

Skipping Stones

A Multicultural Children's Magazine

Volume 6, No. 5

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What do
**Religion and
Spirituality**
mean to
today's kids?

**Roundtable on
Religion:**

Youth discuss love,
choices and
responsibility

Bahá'í Youth:
Speaking of faith

Budismo: Buddhism
Teachings of Buddha

Navarathri Festival:
Honoring Goddess
Durga in India

Also,

Bienvenu!
French kids visit
United States

Skipping Stones

A Multicultural Children's Bimonthly Magazine

Volume 6, No. 5

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Recycled Paper

In the spirit of ecological sensitivity, we choose to print with soy ink on uncoated, recycled and recyclable paper

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Skipping Stones is a non-profit children's magazine that encourages cooperation, creativity and celebration of cultural and linguistic diversity. We wish to explore and learn stewardship of the ecological web that sustains us. We offer ourselves as a forum for communication among children from different lands and backgrounds.

Skipping Stones is designed to expand horizons in a playful, creative way. We welcome your suggestions, submissions, subscriptions and support.

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For subscriptions, submissions and reprint permission contact:

Skipping Stones
Post Office Box 3939
Eugene, OR 97403 USA
Tel. (503) 342 - 4956

<i>Publication Manager</i>	Arun Narayan Toké
<i>Executive Editor</i>	Arun Narayan Toké
<i>Associate Editor</i>	Amy E. Brandt
<i>Accountant</i>	Bidyut Prava Das
<i>Volunteers</i>	Mildred Wilson Rachel Benson

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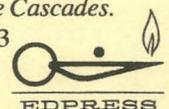
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Namaskár. Alláh Ho Akbar. Inshallah. God willing. Alláh'u'Abhá. Grüss Gott. Rám Rám. Sat Sri Akál. ¡Vaya Con Dios!

These many ways of greeting friends and strangers have something in common. They all refer to the spiritual or religious values of the culture.

The other day, I was hanging out at home and someone knocked at the door. As I opened the front door, I was greeted by a pair of well-dressed young men in their twenties. Yes, they were there to invite me to their religious place of worship. I was brought up in a Hindu tradition. Since our childhood, we learned to respect the many faiths that form the basis of everyday life in India. And, over the years, I have attended worship services in all major faith traditions. Can you recognize the symbols of various faith traditions that you see on this page?

A morning prayer, blessings before dinner, listening to a Sunday service, paying respects to the departed soul, these are just a few outward examples of our religious or spiritual practices. But, if we go deep enough, we will discover that our spirituality and our faith affect our life constantly. Often, we must make choices that challenge our very core values.

The daily news bombards us with violence in our cities, in our nation, in other countries, and between nations. Violence seems to surround us—on our streets, in our schools, in TV shows and movies, even at home, and on our dinner plates! How do we try to deal with it? With more violence or with love and understanding?

How do we choose to live, each day, every moment of our life? What principles guide us as we respond to the events that take place at home or outside? That's where our religion, our spirituality comes in. Religion is the way we live our life, everyday!

In this issue, we bring to focus the spiritual and religious connections in our lives. We explore some of the many religious traditions that abound on our planet. The *Roundtable on Religion and Spirituality* (pages 6–10) is the outcome of a discussion between young adults and experienced teachers of nine different spiritual and religious paths.

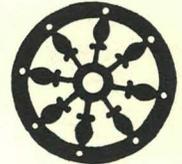
As you read this issue, you might ask yourself, where is my religion, my value system? What do I believe? How does it affect the way I think and act everyday? How can I express my faith or spiritual values in the presence of others, without hurting their feelings?

As always, we are eager to hear your response to this issue. Tell us how you see the events taking place in your community, your world. We wish to be *inclusive of all* points of view.

The path we choose to follow can show us new curves, new lessons every day. Only if we are mindful, attentive to our inner being.

To all my relations. Adios. Shalom. Salam. Peace. Shanti. शांति.

Arun Narayan Torke





LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Author-Artist Still Inspired

Dear Editor: I was very sad when I heard you weren't going to publish my article, but now I am so excited about you having published my picture of a castle in Montova (*Skipping Stones*, 6#3). I want to be a writer and an Artist when I grow up and even now. I hope to have my work published in magazines everywhere. If you ever have a magazine about sports, ask me. I love to scuba dive and waterski and mountain climb and horse ride.

Your writer,

Aubrey Jangraw, 11, Vicenza, Italy

P.S. Your magazine is great!

Editor's Note: See Coming Attractions on page 34 for a future feature on teamwork!

Greening Our Future

Dear Editor: One of the last green places on earth are rainforests. Millions of trees are cut down each year for timber and farming. Many animals become extinct every year because their habitats are destroyed. We must develop new scientific ways to prevent this from happening. You may say this message is not important because we're not being destroyed. But we are, we need animal and plant life. Animal and plant life make up the world. Without it, we have nothing. Please put as much effort as you can into this one area. It's our future!

—Jocelyn Kuritsky, 12, La Paz, Bolivia

Si Vous Plait

Dear Editor: I am renewing our club's subscription in the hope that your issues will include more about the French language, culture, French speaking countries, as well as pen pals from French speaking countries.

I really like the other activities available for student participation. Anything you can do to incorporate more French related articles in your publication would be greatly appreciated.

—Danielle Simms, Le Club Français Des Jeunes (French Club for Kids), Lakeville, Minnesota

Editor's Note: Merci! We really appreciate feedback and suggestions from our readers. Skipping Stones celebrates a French perspective in this issue with poetry by and interviews with French students, see pages 26-27. Look for more French in future issues. Remember, Skipping Stones always welcomes bilingual submissions!

Seeking the White Buffalo

Dear Editor: Thank you for the wonderful prize that you sent to my daughter, Krissy. She was just thrilled. You have a wonderful magazine; we enjoy it and read it completely each time we receive an edition. I have an eleven year old son, my daughter Krissy, who is now eight, and a three year old son. They all enjoy it when we read together.

Can you ask your subscribers if anyone can let us know the legend of the White Buffalo? We saw that there was a white buffalo born and that a white one has never been seen before. The news article said that it is a very religious happening for the Native American people. Perhaps someone could tell us.

—Kristine Dyrz, Home Teacher, New Lenox, Illinois

Editor's Note: Krissy Dyrz was one of the winners of the Skipping Stones Youth Honor Awards (See Skipping Stones, 6#4). Send an SASE for the 1995 guidelines. Also, you can read the legend of the White Buffalo in N.E.W.S. Quarterly, page 32.

Deaf Awareness in Rochester

Dear Editor: Having just received our first issue of *Skipping Stones*, I am impressed with content as well as format and expect a very positive response from students, grades 3-5, and teachers here at Barnard.

I should like to point out, however, an inaccuracy in your *Deaf Awareness: True or False* sidebar (*Skipping Stones*, 6#3). Right here in Rochester is NTID, National Technical Institute for the Deaf, working in conjunction with the Rochester Institute of Technology and offering degreed programs. Gallaudet, I understand, offers more of a liberal arts program than NTID.

Also, since Rochester has a large deaf community, police, fire, ambulance and health care workers know basics of signing. In addition, numerous TV programs are close-captioned; theatrical performances and public addresses are interpreted. Just thought you would like to know.

—Patsy Robertson, Library Media Specialist, Barnard Elementary School, Rochester, New York

Sinking Stones

Our apology to Carl H. Losse and Arlyle Mansfield Losse, authors of "Native Americans of the Northeast," (Please see page 29, Vol. 6 #4) for not including their names.

DEAR HANNA

Who is God? Does God sit up there in the sky and make sure everything goes all right? —G.F.

Dear G.F.: I don't know. No one knows. No one has seen God.

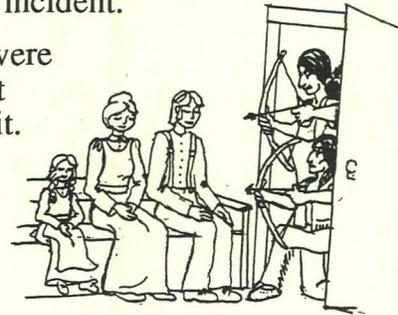
No one has seen God, in the manner in which we see objects, with our eyes. There are no photographs of God.

There is another way of seeing, a way of knowing from inside us. We experience God. On every island and continent, people feel a Spirit inside themselves, an unseen Power which changes their lives. Some use the name Spirit, some Allah, some God. Each in their own way, people listen, share with, and are guided by God.

To answer as honestly as I am able, "Who is God?" I will tell you just two of the ways in which I experience God. One way occurs when my inner spiritual feelings connect to another person's spiritual feelings, such as happened in this true incident.



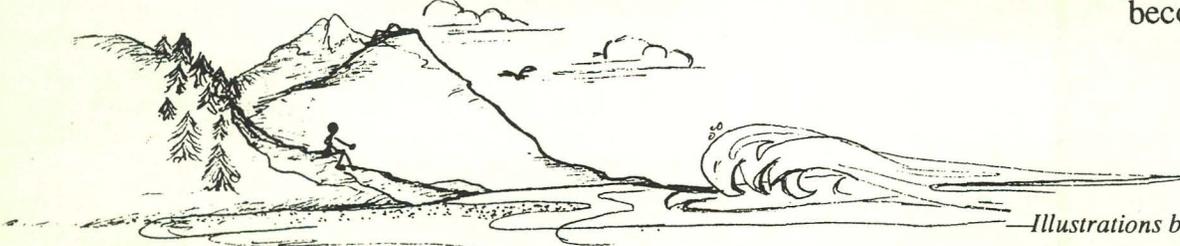
One sunny Wednesday in June of 1775, fifteen Quakers were gathered in their New England log cabin for worship. They sat ever so quietly, eyes shut, deep in communion with God's spirit. Noiselessly, two Indians sneaked through the bushes and appeared at the open door, arrows poised in their bows, ready to shoot. These Indians had been hurt by others and came ready to take revenge. However, the Indians suddenly grasped that none of these settlers carried any weapons.



They eased the tension on the bows. They stood motionless, watching. When the Indian Chief realized that these settlers were gathered worshipping their Great Spirit, just as the Indians were used to doing, they laid down the bows and joined the worshipping settlers. As the hour of worship ended, the settlers shared their food with the Indians. The Chief took a white feather from one of the arrows and fastened it securely over the cabin door, saying: "Great Spirit inside Indian too. We help you. You help us. We friends always."



Another way I experience God is when I'm alone in nature, feeling part of the ocean, the sand, the wind, the flying bird. I feel myself merging into all the surrounding nature. Then I become peaceful, filled with serenity.



—Illustrations by Elizabeth Corbett

We get to know God, each in our own unique way, by developing our spiritual selves. We develop our body through exercise and healthy living. We develop our mind through thought and study. Similarly, we develop our spiritual self through reflective alone time, communion with nature, and through fellowship and inspiration of other people. Developing all three—mind, body, spirit—is essential for a satisfying life.

Questions? Comments? Write to—

Dear Hanna
c/o *Skipping Stones*
Post Office Box 3939
Eugene, OR 97403 USA

Hanna



Roundtable on Religion and Spirituality

One evening in early October, *Skipping Stones* invited five youth from Eugene and Cottage Grove schools, as well as six adults from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds to reflect on what role religion and spirituality plays in their lives. We present extensive excerpts from our 90-minute conversation.



—The Editors

Introductions

Don: My name is Don Moccasin, I'm a Native American. I'm a certified drug and alcohol counselor for the Chemawa school in Salem, so I'm very familiar with what kids are going through right now.

Harriet: I'm Harriet Kofalk, I live in a house that found me and named itself Peace Place. I believe peace is the original religion and other religions evolved out of trying to remember a time when we practiced peace.

Shevah: My name is Shevah Lambert and I am a member of Temple Beth Israel. I'd like to talk about the Jewish mission, which is a way of life, a way of walking toward our goal. I'm also looking forward to listening tonight, for I find I learn more with my mouth shut.

Amit: My name is Amit Goswami, I teach physics at the University of Oregon. My research is in integrating science and spirituality. My wife calls my spiritual affiliation generic mysticism. But I grew up as a Hindu.

Sundance: I'm Sundance Fairchild-Manning, and I go to Waldorf School. I don't really follow any specific religion. My own spirituality is what I believe in the most.

Mark: I'm Mark McCormick and I work at St. Paul's Catholic Church as youth minister. I am what is known as a cradle Catholic, which means I was born and raised Catholic. I come from a standpoint of a belief in God, what that means and how that pans out in our lives.

Sally: My name is Sally Bryan and I am minister of the Eugene Unitarian Universalist church (see page 13). We promote religious pluralism, honoring all the world religions and all the possibilities for transformation. Our principles encourage our members to ask questions about God or the divine force. I like to describe my theology as respectful curiosity, one of the most important virtues we can have.

Nick: My name is Nick Davis, I'm a student at Wellsprings School, which is Quaker affiliated.

Sophie: My name is Sophia Bair. I'm Buddhist, I go to Lincoln Middle School in Cottage Grove, and I thought it might be fun tonight to talk about cause and effect and reincarnation.

Shauna: My name is Shauna Rubinstein and I go to South Eugene High School. I also belong to Temple Beth Israel. This summer I took a trip to Europe and the Middle East and one of my stops was in Israel. It was

very meaningful for me to go there.

Vipul: I'm Vipul Lugade. I'm Hindu, and I go to South Eugene High School. I came here because I want to learn about other religions.

Discussion

Sundance: Both my grandparents and my mother are Christians. My dad also believes in a divine power. Each religion connects to the same great big power, but they're all fairy tales or different versions of telling the story of this power. I have my own version, and that's all I really believe in, I haven't been able to fall into any religion, because they never seemed very dynamic to me, too many borders. I'm scared of being in constricted areas.

Sophie: Would you feel comfortable sharing what your religion is with us?

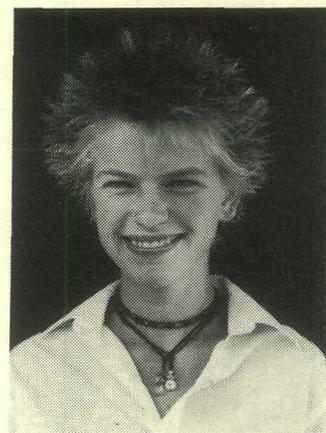
Sundance: It is based on Christian religion. I pray every night, and talk to someone. I've got some kind of guardian angel or helping spirit, that is there. I believe in it. I never think about doing something wrong in the face of this power, for instance sinning. You can't do anything wrong, except what you do to yourself. If you mess up, you fix it.

I have created my own open-minded thing and found myself really satisfied with what I believe in, because I created it myself.

Mark: All the spiritualites, which is different than religion, are like a path to the divine, something beyond humans. The paths are all different, although it doesn't mean that they're not very similar or parallel paths. The Catholic church believes there are many paths to the divine. As long as people are striving toward truth and human dignity, then they're on the right path, which is what you have, Sundance.

Sally: I'd like to honor your courage and creativity, Sundance, for someone your age being able to articulate what your spiritual path is. As adults we too often get locked in, making value statements, "My path is better than your path." It's a challenge to us to have young people step forward and say what you see to be true. Hopefully, our organizations will be nurtured by your creativity and courage, because we need your vision and your youth.

Shevah: Borders can either pen you in or act as the banks of a river, a channel flowing toward the ocean. Judaism has innumerable laws, regulations, and observances, and can, at first glance, be mind-numbing,



complex to learn, and maddeningly strict. But for those willing to discipline their life in the Jewish path, it's tremendously liberating, it becomes like the river, channeling. At the same time, it's important to honor the paths others have chosen. Everyone has their own unique path and role to play.

Mark: People believe today that rules, especially from the church, are restricting. But many religions give rules not to restrict, but to free you. Following these rules frees you from all kinds of problems. It's a paradox.

Shevah: One example is the Sabbath, for which there are a number of laws saying what you can't do, you cannot create or work. It's one day out of the seven in which you step back and appreciate the world as God made it. Go-with-the-flow day. The laws are a natural way of appreciating God's activity in the world. And it is very liberating.

Amit: In general, in Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, there is a tendency to say that God is separate from the world. Therefore, all religions have outer aspects—simple, organized ways of relating to people, practiced at temples, churches, places of prayer. But the philosophic basis of the religion is not really discussed there—it's too hard to understand. But in addition to these outer aspects, religions do have a deeper part. A spiritual understanding where there is no distinction between between God and the world. A good example is Jesus' statement, "The Kingdom of God is within you and also outside you." The Hindu Upanishads also say the same thing. *When you reach these inner depths, the boundaries disappear.* All becomes one. In science, we use the term consciousness, instead of God. When you put behind all the separateness that arises from history (childhood, personality, character), all becomes one consciousness. If we go far enough, beyond the outer teachings and practices of religions, the paths become one. The borders do exist, but beyond those, deep into the teachings, we are one.

