



This Buddha survived Tsunamis in 1334, 1369, and 1498.

THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

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The Four Noble Truths

Anguish is Everywhere

We desire permanent existence for ourselves and for our loved ones,

and we desire to prove ourselves independent of others and superior to them.

These desires conflict with the way things are:

Nothing abides,

and everything and everyone depends on everything and everyone else.

This conflict causes our anguish, and we project this anguish on those we meet.

Release from this anguish comes with the personal acknowledgement and resolve:

We are here together very briefly

So let us accept reality fully

And take care of one another while we can.

This acknowledgement and resolve are realized by following the Eightfold Path:

Right Views, Right Thinking, Right Speech, Right Conduct,

Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Recollection and Right Meditation.

Here 'Right' means 'correct' or 'accurate' — in keeping with the reality of impermanence and interdependence

The other two sages are people I trust to guide me around the wider world, teaching both hope and solidarity:

john powell of the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society

<http://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu> &

Othering and Belonging Conferences 2015 and 2017

<http://conference.otheringandbelonging.org>

Pope Francis who promulgated a Jubilee Year of Mercy 2016

<http://www.iubilaeummisericordiae.va/content/gdm/en.html>

and gave a TED talk about "the only future worth building" April 2017

<https://www.ted.com/talks/>

[pope_francois_why_the_only_future_worth_building_includes_everyone](https://www.ted.com/talks/pope_francois_why_the_only_future_worth_building_includes_everyone)

The First of the Four Noble Truths

Anguish is Everywhere

INTRODUCTION

This pamphlet, like its predecessor, centers on our lives today and the future ahead. Each segment here has the same name as in the first pamphlet, and this time the narrative “arc,” is guided by the Buddha’s four noble truths. The craftsman of this particular version is the late Robert Aiken, Roshi of the Diamond Head Sangha in Hawai’i. The “current events” segments, both In Real Life and None of us is Alone, examine these times from international angles.

The fall 2016 pamphlet ended with some thoughts about women in power. The women this time are “First Ladies” past and present. What a term! “Lady.” But seriously, they present an interesting contrast, a contrast that benefits from “playing” what Peter Elbow, writer, old friend and colleague, calls The Believing Game. Long ago I played that game, without giving it that label, when I wrote a dissertation about the Cold War that assumed a credibility in the commitments of those who would build more nuclear weapons equivalent to the credibility of those of us who were terrified by them. This world may be made up of discordant credibilities, but the only real pathway through to a wiser future depends on heeding most of the various voices. So some thoughts about Melania and Michelle.

Between two longer essay sections and the closing on Women’ Work, comes another Deeper than Elections segment on ways Theater and Humor and Birds illuminate entrances to some of Buddhism’s right paths. Can humourists alleviate distress? (This immigrant has a hard time with US spelling of this particular word, so I am going bi-lingual here). Last time I asserted that Every Court Needs a Jester and I’ve been wondering about laughter and political change for eons. So, though it takes a humorist to write comedy, as the British say, “bear with me” while I take you back to the Lily Tomlin of 40 years ago, who is still capable of shining the kind of light we need to see more clearly how we live today. Theater and Birds? Read on.

Let me end this introduction with few words about pamphleteering itself. In these instant-communication times, creating hard copies and going to the post office with them has enabled a welcome change of pace and focus. Addressing each envelopes brings specific potential readers to mind. Deciding to print yet more copies last time made vivid how big and rich our circles of friendship and colleagueship are. And respect for the difficulties in setting up the layout for printing and binding a folded text led me down a wonderful digital alleyway – to the software for printing the weekly booklets for religious services – software instantly available at the App store for just a few dollars. So hard copies will continue to come your way.

If reading on-line makes the text more accessible for you or for someone with whom you would like to share this, please say and I will send a digital copy instead.

