GARRISON INSTITUTE

Inspired Thinking · Thoughtful Action

Newsletter Issue 2 - Summer 2005

ANCIENT WISDOM AND MODERN KNOWLEDGE: Science and Buddhism at the Mind and Life

Summer Research Institute

The first Mind and Life Summer Research Institute (MLSRI) brought over 100 scholars, researchers and scientists to the Garrison Institute between June 22 and 27, 2004. The ambitious, weeklong event was designed to inspire young neuroscientists and practitioners of Buddhism and other contemplative traditions to pursue collaborative research.

"Buddhism and science are the world's two most powerful traditions for understanding the nature of reality and investigating the mind," said Mind and Life Chairman Adam Engle.

The 2005 MLSRI will also take place at the Garrison Institute and will be held from June 26 through July 2. "Not just a scientific conference and not just a meditation retreat, the MLSRI represents a very promising avenue for relating the lessons of the ancient wisdom traditions to the contemporary world," said Rob Gabriele, Garrison Institute's Chief Operations Officer.

More than 250 scientists, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, professors, contemplative scholars and contemplative teachers applied to attend last year's MLSRI. Those who were selected

to attend came from across the globe: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Israel, Mexico, Switzerland, and the United States.

Among the 20 faculty members that led them through the week of presentations, meditation sessions and breakout meetings were at least one Nobel Prize winner (Daniel Kahneman), one Guggenheim Fellow (Stephen Kosslyn) and two Tibetan incarnate lamas (Tsoknyi Rinpoche and Gehlek Rimpoche). Other members of the faculty were among the world's leading investigators of the mind, including Richard J. Davidson, PhD, University of Wisconsin at Madison; Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD, University of Massachusetts Medical School; B. Alan Wallace, PhD, President of the Santa Barbara Institute for the Interdisciplinary Study of Consciousness; Matthieu Ricard, PhD, Shechen Monastery, Kathmandu; Daniel Goleman, PhD, psychologist and author; Anne Harrington, PhD, Harvard University; and Joan Halifax Roshi, PhD, Upaya Zen Center.

Participant Linda E. Carlson, PhD, explained how she described the event

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NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Garrison Institute welcomes three new members to its Board of Trustees. In their own way, each of them has worked throughout their impressive careers towards the Institute's fundamental goal of enhancing society and enriching the human spirit.



Rachel Cowan

Rabbi Rachel Cowan is director of the Institute for Jewish Spirituality, an organization that works with rabbis, cantors, educators

and lay leaders to deepen the spiritual dimension of contemporary Judaism.

She is also the former long-time director of the Jewish Life Program for the New Yorkbased Nathan Cummings Foundation, where she oversaw approximately \$4 million in annual grantmaking.

Rabbi Cowan has been widely published in many books and publications including *Growing Up Yanqui* and *Mixed Blessings* (the latter with Paul Cowan). Her two children and two grandchildren live in New York City and are a source of great joy to her.



Sharon Salzberg

Sharon Salzberg is a co-founder of Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts; Barre Center for

Buddhist Studies and The Forest Refuge, a new center for long term meditation practice.

She has been a student of Buddhism since 1971,and has been leading meditation retreats worldwide since 1974. She teaches both intensive awareness practice (vipassana or insight meditation) and the profound cultivation of lovingkindness and compassion (the Brahma Viharas).

Sharon's most recent book was the well-received Faith: Trusting Your Own Deepest Expeience. She is also the author of Lovingkindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness and A Heart as Wide as the World; Lovingkindness Meditation (audio); and co-author with Joseph Goldstein of Insight Meditation, a Step-by-Step Course on How to Meditate. She has edited Voices of Insight, an anthology of writings by Vipassana teachers in the West.



Mary Evelyn Tucker

Mary Evelyn Tucker,
PhD, is a professor of
religion at Bucknell
University, where she
teaches courses in
Asian religions and

Religion and Ecology. From 1993-1996 she was a National Endowment for the Humanities Chair at Bucknell. With John Grim, she organized a series of ten conferences on World Religions and Ecology at Harvard and edited a series of ten volumes from the conferences distributed by Harvard University Press. They are currently coordinating the Harvard Forum on Religion and Ecology.

