

**Rain  
bows**



# Rain bows

## N O T I C E B O A R D

*"It was a beech, standing somewhat isolated, and still leafless in quite early Spring. Suddenly I was aware of its skyward-reaching arms and upturned fingertips, as if some vivid life (or electricity) was streaming through them into the spaces of heaven, and of its roots plunged in the earth drawing the same energies from below. The tree was quite still and there was no movement in the branches, but in that moment the tree was no longer a separate or separable organism, but a vast being remifying far into space, sharing and uniting the life of earth and sky full of a most amazing activity."*

**THE PRESERVATION OF TREES**—and indeed not only of trees but of the whole ecosystem of our planet!—is fast becoming an important issue. At this time Mother Nature is forcing a greater awareness on governments and people alike by making us conscious of her needs and limitations. Many people all over the world now recognize the importance of taking care of the environment. As this is an area concerning the wellbeing of us all, we felt that it would be timely to dedicate this issue of *Rainbows* to supporting the aims of the ecology movement.

Our inability to be in harmony with the forces of Nature is derived from a mind and heart that is clouded by the three poisons of greed, hatred and delusion. To re-establish a correct relationship with ourselves, the beings around us and the environment, it is of paramount importance that we work towards purifying the heart of these three poisons. As the heart is purified, a natural balance is found where all things flow harmoniously.

For those interested in a more active approach to the ecological issues of our time, the Buddhist Peace Fellowship would welcome any enquiries. Please write to Martin Pitt, 38 Arnos St., Bristol BS4.

This year we have not run the usual Dhamma classes for children at Amaravati. Instead, we have concentrated on developing the Summer Camp School and the family weekends. Unfortunately, while we have been re-structuring the camp we have had to limit the number of people attending. We apologise for not being able to include everybody this year. However, we hope that once we have a firmer base for the camp we will be able to expand the numbers again in future years.

For those families wishing to stay at Amaravati on another occasion, there will be a family weekend from 29th September-2nd October. If you would like to come, please notify us beforehand by writing to "Families", c/o Amaravati. Towards the end of the year—on December 10th—we shall be holding a special family day, to which all are invited.

*The Sangha*

**THIS IS THE FIRST RAINBOWS** to appear since the end of 1988. A busy year has intervened to prevent all attempts to complete this issue any earlier—an opportunity for all of us to cultivate patience!

We were very happy to receive the responses to the request in the last issue for all recipients of *Rainbows* to renew their place on the mailing list by sending in the form which was enclosed. Many of you also sent along donations to help defray our publication costs, for which we are most grateful.

We were surprised, too, to see that many people did not respond. Those names have been removed from the mailing list for future issues—although everyone will still receive this issue. A reminding note is enclosed if this is to be your last issue, just in case you really still wish to receive *Rainbows* in the post. The thought did occur to us that the small size of the response form might have meant that it got lost immediately, so we are enclosing a larger one this time.

No doubt some readers are wondering just how frequently *Rainbows* is supposed to appear—and so are we, for that matter! In general, we aim to produce 3 issues a year, at approximately equal intervals, but in some cases it is not possible to do so (such as with this issue).

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## CONTENTS

Page	
3	A View of Home —Sister Setima
7	Make a World Spinner —Brenda Poppellwell
8	The Search for the Source —Anagarika Susan
12	A Smile —Anonymous
13	Smiles Like to Travel —Ajahn Sucitto
16	The Eightfold Path —Sister Thanissara
18	A Kindness Returned —Sister Thanissara
23	Tribes —An article on Aborigines
26	Tribes —On the Yansamezi Indians
29	Do You Know About a Tortoise? —Brenda Poppellwell
30	Children's Contributions —Maga and Agata Korbel
31	Parents' Page —Ajahn Amaro

# A VIEW OF HOME

HAVE YOU EVER LOOKED at the shining stars at night-time and thought about the many miles of deep silent space between us and the moon or us and any of the other planets? Have you ever wondered what we look like from outer space? Well . . .



The familiar buildings and streets of my hometown which I had seen so many times from the stationary rocket, could no longer be seen...



...well known rivers and hills became small patterns

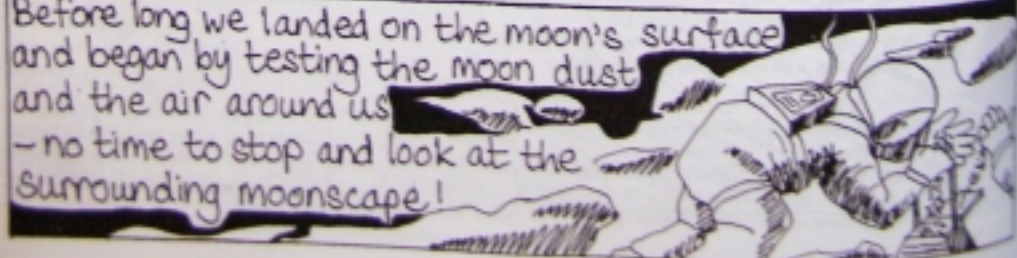
and pretty soon the country's borders disappeared into brown and blue patterns made by the land masses and the sea.

As I sped on our planet became rounder and smaller and the darkness and silence ahead grew to fill the window frame

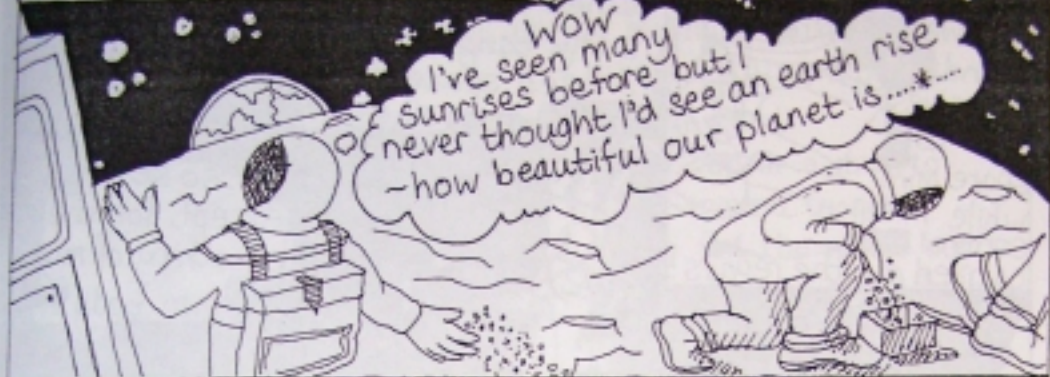


Ahead loomed the moon, cold, silent and grey, and behind was our beautiful blue-green home - the size of a beach ball ... then a marble ...