HEADLINES: MADDENING NEWS, SAD NEWS, GOOD NEWS

JAPANESE MEDIA UNDER SIEGE —
Jeff Kingston, East Asia Forum, Dec. 12 2016

WITH 'FAKE NEWS,' TRUMP MOVES FROM ALTERNATIVE FACTS TO
ALTERNATIVE LANGUAGE —
Danielle Kurtzleben, National Public Radio - February 17, 2017

KEEPING THE KREMLIN'S HANDS OFF THE FRENCH ELECTIONS —
New York Times Editorial, Feb 18, 2017

FEARFUL OF HACKING, DUTCH WILL COUNT BALLOTS BY HAND —
Newall Chan, New York Times, Feb. 1, 2017

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE GP PRACTICE SETS UP A PRIVATE SERVICE - BY
PAYING UP TO £145 TO JUMP THE QUEUE —
(UK) Southern Daily Echo — February 7, 2017.

GOP BILL WOULD ALLOW STATES TO DEFUND PLANNED PARENTHOOD —
Associated Press, Feb 16, 2017

REPORT: HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYERS IN CHINA BEATEN, ARRESTED —
The Associated Press, Feb. 15 2017

TRUMP DETAILS PLANS TO DEPORT MILLIONS OF IMMIGRANTS —
Michael D. Shear and Ron Nixon, New York Times, Feb. 21 2017

AND SOME GOOD NEWS

Two FOX NEWS!!!! segments by standard house newsmen, appalled at TRUMP, both the
chaos and the hostility to the media

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3c_E12d_EtU

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boi2kCgx2Uk>

A detailed Huffington Post Blog with links to many other sources, that spells out the
enormous range of opposition activities already underway. Largely US based but not
entirely.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/theres-a-whole-lot-of-anti-trump-resistance-going_us_58ade23ee4b0598627a55fab

Work on this segment of the pamphlet began a while ago and these are now somewhat dated but the
realities they describe are not much changed.

IN REAL LIFE THERE IS NO INTERMISSION

The Second of the Four Noble Truths

We desire permanent existence for ourselves and for our loved ones,
and we desire to prove ourselves independent of others and superior to them.

These desires conflict with the way things are:

Nothing abides,

and everything and everyone depends on everything and everyone else.

This conflict causes our anguish, and we project this anguish on those we meet.

This section of my last pamphlet was set to the musical Hamilton, songs and lyrics that revealed the many ways US politics today resembles the troubled years between the Revolutionary War and the ratification of the Constitution. This time the inspiration is Bill Murray's Ground Hog Day, a movie in which a TV journalist relives the same day over and over again. The Koreas, North and South and US policies in NE Asia embody the same repeated iterations: in this case of weapons displays, vulgar language, negotiations and mindless decisions. Like Bill Murray we're now scared, as much by the endless repetitions as by day to day events.

I write an essay about Korea and China and Status of Forces Agreements and Presidential ignorance and President Kim and nuclear missiles every couple of years, each time impelled by a flurry of military crises breaking into the headline news. This year these events have been intensified by adding Trumpian ignorance/incompetence to the plot, but the basic structure of this long running movie is unchanged.

Another thing that doesn't change is that most of my friends and colleagues, barely notice Korean events except during the crises. Readers so often respond: "I didn't realize."

So let me remind you why this repetitive movie matters. (1) **The Status of Forces Agreement.** Why does a technicality such as this involve you? Because now, in 2017, and at the insistence of the South Korean Government, a US Officer is designated as Supreme Commander over both US and South Korean troops in the event of a renewed shooting war. YES REALLY. 25000 US troops are already stationed in Korea, also at South Korea's insistence. What happens there is truly OUR problem. Yours and mine.

(2) **North Korean Missiles.** Not nuclear warheads. Missiles. North Korea has designed and built useful long-range missiles, missiles that can reach Japan and perhaps even Alaska. We keep hearing that yet another launch has failed, possibly because US Cyberwarfare tactics ensure that with the right amount of warning, US cybermilitarists can interfere with Korean Command and Control systems. And they probably do. But that also means YOU/WE are already engaged in a certain kind of warfare with North Korea. Remember who's in command if bombs as well as missiles start flying too? We are.