Dr. Tucker is a prolific author, and in 2005 she is helping organize a series of international conferences to commemorate the philosopher of religion and science Teilhard de Chardin. The co-sponsors are the Harvard Forum on Religion and Ecology, UNESCO, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Dr. Tucker also served as a member of the International Earth Charter Drafting Committee from 1997-2000.



Interfaith Sail for the Environment

LAUNCHES THE HUDSON RIVER PROJECT

At sunset near the end of a calm day, the Hudson River takes on the gold and red colors of the western sky, and the water can appear nearly as translucent as the air itself. It would not be hyperbole to call this river a sacred waterway.

More than 50 spiritual and religious leaders from Hudson River communities experienced this sacredness from the wooden deck of the sloop Clearwater, one Sunday early last October.

The magical evening was an early step in the Garrison Institute's program, The Hudson River Project: Caring for Creation and the Common Good. The Interfaith Sail for the Environment, as the trip was called, was co-sponsored by The Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc., the organization that maintains the boat.

For many participants it was their first time ever on the river, even though they live in communities that once depended on it for news and commerce. Their vehicle was a 106-foot-long, historically accurate reproduction of the boats used on the river for nearly 200 years. Uniquely fitted to the Hudson's variable winds, currents and depths, sloops were as typical of this river as paddlewheel steamships came to be of the Mississippi.

The Hudson River Valley is enchantingly beautiful, but it also faces serious environmental dangers. Some progress has been made, but pollution and careless development still threaten water quality and wildlife.

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Spiritual and Religious Leaders gather aboard the Clearwater Sloop

There are voluminous precedents for environmentalism in the holy texts of all the great religions. Early American environmental thinkers such as Aldo Leopold wrote in a language of values. In the second half of the 20th century, however, because environmental battles were fought most often in the courts, the language of environmentalism became the language of science and law. In many cases, spiritual and religious communities were marginalized in the movement.

By clearly defining environmental preservation as an element of personal faith, Caring for Creation is helping restore spirituality to the environmental movement. The program is developing a broad constituency of religious groups and environmental organizations along the river that share values as they relate to the protection of the watershed.

From the thoughts they shared that day, many of the participants already feel bound together by their respect for the river valley. "Custodianship of the environment is a religious responsibility," said Imam Abdullah, from the Masjid Ar-Rashid Islamic teaching center of Beacon, NY, one of the Clearwater's passengers.

"Caring for the environment should be understood as right action," agreed Bonnie Myotai Treace, Sensei, of the Mountain and Rivers Order of Zen Buddhists.

Reverend Ilfra Halley, an Interfaith Minister with the Center for the Living Earth in Ulster County, said, "Our faith helps us realize that we are not separate from the environment. What you do to one part, you do to the whole. This is an essential element of all tradi-



Participants Hoisting the Sail of the Clearwater Sloop.

tions, to act with compassion and consciousness for the sake of the whole."

"When we meditate to achieve inner peace, we are naturally in harmony with the environment and other people," said Rebecca Li, of the Chan Meditation Center in Queens, New York, part of Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhist Association.

"For me, environmental stewardship is connected with who I am. It's not dependent upon political or social responsibility," agreed David Moore, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Rensselaer, New York. "This is what it means to be God's people."

Other participants included Sister Kathleen Donnelly of Religious Organizations Along the River, Reverend Fletcher Harper of Greenfaith, Andy Mele of Clearwater, Reverend Cass Shaw of Albany Presbyterian, Rabbi Lawrence Troster of the Coalition On the Environment and Jewish Life, and David Wellman and Chung Hyun Kyung of Union Theological Seminary.

Fred Osborn,III of the Episcopal Foundation, who also attended the Clearwater sail, has since become a member of the Garrison Institute's Environmental Leadership Steering Committee.

Nearly every one of the religious leaders on the Clearwater that day helped hoist the heavy 2,910-square-foot mainsail, a metaphor for their joint efforts to protect the environment.

