603  
Phil & Paula Gable: 717-295-3041, pgable@redrose.net

## Tennessee

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Holston Valley UU Church  
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Gray, TN 37615  
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## Texas

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Northwoods UU Church  
1370 North Millbend Drive  
The Woodlands, TX 77380  
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## Vermont

Black River Sangha  
Unitarian-Universalist Meetinghouse  
21 Fairground Road  
Springfield, VT 05156  
Richard Ryoha Dunworth M.R.O.: 802-228-2476,  
dunworth@ludl.tds.net

Zen Meditation Group  
C/o The Rev. Robert Senghas  
54 Rivermount Terrace  
Burlington, VT 05401  
Rev Robert Senghas: 802-658-6466,  
rsenghas@worldnet.att.net

## Virginia

The Buddhist Fellowship  
UU Church of Arlington  
4444 Arlington Boulevard  
Arlington, VA 22204  
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The UCN Buddhist Connection  
Unitarian Church of Norfolk (UU)  
739 Yarmouth Street  
Norfolk, VA 23510  
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UU Reston Church Buddhist Group  
Unitarian Universalist Church in Reston  
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Reston, VA 20190  
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melhpine@aol.com

Vipassana Meditation Group  
Mt. Vernon Unitarian Church  
1909 Windmill Lane,  
Alexandria, VA 22307  
Forrest Tobey: 703-660-0028

## Washington

Michael Servetus UU Buddhist Fellowship  
Michael Servetus UU Fellowship  
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Vancouver, WA 98661  
Marvin Benson: 360-695-1858, bensonjmlaw@juno.com

## Wisconsin

Buddhist Unitarian Universalist Group  
First Unitarian Church  
1342 N. Aster Street  
Milwaukee WI 53202  
Andy Agacki: 414-771-2490, agacki@execpc.com

Madison Insight Meditation Group  
First Unitarian Society  
900 University Bay Drive  
Madison, WI 53202  
<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/2140>

## *Canada*

### British Columbia

Karuna Meditation Society  
North Shore Unitarian Church of Vancouver  
2050 West 12th Avenue  
Vancouver, B.C., V7S 1H3  
Michelle Mills: 604-874-4093

### Ontario

Buddhist Practice Group  
First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto  
175 St. Clair Avenue West  
Toronto, Ontario M4V 1P7  
Timothy Law: 416-485-8976 or  
Melanie Noviss: 416-769-3046

# UU Sangha

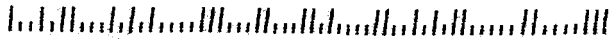
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# UU Sangha

Spring 2002

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