Mark: Christian mystics, Hindu mystics, Jewish mystic, Native mystics...all tend toward that.

Harriet: Like the wheel. If you think of the different religions as spokes on a wheel, when we come to our common point, we come to the center of our own being and speak from that place. Then we can connect with the other religions. But if we're out at the end, holding onto just our traditions, you have gaps to cross. We need to come to the common ground.

Mark: How can we understand this divine being with our human intellect? Well, we ask, what's the greatest good humans can do? Love. That's the real basis of religion, the love that God is. When you're in love with someone, can you keep it silent? If God is love, then we believe God is telling us about it. Love is God's way of reaching out to us.

Sally: I would be interested in hearing from the youth, if you have had a spiritual experience, a connection with something outside of yourself?

Sundance: For me, life is so confusing and intense right now. My body and my emotions aren't familiar with a lot of the things going on in this world. What is the definition of love? You could say that love is the greatest thing you can give and that's what this great God is. But I'm only 16, I'm only just beginning to know what love is, I think it's hard to define it and say, yes, this is love, and I know what that is.

Amit: Love is a way of relating to the One, and if all is One, how can there be a separateness between me and my fellow human being? My ability to love tests my ability for understanding the One, or being the One. If I am really One, then I can love everybody, just as God loves everybody, because God is One. Christianity has a good word, *agape*, universal brotherhood or sisterhood. It distinguishes between spiritual love and romantic love. Our culture often teaches that unity cannot come. But unity has to come through relationships, you have to recognize that the other is as fully established in the One as you are. You not only need to think of God as One, as unity, but you need to think of every being as being part of that One. Only then can you love.

Amy: How can we bring this idea of Oneness into our own lives? You look at the world and there's not a lot of love or Oneness, there's a lot of violence. What can we do?

Shauna: Considering violence, I believe that God wanted differences in the world, or there would be none. It hurts me when I see the hate crimes because I think people need to understand that there is difference in the world and there's nothing they can do about it, it's always going to be there.

Mark: Christianity is a lot to blame for intolerance in this country, not for what it believes, but the way it gets out to the common person. "If you don't believe what I'm preachin,' then you're wrong." It gets real narrow-minded like that. That's why I want to share with youth, that the real message is not like that.

Sophie: If we're all one and we all have love for the planet, then we could fix it, if we work together. But some people just don't realize how we could fix certain things and they don't really care.

Nick: I have questions about my belief. Why would people go to hell for killing people, because if God knows everything, why doesn't God stop it before it happens?

Shevah: It's the price of freedom. There are traditions in which humanity is regarded as the co-partner of creation. It's not like God set it all up and we're just dancing on strings down here. God did not complete the creation, it was given to us to do. With this freedom comes responsibility.



The Hebrew scriptures say, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Usually the focus is on loving your neighbor, but it's equally important to love yourself. True love for another person has to start from self-love, instead of fear. It's remarkable in religion sometimes that there's an emphasis on fear, rather than love and security. The main goal of religion is to give people a sense of true esteem. I am someone significant in God's eyes. I am unique, and I have a unique role to play. To learn to cultivate that sense of self-love empowers you to go out and recognize the same divine spark in another person. Unless you can see it in yourself, you can't see it in another person.

Mark: Why *didn't* God create us as puppets on strings? It would be so much easier, the world would be nice, perfect, there would be no pollution. And we wouldn't be damaging the land, we would be following God's will exactly. But for some reason God gave us free will and we can choose. I think of God's will as a river. You can go with it, or you can swim against it, but it doesn't stop flowing.

Sophie: I think it's better that God did give us choices because then we can decide for ourselves and do what we want to do and follow the path that we choose.

Mark: When your parents love you, they're not going to control every part of your life, are they? They're going to give you choices.



Sophie: There is a certain kind of love in dreams. When you get your heart set on dreams, you'll probably follow them, and they'll keep you alive and happy. My dream is to go to France. I'm going to be so happy when I get there. I think that certain dreams will help you get through life.

Amit: Spiritual paths are not really different from creativity. To be creative means not to be guided by your past habits. Instead, you open up so that ideas can come through you. Ultimately, creativity is not at all personal. When I am creating, I find God's world working through me. At that point, it's the human touching God. Like the painting by Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel—Adam is touching God with his finger. That's the idea of creativity. And that's the idea of free will as well. At that point, we touch the divinity within us and we become free. It is that feeling that we are trying to capture in love, in spirituality, in creativity.

Amy: Could that be what you're trying to capture with dreams, Sophie? You reaching toward your dream, like Adam reaching toward God?

Sophie: It's like wanting to explore.

Amit: Yes, an exploration. For you, France is a metaphor for what you want to explore.

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Harriet: I see creativity and spirituality as having a common definition—conscious use of our inner resources. The more conscious we are of our own process, our creativity, or whatever we value the most, the more we get in touch with our own deeper spiritual center.

Don: I have difficulty with this concept of God. I went to two years of seminary school, and became very disenchanted with Christianity. From my personal investigation into what the Christians have done to the Native peoples on this land, that makes me uncomfortable. I've been trying to get to that forgiveness state, but I haven't gotten to that level yet. I think that people need to develop a relationship with that consciousness, higher power. As a Native American, I belong to a tribe, and each of the many tribes across the United States have their own tribal traditions and customs. We each have our own understanding and our own relationship. I feel that Christians have taken the word of God literally. They have gone beyond that free will and have subjugated some people under the guise of God's will, which really is man's will. For the young people, I hope that you explore and develop that relationship which feels good to you.

Mark: A lot of what Christians have done in the past has hinged on one word that they got from scripture and misinterpreted badly. Dominion. And God said, "Go forth and multiply and have dominion over the earth." They said, oh, I can scar the earth because God says I have dominion over the earth. But they didn't understand that dominion over the earth means, don't destroy it, take care of it. I don't know if people can ever come to the point, Don, where we can say we're sorry for what we've done. We're ultimately responsible to God.

Sally: How difficult it is to be a real peacemaker. As you look at the histories of great religious leaders, Moses, Jesus, Buddha, they all had great suffering and made great sacrifices to bring truth into their personal sphere. We need to learn from each other and look at history. It's important to know your story and to listen to other people's stories, because to be a real peacemaker means to embrace a struggle for justice on this planet and learn to make appropriate sacrifices.

Vipul: If we are destroying the earth, why did God give us free will?

Amit: Hinduism pictures God as a playful being. This one consciousness has nothing to do, it is bored and has no companions. So the one consciousness becomes two: God and the world. That's how the world is created. But because it wants to have fun, it creates with play in mind. There is evil in this play, creativity in this play. If it's predetermined, then it's not play anymore; it's no fun.

Consciousness cannot live that way. As we are, so is consciousness. We are no



different from the One. We have creativity, would we deny creativity to God? But, creativity has a price, the price is responsibility. And that's how the world becomes complicated, and that's good; we'll never be bored with it. Sure, there's pollution, but there's also our ability to deal with it.

Sophie: My teacher said something that I agree with. If we somehow believe that the earth could heal itself, the problems could heal, like the ozone layer. It could recreate itself in a way, if we just stop for a little bit to take a break from all the abusing of it. You have that time so that you can choose your path again.

Mark: Wouldn't it be amazing if we could join this creativity, instead of fighting against it? And choose to come up with creative ways to heal the earth?

Sophie: I don't know, there's a lot of people in this world and we have to all agree and that's pretty hard.

Amit: We can never wait for everyone to agree with us. No creative person could ever create anything if they waited for another to agree with them.

Harriet: I think the earth *is* perfect. We've forgotten that and keep trying to make it better. We don't allow it to try to heal itself, we try to fix it. I'm reminded of Gandhi, "Be the change you want to see in the world;" it's up to each of us to take that responsibility.

Shauna: People forget that just one person can make a difference. Even if it's a small difference, it only takes one person. If just one person doesn't drive, that's one bit less of pollution that's not in the air.

Sundance: In school we've been reading great writings from lots of religions, the Koran, the Ramayana. We also read the parable of the Prodigal Son.

There was a father and he had two sons and he gave each of them an equal amount of money and said go and find your fortune. One son stayed home and worked on the crops and saved his money and invested. And the other son went out and blew it all and had a great time. Then eventually, he found himself eating out of a pig's trough. He thinks, this isn't cool, I don't like this very much, so he went back to his father, and his father took him in, made a great feast and said, "I'm just so glad you're home." The other son thought, wait, he blew everything, he didn't think, is that OK? Is that just? Our teacher asked, do you think the world would be better off if the whole human race just disappeared? Yeah, maybe it

would have a chance to heal. But then I realized that it was like the Prodigal Son, as if *we* were the Prodigal Son. Our father or mother earth is still here, we've blown what we've been given, but we still have another chance. Mother Earth keeps taking us back in and saying, here's another tree, please don't cut it down, and we keep just cutting it down. We're in the stage where we just keep blowing it.

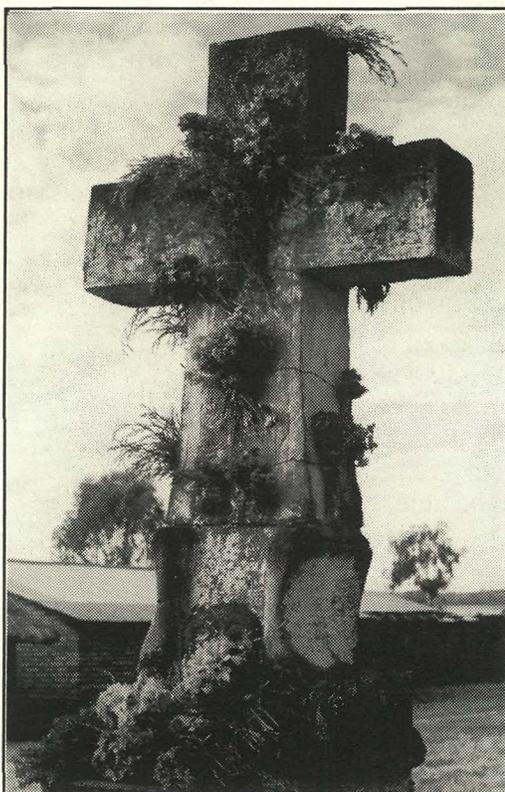
Shauna: If we do keep blowing it and Mother Earth keeps taking us back, maybe one time she won't take us back, and then what?

Sundance: I think we're in an earlier stage; we're not quite eating out of the pig's trough. We're still having a pretty good time in the mines, the mountains, the trees. But I don't know if we're going to get there early enough, or if it's going to be too late, or if she's even going to take us back.

Mark: God loves us. Each person. When we recognize that and treat each other with dignity, that's the first step. When we recognize that dignity, then we start caring about the earth. You don't want to make the earth bad for all these other people. Love yourself and your neighbor; from that comes love and respect for the earth.

Don: The Natives believe in Seven Generations. Each one of us is a generation and we have to, through free will, make the choices that are going to benefit the next generation. I feel sorry for this generation, because you got dumped on by the generations before you and you're going to have to clean up the garbage. But people are waking up. Even on my reservation, big business, uranium people, are coming and asking if we're willing to accept radioactive waste. We say no, we do not want to do that. A lot of reservations are fighting to keep their tribal lands. You have to make a choice with what you want to do with your life. Make the choices that are important to you, so that the next generation will have a better life. And it doesn't have to be based on money. Base them on happiness and peace. If we base everything on the Seven Generations, by the seventh generation there'll be peace and happiness in the world. That's what we're working on.

The birth of this white buffalo is a sign. The sinking of the Estonian ferry is another, also the earthquake in the Pacific Ocean. We've been told about these signs through vision and dreams. We have to take a look at what we're doing, in our own homes, what we're watching on TV, what our friends are talking about. We have to



be very aware of who we are, where we are, and what we're doing. Are we supporting someone else's beliefs or our own?

Mark: It's really difficult to uphold the dignity of every human being, when everything around us puts us down, says we're not good or worthy. So much of television, comedy, is negative, puts people down. How can we respect other people with these images?

Shevah: A defining event of the Jewish religion is the Exodus from Egypt: we marched out of slavery. We re-enact the event every year at Passover, at the Seder. We're reminding ourselves that slavery, of any kind, is not the natural human condition. There are different ways of being slaves, not just to human beings. You can be enslaved to possessions, to money. At the Passover, we look at the ways we're still enslaved and vow that next year we'll be a little more free. So, the Exodus was not just something of the past, it's a way of looking at today. We can move toward liberation. The whole Jewish calendar is oriented around spiritual awareness becoming part of our everyday lives. If spirituality is to have any meaning, it is that our lives mean something.

Sally: Another example is women. Only 75 years ago in this country were women given the right to vote. Until recently in many places women weren't allowed to become ordained religious leaders. What we learned from the population conference in Cairo is that the liberation of the planet may come because of the empowerment of women, in giving them full choice of how they want to live their lives. If they want to have children, how many? Many of the women who fought for suffrage never got to vote before they died. It's important that we all find our small niche in the liberation process and believe in the dream. And realize that it's the process, and not necessarily the result of what happens, that gives meaning to our lives.

Arun: One of the questions that came up during the population conference is that because much of the world population is under the age of 15, sex education is even more important for young people like yourselves. What do you think?



Nick: What I think about birth control is that it should be the woman's choice if she wants to have a baby or not. If she wants to use any contraception, she should be able to.

Sophie: About birth control and babies. Women shouldn't have them if they don't want them. It's pretty much their

choice, it's another one of the paths that we talked about earlier. That's part of life, making the choices.

Mark: Whenever we don't take someone's wishes into regard, and we make the decisions ourselves,

we enslave them. If we force it onto them, we take away their free will, and impose our will on them.

Shauna: Women shouldn't get pregnant if they're just going to get an abortion every time. That's wrong, that could've been a great life for the baby. But I think that if it was a rape or by accident then they should definitely have a choice if they want to get an abortion. I think men get off way too easy. The men can just get someone pregnant and then leave, they have no commitment. It used to be that the woman stuck by the man's side, and I think that's very wrong. They should stick by each other. They should both decide everything, not that the man owns this, and the woman owns that, a certain one owns the children. It's a shared responsibility.

Shevah: Remember that we were created in the image of God. Not in the image of Reebok, or in the image of our peers or other people's opinions. This is the real message behind spirituality, when you're dealing with another person, you're dealing with one of God's reflections. To be able to appreciate that about that person, as well as about yourself, is the beginning of true respect.

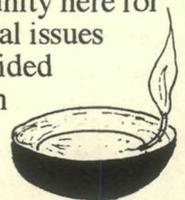


Vipul: In school we've been learning about a method of contraception in developing countries. Because you can find out whether the baby's a boy or a girl, almost every time it's a girl, it's aborted. They only want boys, not girls.

Nick: I think it's a male's responsibility to listen to whatever it is the woman wants. She's the one that has to go through 9 months of carrying the baby. If the woman says no, then the man has to agree. If God wants you to have a baby, then you're going to have one, whether you use birth control or not.

Sundance: I wish it were that easy to say, OK, you guys, it's your responsibility! And girls, it's your responsibility to keep your act together and stay off the streets. If it were that straightforward, this would be a great place. One of the biggest challenges is to be able to say, I'm going to say NO, and he's going to listen to me. Our bodies, our mind, our emotions, it's all so confusing. It's not that straightforward, and neither is birth control.