(3) **China's territorial claims.** China has spent well over 15 years laying the archival and historical and archeological and UN groundwork to make a territorial claim that North Korea, at least, is rightfully Chinese territory. The prospect of China claiming the right to take over North Korean territory if the Kim regime collapses is horrifying.

(4) Like the movie Groundhog Day, each iteration of events brings a few novelties. The ones that continue are bad enough. In 2017 we have added a new degree of "lack of grip" in both the US and South Korean governing leadership.

IN REAL LIFE THERE IS NO INTERMISSION

For Example:

On April 18 2017 President Trump casually ratified China's claim to North Korean territory. His comments were the result of a 10 minute chat with Xi Jinping. South Koreans, both ordinary citizens and the vestigial government were FURIOUS.

Also on April 18, The White House was forced to acknowledge that the Aircraft Carrier Carl Vinson, which had been described on April 8 as heading to Korean waters, had in fact been heading the opposite way for days.

Meanwhile President Trump further outraged South Koreans by identifying the sea between South Korea and Japan as the "Japan Sea." Even inexperienced journalists know better, the US media having learned to dodge the risk of insult by simply merging the Korean and Japanese names "East Japan Sea."

In addition, South Korea has not had a functioning government for months, the elected President Park GuenHye having stepped down to avoid being impeached for corruption.

By the end of April, increasing tensions between "allies" or perhaps between Emperor and vassal state led North Korea to excoriate China for its unprecedented decision to apply UN economic sanctions, by turning back North Korean ships carrying export coal to China.

(5) Back to core repeating features of this movie. South and North Korea combined, whose population is roughly 70 million, the same as the UK (at least for now) have armies second only to China in size. China's population is 1.5 billion. And the Koreas, North and South remain at war, held in check by a fragile truce and a Demilitarized Zone an average of 4km wide. Also, Seoul is within very, very easy reach of thousands of everyday North Korean missiles already deployed for attack.

(6) No government officials in any of the key countries want the current situation to collapse into direct violence.

(7) South Korean Presidents are regularly accused of corruption, as are the chief executives of Samsung, LG, Hyundai and other industrial leaders. This time it's the Samsung CEO in the spotlight but the others are likely involved. Usually Presidential arrests wait till after they leave power. Former President Roh MooHyun, killed himself in 2009 rather than face further corruption investigations.

In Bill Murray's movie Groundhog Day repeats 35 times. We have been watching "North Korean threats" or "talks" about nuclear warheads and missiles for a mere 23 years. If the movie analogy has validity we still have a way to go. There's no music or rap from Lin Manuel Miranda to guide the way. No Bill Murray "epiphany."

Indeed it seems likely that we are headed in the opposite direction: the current US government is woefully short of artfulness and expertise in Korea, and we have a President who seems unable to reliably explain critical information in any arena of international relations.

At this point in this essay I should have an agenda to promulgate. I don't because my ceasefire research demonstrates that opportunities to end crises like these are inherently unpredictable. In the US, our national policy makers need to be ready to grasp any opportunity — an illness, a sports victory, an accident, an earthquake, spiritual leadership — that liberates constructive energy for peace in this fraught and struggling area.

For us as individuals we need to keep aware: (1) the USA is interdependent with Korea — North as well as South. (2) Someday all of this will change radically. It is changing in small ways all the time.

NONE OF US IS ALONE

The Third of the Four Noble Truths

Release from this anguish comes with the personal acknowledgement and resolve:

We are here together very briefly
So let us accept reality fully
And take care of one another while we can.