"There was a lesson in hoisting this sail today...we all have to pull together. We can do better working together than separately."

—Jonathan F.P. Rose Co-founder of the Garrison Institute

If you would like to join this effort or learn more about it, please contact Patricia Ackerman, patricia@garrisoninstitute.org.

CARING FOR YOU: STAFF PROFILES

Shelley Boris, Executive Chef

Chef Shelley Boris approaches food as someone who loves nature.

"I feel like if we take care of the earth to the humble extent that we understand it, it will take care of us," she said. "Whether you rationalize it with science or with spirit, ultimately I think our goal is to eat modestly and with pleasure."

Boris' belief that it is important for people to live as close to the source of their food as possible has powered her support of local farmers' markets. She is a founding member of the nearby Cold Spring Farmer's Market, serves on the Garrison Parent Teachers Association Hot Lunch Program and often speaks on issues of food, food production and sustainability.

Boris' recipes have appeared in various journals and books, including *The New York Times, Food & Wine* magazine and *Recipes From America's Small Farms.*She co-authored *The International Mail Order Gourmet* with Jamie Harrison.

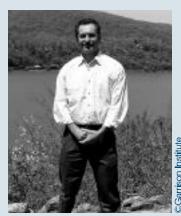


Her culinary career includes serving as chef at Exile and at Peter Dent Catering, both in Tribeca. She opened the first Dean & DeLuca Espresso Bar at the Paramount Hotel in Midtown, and then worked as a private caterer in New York City.

Currently at the Institute, Boris prepares meals in the "glorious" kitchen, which has changed little since Capuchin friars occupied the building. She also runs Fresh Company, a catering and event planning business she founded in the town of Garrison.

Boris describes food preparation as an active form of contemplation. "Rather than causing me stress it seems to reduce my anxiety," she said. "I have a very active cluttered, brain and cooking is a present thing you have to pay attention to."

"I like to feed people," Boris said. "I like that it occupies many of my senses and it keeps my hands busy and it's physical."



Robert T. Perschel, Senior Program Director, Environment

Bob Perschel, who joined the Garrison Institute in October, is directing the two environmental program initiatives The Hudson River Project: Caring for Creation and the Common Good, and the Environmental Leadership Collaborative. In his work, Perschel is trying to combine the environmental movement's traditional rational appeals with the other sources that most people turn to for their wisdom.

"I've always been interested in what connects people to the natural world and what rallies them to support sound environmental policy," Perschel said. "As a regional land protection specialist with the Wilderness Society I observed what made environmental campaigns successful. For example, it wasn't until the leaders of the campaign to protect the Northern Forest framed the land protection needs within the values and vision of the local population that it really succeeded."

"We know that the values that really move people to deep, sustained action are laden with emotion and often connected to ethical, moral, spiritual or religious beliefs," he explained. "I want to enable an enhanced form of leadership that is capable of aligning environmental issues with those deeper core values."

Perschel is the author of *The Land Ethic Toolbox: Using Ethics, Emotion and Spiritual Values to Advance American Land Conservation.* He expects to publish his current research in a book tentatively titled The Heart and Mind of Environmental Leadership.

FIRST PATRON'S LUNCH:

CAN RELIGION SAVE THE EARTH?

In May of last year Dr. Mary Evelyn Tucker, a scholar at Bucknell University who believes religious organizations have a vital role to play in protecting the environment, addressed the first Garrison Institute Patrons Lunch and afterwards engaged in a lively discussion with her audience.

Hosted at the Century Club in New York City, this intimate lunch began a series that offers patrons the opportunity to meet with thought leaders involved with the Institute to hear about their substantial and important work.

Dr. Tucker's ideas about religion and the environment resonate deeply with the philosophy behind the Institute's own environmental programs. She is an active board member and is deeply involved on the steering committee of the Institute's Environmental Leadership Collaborative.