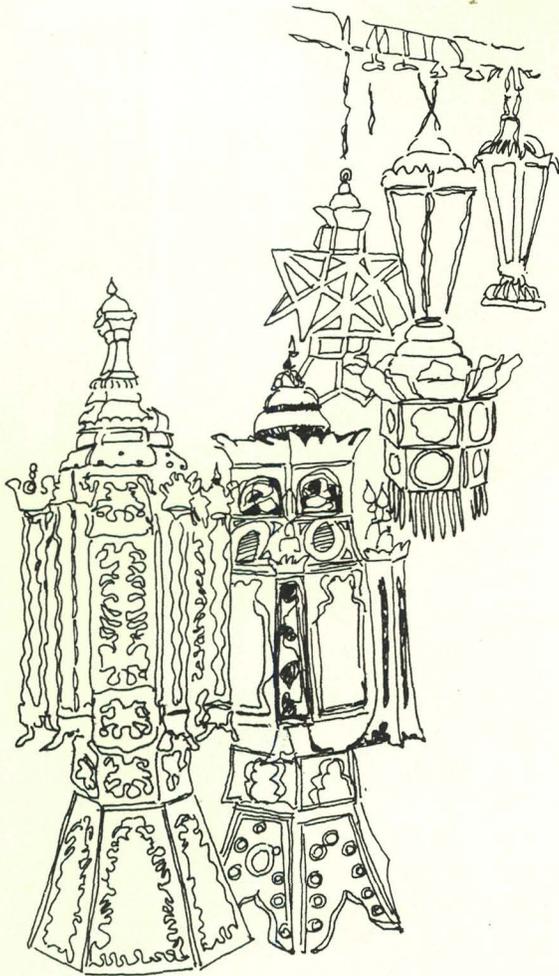
Amit: No, but talking and trying to be sensitive does help, doesn't it? By educating ourselves, by talking, by trying to be creative, by being aware of the problems, we can and we are doing better than if we didn't do any of these things. If young people learn to be sensitive to one another, if you can learn to say no when the woman says no, if you can be sensitive to this unborn baby, then you can avoid many problems. But that sensitivity has to come from deep within us, it is a real practice of spirituality for young people. We have to learn to listen to our body, mind, hormones. There's tremendous opportunity here for learning real spirituality. These are real spiritual issues we're talking about here, spirituality is not divided from life. If you are learning to be sensitive in that way, you are being very spiritual.



Children's Ramadan Song

There is a very old Egyptian tradition of children having lanterns during Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim lunar year.

It is at this time that the young children in Cairo are allowed to stay up late, gather in groups, and go out among the crowds swinging their glowing lanterns and chanting the ancient song of Ramadan. They'll receive some candies in return for their songs!



Wahawi ya wahawi
 iyyahah
 Rihl ya Sha'ban
 Gayiya Ramadan
 iyyahah
 Bint is-Sultan
 Labsah al-guffan
 iyyahah
 Yallah al-Gaffar
 Idluna al-idyah
 Yallah al-Gaffar



Wahawi, ya wahawi,
 iyyahah
 You have gone, O Sha'ban (previous month)
 You have come, O Ramadan,
 iyyahah
 The daughter of the sultan
 is wearing her caftan,
 iyyahah
 For God the forgiver
 Give us this season's gift

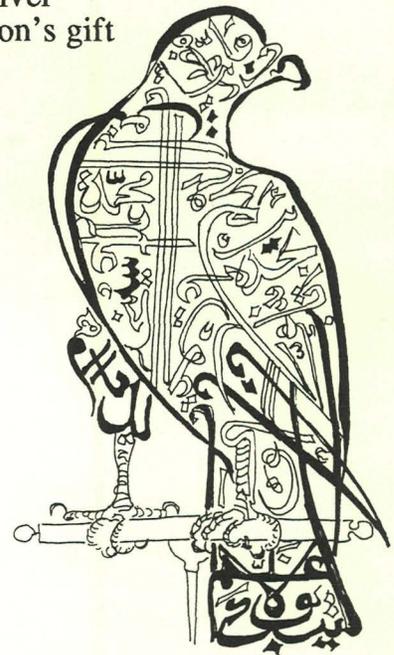
Islam

Islam was founded by the prophet Mohammed some 1400 years ago in the Middle East. There are more than one billion followers of Islam, mostly in the Middle East, Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Africa, and Eastern Europe.

Muslims believe in total surrender to the will of Allah, praying five times a day, kneeling towards the holy city of Mecca, sharing part of their wealth with the mosque and the poor, fasting from sunrise to sunset during Ramadan, and taking a pilgrimage at least once to Mecca.

Modern calligraphers have written on extremely small objects. All 77, 934 words of the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, have been written on the shell of an egg. Prayers have been written on a grain of rice. Often, people will wear Qur'ans no bigger than a thumb as good luck charms.

Zoomorphic calligraphy turns prayers into bird and animal shapes.



—Maya Lalvani, Diamond Bar, California

On Being a Bahá'í

Over a hundred years ago, a man named Bahá'u'lláh announced that world peace and unity would come about through following the Bahá'í Faith. The Black Rose Children's Theater is a group of Bahá'í children, ages 8-14, who teach others about their religion through drama. Their backgrounds are diverse and represent many cultures. They all consider themselves world citizens though, with a common heritage of humankind. They shared with us their thoughts on being a young Bahá'í and acting in the troupe.



I like being a Bahá'í because it is fun. I like being in the Black Rose Children's Theater. We teach our Faith by our play, "We Are Flowers of One Garden." In this play we show why racism is wrong and how life would be better without racism. It's hard to teach our Faith when we are not doing the play. It is hard to teach the Faith when people tell me I should not be a Bahá'í.

—Steffanie Sheppard, 12, Astoria, Oregon

It is very great to be a Bahá'í because I feel close to God and I like to discuss the Bahá'í Faith with my friends and listen about their religions. A lot of our ideas are the same, some are different. It makes me feel very secure at night knowing God is with me.

—Julie Bowers, 10, Seaside, Oregon

Being a Bahá'í is a really exciting experience for me. It's fun to tell people about Bahá'u'lláh and the Bahá'í Faith. I have only been a Bahá'í for a few months but I already have made many new friends. Alláh'u'Abhá.

—Patrick Adriatico, 14, Astoria, Oregon

I like being a Bahá'í because I like telling people about Bahá'u'lláh and I like going to Feast and I love saying Prayers. My favorite prayer is the Evening Prayer. We sing some of our prayers, I like doing that. Someday I would like to teach an adult about the Bahá'í Faith, by myself.

—Matthew Morrell, 9, Astoria, Oregon

I like our songs and music. The Bahá'í Faith can make you feel happy (like when we are meeting new friends at conferences, singing songs, talking about the Faith, and praying) and sad (like when we have to leave the new friends at the end of a conference) and sometimes confused (like when people ask me what I believe and it's hard to put into words, or when people tell me that I shouldn't be a Bahá'í).

—Alex Valencia, 10, Astoria, Oregon

I think being a Bahá'í is a good thing because it makes me happy especially when I pray. I talk to my friends about being a Bahá'í when they ask me what religion I am, but they don't ask me a lot of questions, so I don't get a chance to talk about it a lot unless I am performing in our play.

—Mark Bowers, 11, Seaside, Oregon

I like to teach my friend Chance about the Bahá'í Faith because he likes to listen and he always wants to know more about it. He liked it when I told him that Bahá'ís have to love everyone, even people who don't like us.

—Lance Rochester, 8, Astoria, Oregon

The Bahá'í Faith makes me feel happy. I like telling people about it when they are glad to listen. I don't feel good inside when adults tell me I should go to their Sunday school and read the Bible and be their religion because mine is wrong.

—Aimee Bowers, 10, Seaside, Oregon

I like teaching people about the Bahá'í Faith. When people ask me if I know what I am talking about I can say "yes," because I read about my Faith and find new ideas all the time. I feel bad, too, when adults get angry that I am a Bahá'í, but I know that soon (after World Congress) people will think differently about the Bahá'í Faith and then they will do more research before trying to judge us.

—Katrina Morrell, 10, Astoria, Oregon

Unitarian Universalism: *Respecting Diversity*

A beautiful ceramic mandala with symbols from many world religions greets each child and adult who walks through the front door of our church in Eugene, Oregon. Can you identify the historic icons for Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Islam, Shintoism, Taoism, Judaism, and Christianity? For many people, this is their first opportunity to see these ancient symbols displayed together with equal respect. Inside the circular mandala, one sees a large flame and chalice—the symbol for Unitarian Universalism.

Since the early 15th century in Europe, the flame and chalice have symbolized a commitment to religious freedom. The roots of Unitarian Universalism can be traced to Jan Hus, a Catholic priest of Prague, Czechoslovakia. He was martyred because he believed that the laity (people who are not priests) deserved to participate in the decisions of the church. Since that time, many people wore a flaming chalice embroidered on their clothes to identify themselves with a religious movement that embraced the full participation of all people. When the Unitarian Universalist Association was organized in 1961, the flaming chalice was chosen as the appropriate symbol for this new religious denomination.

Unitarian Universalism has become a worldwide movement which teaches “religious pluralism.” The children who worship with a “UU” community are encouraged to respect the diversity of religious traditions and study the prophets and creeds of many world religions.

As I develop and grow myself, I continually discover new questions and observations about the mystery of life. As a minister, therefore, I encourage the children of my church to remain devoutly curious throughout their own unfolding life-journey. If our minds and hearts are

truly open, we will see and feel more of the complex nature and truth of human existence.

Unitarian Universalism has seven principles guiding our behavior in this world. All of the guiding principles have been determined by democratic participation. And the spiritual vision expressed is inclusive for all humanity.

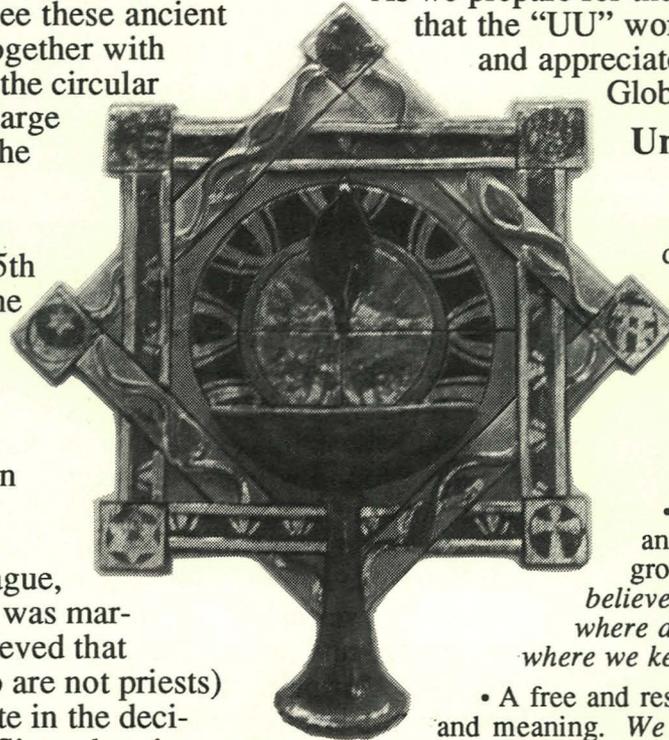
As we prepare for the 21st century, I believe that the “UU” worldview allows us to see and appreciate the true diversity of our Global Village.

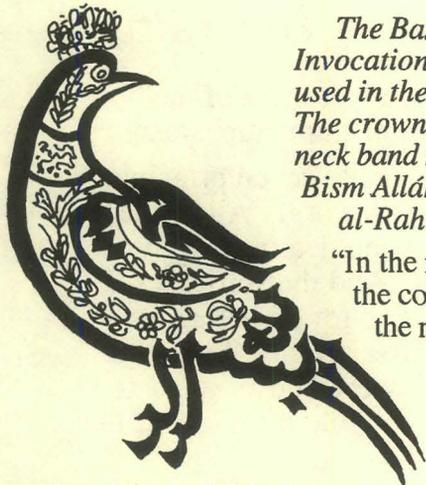
Unitarian Universalist Principles

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person. *We believe that each and every person is important.*
 - Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations. *We believe that all people should be treated fairly.*
 - Acceptance of one another and encouragement of spiritual growth in congregations. *We believe that our churches are places where all people are accepted and where we keep on learning together.*
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning. *We believe that each person must be free to search for what is true and right in life.*
- The rights of conscience and the use of democratic process within our congregations and the society at large. *We believe that everyone should have a vote about the things that concern them.*
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all. *We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world.*
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. *We believe in caring for our planet earth.*

Unitarian Universalist churches and fellowships flourish in North America, Europe, and other countries as well. Our buildings and meeting places can look very different, yet you will always find a flaming chalice as the unifying symbol for this religious community. Unitarian Universalism can be a very meaningful spiritual home for someone who enjoys asking questions about life, faith, justice, and peace.

—The Reverend Sally Bryan, *The Unitarian Church of Eugene, Oregon*





*The Basmalah
Invocation is often
used in the Qur'án.
The crown and the
neck band reads:
Bism Alláh al Rahmán
al-Rahím.*

*"In the name of God,
the compassionate,
the merciful!"*

—Maya Lalvani, California

How Great Is God

Looking at you,
Looking at her,
I just see how great He is.

He made heaven
He made even human lives
He is big; He is little
He is everything you want.

You know?
He can help you
When you're in trouble
He is always there
He'll never leave you alone!

He is a friend,
A helper,
A teacher,
An architect.

But the most important thing is
That He your Father is.

—Miriam Guerrero, 15, Celaya, Mexico

My Luggage

With stars above
And salvation abroad
I tell you your thoughts and stereotypes
of me are all a fraud

I shall take the one chance I see
Fasting and running
So that I could be free

The stars and drinking gourd is what I'll use
I'll take with me the anger and abuse
The feeling of inferiority a whole string
of emotions that you misused

I laugh at your insecurity and fear of me
Your greed and anxiety
In a way very hard for you to see
I am already free.

—Marc Rivera, 12, Troy, New York

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How Does the Earth Change?

The law of earthquakes: God fears that there will be a war, so God shivers and it shakes.

The law of mudslides: God mourns someone's death and it rains.

The law of hurricanes is: When God sighs, God's powerful breath blows a heavy wind.

The law of waterfalls: Waterfalls are God's sinks.

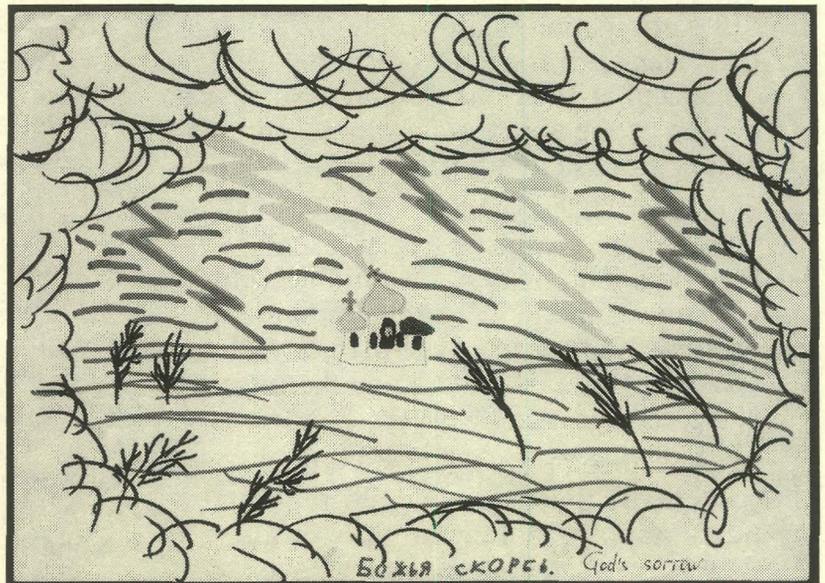
The law of volcanos: Because of all the crime, war, death, injuries, and fights, God explodes.

—Eric Siegel, 9, Encino, California. *"I'm a Jewish American and go to a private Jewish day school. I wish there was no graffiti in the world, so we could paint more murals. My goal is to write more bestsellers than John Grisham."*

My Church

I attend Saint Peter's Catholic Church and I love it. It is so beautiful. It is even registered as a historical site in our city! It is full of bright, colorful stained glass windows. A long, narrow staircase leads to the balcony. In the balcony is a huge round window called the Rose Window. Huge carved statues of the Fourteen Stations of the Cross are mounted on the walls. Beautiful, realistic statues of Jesus and Mary are everywhere. Behind the altar is a gigantic structure representing the kingdom of God. It is beautifully ornamented and decorated. A statue of Jesus is set at the very top. During Catholic holidays the interior is absolutely breathtaking with candles and flowers. I feel very lucky that I have such a wonderful place to worship.

—Tracy Williamson, 14, Joplin, Missouri



—Katya Kievskaya, 11, Kiev, Ukraine

Grains of Sand

Once upon a time, there was a young lad by the name of Timmy. While Timmy was visiting his grandparents' farm one afternoon, he became bored and curiously began searching through an old trunk in the attic of the old farmhouse. As he was searching though, he slipped on some loose papers and hit his head on the rusty trunk.

After a while, Timmy awakened to find himself in a land with the bluest of blue skies, the greenest of green grasses and an array of beautifully colored trees that looked like someone had spilled paints of all different colors across the horizon. As far as Timmy could see there was beauty. This wondrous place was called Ferghanah Valley.