Last time this segment “None of us are Alone” focused on the hyper-nationalist political agendas that seemed to be gaining ground in elections around the world. Since the autumn of 2016 the news has been mixed – the Dutch held off their right wing, though a Dutch acquaintance claims that if they really want the Nationalists to founder the party should be invited into a coalition government. Coalition minor parties repeatedly collapse in the Netherlands – coalition compromises certainly helped ensure the collapse of the LibDems in the UK. The French are voting as I write and while Marine Le Pen won’t triumph, neither of the finalists leads a political party with any experience governing nationally. Outsiders won. Germany is yet to vote this coming autumn, but we already know that Turks in Germany were among those in the Turkish electorate who entrusted Erdogan’s authoritarian government with a powerfully strengthened mandate.

So are we all simply wandering companionably together down the pathway to doom and gloom? Emotionally I feel that way a good deal of the time, but this essay is about another kind of political companionship, an energy also on full display in these times – the companionship of issue-driven global civic action.

The Vietnam war set my generation marching all over the world in 1968, but a new kind of intensely bonded organizing consciousness and capability has come alive quite recently. Fireworks around the globe for the new millennium in 2000, of course, but the 2002 “Rolling Requiem,” performances of Mozart’s Requiem, on the first anniversary of the Sept. 11

disaster are more truly representative of the “global grassroots” interdependence and interconnection that I am thinking of. Feb 15, 2003 saw marches world wide against the impending George Bush/Tony Blair assault on Iraq. I personally was more involved the Lysistrata Project – Over 1000 performances on Mar 3 2003 world wide. Neither the march nor ancient Greek theater prevented the onset of violence, but both served to strengthen global solidarity.



In 2008 the Chinese Olympic torch faced visible opposition to China’s Tibetan disaster along the entire route from Athens to Beijing. Midway, thousands of overseas Chinese began to turn out in

NONE OF US IS ALONE

support of Chinese policy, the first example I have seen of grassroots encounter and confrontation publicly and explicitly debating our planet-wide future. In January 2009, Rob and I went to Washington DC to see off George Bush and to welcome the Obamas into office, joining well over a million others who converged on the Mall as we had, just to be there together. In 2015 there were marches in support of the Paris Climate Change agreement. In 2017, the day after Donald Trump's sparsely attended inauguration there were huge "women's marches" world wide once again, pink hats and all. And of course huge numbers of men joined in too.

NUMBER OF MARCHES: 673

MARCHERS (EST): 4,956,422

In April 2017, 610 marches "for Science" on the 22nd, and another huge turnout April 29th to support working to tame climate change.

Not being "alone" is tricky intellectually. What ideas do we actually share with others? If I am crying while listening to the 9/11 anniversary performance of Mozart's Requiem in Olympia, WA, what do I have in common with the audience listening a few hours earlier somewhere in India? Does Japanese laughter during *Lysistrata* have anything to do with the kind of humor Marla Elliott engendered in our Olympia production of the play?

Among academic theorists, the term "cosmopolitanism," is intended to imply a shared sense of right and wrong, but it reeks of elitist universals, even as its proponents try to align it with inclusive philosophical beliefs. I have gained more from Michael Walzer's book Thick and Thin, Moral Argument at Home and Abroad. In brief, Walzer says that while words like "science" undoubtedly exist in the majority of languages and the practice of science exists all over the world, the implementation of science education and scientific and medical research will vary widely from place to place. Yes, even a field as allegedly neutral as science will mean quite different things from place to place.

So rather than imagining all the Science marchers in 2017 trying to achieve the same outcome, I return again to those Buddhist truths. I am no Buddhist but the following things do seem true: These marches are testimony to widespread feelings of interconnectedness around the world. We are marching together for women and for planetary equilibrium and for Obama's inauguration and for peace because in all those arenas our lives impinge across frontiers.

It is harder, I am guessing, for us to be comfortable with that other truth — impermanence. So often my own anxiety is heightened by the sense that things I value are being ended or at least eroded. Indeed Donald Trump happily trumpets his desire to end many justice and social and ecological policies and programs I value. But life is impermanent, existence is impermanent and even the best of policies are actually impermanent as well.