In her talk, Dr. Tucker characterized the global environmental crisis as the most serious challenge humanity has ever faced. "It is such a wideranging and dangerous threat that responding to it will require efforts not just by politicians, business, or scientists and academics, but by all these disciplines, as well as the world's religions," she said.

A brief perusal of any day's newspaper reveals fresh evidence that climate change, species extinction, loss of soil, and destruction of forests and fisheries are occurring at an increasingly rapid rate. More alarming still is that these losses have been ongoing for decades.

More than 15 years ago the world's interrelated environmental problems were so great that author Bill McKibben called them the "end of nature." The 2001 State of the World report also concluded our myriad environmental chal-

clusions that underlines the Garrison Institute's own environmental programs. For example, Caring for Creation seeks to create a coalition of faith-based groups and environmentalists to protect the Hudson River Valley (for more information see our Newsletter First Issue).

"While religions are only recently awakening to the environmental crisis, they have important contributions to make, as spiritual, and ethical perspectives are indispensable to the reconfiguring of human-Earth relations."

—Mary Evelyn Tucker

from UN Symposium on The Spirit of the Earth

lenges have become dire."Despite abundant information about our environmental impact, human activities continue to scalp whole forests,drain rivers dry, prune the Tree of Evolution, raise the level of the seven seas, and reshape climate patterns," the report states."If current trends continue," summed up Dr. Tucker, "we will not."

Most religious traditions have developed attitudes of respect, reverence, and care for the natural world. According to Dr. Tucker, changing the global environment irrevocably and without concern for future —or even present— generations would seem to violate these fundamental principles.

To solve such a fundamental challenge, every one of society's institutions, including organized religion, needs to play a role. That is also one of the con-

The world's religions are indeed beginning to find their voices on the importance of reverence for the Earth. "Although the world's religions have been slow to respond to our current environmental crises, their moral authority and their institutional power may help effect a change in attitudes, practices and public policies," Dr. Tucker says.

She emphasized that religions come as partners to these discussions, not as definitive agents of moral authority. Their participation enables the mobilization both the ethical transformations and practical policies needed for reinventing industrial society on a sustainable basis.

Buddhist environmentalists, for example,see their worldview as a rejection of dominance of one human

over another, and of humans over nature. In the view of Thai monk Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, "The entire cosmos is a cooperative. The sun, the moon, and the stars live together as a cooperative. The same is true for humans and animals, trees, and the earth ... If our lives are not based on this truth, then we shall perish."

In Judaism, scholars have found justifications for environmentalism. The medieval Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides wrote that according to the Torah, "God saw all of the works of creation and behold, they were very good." The text goes out of its way to emphasize the value of each plant and animal, and not just of humans, suggests Dr. Tucker. For example, Maimonides concludes, "All the other beings have been created for their own sakes, and not for the sake of something else" [e.g., humanity].

Most of the world's religions share common values, which might be summarized as reverence, respect, restraint, redistribution and responsibility. "Although these principals have been previously understood primarily with regard to relations with other humans, the challenge now is to extend them to the natural world," Dr. Tucker concluded.

The Garrison Institute has a growing circle of patrons, whose support goes directly to the development of programs. To learn more about becoming a patron, contact Jeanne Johnson jeanne@garrisoninstitute.org.

"The ages of nations has passed. Now, unless we wish to perish we must shake off our old prejudices and build the earth."

—Teilhard de Chardin



Faculty at MLSRI 2004 (L to R): John Dunne, Matthieu Ricard, Jon Kabat-Zinn, Margaret Kemeny, Richard Davidson, and Alan Wallace.

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afterwards, to friends and colleagues:
"I discussed the focus on compassion, both in our work and our practice of meditation and life," she recounted. "I also highlighted the juxtaposition between meditating with a Tibetan monk in full robes one moment, and easily transitioning to PowerPoint presentations of brain scans the next."

"This (mind training) is one of the best things we can do to transform ourselves, become a better human being, and through transforming ourselves, contribute to transforming the world."

—Matthieu Ricard

Nisha N. Money, MD.,said,"Attending the MLSRI was one of the most remarkable experiences of truly and authentically bridging the boundaries between the spirit of consciousness and neuronal correlations. The discussions and insights were fuel for the soul."