As Timmy looked around, he found there was a man in the distance calling out his name. As Timmy drew closer, he got a better look at the old man. He had thick, black hair that was sprinkled with gray and white.

Timmy asked him, "How do you know my name, for I have never been here before?"

"I am Cyrus, the wise god of Ferghanah Valley. I was Summoned by my people to come and greet you," he said pleasantly.

"People? There are no people around here," said Timmy.

"You cannot see them, for they are afraid of you."

"Why would they be afraid of me, I haven't any weapons. I came in search of "

"Yes, I know. Peace," said Cyrus, interrupting Timmy.

"How do you know all about me, and why I am here?"

"I told you, I am a wise god. I know everything about anything in Ferghanah Valley," Cyrus said, "But, if you were to leave the Valley, I would remember nothing about you or what we have spoken of," the wise god added.

"Why do your people want you to greet me?" asked Timmy.

"They also knew about your long journey to find peace for your world. I am to let you know what you will need on your voyage.

"First, you will need this ring made of beautiful gems and jewels. You will need this when you reach Kharranah; there are nomads

there who will kill you if you don't have the ring. Secondly, you will need a form of transportation. You may use Raul, our flying dragon. Lastly, you will need one single grain of sand which you must carry throughout your journey. If it is lost, peace will be unfound and impossible for your world," said the wise god.

"One grain of sand?! You're joking, right? That's impossible," said Timmy.

"You may give up now and never have peace," said Cyrus.

"No! I shall find the answer to world peace," Timmy announced proudly.

He climbed on Raul and asked Cyrus how he was to find peace and where he was to go to get to Kharranah. Cyrus told him, "Let your heart be your guide and the answer you will always find."

Timmy and Raul traveled for several hours until Timmy began to have a strange feeling in his heart. "Stop," he called to Raul. "Go down, this is the place, this is Kharranah. I can feel it in my heart."

He remembered what Cyrus had told him, "Let your heart be your guide and the answer you will always find." It actually worked!

Looking through his pocket, Timmy reached for the grain of sand, which almost slipped through his fingers. He decided to find a safer place for the grain of sand. Timmy noticed that the ring had a small compartment in the top jewel that opened up. Timmy took the grain of sand and put it in the compartment where it would be safe.

Now, Timmy and Raul were in Kharranah. It was very cold and Timmy had on only a light jacket and old pair of jeans with holes at the knees. Suddenly, Timmy heard a noise so vicious that it had to be the fierce nomads.

"They are coming to get me, what do I do?" Even though he was frightened, he quickly remembered the ring. But what was he supposed to do with it? Cyrus never told him. And they were coming closer, over the hill, right toward him.

All of the sudden, he yelled out the words, "Let your heart be your guide, and the answer you will always find!"

Then he closed his eyes and prayed to God for a miracle to take place. When he opened his eyes, he found himself at the top of a great mountain.

As Timmy looked around at the beautiful, purple, majestic mountain, he saw an Indian elder sitting on the ground.

“Who are you?”

“I’m Big Horn, a wise and knowledgeable man that watches over this mountain. Timmy, you are finished except that you have one more task that you must do,” he said calmly.

“What’s that?” asked Timmy.

“I know that you have been carrying a single grain of sand throughout your entire journey. Now, what you must do is drop the grain of sand on the top of the mountain.”

“Drop it!? I’ve traveled all this way and now you want me to drop it?”

“Yes,” said Big Horn calmly.

So, Timmy dropped the grain of sand.

“Now, find it for me,” said the wise elder.

“What? I can’t do that! It has blended in with the other grains of sand and the dirt,” said Timmy, aggravated.

“Exactly! A human being is like a grain of sand; each is different from the other, yet the same. Like grains of sand that blend together in a sand box, humans must blend together in the world to achieve peace and harmony.”

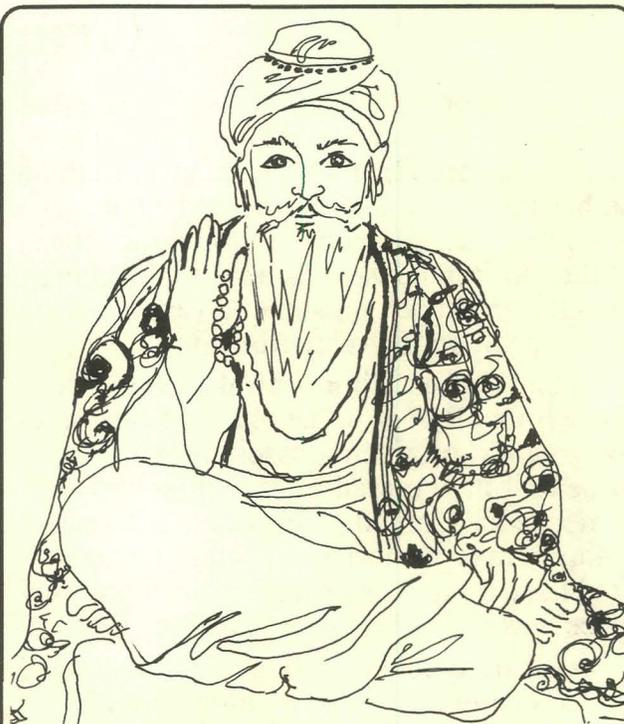
“Oh, I understand! It makes perfect sense to me. Humans must live together happily and respect each other for who they are as individuals, if we are ever to achieve world peace. Now that I understand, will I be able to help others to also understand?”

Big Horn assured him, “You already have.”

Timmy closed his eyes. He awoke to his grandmother calling him for dinner.

—Brandi M. Schaffer, Hallsville, Missouri, 15, wrote this story when she was 13. “This story was an assignment for a creative writing class. The night I got the assignment, I sat on my back porch and watched the sun, and the trees and just started writing. I think nature, God and the strong encouragement from my family helped me. You look around the world and see the hungry, shelterless, sick and those without clothing and it makes you sad. You see the fighting and the wars, and you just feel like breaking down and crying. But instead, you pray for peace and thank God for what you have. The world is my inspiration because it’s an inspiring world.”

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Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism

—Maya Lalvani, Diamond Bar, California

Guru Nanak visited the holy city of Hardwar (Gateway to God) on the river Ganges. Large crowds had come to bathe in the river. Nanak was not so impressed by the sight of the people “washing away their sins” in the river Ganges. People faced to the East and threw palmfuls of water to the Sun. Nanak entered the river and started throwing away palmfuls of water to the West.

“Who is this man who offers water to the West?” asked the shocked pilgrims.

Nanak asked them why they offered water toward the Sun. “We offer it to our dead ancestors” they replied. “Where are your dead ancestors?” asked Nanak.

“With the Gods in heaven.”

“How far is heaven?”

“Very far.”

“Does the water get that far?”

“Yes. But why do you throw water toward the West?”

Nanak replied, “My home is toward the West. It has not rained there in a long time. I am watering my fields.”

Guru Nanak founded Sikhism some five hundred years ago in the Northwestern part of the Indian subcontinent. There are almost 10 million followers of Sikhism in the world today. Through chanting Sat Nám, the Holy name, Sikhism invites people to attain Moksha or blissful union with God.

ದಕ್ಷಿಣ ಭಾರತದಲ್ಲಿ ಉಚಿತವಾದ ದತ್ತರ ನವರಾತ್ರಿ ಹಬ್ಬ

The Navarathri Festival in South India

India is a land of great geographical and cultural diversity. Festivals play a big role in Indian society. Whatever the season, whichever the place, there is always a festival to spread laughter, music, drama and dance.

Most festivals have a religious background, with the rare exception of *Raksha Bandhan* (See Vol. 6, no. 3) which reaffirms the sacred relationship between brother and sister. These festivals draw people out of their homes. People mingle with each other amidst lots of merrymaking.

Let me tell you about a grand and important festival of Karnataka, a southern state in India—*Navarathri* or *Dussera*. It falls in September or October each year. *Navarathri* means 'celebration of nine nights.' The festival celebrates the victory of Goddess Parvati, or Durga, over the demon Mahishasura. For nine days, prayers are offered to the Goddess every morning and evening. Each day is filled with social and cultural events.

Mysore, a city in Karnataka, is the focal point of South India during *Navarathri*. The Mysore Palace, a majestic architectural beauty, is brightly illuminated every evening during *Navarathri*, because Raja Wodeyar brought the festival into mainstream cultural life in 1610 AD. Ever since then, the Maharajas (kings) of Mysore have played host to a series of festivities throughout the ten days. Since 1950, the Government of the Province of Karnataka, hosts the celebrations.



Every morning, the royal animals (elephant, horse, camel, and cow) are worshipped. In the evenings, the king's ministers and many visiting dignitaries assemble in *darbar* (the royal court). They are dressed in their traditional silk attire, often in *kurta-pajama* (a pant and tunic) and a *jari* (brocade) *turban* on their head. Classical or folk music and dance performances by renowned artists highlight each evening.

Goddess Parvati took nine forms and each day of *Navarathri* is dedicated to one of these incarnations. (See *The Story of*

Navarathri, page 19). Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning, is worshipped on the sixth day of *Navarathri*. People everywhere worship their books, musical instruments and writing tools.

On the seventh day, Goddess Parvati came in the form of Chamundi and slayed Mahishasura, on top of Chamundi Hill. Today there stands a 30 ft. tall, colorful clay statue of the demon with a huge mace in his hand. There is also a temple with a gold idol of Goddess Chamundi. Special prayers are offered to her at this temple during the festival.

The eighth day is also known as *Durgashtami* and on this day the Goddess is worshipped in the form of Durga. The ninth day is referred to as *Ayudha Pooja* (worship of weapons). The weapons in the palace artillery are brought out, cleaned, polished and worshipped. Vehicles are decorated with strands of chrysanthemums and marigolds and sacred markings made in lime-chalk.

Vijayadashami

The tenth day, *Vijayadashami* or *Dussera*, also celebrates the day long, long ago that the Pandava brothers emerged from their 13 year exile in the forest. They collected weapons they had hidden in a Banni tree and started preparing for the inevitable Battle of Kurukshetra (*Mahabharata*) against their greedy cousins, the Kauravas, who had banished them to the forest. The Pandavas won the battle, so the Banni tree is considered to be holy. Also, on this day, *Vijayadashami*, Lord Rama won the war with demon king Ravana of Sri Lanka. In Indian festivals, lots of mythological lore overlaps.

In Mysore on *Vijayadashami*, a mammoth procession of colorfully bedecked elephants walks through the city. The elephants come from the forests of Nagarhole and Bandipur, about a week before *Navarathri*. The oldest among them is a 70 year old *Drona*, who has been in the procession since the days of the Maharaja. This privileged elephant carries the golden *howdah*, holding the golden deity of Goddess Chamundi.

Schoolchildren, ethnic folk dancers, and musicians join the colorful and symbolic floats, each of which represents the different districts of Karnataka. The air reverberates with the pulsating beat of drums as diverse people dressed in silks and festive finery blend together in rejoicing and celebration.



Statue of Mahishasura on Chamundi Hill



—Sujit Kumar Pradhan, 7th grade, Khandgiri, Orissa

The six-mile-long procession lasts six to seven hours—beginning about noon and ending at dusk at a place called *Banni Mantap*. Later on that night, there is a torch-light parade. The grand finale of *Navarathri* comes in the form of a magnificent display of fireworks, both at *Banni Mantap* and atop Chamundi Hill.

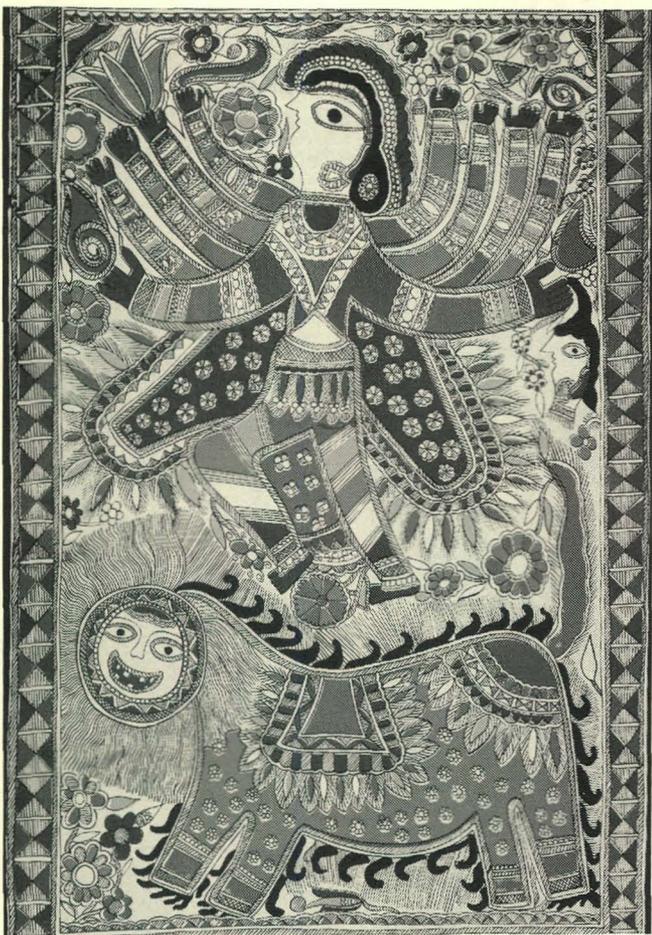
There are lots of other fun activities during *Navarathri*. Children in Karnataka have vacations during this festival which enables them to have fun with their parents. Various organizations in Mysore and Bangalore, the capital city of Karnataka, arrange concerts and organize grand flower shows.

Mysore holds a huge exhibition and sale. Vendors set up stalls selling almost everything from textiles to eats. There are rides and Ferris wheels. The Mysore Palace remains open to visitors.

Another interesting aspect of *Navarathri* is the arranging of dolls (*bombe*) in homes. Girls dressed in silk skirts and blouses go to neighbors in the evening, sing songs in praise of the Goddess and get snacks to eat, which are actually made as offerings to the Goddess. Usually they consist of chick peas or mung beans, sprouted or roasted.

Navarathri makes Mysore the point of world attention. A sea of people flood the streets of Mysore. Differences of color, caste and social status are forgotten; for those ten days, people are one. That is the essence of a festival in India, a land of diversity.

—Shubha Subbarao is a botanist from Mysore, India. She lives in Green Bay, Wisconsin.



The Story of Navaratri

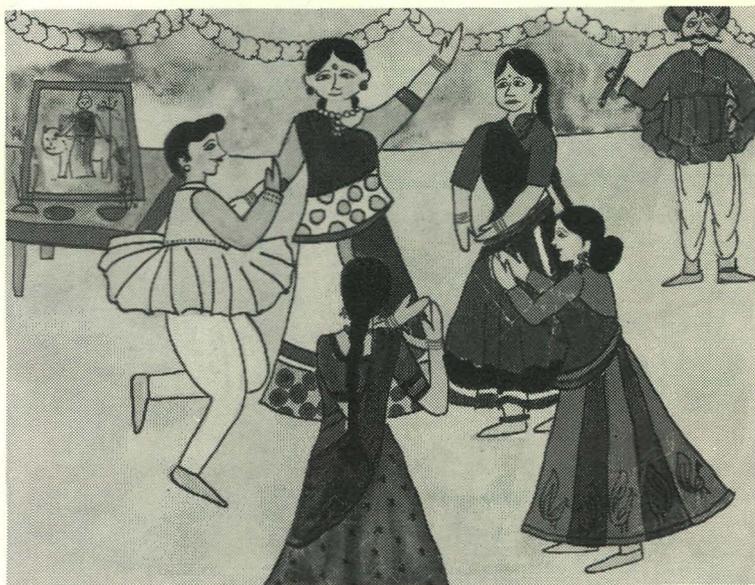
A very long time ago, there lived two demon brothers, Raktabeeja and Mahishasura. Through his prayers and worship, Raktabeeja (meaning “seed from blood”) had acquired a boon from the gods. If he were wounded in a battle, thousands of demons (identical to Raktabeeja) would emerge from each drop of blood that touched the earth. In addition, he could never be killed by any man. Raktabeeja then became power hungry and waged a war against the gods. The gods requested the Goddess Parvati help. One thing that Raktabeeja had forgotten to ask for was for protection from death caused by a woman. Gods empowered Goddess Parvati with strength and weapons. She took different forms, or incarnations, with various virtues and powers, to fight the demons. She came as Kumari (a child), Trimurti (with three heads), Kalyani, and then Rohini.