I do find comfort if I return to the specific language of the third of those Buddhist noble truths: The global marches of recent years are, at very least, proud statements of the willingness of so many to care and to take care of one another in the brief time each of us will be around to do so.

DEEPER THAN ELECTIONS

Noble Truths — Paths One and Two

Right Views, Right Thinking, ROE v. WADE

A play about Roe v. Wade, the big abortion-rights case in the USA, has traveled the US recently. It makes a strong evening, among other things as a living, breathing version of Peter Elbow's Believing Game. Plaintiff Roe (a pseudonym) and her lawyer — first friend then opponent — were given equivalent space and time on stage to set out their views and to explain their thinking. There was no reason to doubt the author's commitment to abortion rights but its opponents were real and rounded people.

Norma McCorvey (Roe) and Sarah Weddington (lawyer) evolved over the course of the play, as they did over the course of the years, always inextricably interdependent as well. Wade, the Dallas District Attorney quickly became more or less irrelevant. McCorvey died this year, during the run of the play, a significant moment for the actress playing her. In 2012 the University of Texas Law School eliminated the real Weddington's adjunct faculty position — budget cuts, you know.

This performance kept our group of theater-goers talking for hours afterwards, and to my surprise I discovered my view to be a hardline position: This is strictly a matter for the family expecting the child, particularly the woman and any medical professionals who need to be involved. NO State has the right to get involved at any time. Not even when paying the bill. That turns out to be my view.

My thinking — that's a different matter. A genuine possibility of myself having to have an abortion due to severe disability awakened in both me and the father a vivid sense that abortion might actually be impossible to think about at all, at least once a baby has "quickenened." What is more interdependent than a pregnant women, the baby(s) and the father? The team of doctors urging me/us to plan for abortion were urging us recognize impermanence and we really wanted to deny it. Luckily a follow-on ultra-sound signaled twins not spina bifida, and those lives continued viable so thinking about abortion could stop.

Right thinking about an actual abortion still seems amazingly hard, and doing it depends on "care," a big and fruitful topic among women thinkers, an almost invisible one for many men.

Right thinking about abortion should at very least be profoundly situation specific. Carol Gilligan used the notion of "a different voice" in the 1980s, to explain the tangible differences in the thinking behind "rule-driven" justice and "situation-specific" justice, labeling the latter "care." Right thinking about abortion is diminished because public analyses of the issues are largely structured by US legislatures and court rooms, where the creation of rules is the task at hand and taking care of actual people can be ignored.

Anne Marie Mol, a Dutch health-care sociologist, illuminates another dimension of right thinking about abortion, contrasting the logic of "care" with the logic of "choice." "Choice" for women has long been the favored term among advocates for abortion rights. It is so easy to make "choice" sound hopeful. However, choice is deceptive. A logic of care in health decisions depends on professionals actively contributing alongside patients, and resting their impulse to

DEEPER THAN ELECTIONS

care on professional skill their patients do not share. I suffered as the doctors advised abortion, but looking back I recognize their expertise. Had we and the docs truly seen ourselves as an actual team, working together on the decision ahead, I believe I would have been better at thinking with, and in aid of, “care” both for myself and for the other beings involved.

Noble Truths — Path Three

Right Speech — ONE RINGY DINGY, TWO RINGY DINGY

Several weeks ago a group of experts on Russian literature, and on Andre Platonov in particular, presented a evening at the London Review of Books Bookshop. The organizer was my brilliant translator cousin Robert Chandler, a deeply knowing, thinking writer whose craftsmanship as a writer is remarkable.

The bridge from Platonov to Lily Tomlin? Absurdist humour.

Irina Brown, a Russian theater director living in the UK, jumped up during the Platonov presentation, in response to a suggestion that Trump’s era is a time for satire: “Not satire” she said. “Absurdism. Platonov worked convincingly through the Soviet years because he was a quintessential absurdist.”