Perhaps because many of them already practiced Buddhist meditation, participants were grateful for the dual emphasis on that millennia-old contemplative tradition and neuroscience, one of the most rapidly advancing fields of contemporary scientific knowledge."It was pretty amazing to see how many of the participants already had a meditation practice firmly in place when they arrived at Garrison," Chairman Engle said. "We were not expecting that."

"For the first time the two separate hemispheres of Buddhism and neuroscience started to come together and talk to each other," explained another attendee. "But most importantly I found it very valuable that we were starting to put together, as a group, a framework for future research in meditation." One participant summed up the promise of this approach with these words, "Meeting those people has humbled me and has bred hope in me that humanity is not completely doomed."

If you are interested in reading further about this pioneering field, see the recent articles in *National Geographic*, *Time Magazine*, *Psychology Today*, *London Financial Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal* and the *Smithsonian Magazine*.

GARRISON INSTITUTE PROGRAMS

The Garrison Institute's programs are bound together by their common mission of applying the wisdom of contemplative traditions to the challenges in our society and environment. The programs work towards two goals: to explore issues with depth and insight and to articulate specific action steps to enhance society and enrich the human spirit. It is our hope the programs will catalyze new collaborations, partnerships and networks, with the common goal of creating a more just, peaceful and sustainable world. We have presented here descriptions of a few of our programs in development.

CONTEMPLATION AND EDUCATION

Science and the Benefits Of Contemplative Education

In April of 2005, 34 scientists, physicians, psychologists, educators, leaders of mindfulness education programs and others working in the field of contemplation and education gathered at Garrison Institute for the first symposium on the Program on Contemplation and Education. The program is led by Deborah Schoeberlein, Program Director, and Theo Koffler, Program Advisor.

The Symposium focused on the role of science in the development, implementation and evaluation of mindfulness education for K through 12th grade students in mainstream settings. In particular, the attendees examined the link between programs that train attention and desirable outcomes, such as educational success. The mix of people and depth of content was unprecedented and included Valentino Giacomin, The Alice Project; Soren Gordhamer, Healing the Divide/The Lineage Project; Rachel Kessler, Passageways Institute; and many other leaders in the field.

Saki Santorelli, EdD and Florence Meyer, MA, of the Center For Mindfulness at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, began the two-and-a-half-day event with a keynote address on Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction.



Deborah Schoeberlein, Program Director and Valentino Giacomin, The Alice Project

For the next two days, attendees presented their work, exchanged ideas, made strategic plans, and renewed their energy through contemplative practice. There were six scientific presentations on research related to different aspects of contemplation and education. In addition, five presentations discussed the application of contemplation to K-12 educational

settings. Four contemplative practice sessions introduced attendees to some of the techniques that students and teachers in the United States and India already use.

Another key element of the Symposium was the presentation of the main findings from the Mapping Project, a one-year effort led by Schoeberlein and Koffler to track the status of contemplative education in mainstream schools.

"The Mapping Project is the first serious attempt to catalogue the full extent of contemplative education programs already underway all over the country," said Deborah Schoeberlein. "It is primarily concerned with program pedagogy and methodology, and also explored the degree to which such programs foster love and forgiveness among students."

"There is a crisis in education today and the time is ripe and receptive for understanding exactly how mindfulness can be part of the

"The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgment, character, and will...An education which should improve this faculty would be the education par excellence. But it is easier to define this ideal than to give practical directions for bringing it about."

—William James

Garrison Institute Programs continued...

solution," explained Theo Koffler, program advisor.

Both Schoeberlein and Koffler believe that contemplative initiatives are most successful at winning a place in the school day when administrators and faculty can be shown they will have a positive impact on standardized test scores and other conventional measurements of success.

Some science already exists to document the link between contemplative practices and success in education as it is traditionally defined, according to Dr. Amishi Jha, scientific advisor for the Symposium and assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

"I've done basic research on the effects of mindfulness on adults," says Dr. Jha. "There is an aspect of attention that is improved by mindfulness training, and it turns out that it is the same aspect that is linked to academic achievement."