Goddess Parvati knew of the boon that Raktabeeja had. She incarnated as Goddess Kali and spread out her tongue on the earth. This way, the blood drops of the demon did not touch the earth and so no more demons were born out of them. Raktabeeja thus became weak and was killed by the Goddess.

Mahishasura was helping his brother in the battle. And, now it was Mahishasura’s turn. He

too was very powerful and capable of assuming different forms. On the eighth day of the battle, when he took the form of a huge buffalo, Goddess Parvati killed him by taking the form of Durga, or Chamundi, with a *trishul* (a three-pronged weapon) given by Shiva, the Lord of Destruction. Before dying, Mahishasura requested the Goddess to grant him one last wish, that his name would live on forever. She granted him the wish. That’s how Mysore got its name (from *Mahishas-ura* = Mahisha’s town). A 30 ft. statue of Mahishasura and a temple of Durga remind us of the event. —*Shubha Subbarao*

Navratri in Gujarat



Gujarati Folk Dance, *Gurba*

Painting by Rinkal Shah, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India

In India, especially in Gujarat state where I live, we celebrate a festival called *Navratri*, which means nine nights. It is also called *Gurba*. *Navratri* is celebrated in the memory of different Goddesses on all nine days.

Navratri falls during the month of October. Rich and poor, men and women, young girls and boys and children enjoy this festival. First of all a religious hymn of Goddess is sung called *Aarti*. The people worship Goddess with flowers and fruits. After the prayer, beautiful songs are sung by the singers along with the music. People are seen in their new dresses dancing joyfully around the statue of Goddess clapping their hands with different styles. A special type of dance, *Raas*, is also performed with a special type of two wooden sticks called *Dandia*. This dance is done by pairs. Like this, *Navratri* is celebrated for nine days.

—*Manisha Handa, 13, studies in 8th standard, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, Western INDIA*

Budismo

Hace 2,500 años había un niño que se llamaba Siddhartha Gautama. El niño no sabía del sufrimiento en el mundo porque sus papás eran ricos. Ellos vivían en un palacio.

Cuando Siddhartha creció, se separó del palacio, y él se fijó que había mucho sufrimiento. El decidió estudiar con personas que creía que sabían de sufrimiento porque él quería saber porque había tanto sufrimiento.

Pero entonces el pensó, "Yo voy a aprender de la vida por mi mismo." El se sentó debajo de un árbol y prometió no levantarse hasta que hubiera aprendido que es la vida y como aliviar sufrimiento.

El se sentó por 49 días debajo del árbol. Un hombre le traía comida. Después de 49 días él se volvió *buda*. Para ser el *buda* es a despertar espiritualmente, conocerse a si mismo y entender a la gente.

El Buda empezó a enseñar lo que aprendió debajo del árbol. El enseñó en la India por 45 años y tuvo muchos seguidores. El dijo que la causa del sufrimiento es que la gente desea cosas que no puede obtener. El enseñó a despertar espiritualmente y a tener comprensión por los demás.

Para despertar de esta manera es necesario meditar. Meditar es pensar solo en una cosa, para estar aquí ahora y disfrutar del momento presente. Nunca ponemos suficiente atención al nuestro real. Ponemos demasiada atención al pasado o al futuro.

El Buda murió 480 AD cuando tenía 80 años. Ahora el Budismo ha cambiado porque no se escribían libros cuando él estaba vivo solamente sus sucesores escribieron libros. El Budismo se propagó en China, Japon, Korea otros países en Asia por esta razón cambió mas.

—Illustration by Kristina Anderson,
Corvallis, Oregon

Buddhism

About 2,500 years ago there was a boy born in India named Siddhartha Gautama. The boy didn't know about suffering in the world because his parents were rich. They lived in a palace.

When Siddhartha grew up, he moved away from the palace and saw a lot of suffering. He decided to study with some people who he thought knew about suffering because he wanted to learn about suffering.

But then he said to himself, "I'm going to find out about life by myself." He sat under a tree and promised himself to stay under that tree until he found out about life and how to reduce suffering in the world.

He sat for 49 days under that tree. A man brought him food. After 49 days he became the Buddha. To be a Buddha means to wake up spiritually, to know yourself and to understand people.

The Buddha started to teach people about what he learned under that tree. He taught in India for 45 years and had many followers. He thought that the cause of suffering was that people

wanted things that they could not have. He taught people to "be awake" and to understand other people.

To become awake in this way, it is necessary to meditate. Meditation is to think of only one thing, to be here and enjoy the present moment. We usually never pay attention to our true self. Instead we pay attention to what was in the past or in the future.

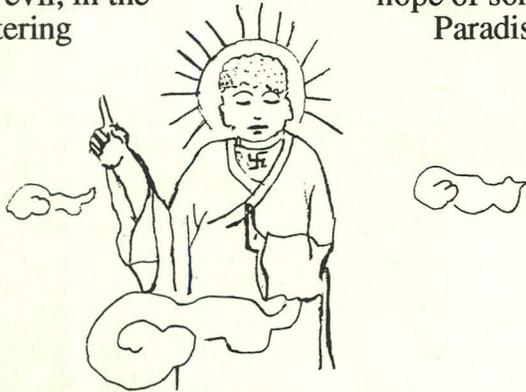
The Buddha died about 480 BC when he was 80 years old. Now Buddhism has changed because people didn't write books when Buddha was alive. Only his followers wrote books. Buddhism spread to China, Japan, Korea and other countries in Asia and it changed even more.

—Both Spanish and English by Daisy Diaz, 12,
studying in Randolph Center, Vermont, USA



The Bird Named Bim Bip

A long time ago, there was an old Buddhist monk. He only ate rice and vegetables to purify himself. All of his life he tried to do no evil, in the hope of someday entering Paradise.



One night, while he was praying, Buddha appeared with a bright circle around his head and said, "I am Buddha. I have noticed your good heart. Go to Paradise, starting tomorrow. Keep on going until you see a fire-coloured cloud. That's the gate where I will wait for you."

After saying good-bye to everybody in Pagoda, his village, he went eagerly on his way. He took a bamboo cane, a holy book, and a wooden fish on his journey. Climbing many mountains, the monk went on his way. The only food he had was the fruits from the forest and water from the creeks.

While walking one day, he met a wounded man lying nearly dead by the road. When he saw him, the monk tore off his cloak to bandage the man's wounds and gently asked, "Are you hurt? I can help you."

The man said, "I am a famous outlaw around this area. I got hurt while robbing last night. My last day is coming near, because I have committed many crimes in my life."

To make him feel comfortable, the monk said, "I would try to cure your wound, but I don't have any medicine."

In a weak voice the outlaw said, "Thank you. Don't worry about me. But why are you passing through such a horrible place?"

"I am on my way to Paradise."

The outlaw smiled. His eyes glowed with hope. "I have done many crimes in my life, but I am asking one favour. Could you please bring my heart to Buddha. Maybe he'll forgive all of my sins."

Suddenly, the outlaw took a knife out of his pocket and jabbed it deep into his chest. It was too late for the monk to stop him. He saw the red heart in the outlaw's chest. The monk cried as he picked up the heart. He tore his cloak, wrapped the heart in it, and tied it to the bamboo cane. Then he quickly continued on his way.

After a few days, the heart started to produce an awful odour. But the monk still kept the heart as he had promised.

Five days and then ten days passed. The monk was very tired of walking and he couldn't stand the awful odour the heart produced, so he threw it by the road.

A couple of days later, the monk reached the gate to Paradise. There were many beautiful flowers beside the road. Buddha suddenly appeared on a yellow Lotus flower, with a bright circle around his head, and a very nice smell. Buddha said, "I've been waiting for you. It is about time I led you to Paradise, but you have forgotten something."

The old monk threw himself to the ground and said, "Oh, what do I have, besides this poor body of mine?"

Buddha grinned, "Where is the outlaw's heart? You can't enter Paradise without that heart." Then Buddha disappeared.

The poor old monk went hurriedly back to the road in hope of finding the heart.

Day after day he looked for the heart. But it was no use.

Finally the old monk died of exhaustion. Buddha had pity for him and turned him into a small bird named Bim Bip.

These birds have brown feathers, like the colour of the monk's gown.

People say that this bird is the spirit of the monk, and it wanders the country still looking for the heart of the outlaw, in the hope of finding it someday and becoming able to enter Paradise.

—John Nguyen, Grade 6, Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada. John received this story in oral form from his Vietnamese grandparents who have recently come to live with his family in Canada. The story was told in the Vietnamese language. John has translated it into English.

Mid-Autumn Festival in Hong Kong

The moon is full and bright, but kids are not ready for bed. They're playing and roaming in the parks with colorful lanterns. It's Mid-Autumn Festival in Hong Kong!

Hong Kong is a city south of China. Most people there are Chinese, and they celebrate this festival on the 15th day of the eighth month of the Chinese calendar (September or October in the United States). A long time ago, the festival was held to celebrate the harvest of fruits and rice. But today, it is the time when relatives get together, share special foods, and watch the full moon.

Mid-Autumn Festival is a day for family reunions. Everybody hurries home for dinner. Kids meet their cousins, aunts and uncles and have a big feast. The house is filled with laughter and the rich smell of chicken, fish, oyster, lotus root and many other favorites.

After dinner, the whole family goes out to watch the full moon. Tens of thousands of people go to playgrounds or parks, where carnivals and parades are held.

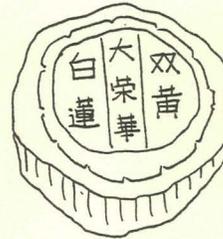
Kids will bring along lanterns bought at the stores. They hang them on trees, drag them along the sidewalks, and carry them everywhere.

The lanterns are colorful, and the shapes are varied: dinosaur, butterfly, airplane, peacock, fish, starfruit, rabbit, barrel and many others. The traditional lanterns are made of colorful paper or cloth. Each has a candle in the middle to be lit up after dark. There is a string on the top for kids to carry. The modern ones are made of plastic. They hang down from flashlights and have lightbulbs inside.

Some people will even set rows and rows of candles on the ground. When the candles and the lanterns are lit up, the park becomes a sea of flickering lights.

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Another festival custom is to share *mooncakes* and other special foods with family members while watching the moon.



Mooncake



A piece of mooncake with salted duck egg yolk inside

Mooncakes are sweet and come in many sizes. They look like brown birthday cakes with pictures and Chinese characters carved on top. Most are made of lotus seed or red bean pastes and may have up to four salted duck egg yolks inside!

There are special Mid-Autumn fruits, too. *Persimmons* look like big red tomatoes and are sweet. *Starfruits* have a lemon shape, but are green with ridges on the outside. The meat is crunchy and tastes like celery sticks. There is also a special grapefruit called *shaddock*. This pear-shaped fruit is as big as a small soccer ball. Its yellow-green skin is an inch thick!

As families eat and enjoy the evening, the moon appears brighter and larger than ever; the shadows on it are clear. Kids are told that the shadows on the moon are those of fairies. It is said that thousands of years ago, Shang E, the wife of the master archer of the sky, swallowed some eternal medicine that made her live forever. She flew all the way to the moon and is still there.

It is also said that the shadows are Wu Kong's, a woodcutter ordered by the Imperial God to chop down a cassia tree. But the poor man never succeeds, because with each chop of his axe, the tree closes up again. If you look carefully at the moon, you can still see him moving his axe.

It's already late at night. But in Hong Kong, tomorrow is a school holiday! Who needs to worry?

—Wai-Fong Lam, Camas, Washington, writes, "I grew up in Hong Kong with the festival. I came to the U.S. in 1982, but I still celebrate it with my American-born children. We buy lanterns imported from China and mooncakes made in America."

Asian Moon Festival



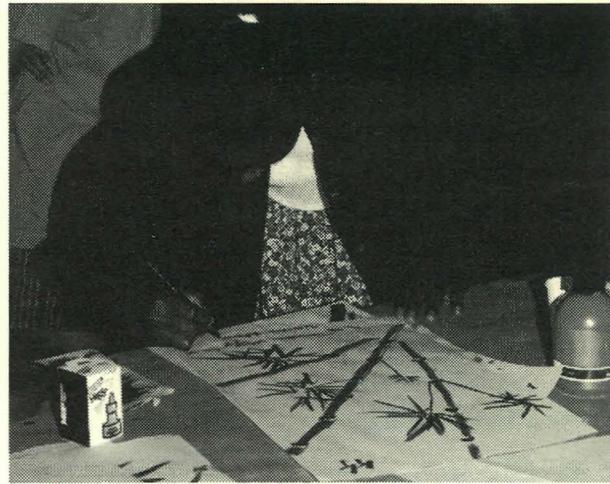
Have you ever made a wish while gazing at the Harvest Moon? It is said to bring you luck all year long.

When the Moon Festival is celebrated on the 15th day of the eighth moon, Northern China's wheat and the South's rice crops have already been harvested. Adults and children all over Asia gather for picnicking. They bring boxes of round mooncakes and share stories late into the night under the bright silver moon. They honor the Moon Lady, Chang E, who grants them their wishes on that night. (See *Red Eggs and Dragon Boats: Celebrating Chinese Festivals*, page 33.)



Did you know that in China, some 600 hundred years ago, mooncakes were used to pass around secret messages? People rose up against the Mongol ruler occupying their country as they received directions on a piece of paper hidden in these cakes. Today the tradition is to have printed paper attached to the top or bottom of the mooncakes.

Mooncakes have landed in the United States as well. Eugene, Oregon's Moon Festival brought 500 people together to enjoy delicious mooncakes, Chinese and Japanese brush painting and storytelling. Children made Korean headbands, star-gazed through telescopes, and took part in a lantern-lit procession, led by an authentic dragon. Children were also treated to a colorful shadow puppet show, "*The Stonecutter: A Fable from Japan*" performed by Jeff Defty and Lynn Frost. The Friends of the Eugene Public Library organize this annual multicultural festival to promote cultural and natural awareness in youth.



The next day, a crisp autumn Sunday, the Asian Kite Festival brought hundreds of colorful kites and kite-lovers to a Eugene park. Taiko drums and Chinese and Japanese music provided a backdrop for kite-making workshops and kite-flying contests. Photos by Arun Narayan Toké give you a glimpse of what went on at these Asian celebrations.



Did You Know That?

- Some cultures might consider 13 an unlucky number. But the Kiowa and many other Native American people believe that there are 13 original clan mothers—the keepers of ancient wisdom. These clan mothers talk, know, guard, see, listen, tell, love, teach, heal, weave, visualize and walk for humanity. And, in Judaism, there are 13 cardinal tenets of the faith.

- In India, 108 is a sacred number. There are 108 beads on Hindu and Buddhist rosaries, and 108 Upanishads. In Buddhism there are 108 *arhats* or “worthy ones.” And, in the Tantric tradition, there are 108 places of pilgrimage in India.

The average distance between the moon and the earth is 108 diameters of the moon. And, the average distance between the sun and the earth is 108 diameters of the sun. Moreover, silver, the symbol of the moon, has an atomic weight of 108!

- Judaism has 613 commandments or *mitzvot*: 248 positive rules and 365 prohibitions. The 248 positive rules in the Torah correspond to the 248 bones in our body. 365 negative rules correspond to the 365 days of the year.

- Hindus have over 1000 names for God.

- Calendars! We think of one or two, at the most. The solar (365 days) or the lunar (based on the phases of the moon). But, in the Mayan culture of Southern Mexico and Guatemala there are a few more! An “ideal” calendar with 360 days (18 months of 20 days each), one based on the planet Venus with 584 days, and a third sacred calendar, known as *Tzolkin*, based on 260 days. *Tzolkin* is a divine almanac, assigning a particular quality and energy to each day. Many Mayan people still use the *Tzolkin*!

- According to the Jain religion, there are five reasons humans are in bondage to the material world: false vision, lack of restraint, lack of proper attention, passion, and actions. Our spiritual path progressively liberates us from the bondage. The Jain religion recognizes 14 levels of spiritual progress towards the goal of liberation.

—Excerpted from *Spirituality by the Numbers* by Georg Feuerstein. Tarcher/Putnam Books, 1994.