Which helped me understand why I’ve virtually stopped watching the Daily Show. Partly of course to create an island of peace for myself, free of the vagaries of today’s politics. But also because satire is too blunt for these times. Trevor Noah and all the others have their wonderful moments. In the past Larry Wilmore and Jon Stewart made it possible to engage in the awkward and painful politics of George W. Bush and imperfect Obama years.

But life is different now.

Google structures an amazing proportion of the world’s consumer economy and Trump is in the White House. Autocracy in the economy and in politics, in both settings hiding behind the delusion of individual choice. On Rowan and Martin’s Laugh-In in the 1970s, Lily Tomlin’s Ernestine described for us out loud the ideology underlying the AT&T telephone monopoly and its collusion with government surveillance. Her weekly calls connected us directly with J. Edgar Hoover and Gore Vidal, Attorney General John Mitchell and the vagaries of Ma Bell’s attitude to consumer rights. When Google’s ad service gets paid to push Motel 6 at me because I have recently booked a room at Motel 6 using Gmail in the booking, the real reason behind Google’s free email address is pretty clear.

Where is Ernestine when we need her? Who will be our “chat” partner, on-screen, a real person typing away and making us laugh, our own reminder that Gmail doesn’t ask us to pay because we are only a cog in Google’s machinery of power, and not the free-choice consumer of our imagination? How will we get away from Trump and Twitter so that voters can become aware that votes are being cast in this country at the behest of the Koch brothers, without those voting even knowing who is shaping their choices? I am pretty sure that we need to be laughing at least part of the time if we truly want to awaken to reality.

DEEPER THAN ELECTIONS

Noble Truth — Paths Four and Five

Right Conduct and Right Livelihood — THE SOCIAL LIFE OF BIRDS

Having been seduced by Disney documentaries and rigorous evolutionary biology to consider myself a mammal, when my work on war and peace required analogies, I always used mammals. The images that came to mind were of apes and lions. I largely ignored the more reptilian brain we share with birds, including an amygdala which takes the “first-responder” role in our danger-warning systems.

However it was not thinking about war but thinking about my faculty colleagues, governance in the university and their group behavior that got me wondering whether we might actually be more like birds than apes. Specifically flocks of birds. And I must not go further without acknowledging that birds are profoundly territorial, often engaged in hostile relationships with each other (particularly those in the SAME species/tribes not so much with most OTHER species/tribes) and that birds may well be largely uninterested in the wider welfare of the world.

Nonetheless any list of the ways humans resemble birds easily gets quite long.

They talk and sing and arrange most social relations conversationally. Many construct absurdly beautiful fashion displays with their bodies and in their houses to attract each other. They raise their children in couples. Sometimes they adopt someone else’s child warmly and generously. They live in private nests even when they cluster their nests together in bird cities. Feeding the young is a task almost always shared by both parents. A surprising number of birds live as monogamous couples for years, even if they do not live together between breeding seasons. And they migrate, often thousands of miles.

Chimpanzees do not migrate. They claim and live in patches of forest, hassling others in nearby patches for more territory, but not traveling miles and miles. There are of course mammals which do migrate. Whales and elephants are amazing. The huge Serengti trek across Africa is justly famous. But when I learn that 65 million humans are on the move this year, I think birds not chimpanzees.

Having established that we are, at least in part, birds, let me turn to how birds might remind us that migration and immigration are “right paths” in the Buddhist sense, not violations of the human instinct for tribal solidarity. Migration for a bird is “RIGHT CONDUCT,” and birds have distinctive and successful ways of doing complex work in vast and mobile communities. Despite organizing flocks of thousands, which then travel thousands of miles, birds do not depend on an all-powerful leader or president, an alpha-male or silver-back elder. Instead the identity of the birds in front changes often and most birds on the journey gather the instructions about where to go and how fast via the birds in their immediate vicinity.