Attention is, in fact, the basis of success in both contemplative practice and traditional education, neither can be successful without first training attention. "There is a very compelling case to focus contemplative education programs on improving students' ability to focus their attention," says Schoeberlein. "It is the common denominator that underlies both education and contemplation."

For a copy of the full report on the Mapping project, contact Jeanne Johnson jeanne@garrisoninstitute.org.

WELLNESS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTERS WORKERS

Every six minutes a woman is assaulted, and every day at least three women are murdered by their intimate partners. In New York City, over 400 calls are made daily to the city's domestic violence hotline. The counselors and advocates who help victims of domestic violence are vital to the victims' recovery and ability to reestablish stable, happy lives.

However, it is becoming increasingly clear that these service providers are themselves subject to loss of their own optimism, faith and basic trust in other human beings. The Garrison Institute's Wellness for Domestic Violence Shelter Workers program is designed to create and study ways to help these women reduce stress using contemplative techniques such as meditation and yoga.

"When you listen to traumatic stories over extended periods of time, or you witness the effects of trauma, you can begin to take on some of the symptoms of trauma and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, it's called vicarious trauma." explained Marie T. O'Neil, program director.

The symptoms of vicarious trauma can include anxiety, sleeplessness, cynicism, job burnout, shifts in your worldviews, changes in beliefs about trust in the world, and loss of trust in other people.

"One of the main program objectives is to create a model that can be exported nationally or internationally," O'Neil said. "Research

shows self care is the best way for domestic violence workers to protect themselves, but we've failed to identify a single self care meditation program for domestic violence counselors anywhere in the nation."

Initially designed for 75 front line workers from the 40 metropolitan New York shelters, Wellness began with a three-day retreat at the Garrison Institute this June. Participants experienced secular meditation, yoga, and mindfulness.

"Meditation is a powerful way of addressing and reducing the stress and heartbreak entailed in this work...The skills of meditation practice balanced awareness. compassion for oneself as well as for others, and learning to connect to a bigger picture in challenging circumstances—can all be of great support."

-Sharon Salzberg

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Garrison Institute Programs continued...

Sharon Salzberg, the internationally acclaimed meditation teacher and writer is the lead teacher for this program. Sharon also serves as an active member of the Garrison Institute's board of trustees.

Cyndi Lee, author and founder of the OM Yoga centers in New York City and East Hampton, NY, will oversee the yoga portion of the program.

Portions of the retreat will be in silence, and there will be plenty of time between scheduled sessions for connecting with others, walks, and time alone.

The first session will be followed by four monthly support sessions in New York City and a second threeday retreat at the Garrison Institute in November. "For self care and healing to take place, it needs to be consistent and ongoing," explained O'Neil. "A one-time program would be much less valuable."

She adds, "We want to facilitate the development of a supportive community experience, and to create room for rejuvenation and personal growth. We want our participants to learn new tools for self care and to be able to reconnect with their original motivation for the work."

O'Neil estimates that approximately 75 percent of the participants in the Wellness program will be minority women, and the faculty will reflect this.

Garrison Institute tested the waters for its Wellness program at a January Wellness Workshop for directors of metro New York domestic violence shelters. Participants included directors from Safe Horizon, Sanctuary for Families, Henry Street Settlement and Allen Women's Resource Center.

"They expressed great enthusiasm for it," recaps O'Neil. "In fact, they have asked us to organize a similar program specifically for administrators and directors." O'Neil feels it is important to cultivate the directors, because the shelters they run need to commit to Wellness for it to be successful. "We want to have as much impact as possible, not just a nice weekend," says O'Neil. "It's important to have the support of the agencies, so there's a collective energy behind it."

In future years, O'Neil expects Wellness to expand to include programs for directors, supervisors and trauma experts. "We also hope to eventually expand to caring for victims of violence," she says.