Skill With Shadows



ARJUNA

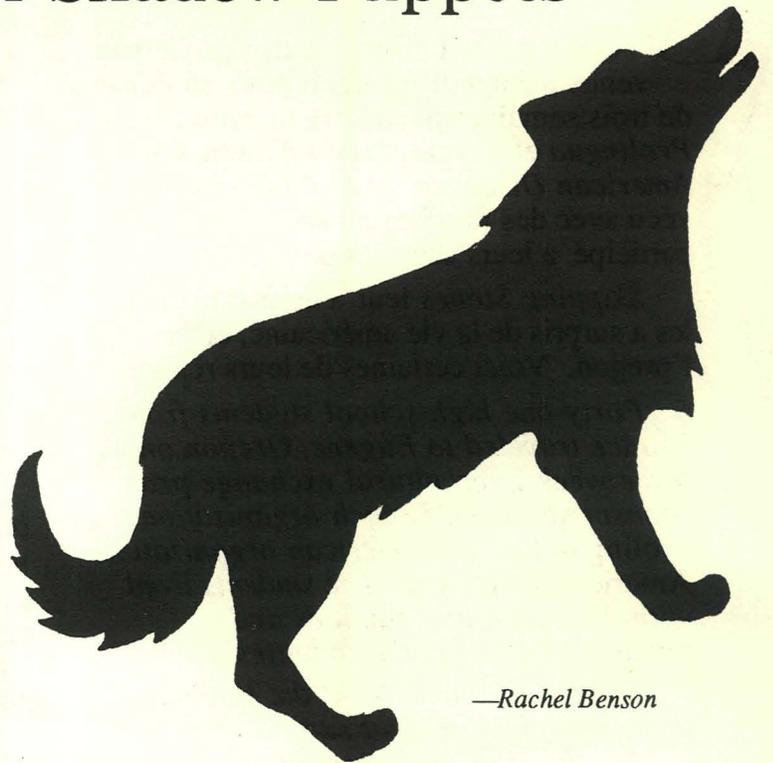
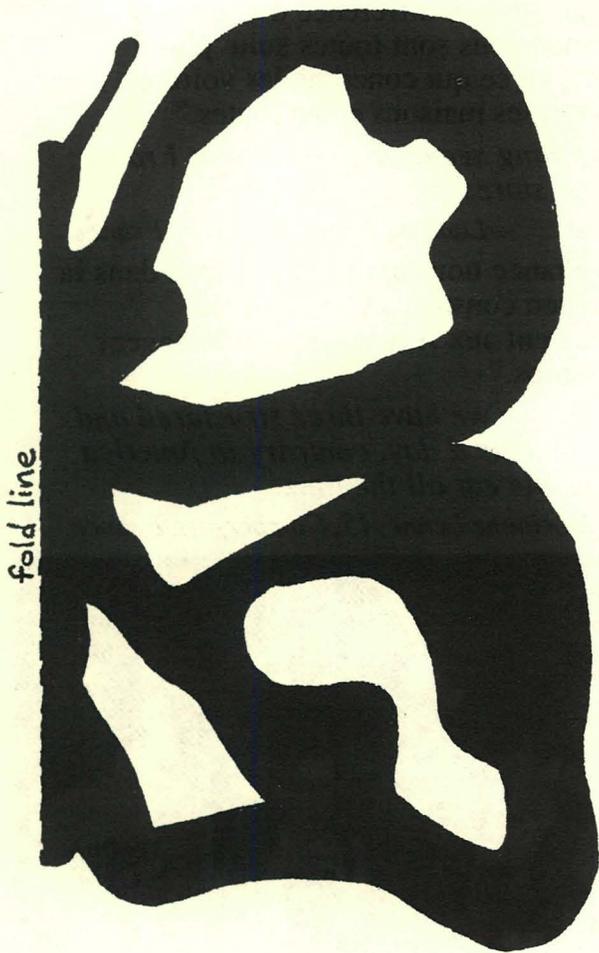
Shadow puppetry is one of the oldest forms of theater in the world. It seems to have originated in India and then spread to the Indonesian islands of Java, Malaya, Bali, Thailand, and Cambodia, and eventually to China, Arabia, North Africa and Turkey. In all of these places one can find a long tradition of puppeteers using flat, animal-hide puppets to create shadow plays from behind a screen.

Probably the best-known shadow theater is the Javanese *wayang kulit*. This performance, like that in most countries, recounts a traditional version of an ancient Indian epic poem. It takes the form of a long story with many characters and many episodes, and it takes all night to perform. The puppeteer, called a *dalang*, sits cross-legged behind a screen and handles as many as 60 puppets during the show. Behind him sits an orchestra of musicians playing drums, gongs, xylophones, flutes and other instruments to accompany the shadow play. The *dalang* directs this *gamelan* as well. It takes great skill, from years of practice, to perform the *wayang kulit* successfully.

—Rachel Benson, Eugene, Oregon

(Source: *The Puppet Theatre of Asia* by J. Tilakasiri. Ceylon: Dept. of Cultural Affairs, 1968.)

Make Your Own Shadow Puppets



—Rachel Benson

You Will Need:

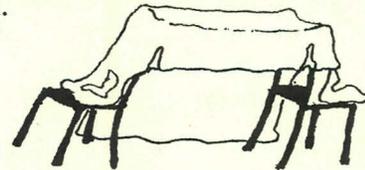
scissors
paper for tracing
dark, thicker paper
tape
pencil or small stick
flashlight (small lamp can be substituted)
white or light-colored sheet
two chairs
a dark room
someone to watch and take turns with!

Instructions:

1. Trace the puppet from the page.
2. Use this as a stencil to cut your puppet from the dark paper. Note: For the butterfly, fold the dark paper in half and place the stencil along the fold.
3. If you like, decorate your puppet by punching holes in it with a hole punch or darning needle.
4. Tape a pencil or stick to the puppet for a handle.



5. Set up a screen by draping a sheet over the tops of two chairs so that it hangs down to the floor on one side. Try to make the screen straight and smooth.



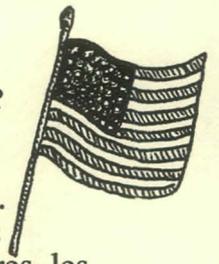
6. Now you're ready! Make sure the room is dark. Get your puppet(s) and a flashlight and someone to watch, and sit between the chairs behind the screen. Hold a puppet up to the screen, shine your light on it, and listen to the gasps of amazement!

Suggestions:

- * You can make a butterfly seem to flutter by rolling the pencil/handle between your thumb and fingers.
- * Make up your own puppet designs, now that you have the idea.
- * Make up a play. You might find ideas in books at home or in a library.
- * Try using colored tissue or cellophane paper to get colors. (You could tape it over open spaces on your puppet like stained glass.)
- * Make scenery by taping paper or cardboard cut-outs (trees, flowers, etc.) to the inside of the screen.



Bienvenu! A French-American Exchange



Quarante et un lycéens de France sont venus à Eugene, Oregon pour un échange de trois semaines avec l'organisation française *Prolingua* et l'organisation Américaine *American Discovery*. Les étudiants ont vécu avec des familles américaines et ont participé à leurs activités de familles.

Skipping Stones leur a demandé ce qui les a surpris de la vie américaine, et de l'oregon. Voici certaines de leurs réponses:

Forty-one high school students from France traveled to Eugene, Oregon on a three week intercultural exchange program sponsored by the French organization Prolingua and the American organization American Discovery. The students lived with American host families and participated in family activities.

Skipping Stones asked the students if there was anything that surprised them, or that they did not expect about the U.S. and Oregon. Some of their responses—

“Je n’avais pas réalisé combien les Américains sont dépendant de leur voitures. Tout est si dispersé. Les voitures sont utilisées pour tout! La banque, le teinturier, la nourriture. . .

Ce n’est pas la meme chose en France.”

I didn't know Americans are so dependent on cars. They use cars for everything! Banking, dry-cleaning, food. . . It is not the same in France.

—Delphine Klein, 15, Paris, France



Delphine Klein enjoying the outdoors in Eugene

“Tout est plus grand qu’en France. Il y a une grande différence d’échelle. Les dimensions sont toutes suite plus grandes, en ce qui concerne les voitures, les magasins, les maisons et les routes.”

Everything seems bigger than in France; the cars, stores, houses and roads.

—Ludovic Bron, 15, Paris, France

“En France nous avons trois repas dans la journée bien construits et équilibrés contrairement aux Américains qui mangent tout le temps.”

In France we have three structured and balanced meals a day, contrary to America where people eat all the time.

—Dorianne Lenne, 15, Cambersart, France



Guillaume Noyrit, 14 and his American family, Ed and Donna Easterbrock and their sons Bryan and Aaron

Skipping Stones a demandé aux étudiants ce qu’ils voudraient que nous sachions sur la france. Beaucoup ont répondu que c’est un pays ou la culture et l’histoire sont tres importants. Ils ont ajouté:

Skipping Stones asked the students what they would like people to know about France. Many students responded that it is a country where culture and history are very important. Also. . .

“C’est un super pays. Le temps est moins beau, mais les monuments sont beaucoup plus vieux et beaux. Les vetements sont super!”

It is a great country. The weather is not so great but there are many old and beautiful monuments. The clothing is super!

—Myriam Lacombe, 17, Bobigny, France

“Tout leur semblerait miniature réduit. Les maisons sont ‘pittoresques.’ La nourriture est plus ‘raffinées’ qu’en les Etats Unis.”

— *Everything would seem miniature to Americans. The houses are very picturesque. Food is more refined than in the United States.*

— *Stephane Ponneau, 17, Talence, France*

“Il y a beaucoup de choses à faire sans restrictions d’âge!”

— *There are many things to do without age restrictions!*

— *Denis Depireux, 15, Paris, France*

“C’est un pays très beau, riche par ces brusques changement de paysages. C’est un pays qu’il faut découvrir par soit meme; allez-y!”

— *France is a very beautiful country with a varied countryside. You must discover it for yourself; come visit!*

— *Caroline Lesbre, 18, Charenton, France*

Interviews and photos by Rhea Connors, Eugene, Oregon, a Program Coordinator for American Discovery . English translations by Catherine Leavitt.



Aurelie and Lydia at the Oregon Coast

Au bord de la rivière

Au bord de la rivière
M'allant promener,
L'eau était si claire
Et le vent léger

Je me suis couché dans l'herbe
Pour écouter le vent,
Ecouter chanter l'herbe des champs

Au bord de la rivière
Les oiseaux du ciel
Changent leur prière
Au Dieu du soleil

Au bord de la rivière
Me suis endormi,
Rêvait de la terre
Et du paradis

On the Edge of the River

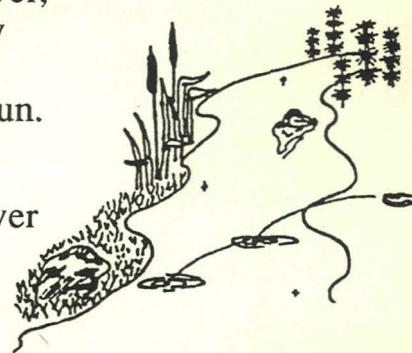
On the edge of the river
I went walking,
the water was clear
and the wind light.

I rested in the grass
to listen to the wind,
Listening to the song
of the grassy field and meadow.

On the edge of the river,
the birds of the sky
Sing their prayer
to the God of the sun.

On the edge of the river
I went to sleep
Dreaming of the land
and of paradise.

— *English translation by Rhea Connors*



Simple Gifts

One kind of song which is sung all over the world is a *hymn*. Hymns are songs of worship and praise. You may hear hymns in churches, synagogues, temples, and other places of worship. Or, you may hear somebody humming a hymn anywhere, because they are some people's favorite songs! Most hymns help us discover something about the way people who first sang them lived, thought, and worshipped. They are like "musical windows" into the history and beliefs of many religious groups.

Let's take for an example a hymn from the Shaker religion, *Simple Gifts*. The Shakers were a Christian group which began about 1750; they lived simple lives in communities which they considered "heaven on earth." They had many hymns, but they didn't just sing them, they

danced! They believed that *shaking* the arms would get rid of bad things, like hatred or greed. (Do you begin to guess why they were called the Shakers?) On the other hand, *scooping* with the arms, like a steam shovel, was a way of scooping up blessings, or good fortune. What do you think about whether those actions work, or not?

People who study the history of dance have recorded the movements to this favorite Shaker hymn, *Simple Gifts*. Although the Shakers would have danced it from opposite sides of the room, with the men on one side and the women on the other side, I think it is most fun when people dance this in a circle. If you have just one other person, perhaps your brother or sister, you can begin by facing each other, several steps apart. Of course, you can enjoy doing this dance all by yourself, too!

'Tis the gift to be simple: Dance and Music

Eight movements for the eight lines of the song.

1. Take four steps forward, while making one big scoop with your arms.
2. Take four steps backwards, while shaking your hands, held out in front of your body at shoulder-height—two shakes for each step.
3. Take four steps forward, scooping with your arms.
4. Take four steps backwards again, shaking your hands twice at each step.
5. Step to the right side, opening the arms to your side. Then bring the left foot beside the right, as you close the hands with palms together and make a little bow. Repeat the movement to the other side, stepping to the left and bring the right foot beside the left, with the same hand motions.
6. Repeat the above movements.
7. Turn around in a circle towards the right—clockwise, with the hands lifted up in the air at about shoulder-height.
8. Turn around in a circle towards the left—counter-clockwise, with the hands lifted up in the air as before.

When you have learned this dance, you can teach it to your friends, teachers, or family. Ask them some questions about it, to get them thinking about the words. I've included one answer for each question, but there are lots of good answers to each of them.

Why does "being simple" help a person to "be free?" (A person doesn't need to spend so much time on the clutter!)

Where is "where we ought to be" and "the place just right?" (In harmony with other people and the earth)

What is "bowing" and "bending" all about?

(To listen to and cooperate with others, rather than always insisting on having your own way)

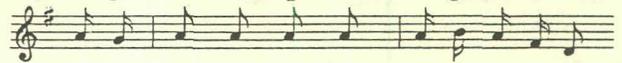
What is "turning, turning" all about? (Seeing things from as many perspectives as you can, not just your own, and being able to adjust)

Happy Dancing!

—Nancy Roth, Oberlin, Ohio is co-editor of
We Sing of God: A Hymnal for Children.



'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free,



'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,



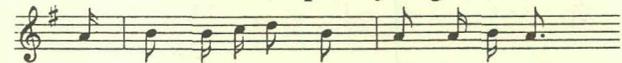
And when we find ourselves in the place just right



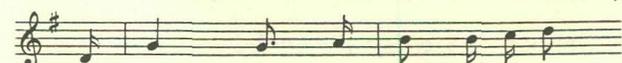
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.



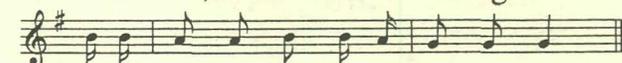
When true simplicity is gained,



To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed,



To turn, turn will be our delight



Till by turning, turning we come round right.

TAKING ACTION

Travel the World on a Paintbrush

Calling all schools, clubs, and church groups! Pick up your pencils and paintbrushes for the **International Children's Art Exchange!** Last year, 3200 young artists in 66 groups from 37 different countries participated in sending and receiving artwork all over the world. The Exchange is not a contest, but an unique way to learn about your peers in other countries. Artwork may be in any two-dimensional medium and address themes of world peace, family, animals or traditional festivals and costumes. All artwork must be received by 31 January 1995, so write for details soon. *Contact:* Mitchell Young, Community Church of Honolulu, 2345 Nuuanu Ave., Honolulu, Hawaii 96817 USA

Take off with *Skywriters!*

Thirteen-year-old Abigail Goutal had been "writing compulsively" and "searching desperately for an outlet." Few magazines seemed to publish kids' work, which frustrated her to no end. Then lightning struck.

"The heck with it," she thought, "I'll publish my own magazine." And *Skywriters* was born!

Abigail, now 14, edits *Skywriters*, a magazine for kids, by kids, with friends Jesse Ben Raymond and Ginny Waymouth in Londonderry, New Hampshire. This quarterly "is for creative kids who love to write, read, draw, and imagine." It contains regular spaces such as "Chrysalis" for short story writers and "Flights of Fancy" for poets. Issues also include riddles and puzzles, writer's challenges and artwork. Many of the submissions come from friends and family, such as Abby's sister, Betsy, 11, and cousin Nell Ketchum, 13. But *Skywriters* is always looking for outside contributions. As Abby writes in the author's guidelines, "any submission will be greeted with tremendous enthusiasm."

Abigail offers the following advice to other kids interested in started their own publication, "Don't put off. Don't procrastinate. Once you make a decision, follow it through." The editors at *Skywriters* seem to be following their own advice. Despite busy school schedules and infrequent submissions, the Fall 1994 issue of *Skywriters* will soon travel to about 40 subscribers in over eight states. Issues are free but a small donation is welcomed.

Excited young authors and artists are encouraged to request a copy or send their work to: *Skywriters*, 44 Nashua Road, #6-114, Londonderry, NH 03053.