Before long we landed on the moon's surface and began by testing the moon dust and the air around us - no time to stop and look at the surrounding moonscape!



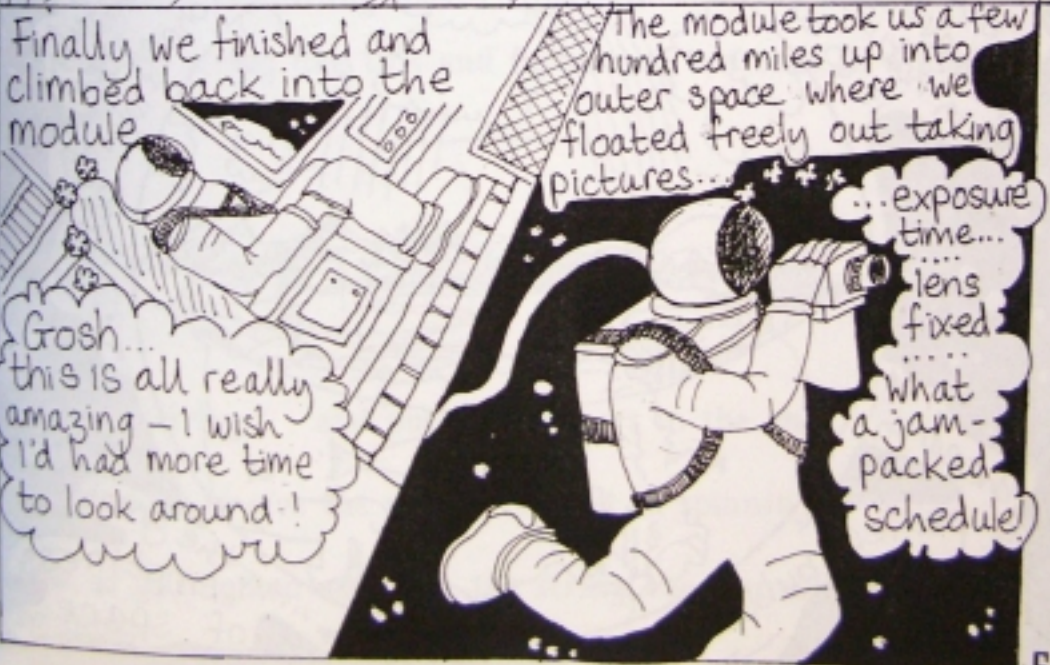
While packaging some dust I glanced up at the moon's horizon  
... where the earth was rising ...



Wow  
I've seen many  
sunrises before but I  
never thought I'd see an earth rise  
- how beautiful our planet is ... \*



O well, back  
to the moon dust  
and experiments ...  
... 100g ... 150g ...



Finally we finished and  
climbed back into the  
module

The module took us a few  
hundred miles up into  
outer space where we  
floated freely out taking  
pictures ... \*

Gosh ...  
this is all really  
amazing - I wish  
I'd had more time  
to look around -!

... exposure  
time ...  
... lens  
fixed ...  
...  
What  
a jam-  
packed  
schedule!

Suddenly a camera broke down and we found ourselves with 15 spare mins while mission control carried out the repairs!



Attached only by my oxygen pipe, I floated round away from the module and turned to face the awesome nearly tangible darkness of deep space ahead...



...so still, except for the breathing of my own body...

...and the pulse of my blood...

Here I was...

...an earth creature...

...millions of miles from my fragile iridescent-blue home...

... then I began to see how everything in nature is so connected...



... one beautiful connected flowing pattern

... the earth a perfect bubble of life

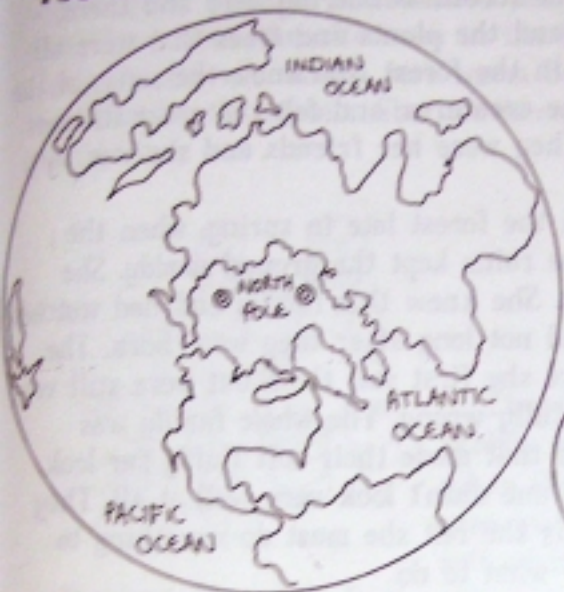
... in the great emptiness of space

# MAKE A WORLD SPINNER

**YOU NEED:** coloured felt tips, an old birthday card, scissors, thin string.

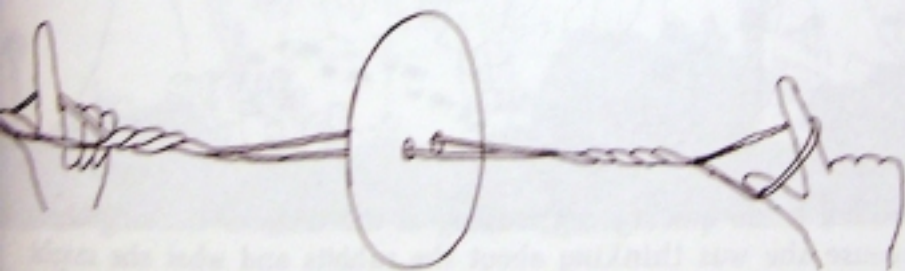
**On the Card:**

use a cup or a mug to draw around to get a circle. Cut the circle out and make two small holes for the string to go through.