Like birds, my faculty colleagues function mostly in relation to their immediate communities, their teaching teams and students, adjusting to counselors and librarians as needed. My staff colleagues work in offices side by side, adjusting to faculty and students largely by brushing up against small clusters who need them. From time to time, and at The Evergreen State College, now is one of those times, the flock as a whole wonders if it needs to make a pretty significant

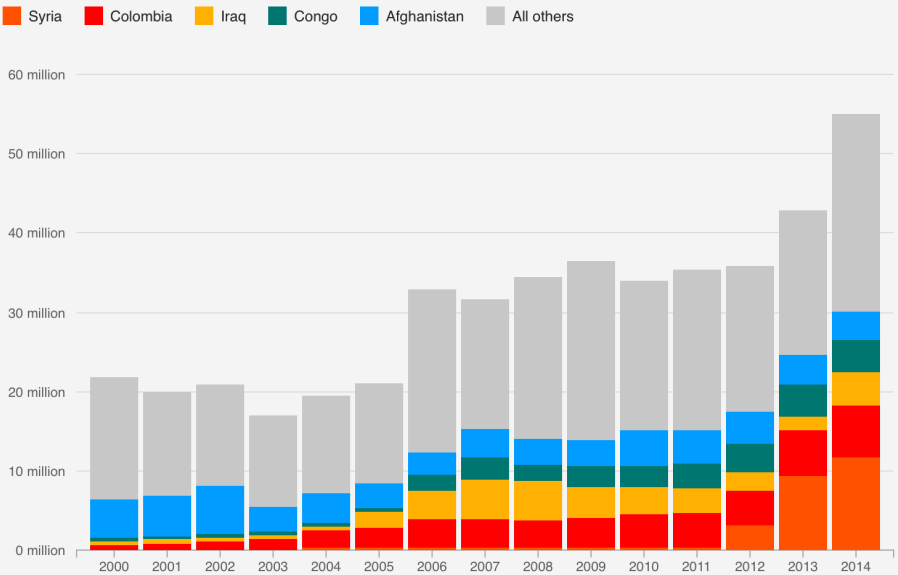
DEEPER THAN ELECTIONS

change of course, a change in orientation. That kind of move mobilizes and agitates the whole flock, but when we are working well together, ideas about how to make big changes are conveyed in sound and song and visual display, instead of by that favorite mammalian tactic: intimidation.

RIGHT LIVELIHOOD for a bird of course varies with the seasons of life. They migrate because food supplies travel with the sun from north to south and back again while the right conditions for nesting and raising young are quite specific. Viewing the millions of human migrants now on the move, many observers, even those with a progressive orientation are making distinctions between refugees and economic migrants, as though the one were pure and the other wrongly self interested. Not “right thinking.”

Global Displaced Population Has Nearly Tripled In Past Decade

The United Nations "population of concern" includes refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and others who have been displaced. They are shown here grouped by country of origin.



Source: UNHCR Population Statistics

Livelihood is work, livelihood is bringing to life the next generation and right livelihood is the path each person should be following as courageously as possible. When they make the big migration move, a flock's sense of timing needs to be good. Human migrants also need to be adaptable and determined and potential host countries ought to be generous and hospitable. We in the USA are learning fast how easily false steps in relation to human migration can damage our good name. These skills are part of a longer list of peace-abilities I believe we need to foster if we are to undertake right efforts for wiser and kinder world; the whole list appears on the last page of this pamphlet.

WOMEN'S WORK AND OTHER FRONTIERS

Noble Truths — Path six

Right Effort — MICHELLE AND MELANIA

Contemplating this section was the reason I remembered Peter Elbow's Believing Game. I began to believe that truly to understand the hurdles facing women in leadership, I had as much to learn from Melania Trump and Michelle Obama as from Hillary Clinton. To be specific: there is much to learn about women's access to power, about the widespread capacity to "other," and about what needs to happen if any woman is to have a chance to become a leader.