Bring Peace Through Play

As the holidays approach, toys suddenly receive a lot of attention. The **Stop War Toys Campaign** asks us to stop and pay even closer attention. Recognizing that values are often learned through play, the Stop War Toys Campaign is committed to educating people about the hazards of war toys. Allowing war toys allows increased aggressiveness, insensitivity to violence, a militaristic mindset and the acceptance of violence as a way of life. To create a more peaceful future, we need to promote toys that teach cooperation and creative problem-solving, rather than toys that foster violence and hatred.

The Campaign wants to let toy manufacturers know that there is a growing movement of people who believe that toys that teach war cannot be gifts of love. If you would like to support this group in their efforts, please write: **Stop War Toys Campaign**, c/o War Resisters League, 339 Lafayette St., New York, NY USA

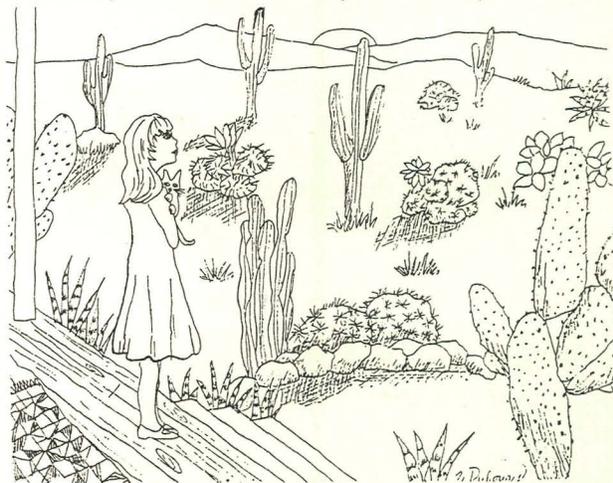


Give Liberty a Voice

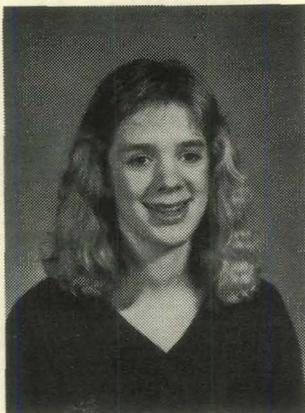
"True liberty goes far beyond parades and statues and flags . . . Liberty, like all other ideals, resides in the hearts and minds of all ... (It does not necessarily) mean the liberty to vote, or the liberty to have freedom of speech; it is the liberty to grow as individuals, not in money or power, but in spirit."

In 1986, Gayle Brandeis' essay, "The Liberty of the Heart," was chosen for a Statue of Liberty time capsule. She was named a "Steward of Liberty for the Next 100 Years."

To help fulfill her stewardship duties, she is asking children worldwide what liberty means to them. She will compile these Voices of Liberty in a book. Send your poems, brief essays, or artwork on the subject of liberty (also your name, age, and address) to: **Voices of Liberty**, c/o Gayle Brandeis, 3330 Utah Street, Riverside, CA 92507



Pen Friends: Friends That Were Meant To Be



My name is Tracy Williamson. I am 14 and live in Joplin, Missouri. My best friend lives in Grandville, Michigan. Her name is Libby Struik and I have never seen her in person before.

About three years ago, I sent a letter to a pen pal section of a magazine. A few weeks later I began to receive batches of letters. I tried to respond to most of them, but one of them really intrigued me.

“Dear Tracy,” it read. “My name is Elizabeth Alice Struik, but you can call me Libby, Liz, Beth, Betsy, Alice, or Elizabeth...”

The letter went on, telling me about her family and friends, her school, her hobbies and interests. So I wrote back. At first, we were a little “restricted” about what we wrote to each other. But the more we wrote, the more we found we had in common. One of our biggest similarities is that we are both crazy about basketball. We’ve written pages and pages about the NBA and college basketball. After a while we began to tell each other everything. We wrote about guys a whole, whole lot!

Now we write constantly. Our letters are usually at least ten pages. We send tons of photos. We write about school, our families, our friends, our futures, our problems, and our feelings. I feel like I can tell her anything, and I do. I tell her things I would never tell my other friends. She understands me so well, it is unbelievable. She doesn’t judge me or make fun of me. I don’t know what I would do without her.

I hope someday Libby and I will meet in person and I will actually be able to talk to the person I’ve shared so much about myself with. But until then I am content to continue writing.

—Tracy Williamson, 14, Joplin, Missouri

My name is Libby Struik and I am 13 years old. How many of you have a best friend who lives over 500 miles away and whom you have never met in person? I do. She isn’t only my best friend—she’s my pen pal.

Tracy Williamson is her name. If everyone had a pen pal and best friend like her, the world would be a wonderful place. She is so understanding, kind, honest, loyal.

I found her name on a list while I was in 5th grade. By luck I picked Tracy and I am so glad I did. I’ve had other pen pals before. They weren’t very dependable and would not respond! Tracy was different in a great way. She wrote back right away and was very interesting. This is where it all began.

This December will be our third year of writing. We have shared so much on sports (mainly basketball), vacations, guys, parents, dreams, heroes, pet peeves, everything. . . everything you could imagine. It is like we are made for each other.

How can we know each other so well if we haven’t met each other? Because we understand and trust each other so much. I tell her a lot and know it will stay with her. I think this is what many kids need as they grow up—trust, understanding, and a listening ear. I really get that from Tracy when we write long letters expressing ourselves.

I believe we will one day meet. Until that day we will write each other, doing what we do best—understanding and listening. That’s what keeps us together.

—Libby Struik, 13
Grandville, Michigan



• *If you love to get letters and make friends, then pen pals are for you. On pages 31 and 34 you will find pen pal requests from many countries in the world. Having pen pals, at home or abroad, is an exciting way to learn about other people’s customs and cultures. Writing letters sharpens your writing skills too! It does take time to develop meaningful penfriendship and find someone you can share your dreams with. But, it’s worth it!*

PEN PALS

To be listed on the Pen Pal Page, please send \$5.00. (You'll also get a copy of the issue.) Low-income and subscribers get one free listing. Priority given to pen pals age 17 and under.

Nathalie Lesbre, girl, 15
18 Av de Gravelle
94220 Charenton, FRANCE
Int: playing guitar, skiing, movies

Teri Yamana, girl, 12
165 Bridge Avenue, Windsor,
Ontario, N9B 2M1, CANADA
Int: writing, sports, travel, can write
English, French, Japanese (Hiragana)

Hisae Ishii, girl, 15
2-1-10, Aoba, Sagamihara-shi,
Kamagawa-ken, 7229, JAPAN

Vladimir Korzhick, boy, 11
Yanky M. Street 25-63
Minsk 220015, BELARUS
Int: sports, music, pet parrot

Svetlana Uvanova, girl, 13
Odintsova Street 23-1-164
Minsk 220018, BELARUS
Int: drawing, reading, music.
Pals from USA.

Olga Kazachok, girl, 13
Street Zhudro, House 57, Flat 74
Minsk 220104, BELARUS
Int: drawing, cooking sweets, travel

Nastia Drozdova, girl, 13
Kosmoso 34-38,
Visaginas 4761, LITHUANIA
Int: tennis, collect posters, stickers

Wanted: Pen pals of all ages!
Write c/o Rita Liepina, English
Language Club, Ragana 10-7,
Rigas rajons, LV 2144, LATVIA

**Kindergarten through Eighth
Grade students** are seeking pen
pals. Write, c/o Gina Hollingshad,
Dora R-III School, Box 14,
Dora, Missouri 65637 USA

Andy Dyrcz, boy, 11 (Int: art,
music scary stories, archaeology,
swimming) and **Krissy Dyrcz**,
girl, 8 (Int: art, skating, reading,
poetry, sewing) want English-
writing pals anywhere!
1108 Plaza Drive
New Lenox, Illinois 60651 USA

Kristyn Blanc, girl, 9
1401 Ocean Avenue, 12J
Brooklyn, New York 11230 USA
Int: arts & crafts, reading, games

Samantha D'Aprile, girl
144-90 41st Avenue #316, Flushing,
New York 11355 USA

Naomi Formigan, girl, 12 (Int:
camping, making earrings, stamps,
piano, karate, coins) and **Andreas
Formigan**, boy, 7 (Int: computers,
woodworking, rocks, camping)
9593 Plainview
Detroit, Michigan 48228 USA

8th Grade Reading Students
want pen pals around the world.
Also, **8th Grade Reading
Teachers** want to correspond with
teachers in other countries.
Write, c/o Ms. Cynthia Adams
Sequoyah Jr. High School
3456 Aztec Drive,
Doraville, Georgia 30340 USA

Carrie Suggs, girl, 11
PO Box 144,
Herndon, Virginia 22017 USA
Int: coins, cats, animals. Wants
English-writing pals, not in USA.

Kids, ages 12-13, want pals!
Write c/o 7th grade reading teacher,
Linda Garrett, Lake Dallas Primary
School, P.O. Box 548,
Lake Dallas, Texas 75065 USA

Korean students seek pals!
Send name, address, sex, age,
hobbies and photo to Mrs. Joo In Ja
Seoul International Pen Pal Club,
C.P.O. Box 941
Seoul 100-609 KOREA

Lizelle Couch, girl, 13
29 Engelbrecht Road, Austerville
Durban 4052, SOUTH AFRICA
Int: music, videos, reading, dance

Catherine Nkosi, girl, 16
1411 A Emndeni South
P.O. Kwa-Zuma 1868, S. AFRICA
Int: karate, tennis, reading, music

Christine Antunes, girl, 15
181 Augusta Street
Linmeyer 2190 JHB, SO. AFRICA
Int: music, soccer, tennis, cricket

Wendy Wood, girl, 16
133 Donabel Villa, Newton Park
Port Elizabeth 6000, S. AFRICA
Int: riding horses, cycling, swims

Elenor Mather, girl, 17
PO Box 90
Lady Grey, 5540 SOUTH AFRICA
Int: riding horses, music, friends

Venussha Naidoo, girl, 17
Int: reading, foreign affairs, fashion,
and **Lavinia Naidoo**, girl, 15
Int: pop music, baking, gardening,
and **Therusha Naidoo**, girl, 14
Int: animals, baking, reading
70 Rocky Mountain Drive
Shallcross 4093, SOUTH AFRICA

Roeghshana Davids, girl, 16
46 Derwent Crescent,
Conistan Park, Steenberg
Cape Town 8000 SOUTH AFRICA
Int: music, TV, cycling, swimming
Pals from all over the world.

Nosizo, girl, 16
P.O. Box 3066
Witbank, 1035 SOUTH AFRICA
Wants pals who are crazy about art
and good music. Share ideas,
feelings, anything about S. Africa

Irma Rohliene Coles, girl, 14
135F Seabass Road, NE Durban
4051, SOUTH AFRICA
Int: rugby, tennis, socializing

Florence Mqquka, girl, 14
Zone 11, No. 42, Langa, 7455
Cape Town, SOUTH AFRICA
Int: swimming, letters, music, can
write in English or German.

Zingisa Menye, girl, 17
Gtsokolele Township, POB 10059
Matatiele, 4730, SOUTH AFRICA
Int: karate, dance, Radio Transkei

Joelene Adams, girl, 14
143 Highfield Road, Korsten, Port
Elizabeth, 6020, SOUTH AFRICA
Int: reading, music, drama, letters.
Write in English or Afrikaans.

Sakyi Ernest, boy, 14
c/o Margaret Adu, Ministry of
Health, PO Box 31, Nkoranza-B/A
GHANA, WEST AFRICA

Michael Osei Mensah, boy, 15
Seth Agyei, boy, 14
Eric Sarpong, boy, 12
Int: reading, football, tennis
P.O. Box 15, Mampong-Ashanti
GHANA, WEST AFRICA

Yaw Boateng, boy, 15
P.O. Box 562
Sunyani-Fiapre, GHANA
Int: soccer, friends, music, photos

International Year of Tolerance

The United Nations has declared 1995 to be the **International Year of Tolerance**. While all human beings are created equally in dignity, we are all different in terms of our beliefs, values, and talents. Respecting each other and our differences—cultural, religious and behavioral—are an integral part of preserving and promoting the diversity and richness of our planet.

Tolerance is our capacity for or practice of recognizing and respecting the beliefs and/or practices of others. In practical terms, it means becoming a multicultural, multilingual, multi-religious, egalitarian, pluralistic world. As we approach 1995, there are many positive signs illuminating the horizon. Noteworthy among them are—

- The people of **Haiti** are rejoicing as their democratically elected government returns to the National Palace in the capital city of Port-au-Prince, under the leadership of Rev. Jean-Bertrand Aristide

- **Jordan and Israel** progressed toward a peaceful coexistence. On 25 October, the two countries signed a Peace Treaty, ending their long-standing disagreements. The **1994 Nobel Peace Prize** is being awarded to the leaders of Israel and Palestine, for their efforts in seeking a practical, peaceful solution.

- The people of **Northern Ireland**, both Protestant and Catholic, as well as the leaders of the United Kingdom are working toward a peaceful settlement.

- The **1994 Nobel Prize for Literature** is being awarded to Japanese poet and author Kenzaburo Oe. His writings confront the pain of the Japanese people following the Second World War.

- The **International Conference on Population and Development** convened in Cairo, Egypt in early September. Over 100 nations agreed that population control can only be achieved with the empowerment of women worldwide. Education for girls and women must be a priority. Women must be able to make their own choices in regards to children and childrearing.

A White Buffalo Calf Is Born

Most Native Nations of the plains—the Lakota, Dakota, Nakota, as well as the Cheyenne, Blackfoot and Omaha people—consider the white buffalo sacred.

The Lakota legend of the White Buffalo says that at a time of famine, the sacred pipe was brought to the people by a woman who is known as the White Buffalo Calf Woman. When the woman left she turned into a white buffalo calf—a symbol of good will, abundance and peace.

The Native people believe that the White Buffalo Calf Woman will come to them one more time. So when a white calf is born, it is a sign that her return is near.

Birth of a pure white calf on a Wisconsin farm in late summer signifies that positive changes are ahead. Therefore, ever since the birth of this rare buffalo, elders and members of the plains tribes have gone to the farm to offer dream catchers, medicine wheels, sweet grass, wasna, timsila, and other traditional gifts to welcome the calf to the world.

Next year, during medicine lodge ceremonies, this white calf will be tied to the Sun Dance pole and given back to Wakan Tanka, the Great Spirit, to ensure the fertility and survival of the buffalo. In the past, whenever a white buffalo was hunted, Native peoples would offer its hide to the Great Spirit in a special ceremony.

The last time a pure white buffalo calf was born was almost a hundred years ago, shortly after the Wounded Knee Massacre, a time of great turbulence for Native people.

Source: Indian Country Today. Thanks also to our friend Wilma Crowe, a great grandmother of Lakota Sioux heritage, for sharing the information.

Organic food production in the United States is now a \$2 billion dollar business and growing! 72% of consumers are willing to pay more for organic foods believing that organic foods are good for their health. In addition to reduced intake of biocides, consumption of organic foods also promotes sustainable farming practices, safer work place for farm workers. Organic farming also reduces water pollution.

BOOKSHELF

Look for these books in your public or school library or bookstore.

Red Eggs and Dragon Boats: Celebrating Chinese Festivals by Carol Stepanchuk (Pacific View Press, Box 2657, Berkeley, CA 94702). Discover five festivals of China! Vibrant folk art illustrates the Lunar New Year, Clear Brightness Festival, Full-Month Red Egg and Ginger Party, Dragon Boat Festival and Moon Festival. The author includes the stories behind each celebration, as well as recipes, arts activities, traditional customs and Chinese calligraphy. Grades 3 and up.

Christmas Gift: An Anthology of Christmas Poems, Songs, and Stories, Written By and About African-Americans, compiled by Charlemae Hill Rollins (Morrow Junior Books, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019). "Christmas Gift!" African-American slaves would shout to each other on Christmas Day. And, depending on who was quickest, many would win extra presents that day. Rollins gives us an extra gift with this collection of African-American traditions, folktales, songs, and recipes in the Christmas spirit. This reissue of the 1963 collection includes striking linoleum-cut prints by Ashley Bryan. Grades 3 and up.