Before you thread the string through it, decorate both sides with a map of the world, or your country, or your home town ... or just a beautifully-coloured pattern.

Thread the string like this and fasten the two ends in a knot.



Twist the string and put your fingers in the ends.

Get someone to give the spinner a start in spinning.

Now, as you tighten or loosen the string, the disc will go on spinning.



## THE SEARCH FOR THE SOURCE

ONCE UPON A TIME there lived a girl named Jyoti. Her favourite activity was to walk through the forest, wandering here and there, taking notice of the creatures and the plants and trees that were all around. She felt quite at home in the forest. She knew the songs of the birds, the habits of many of the creatures, and felt the great stillness and wisdom in the old trees. They were her friends and she was very happy to walk amongst them.

One day she was walking in the forest late in spring, when the bluebells were blooming and the rains kept the ground muddy. She came across a family of rabbits. She knew this family and had watched the little ones first jump around not long after they were born. The little ones had grown a lot since she first saw them but were still very little. But something was dreadfully wrong. The whole family was covered with a black dirty film that made their soft fluffy fur look unkempt and nasty. The littlest one didn't look very well at all. They looked sick. When Jyoti saw this she felt she must do something to help them. But she didn't know what to do.



She walked home quickly, not looking at the trees or noticing the birds, because she was thinking about the rabbits and what she might do to help them. When she got home she went to talk with her mum and told her all that she had seen.

Now Jyoti's mother said, "Yes, it is a very good thing to respond with kindness and concern for the creatures of this world. When you sit silently paying attention to your breath, the natural wisdom and compassion of your heart can express itself and you will know what to do. You don't have to worry or think too much about it."

So Jyoti did just that. That night she sat silently with care and attention focused on her breath, before going to sleep. She slept very well. When she woke up and washed her face she had an idea. Every morning she woke up and washed her face. And sometimes when she came back from the afternoon in the forest everything was dirty. First thing she did was take a nice warm bath. No reason she couldn't do the same for the rabbits. She told her mum and dad her idea and off they went.



They came to the spot where the rabbits were, and carefully washed them all so that the black greasy film was gone and their lovely fur was nice and soft again.

The next day, when Jyoti came to the spot where the rabbits were, she saw that they were covered with the greasy oily film all over again. She felt upset, and ran home, hardly seeing the forest at all. When she got home she told her dad, who scooped up Jyoti in his arms, comforting her, and said, "Look more deeply. Maybe there are some things which are causing the problem you have to discover."



So that night, sitting still in her room, she quieted her mind by focusing her attention on her breath. The frustration of the afternoon went away, and she slept well.

In the morning when she awoke, she washed her face as usual. When she looked in the mirror, her face was covered in a rusty brown colour. Looking carefully at the water, she could see it had rust in it. That gave her an idea.

She ran to where the rabbits were, and looked at the stream near by. Sure enough, there was a black greasy film on it. She thought to herself, "I wonder where the greasy black stuff is coming from? I will have to keep cleaning the rabbits unless I remove the source."



Later, back at home, she told her mum and dad. Together they decided to investigate. So off they walked, up the stream, paying very careful attention to what they saw.

It seemed that they could see a greasy film of oil on the water for a ways up the stream and then it seemed to disappear beyond their neighbour's farm. They decided to go and ask and see if the farmer might know anything about it.

So they walked up to the main door of the farmhouse, and knocked. When the young gentleman answered the door Jyoti asked, "Excuse me sir, do you know anything about a black oily film on the water? You see, I found some rabbits who were all dirty and not looking very well and I would like to help them out."

The young man said, "I'm sorry, I don't know anything about..." Then he stopped and twisted his face as if he were trying to make it think for him and then said, "Well, maybe I do know."



He told how he had just changed the oil on all of the farm vehicles, and had put the old oil - which was very dirty - into a container, until he figured out a better place to dispose of it.

They went to go look at the container, and they could see that there was a crack in the bottom. Slowly the oil was leaking out. The water from the spring rains was carrying it to the stream.

Jyoti was quite happy when she saw this, because she was sure she would be able to help the rabbits now. The four of them thought about how to remove the oil from the water, how to store it and then dispose of it properly. They had seen the source of the problem, and it would not be difficult to solve. They decided the best thing to do was to take the oil to a garage that used lots of oil and could recycle it to be used again.

The next day, Jyoti, with her mum and dad, went back to the family of rabbits to clean them for the last time. And this time before they left, Jyoti gave them all some fresh carrots and fed the little one some milk to help them get well.

That night, when she was sitting quietly in her room before going to sleep, she felt a nice warm glow inside. She thought about what had happened with the rabbits and how she and everyone else had been able to help them. That night she slept very peacefully.



# A SMILE

A smile costs nothing, but gives much.

It enriches those who receive,

without making poorer those who give!

It takes just a moment,

but the moment of it sometimes lasts forever.

None is so rich or mighty that they can get along without it,

And none is so poor that they cannot be made rich by it.

A smile creates happiness in the home,

Fosters goodwill in business,

And is the sign of friendship.

It brings rest to the weary,

Cheer to the discouraged,

Sunshine to the sad,

And is nature's best antidote for trouble.



Yet -

it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed or stolen,

For it is something that is of no value to anyone

Until it is given away.

## SMILES LIKE TO TRAVEL

### DO YOU LIKE TO SMILE?

Do you like it when people smile at you?

Try a little gentle smile now, to see how it feels. No ... not a giggle, but something soft and warm, like a sunset on a perfect day. It starts with a feeling of kindness in the heart, doesn't it? Maybe you should think of that sunset, or of someone you love who looks after you.



When you do that, can you feel a smile glowing up from your heart that slowly makes your lips into a smile? How does that feel?

You can let your whole body enjoy the happiness of that smile. It's easy. You have to close your eyes so that you can concentrate on the feeling of smiling. It's a kind of glow. Now concentrate and bring that glow up to your closed eyes, one at a time ... now it's like a light. Once you can see and feel that glow, you can send it around your whole body. Slowly now!

Start with the centre of your forehead - imagine that there's a gentle glowing smile, like the one the Buddha has, spreading over your forehead.

You have to let it go at its own pace. Then you can let it sweep back over your head just as if someone is stroking your hair ... and down the back of your neck.