But first we need to be willing to consider both "wives" in the same place in our mind, women equally changed by the lives their husbands chose to lead. Michelle had to stop being a lawyer and move to Washington. Interestingly enough Melania has avoided the Washington DC move. If she goes, will beliefs about what good wives do or beliefs about saving the money spent on New York security be more powerful in driving her down there? I doubt we will ever know.

Because that of course is the fate of women married to hyper-powerful men. They are not supposed to make efforts of their own. Not even Michelle. The Beloved. Hillary Clinton could not put behind her the fury that rained down during Bill's presidency, when she had the temerity to take a crack at shaping a new kind of healthcare for the USA. Republican men in the House today, though they are widely considered to be mangling healthcare catastrophically, will never pay the price that Hillary paid for her 1993 right-minded effort.

M Obama and M Trump have both been subjected to ugly "othering," a result of identities that differ from the majority culture. Michelle, repeatedly described as aggressive during the campaign, found herself in that niche imposed on so many Americans of African ancestry: Dangerous Person. Melania like many white women with exotic accents got a label too: Call Girl. Stories about Melania "working" in the USA before her modeling visa was approved may have called it "modeling" but the taint was there. She could not avoid being characterized as one or another kind of "illegal" worker or another.

If we want to see a woman president in the White House, we need to make ourselves open hearted enough to see what happens to women in that building. Even Aaron Sorkin, creator and writer for a humane and policy-driven West Wing, couldn't give women power in their own right. If your memory idealizes Alison Janny and Stockard Channing as autonomous, watch again. Watch Josh talking down to Donna repeatedly. Watch the men in the Oval excluding CJ at key moments. Watch Leo's wife unable to offer a better argument against their life style than that "their marriage ought to matter more than his job." Aaron Sorkin, like White House inhabitants in real life, always envisioned the building as a boy's club-house, with a few token women largely outside the centers of policy-making. Women came to lead only after Sorkin left the show.

Play the "Believing Game" with Melania. See whether she gets to stay away and feel for her if she fails. Watch Michelle to see if child nutrition and injured vets remain her most prominent remit. Watch Hillary to see if she escapes the prison for "policy-wonks." It is just possible she could be the new Ernestine. It's certainly more likely than Elizabeth Warren taking the role.

We need women in power who can create a convincing and enlivening governing narrative about this country, governing in ways which depend on our help as well as our votes. Until such a leader arises, have compassion for those women whose right efforts are forever hampered and hemmed in by the fact that the man they happen to live with became President of the USA.

Bio

Helena Meyer-Knapp is a scholar/activist who came to the USA as an immigrant in 1969. Her work centers on peace-making. She earned a BA in History at Oxford in the UK, and an MA in Communications and Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Political Studies in the USA.

Her scholarly work includes Dangerous Peace-Making, a book published in 2003. It covers seven case moments when people in different countries undertook serious attempts at peace-making. It ends by taking up the challenge of post war justice and reconciliation. Helena also publishes essays on college teaching, on applied ethics, and on the links between national heritage-narratives and personal identity.

She has worked steadily as a member of the faculty at the Evergreen State College, (international relations and political studies) since 1984. Since 2001 her research projects have taken her regularly to NE Asia, most often to Japan but also to South Korea.

An activist also in international issues, in the 1980s she focused most of her efforts on local and national elections and referenda in support of the Campaign for a Nuclear Weapons Freeze. Her college teaching has centered on public life by encouraging students to gather the materials, the skills and the momentum they need to participate in public life on their own behalf.



Pamphlet web-links can also be found at Peacemakerpress.com

PEACE ABILITIES

Noble Truths — Paths seven and eight

Right Recollection and Right Meditation

Craftsmanship

Good Name

Forbearance

Adaptability

Determination

Courage

Unassuming Modesty

Remembrance

Hospitality

Generosity

A Sense of Timing

My Work These Days: Nurturing These Skills