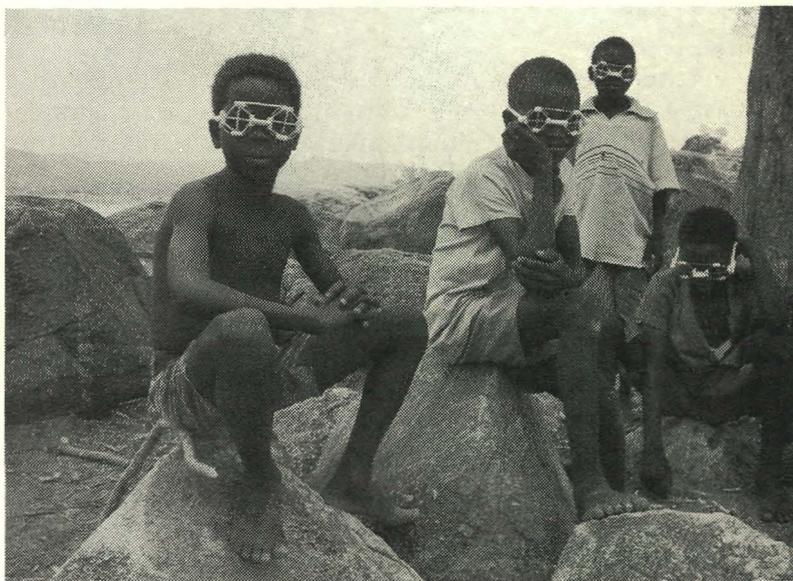
The Jewish Kids Catalog by Chaya M. Burstein (The Jewish Publication Society, 1930 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103) Right from Chapter one, "Some Jewish Things About You," it's obvious this book is exceptional. Burstein's lively text and illustrations introduce you to the richness of Jewish heritage and culture. Includes Jewish names, languages, recipes, crafts, songs, books and much more. Grades 3 and up.

South and North, East and West: The Oxfam Book of Children's Stories, edited by Michael Rosen (Candlewick Press, 2067 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02140). Why do dogs chase cars? Who can tell the best lie and marry the princess? How did our ears, eyes, legs, arms become attached? Find out when you read these and other tales collected from many different cultures. Many of the stories are ideal for reading aloud and are illustrated by well-known artists. All book proceeds benefit Oxfam's programs in developing countries. Grades 2 and up.

Building Your Multicultural Library

Ask Me If I Care: Voices from an American High School by Nancy Rubin and a cast of hundreds (Ten Speed Press, P.O. Box 7123, Berkeley, CA 94704). Teacher Nancy Rubin recreates her Social Living class at Berkeley High by compiling class discussions and speakers, statistics, and hundreds of her students' journal entries. The sometimes humorous, sometimes painful entries address real issues in students' lives: sexuality, violence, racial identity, AIDS, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, self-image, death. It is a remarkable book in that, despite its sobering contents, it compels its readers to care. That's what the authors ask of us. Grades 7 and up.

The Elephant-Headed God and Other Hindu Tales, retold by Debjani Chatterjee (Oxford University Press, 200 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016). Children in India grow up with traditional tales of why Lord Ganesh has an elephant head, or how Lord Rama was helped by monkeys in his quest to destroy the most powerful demon king of Sri Lanka. Now, you too can read twelve such tales about Hindu gods and goddesses. Grades 3 and up.



1995 International Calendar by Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Wisconsin (PO Box 1012, Madison, WI 53701). Weave a Persian carpet in Iran in August and gather *nkoumou* (wild green) in Gabon in December. From Afghanistan to Bangladesh to Cameroon, Peace Corps volunteers have captured on film the people and personalities of diverse cultures. Each calendar day includes important cultural events and celebrations from around the world. Great for your classroom wall!

COMING ATTRACTIONS

In the Next Issue—

Skipping Stones celebrates diversity all year long, yet we know that often in the world diversity is *not* respected. Our February – March 1995 Issue seeks **your** experiences of discrimination and equality. What's going wrong, what's going right in our schools, homes, churches, communities? How can we change the future and respect all people?

Future Features—

Envisioning Life in the Year 2025

Homes and Shelters

The State of the Earth

Teamwork, Cooperative Games and

Reaching Your Highest Potential

Send your own writing and artwork for publication in *Skipping Stones!* The 1995

Skipping Stones Youth Honor Award entries are due by June 25, 1995. Send an SASE for guidelines.

Skipping Stones Magazine

P.O. Box 3939,

Eugene, Oregon 97403



From a 1508 Albrecht Dürer study of St. Paul in the Heller Altar

—Josh Waterman, Corvallis, Oregon. He drew it in the 11th grade at Crescent Valley High School.

More Pen Pals

Kyeremeh Richard, boy, 17
POB 39, Sunyani B/A, GHANA
Int: football, music, reading, travel

Osei Kwadwo, boy, 17
Int: housecleaning, football, music

Nana Osei Prince, boy
Nana Nsiah Kwadwo, boy
POB 176, Sunyani B/A, GHANA

Lawrence Kwakwah, boy, 13
Fiapre Methodist JSS, POB 1770
Sunyani-Fiapre, GHANA
Int: football, table tennis, reading

Stephen Bans, boy, 16
Estate Road, PO Box 615,
Sunyani-B/A, GHANA
Int: table tennis, volleyball, running

Helvi Itenge, girl, 15
PO Box 70228, Khomasdal,
Windhoek 9000, NAMIBIA
Int: asking questions, soccer

Rashine Nerwande, girl, 16
House No. 5566, Glen Norah B
Harare, ZIMBABWE

Penelope Chamanga, girl, 17
POB 70401, Ndola, ZAMBIA
Int: swimming, chess, cooking

Dalitso Dzuwani, girl, 13
PO Box 606, Lilongwe, MALAWI
Int: swimming, skiing, music

Yvonne Mello, girl, 17
POB 678, Gaborone,
BOTSWANA
Int: movies, travel, comics, fashion

Kevin Chokufora, boy, 15
1257/A Mumondo Street
Dzivaresekiva 3, Harare,
ZIMBABWE
Int: travel, video games, languages

Kenyan children, ages 8-18
want pen pals. Write them
c/o Jackton Kayesi, Director
Orphanage Mission Organization
P.O.Box 305 Kakamega, KENYA

Cathrine Kanyepi, girl, 16
ZRP St. Mary's, PO Box 29
Zengeza I, Chitungwiza,
ZIMBABWE

Int: cooking, dance, church

Tawanda Maguze, boy, 12
4 — 45th Ave, Haig Park
Mabelreign, Harare, ZIMBABWE
Int: basketball, soccer, water polo

Leolelus Cunyere, boy, 17
Stand No. 7570, Old Highfield
Harare, ZIMBABWE
Int: music, volleyball, TV, jokes

Emilia Munodawafa, girl, 15
Karoi District Hospital, PO Box 57
Karoi, ZIMBABWE
Int: photography, novels, friends

Randy Pedzisavi, girl, 12
18 Mufenje Road, P.O. Mufakose
Harare, ZIMBABWE
Int: reading, stamps. Girl pen pals!

Boys in Papua New Guinea
want pen pals: Nelson Piru, 12,
Terry Ipape, 13, Anton Yeipa, Amos
Pari, Wayali Mara, Johnna Mamaku,
Joshua Mapa (ages 14), Ikiye Punga,
Harigi Hengene, Robin Minai,
James Embetaya, Thomas Piaro,
Wasoba Esia, Tayape Tamita, Daniel
Andama (ages 15), and Alia Andrew,
Hetaya Gomia, (ages 16).

Write them at Koroba High School,
P.O. Box 72, Tari,
S.H.P., PAPUA NEW GUINEA

There have been numerous requests for a discussion on spirituality in children's lives. Why is there a lack of clear direction on this subject in our society?

Over the past several decades, confidence in the authority of institutions and leaders has greatly diminished. "Question Authority" is a familiar slogan in many countries. That theme surfaces in educational, legal, medical, governmental and family structures. It has, likewise, impacted matters of religion twofold:

First, members of many faith traditions have questioned their institutions and leaders and adopted changes in doctrine and practices at a rapid pace.

Secondly, spirituality is no longer owned solely by religions. Many accept spirituality as inherent to all human beings. As a consequence, more individuals feel empowered to explore spirituality on a deep level.

While many regret our culture's movement from the security of institutional order to the perceived chaos of individual autonomy, it is possible that this evolution will serve as a *stepping stone* for society, much as adolescence is for the evolution of the individual. Children surrounded by adults who are themselves committed to their own spiritual path may well function from a spiritual maturity leading to actions of high ethical standards.

It is important therefore to share some explorations on children and spirituality.

Books to empower parents' spiritual authority—

- *You Are Your Child's First Teacher* by Rahima Baldwin, Celestial Arts, 1989.
- *Whole Parent/Whole Child* by Polly Berrien Berends, Harper & Row, 1983.
- *In the Absence of the Sacred* by Jerry Mander, Sierra Club Books, 1991.

Books on children and spirituality—

- *But Who Made God? Religion and Your Growing Child* by Marieke Anschutz, Floris Books, U.K., 1991.
- *Spiritual Parenting in the New Age*, edited by Anne Carson, The Crossing Press, 1989.
- *The Religious Potential of the Child* by Sofia Cavalletti, Paulist Press.

Creating a climate wherein children trust their own spiritual awareness—

- Welcome and celebrate the child's own true deep feelings.
- Stop to experience moments of awe in face of beauty, discovery, insight.
- Bear in mind a great religious teacher's saying that 'becoming child-like' is the essence of spirituality.

Providing opportunities for co-experiencing times of spiritual awareness with children—

- Allow appropriate times of silence to experience nature's beauty (sunrise on the beach, hilltop sunset).
- Participate, by doing or observing, in appropriate presentations of music, art, dance.
- Share moments of mystical experiences, e.g., candlelight services, Quaker meeting, memorial services, retreats, special services of various faith traditions.

- Cherish spiritual moments of movies: Ghandi's counsel that forgiveness would come by raising a child a Muslim; lessons of humility of Kung-Fu.

Spirituality happens in everyday life situations—

- Living the faces of spirituality: the look and touch of empathetic love; the tear of shared pain; the remorse over a hurtful act; walking with another through difficult times.
- The right story book at the right moments can bring healing and transcendence. For example:

To find the undiscovered good in another person, read *Crow Boy*

To experience goodness overcoming evil, read *The Legend of the Flying Hotdog*

To feel self-empowered when all is lost, read *The Magic Fan*

(Write if you are interested in a more complete list.)

Helpful rituals—

- Times of silence together to get centered before an event, before a meal.
- Daily reading of a brief story over a cup of hot chocolate. Excellent sources:

Stories of the Spirit, Stories of the Heart: Parables of the Spiritual Path from Around the World, edited by Christina Feldman, Harper, 1991.

Lighting Candles in the Dark, Friends General Conference, 1216 Arch St., #2B, Philadelphia, PA, 1992

Twenty Jataka Tales retold by Noor Inayat Khan, Inner Traditions International, Ltd., 1985.

Stories for Telling by William R. White, Augsburg Publishing, 1986.

- Family meetings where individuals bring issues to be solved for the common good, where individual or group action plans are considered.
- Roleplay for conflict situations: How do I see this situation? How might the Other see the situation? How might God be seeing the situation?

Please write and share your experiences and resources.

— Hanna K. Still

International Year of Tolerance

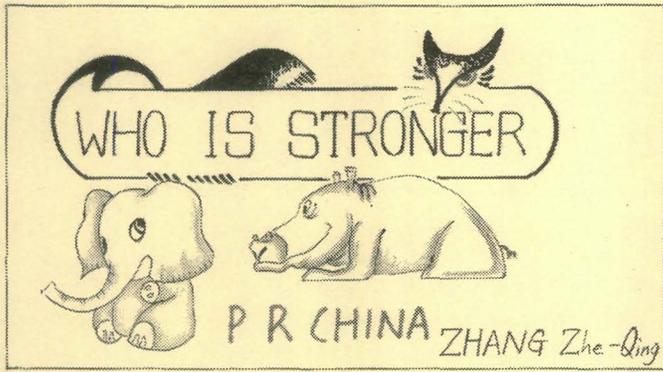
You may wish to use this helpful class exercise as 1995, the International Year of Tolerance, begins.

Have each student come up with a set of values that she or he would live by and would want others to follow. This could take the form of ten commandments, 25 golden rules, constitution. . . Give students ample time to think about what is important to them.

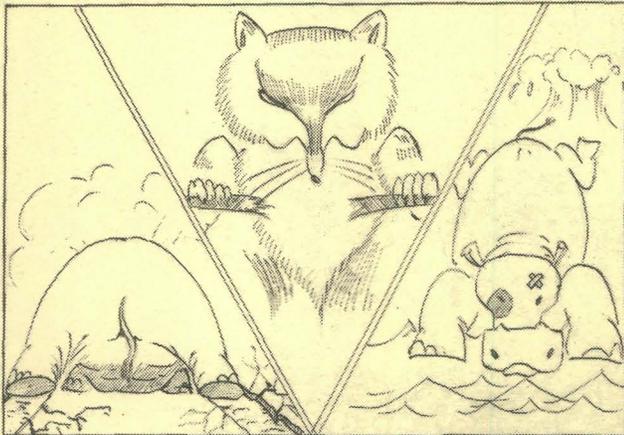
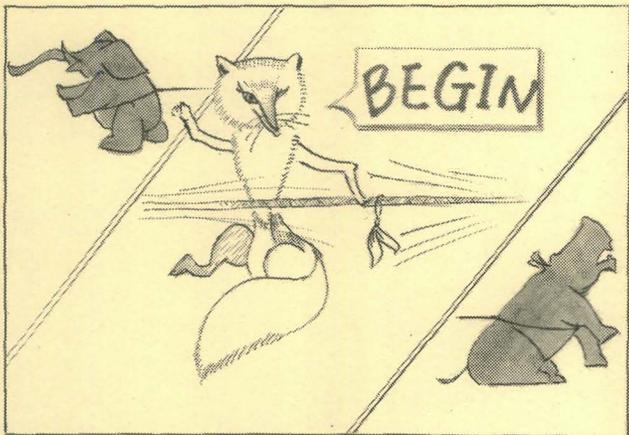
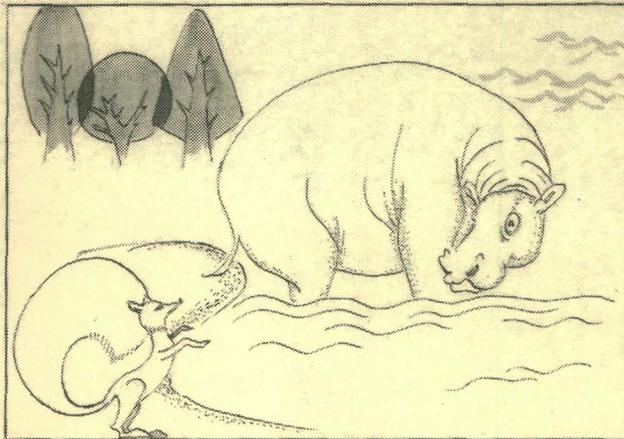
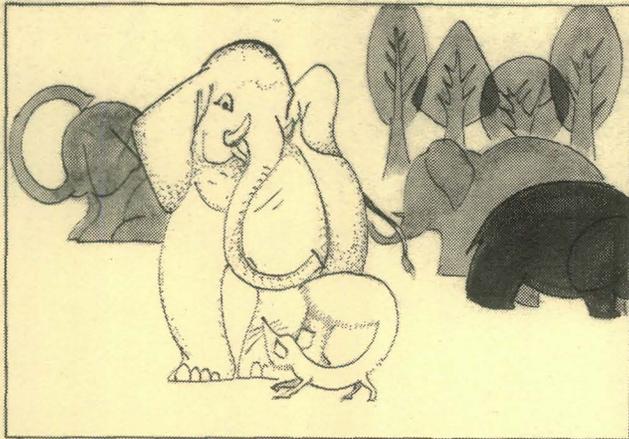
Have your students share their "value systems" with the class. Organize the class into groups, involving students not yet ready to tolerate other points of view. Ask them to come up with a set of group values. What needs to happen for us to co-exist? Role playing and a class discussion might follow.

Additional Resources

Dancing With Siva. (Hinduism) Himalayan Academy, 1994.
How Like An Angel Came I Down. Lindisfarne Press, 1991.



1. One day, a little fox said to a big elephant, "I am stronger than you. If you don't believe me, we can play tug-of-war." The elephant agreed, smiling.
2. Fox also challenged a hippo. The hippo agreed too. Then the clever fox tied the cord to both elephant and hippo.
3. The elephant and hippo both thought that there was only a weak fox on the other side of the cord. When the fox shouted, "Begin!" two fools felt the large force.
4. The two fools gave up little by little. Unable to bear such force, the cord broke. The elephant and the hippo rolled far away from each other and wondered, "Who is stronger?"



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