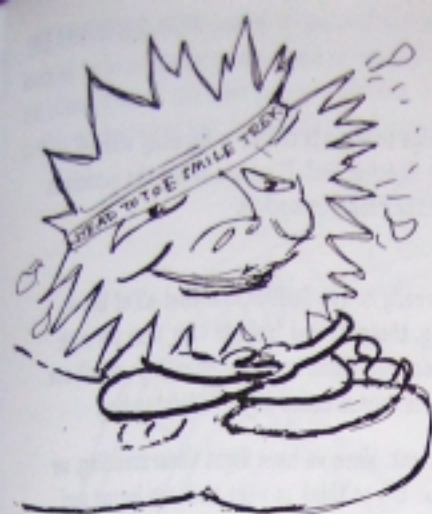
Your chest likes to smile too. Right in the centre of your chest, that Buddha smile feels very comfortable. If you let yourself breathe slowly with a smile in the middle of your chest, it will gradually spread until you can feel it in your heart, your lungs and your tummy. When you breathe in you can feel it expand, and then when you breathe out it gently washes over your body. All you have to do is keep that kind glow in the centre of your chest, and then watch what happens when you breathe. Some people like to feed their smile (which is doing so much) by giving it a word, or a thought like "Peace" or "May I be at peace" or a picture of someone that they know and care for. That's what the best smiles live on, don't they!

I bet your feet have never had a smile visit them. Feet must feel terribly lonely down there at the end of our legs being walked on all day. But smiles like to travel to where they're needed, and it's an interesting journey.



*Smiles like to travel!*

Can you feel your upper leg, and imagine a smile moving along inside it around the muscles and down to the knee. What do you think those fleshy bits and bony bits look like? You can feel them, can't you, tingling and throbbing. And your smile can send some peace and kindness their way as it passes, curling around your knee, now sliding down your calf and shin. Slow down now, here comes your ankle, so you have to turn the corner into your foot.



Phew!

Lots of fine bones here to hop over – and also that curving arch under the foot – until you find yourself, a little tired, in your toes. So get the glow back by resting in your big toe until you feel like going home to your chest. The breath will be waiting for you there, peaceful and gentle as a song at bed-time.

That's how you let your whole body smile. It takes some practice to get to all of the body, but that's because some parts of our body we don't notice until they hurt. It's like that with other people too. We don't think of how they feel very often, so we're not always kind to each other. But remember what it feels like to have a smile move in your own heart and body. So it would be good if we could let our smile travel over to other people too. They'll need an extra helping of "May they be well, may they be at peace", but smiles like to travel, and they're welcome wherever they go!

*Ajahn Sucitto*



*Smiles are*

*always*

*welcome!*



# THE EIGHTFOLD PATH

**IF WE WANT TO HELP OUR PLANET**, one of the most important things to learn is to live in harmony with all things. The Buddha showed us a way to do this: this way is called the *Eightfold Path*. If we can follow the guidelines of the Eightfold Path, we will automatically help the environment and the people around us.

The Eightfold Path is as follows:

**RIGHT SEEING or UNDERSTANDING** This means seeing life as it really is. The Buddha said that all of life is constantly changing . . . whether it's our bodies, the clouds in the sky, thoughts and feelings that pass through our minds and hearts, trees or animals. In fact, everything that we can see, think or feel is changing—it will not satisfy us forever, and does not really belong to us. Seeing that this is true is called Right Understanding.

**RIGHT THOUGHT** This means being very careful about the way we think. When we have Right Understanding, we are also able to think about life in a clear way. With Right Thought, we try to think in ways that are loving and kind, and we try not to hold negative or hateful thoughts in our mind.

**RIGHT SPEECH** When we have Right Thought, we will be able to see the harm of lies, and nasty or gossipy speech. To have Right Speech is not always so easy, because we can sometimes say things very quickly without really thinking about the harm they might cause. It is always very beautiful to listen to someone who has Right Speech, because they speak true and kind words.

**RIGHT ACTION** This means keeping the Five Precepts. These are:

1. Not to harm or take the life of any living being.
2. Not to steal or take anything which has not been given to us.
3. Not to indulge in harmful sexual behaviour.
4. Not to lie, gossip, swear or use hurtful speech.
5. Not to take drink or drugs that cloud the mind or harm the body.

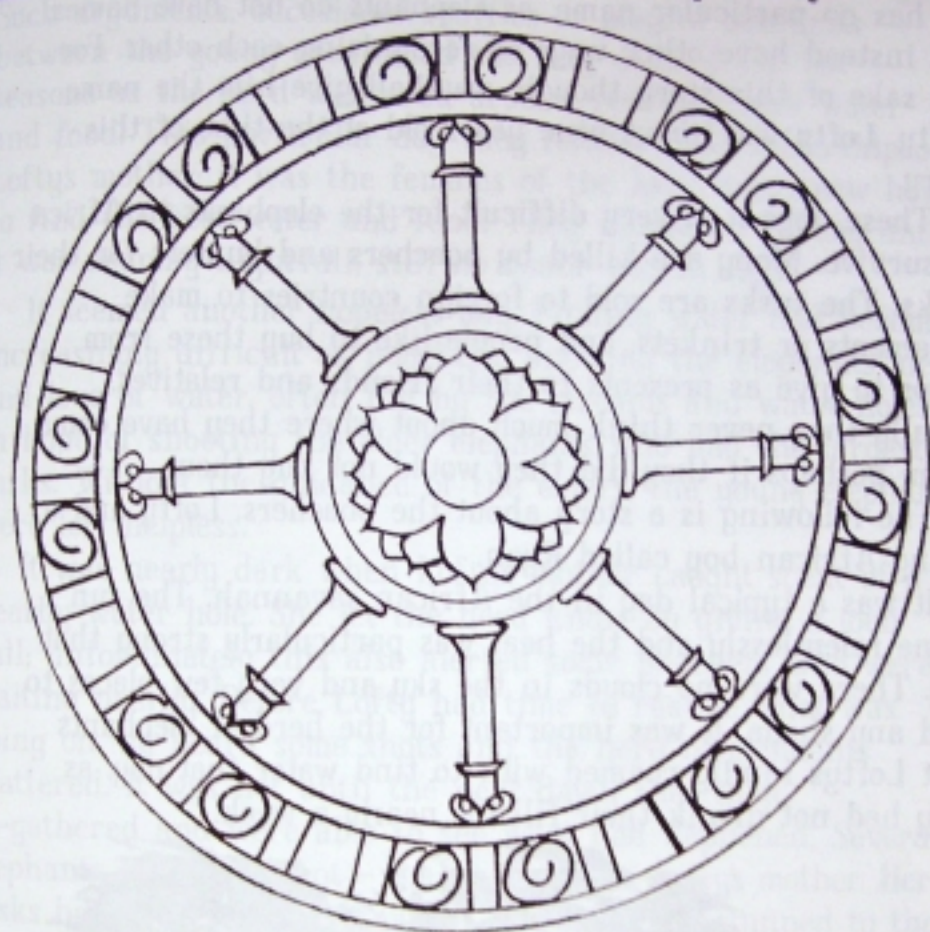
**RIGHT LIVELIHOOD** This means that one should not have a job that involves destroying life or harming any other living beings. It also means to avoid working in a way that increases greed for money or power. A lot of Buddhists prefer to have jobs that involve helping others or the environment.

**RIGHT EFFORT** This means that one must make the effort to practise the teachings of the Buddha in everyday life. The path of Buddhism is about helping and improving ourselves. It is not always easy to go against our bad habits. Therefore we have to use Right Effort, which means we do the best we can in each situation.

**RIGHT MINDFULNESS** This is one of the most important steps of the Eightfold Path, because all the other steps need Right Mindfulness. This means being attentive to life moment by moment. When we have Right Mindfulness we can pay attention to what's happening in our hearts and minds, as well as to what's happening around us. When we see life clearly through Right Mindfulness, we know how to follow the rest of the Path.

**RIGHT CONCENTRATION** This involves meditation. In meditation we learn how to calm our minds by concentrating on the feeling of our breath. When the mind calms down, we are able to understand how things work. Seeing the way all things work together—or sometimes don't!—takes us to Right Understanding, the first step of the Eightfold Path. This is why the Eightfold Path is shown as a circle, and not as a straight line. Each step of the path works together with all the other steps.

THE EIGHTFOLD PATH covers all parts of our lives. It is called a "path", because it is something we follow, and it leads us to true happiness and peace of heart. It is very easy to create harmful situations in life for ourselves and others if we do not have proper guidelines. The Buddha was such a wise teacher that he knew how to give guidelines that would last for thousands of years, and that would be useful to many human beings.



Here are some questions about the Eightfold Path for you to answer.

1. Write down five jobs which follow Right Livelihood and five jobs which don't. If you can think of more than five, write these down too.
2. Write down which step of the Path would you find most difficult to follow, and say why. Which would you find the easiest, and why?
3. Can you see how the steps of the Path are linked together? Can you write about this?
4. Do you think the Precepts are easy or difficult to keep in this day and age? Why?
5. Which Precept do you think would be easiest to keep, and which would be the easiest to break? Why?
6. Can you draw your own Dhamma wheel to show the Eightfold Path?
7. How do you think meditation would help in someone's ordinary life? Give some examples of times when it would be helpful.

If you would like to send in your answers to these questions, we would be very happy to read them and, if possible, publish some of them in the next Rainbows. Please send them to "Families", c/o Amaravati.

## A KINDNESS RETURNED

**A**T THE PRESENT TIME, there lives in Africa an elephant. He has no particular name, as elephants do not have names, but instead have other ways of recognizing each other. For the sake of this story though, we shall give him the name Lofty. Lofty was about nine years old at the time of this story.

These days it is very difficult for the elephants in Africa to survive. Many are killed by poachers and hunters for their tusks. The tusks are sold to foreign countries to make ornaments or trinkets, and people like to buy these from shops to give as presents to their friends and relatives. Usually they never think much about where they have come from; perhaps if they did they would not buy them.

The following is a story about the poachers, Lofty and a young African boy called Ryan.

It was a typical day in the African savannah. The sun shone relentlessly and the heat was particularly strong that day. There were no clouds in the sky and very few places to find any shade. It was important for the herd of elephants that Lofty's family roamed with to find water that day, as they had not drunk their fill for nearly a week.



Their thirst was getting stronger and some of the younger calves were feeling quite irritable. Lofty had got into an argument with one of his cousins over who was the strongest. Such arguments, occasional scuffles or playful outbursts between the young ones filled the lazy days of the hot seasons as the herd wandered around seeking fresh water and food. This particular day they followed the leadership of Lofty's mother; it was the females of the herd who knew how to find the best water and food. They wandered all day until it was nearing night-fall; still no water was in sight.

It seemed another hopeless day. Finding water had become increasingly difficult as poachers, knowing the elephants' need and love of water, often hid by the streams and water holes in hope of shooting the older elephants who had the largest tusks. Without the guidance of the elders, the young elephants were left helpless.

It was nearly dark when Lofty's mother caught scent of a nearby water hole. She let the herd know by giving a loud call; unfortunately this also alerted some poachers who were waiting nearby. Before Lofty had time to realize what was going on, he heard some shots and the herd of elephants scattered. It was not until the next dawn that they re-gathered and were able to see what had happened. Several elephants had been shot – one of them was Lofty's mother. Her tusks had been mercilessly pulled out. Lofty was stunned to the quick and for days after he wandered alone, not caring to eat or drink, but only crying for the loss of his mother.

He was so upset he didn't know quite where he was going, and he landed up wandering dangerously close to a human village. He heard the shouts of children playing, but before he could turn away the children caught sight of Lofty and began to taunt him and poke him with sticks. Lofty was too exhausted to do much other than feel sad at their behaviour. One of the boys who was sitting to one side looked on quietly. His name was Ryan – he was the son of the village chief. He was not happy at all with what he saw the other children doing.

"Don't do that! Can't you see how the poor young elephant is suffering? He is tired, thirsty and weakened by lack of food," said Ryan.

The other children listened to Ryan. They respected what he said, partly because he was the chief's son and partly because he had a certain air of authority about him. The children left Lofty alone and carried on with their games. Ryan approached Lofty with a sadness in his eyes:

"Please come with me so that I can give you some food and water," he said.

Lofty did not trust the humans, so with his last strength he walked away, thinking that he would find his own water and food. He didn't particularly want the help of the young boy, though he was glad that he saved him from the other children. Lofty wandered for many miles until he eventually found his own water to drink and some fresh green leaves to eat. Soon some of his previous strength was restored.

That night he lay under the light of the full moon. He was not tired, so instead he began to think about the nature of life and the ways of animals and human beings.



"This life is an uncertain thing," he thought. "We're here one day and maybe gone the next. It's not certain that I'll even see the end of this night."

He remembered the sayings of the old wise elephant that used to live with his herd but who had long since gone his own way.

"Live as well as you can each day, this is the best insurance for the future. Our bodies are born and they die, they belong to the earth, they are not our true nature," the wise elder used to say.

Lofty felt comforted by these thoughts and watching the stars move silently across the skies, he gradually fell into a deep sleep. In his heart he felt close to his loved ones, and he even felt he could understand those who had taken the life of his own mother. "We are all of one essence," he thought, "and each will receive the results of his or her own actions in due course."

As dawn broke, Lofty woke refreshed from his sleep. He set out enjoying the beauty of the forest around him. Before long he came across the body of a young boy lying helplessly at the bottom of a tree. "A young human," he thought. For a moment he felt a surge of anger at the humans, and with it a desire to trample on the small body to avenge his mother's death. Then he remembered the thoughts from the night before. "Two wrongs don't make a right, I shall go and see if I can help him." Lofty went up to the boy, and looked carefully at his face. It was the same boy who had helped him the day before.

Ryan, who usually liked to wander off in the forest on his own, had lost his way and could not find his way back to the village. He had climbed a tree, hoping to see which direction to go in, but had slipped from a high branch and fallen, banging his head hard against the dry earth. Lofty knew that a human child would not survive the night if left in the forest. In spite of his fear and anger for the humans, he picked Ryan up in his trunk and walked towards the village.

The rhythm of the elephant's walk brought Ryan to his senses. He opened his eyes and at once recognized Lofty from the day before. Lofty looked at Ryan and they held each other's gaze for quite a while. A lot was communicated in that silent gaze. By the time they reached the village they felt a strong love for one another, they seemed to have many things in common.

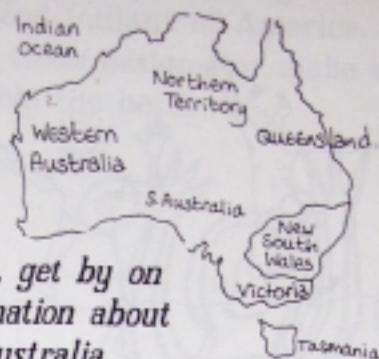


Lofty left Ryan at the edge of the village. They took one last look at each other before Lofty turned and walked away to meet with whatever life brought him. Ryan stayed on that spot for several hours feeling that he had not only lost a good friend but also a real soul mate. Hot tears fell from his eyes; never before had he cried so much from the bottom of his heart.

Now this happened a few years ago. As each year has passed, it's become more and more difficult for the elephants to survive. Ryan never forgot his meeting with the strange silent elephant who had so much to tell in his eyes. As he grew into a young man he became stronger and more wise. He would not allow any of the villagers to take the life of the elephants. Instead he encouraged them to help fight against the poaching and killing that was going on. Lofty too never forgot the human child that he had saved that day in the forest. In his dreams at night he often wondered if they would meet again, and if it would ever be possible for men and elephants to live in harmony with each other.

## THE ABORIGINES

*Having heard how the elephants live in their elephant kingdom, we thought you would like to hear how some humans, who also live in tribes, get by on this planet. First, here is some information about the Aborigines, sent by a friend in Australia.*



**T**HE AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL RACE is one of the oldest known to man. History books say that they came to the Great South Land at least 10,000 years ago.

That was long before the ancient Egyptians, and way back in time before the mythical Greeks. Some say the Aborigines paddled their fragile canoes across the thin strips of water that divided the mainland of Australia from the islands that stretched down from Asia.

Time passed.... When the waterways spread out and became an ocean, the Aborigines were stranded. The earliest Aborigines fitted well into the South Land. They were a simple people, content to lead a simple life, but they were clever. They had to be, for life was harsh. The bush was their home and the strange animals that roamed the land were their food.

By passing down tribal customs and traditions they taught their children to survive. Even today, in some remote areas in the continent of Australia, there are Aborigines living the same way as their ancestors. They still sing the songs and tell the tales of the far-off days of their origin.

Aboriginal folklore has a strange, uncanny likeness to the stories of creation in the Bible. The "Dreamtime" is the name they give to the stories that tell of their earliest days, when the great Spirit-God - Byamee - pushed the rivers and mountains in shape, and put all creatures upon the land.





Children led a happy life. Loved, well cared-for and well fed, they were carefree until about twelve years of age. From the time they were babies, the women of the tribe taught them about the animals and the plants they lived on, and the bush-lore they must know for protection. When about twelve, the boys came under direct care of their fathers, and prepared for initiation and manhood. At the same time, girls were given more important tasks and prepared for marriage.

Though Aboriginal children played games of a serious nature, meant to teach them things they must know for survival, they nevertheless spent a great deal of time playing games that are very similar to those played by modern children. Playing "mother and father" and keeping house, or "guniah", is one example. Ball games, dolls, hide-and-seek, throwing stones across water, climbing trees, playing in water, cat's cradle and chasings were other favourites.

Art was an important part of the traditions and ritual of Aboriginal life. Many of the designs were symbolic and sacred. Others depicted objects in everyday use. Tribal designs were painted on the body as well as on weapons, on bark, or carved into rock; to illustrate the "Dreamtime" and make it seem more realistic.

## THINGS TO DO:

Here are some simple designs used by Aborigines; they are also similar to the designs used by the Red Indians of America. Find a large stone and paint one of these designs, or make up your own. (Enamel paints are probably the best).



## BRAZIL'S YANOMAMI INDIANS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR THE RAIN FORESTS

**TREES ARE OUR VERY GOOD FRIENDS**, benefitting us and all creatures, in many ways. They help keep the air fresh and clean, since they like to breathe in part of the air that is not good for humans (carbon dioxide), and then breathe out extra oxygen - which is just what people need the most! They feed and shelter many birds, animals and insects; their strong roots hold the ground in place, so it doesn't wash away in the rain; and when they die and crumble back into the earth, what used to be a tree becomes food for the new plants that grow. They feed and shelter us, too - although unlike most animals, we usually have to chop down the tree to make use of its wood.



If you study the weather, you'll find out that trees are very important in helping clouds to take shape in the sky, and send their rain to the earth. So when too many trees are cut down in one place, the amount of rainfall can diminish. Drought can follow, and the land may eventually turn to desert.

Of course, trees are also very beautiful and soothing to look at; and they teach us about change as we watch them through the seasons. The Buddha liked trees very much: he was born, was enlightened and attained *Parinibbana* (at the death of his body) under a tree. Often he would encourage his disciples to wander and find shade and shelter under trees.

Our civilizations powerful modern technology has brought about a desperate situation for trees in the rain forests - great numbers of them are being cut down, every day. (*Rain forests* are the great jungle forests of the lands where the weather is very hot.) In fact, so many trees are being lost, that the weather of all the earth is being affected. There are also problems for the people who live in these forests, such as the Yanomami Indians.

The Yanomami Indians live in Brazil, which has one-third of the world's rain forests. These forests contain 55,000 rare species of flowering plants, half of which occur only in the Brazilian Amazon. Many medicines used by Western doctors come from these plants. The forests support much unusual wildlife, insects and birds. And they are the home for many groups of Indians, who have lived there for as long as 10,000 years.

The Yanomami cultivate small gardens of wild plants, vegetables and fruits. These are used for food, medicines and clothing. When a tribe moves away from a place, these small garden plots easily blend back into the forest, in a way which enriches the environment rather than takes away from it. By the time they are teenagers, Yanomamis know the difference between what is good and what is poisonous to eat, how plants should be prepared as food, and the other uses the plants may have. Besides food, the forest gives the Indians other important things, such as cotton for weaving hammocks, firewood, vines for baskets and canes for arrows.

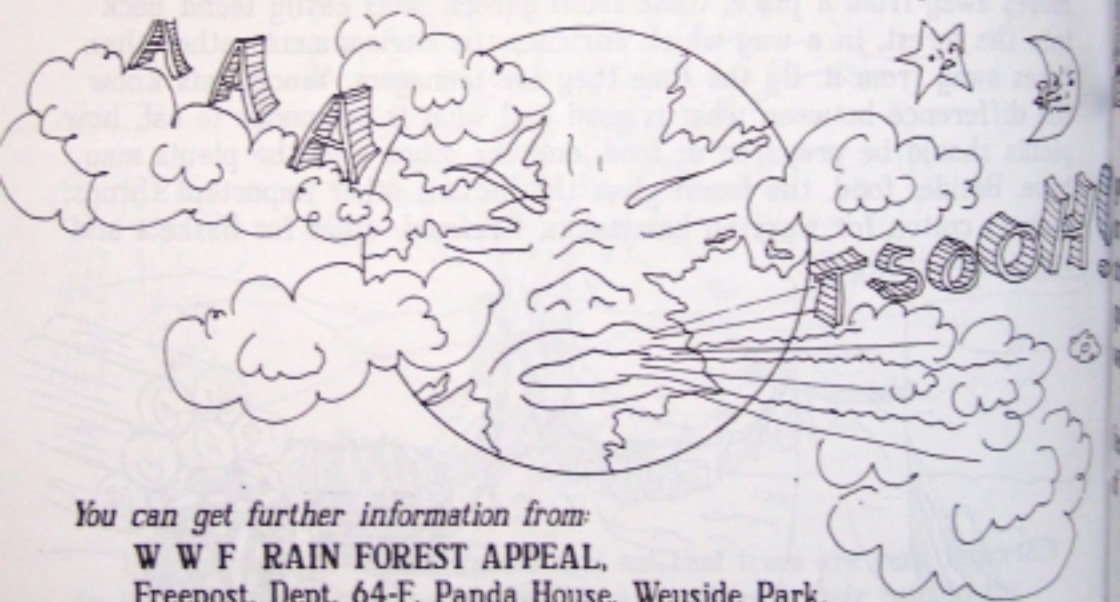


The Yanomami are considered the most skilful and sensitive forest managers in the world. They move through the forests carefully, using only what they need from the plants, trees and animals. Everything is eaten at a seasonal time; nothing is stored. Whatever is gathered or hunted is shared out amongst all the families - generosity is their greatest virtue.

The Yanomami way of life is now in danger. Their home, the rain forests, are being cut down and cleared, for a variety of reasons: for wood to export to rich countries; for grazing land for cattle, whose beef is exported mostly for hamburgers; for highways and dams; for gold mining; and for land for new people to come and settle.

Unfortunately, this cutting causes great devastation. For example, to make just one hamburger, 55 square feet - the size of a small kitchen - needs to be cleared. Such an area usually contains a 60-foot tall tree, 50 saplings and seedlings, and 20-30 species of plants. In 1988, vast areas of rain forests - the size of Belgium - were cut down in a few weeks. Rain forest land is not especially good for cattle grazing, either; after about ten years, the ground starts to erode and turn into wasteland.

This destruction is not only harming such an ancient civilization as that of the Yanomami Indians, but it is also affecting the whole planet, which includes us all. We wouldn't be happy if our own lungs were being poisoned - we wouldn't be able to breathe! But that is what is happening to the earth, for the rain forests are the lungs of the planet.



*You can get further information from:*

**W W F RAIN FOREST APPEAL,**  
Freepost, Dept. 64-F, Panda House, Weyside Park,  
GODALMING, Surrey GU7 1BP

## HERE ARE SOME DIFFERENT THINGS TO DO:

1. Can you find any plants or flowers round where you live that can be used for foods or medicines?
2. Save up your pocket money and plant a tree either in your garden or, if it's allowed, in your school grounds.

## DO YOU KNOW ABOUT A TORTOISE?

**WE ALL NEED TO BE TREATED PROPERLY** so that we grow up and well—and it is the same for animals. If we ever have a pet we should know how it should be treated to keep it happy. Do you know anyone who has a pet tortoise?



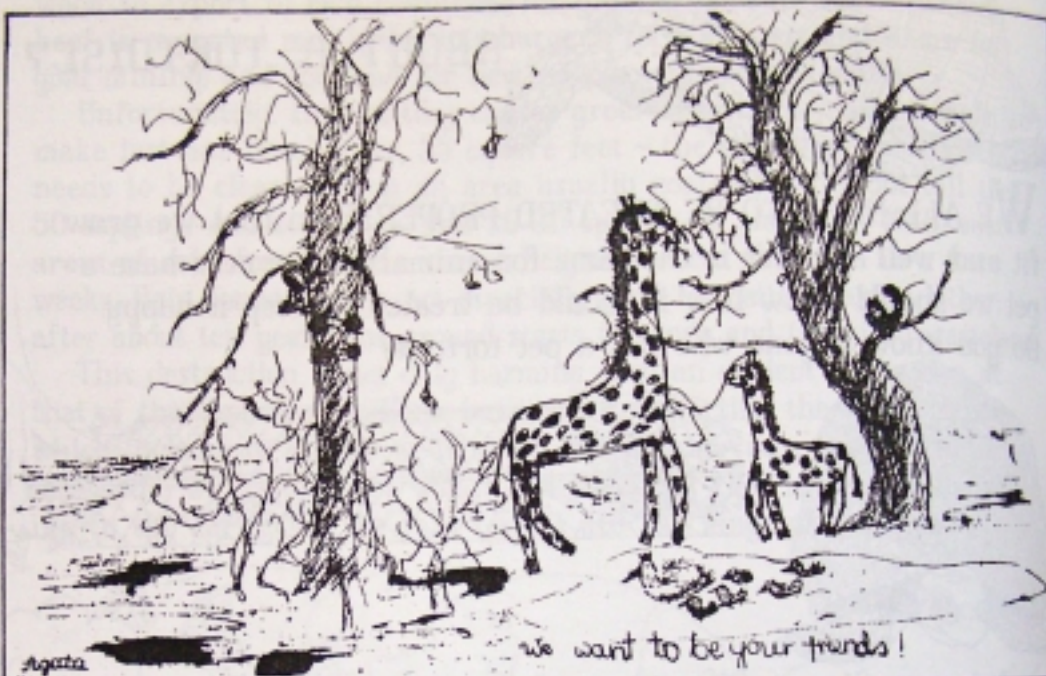
A tortoise lives in a good cage. It is an easy pet to keep, but you will lose it if you do not make a little run with wire netting or a low frame of wooden boards. A wooden box filled with straw and leaves, and with an opening at one end, will make a good house. Stick a flat dish into the ground and fill it with water, as the tortoise likes to bathe.

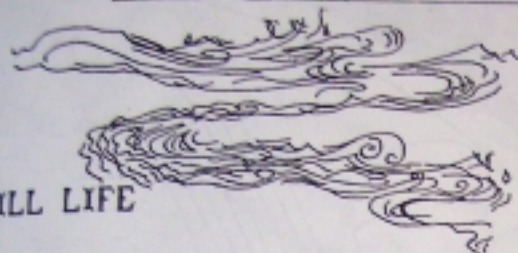
Our tortoise was called 'Speedy' because it was so slow! We fed it on fresh grass, lettuce, dandelions, cabbage leaves and slices of carrot and apple. It liked bread with some jam on it!



When it went off its food in autumn and seemed sleepy, we knew it was about to hibernate, so we put it in a box with straw and moss, and kept the box in the shed. In the spring we bathed its eyes and its mouth with horsetail lotion, to help unroof them. We gave it water to drink and rubbed its shell with a little oil.

# CHILDREN'S CONTRIBUTIONS





## STILL LIFE

IT IS GREATLY ENCOURAGING to hear so much concern expressed nowadays about the environment and its welfare. It is almost as if the world is waking up to its own identity after a long sleep.

— What happened? — Oh, it's all coming back to me ... this planet, this universe, we are a single living thing; a sphere of sensitivity, precious, sacred. This planet is home and ALL creatures know that a home, however temporary, should be cared for, kept clean and safe from harm.

From the Buddhist perspective this recognition should not be allowed to stop at the view of the external world, but should penetrate to the heart of the inner world — the mind — as well. It has been said by the Buddha that all things are established in Dhamma (*Dhamma-tiṭṭha*) and exist according to the Law of Dhamma (*Dhammaniyama*), but in this sense we can also translate the word "Dhamma" to mean "Nature"; we can use the two words interchangeably.

"Everything follows the way of Truth. It does not diverge from Truth... Whether a tree, a mountain or an animal, it's all Dhamma, everything is Dhamma ... Dhamma is Nature. This is called 'Sacca-Dhamma', the True Dhamma. If one sees Nature, one sees Dhamma, if one sees Dhamma, one sees Nature." — *Venerable Ajahn Chah*

Nowadays people call the study of Nature "ecology". Ecology actually means "a science of the home"; a spiritual ecology therefore relates to our spiritual home.

This is not our planet, our house, or even our body; our true home is the peaceful heart. This heart attaches to nothing, rejects nothing; it is the mind which Knows and is Awake, and which we experience as pure and radiant. This is our refuge — home — glorious in its wholeness, its perfect natural beauty, the very source of all harmony and balance.

As we go to Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha for refuge, we incline to this sphere of perfection, and from this point our actions and words cannot escape from being in harmony with Nature, with all that is good. Just as the seeds of life are held in the core of the apple, that which comes from the core of the pure heart holds the power of true life also. If our efforts stem from goodness right at its very root, inevitably good will come from them.

When effort is made only at the surface level of life's problems then, although we can do much to relieve a situation, we can also create much resentment and havoc in the process. Some conflict is inevitable — it is true — but when we are guided by mindfulness and wisdom these conflicts are held to a minimum. We go through life, or rather life flows through the stillness of the mind, like water running down a mountain and, as Andrew Brennan, a young Buddhist poet who died recently in India, put it:

"... water unconcerned  
Does only what it can,  
Unexalted, all-sustaining,  
Brings its gift, and passes on."

We find we can live in the same way — no trace is left behind other than life in harmony and what could be more beautiful than that?

*Amaro Bhikkhu*