All expenses for the Wellness program are being underwritten enabling participants to attend at no cost. For information on sponsoring a shelter worker or making a general contribution to this very worthwhile program, please contact Marie O'Neil, marie@garrisoninstitute.org.

GENERAL SECRETARY VISITS GARRISON



(L to R) Alexander Likhotal, Pat Mitchell, Matt Petersen, Jonathan F.P. Rose, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, Diana Calthorpe Rose, and Irina Virganskaya.

The Garrison Institute hosted Mikhail S. Gorbachev during one glorious autumn weekend last October. The Nobel Peace Prizewinning former general secretary of the Communist Party was especially interested in the Institute's environmental programs that draw on religious and wisdom traditions.

Since tearing down the infamous iron curtain, Mr. Gorbachev has dedicated himself to protecting the environment. Today he leads an environmental network whose US member is Global Green—a group that is promoting the creation of a \$50 billion Global Solar Fund.

"Mr. Gorbachev has a deep commitment to ecology and the environment, and deep regard for the need to embrace the spiritual side of nature," said Matt Petersen, Global Green's CEO. "He was interested in visiting Garrison Institute due to its commitment to the earth and to contemplation. He has deep respect for many religions, particularly Buddhism, and was interested to learn more about Garrison Institute," Petersen added.

Mr. Gorbachev looks forward to returning to the Garrison Institute for further dialogue.

Garrison Institute Program Updates

CONTEMPLATIVE MIND IN THE LIFE OF SERVICE

Multi-faith symposium for University Chaplains, Spiritual Advisors and Deans of Religious Life.

This second annual symposium for chaplains was held in April 2005. The three-day symposium led by program director, Patrice Brodeur, University of Montreal and moderated by Jaqueline Landry, Catholic Chaplain at Harvard University brought together over thirty-five chaplains from almost thirty universities and colleges across the US.

This unique opportunity allowed participants to refresh their individual contemplative practices, learn from other spiritual traditions, share experiences and best practices related to their social action efforts, and explore the profound ways in which contemplation and service enrich each other.

The distinguished teachers for this multi-faith symposium were Fr. Thomas Keating (Christianity), Kabir Helminski (Islam), Gina Sharpe (Buddhism) and Rabbi Miles Krassen (Judaism). In addition, Rabbi Zalman Schachter, one of the Institute's spiritual advisors, joined the symposium via live video-conference.

Plans are currently underway for a third symposium to be held in the Spring of 2006.



(L to R) Patrice Brodeur, Kabir Helminski, Gina Sharpe, Fr. Thomas Keating, Jonathan F.P. Rose and Jeanne Johnson.

THE HUDSON RIVER PROJECT Caring for Creation and the Common Good

This program is a place-based initiative, focusing on the sacredness of the Hudson River estuary system. It brings together religious and environmental leaders in a unique coalition to work on behalf of the River. The model developed consists of interfaith and cross-community collaboration, creation of a document based on shared values, and community based action projects.

Since our last newsletter, a steering committee has been formed that includes local, regional, and national leaders from both the environmental and religious communities. From this committee, a writing team is working on a joint statement based on environmental and religious shared values which will be of international significance and vision.

The project also serves as a communications and learning network linking members to one another. During June 2005, the project will host a forum on land protection issues, and hold a plenary panel on religion and the environment at the Bard/Resurgence Earth & Religion conference. In June, we will also begin a 12-part series of public conversations at the Institute with well known environmental activists. The first Conversation to be held features Scottish environmentalist and author, Alastair McIntosh in dialogue with community leaders involved in successfully opposing the St. Lawrence Cement Plant.

If your organization or worshiping community would like to kno w more about this project, please contact Patricia Ackerman patricia@garrisoninstitute.org.

RETREATS AT GARRISON

Retreats at Garrison has been created to put the Garrison Institute's resources at the service of visiting teachers and students from the world's great spiritual traditions. Typical events focus on prayer, meditation and reflection.

"Supporting ongoing spiritual practice by groups in retreat is a central part of the Garrison Institute's mission," emphasizes Director of Operations Rob Gabriele. "It complements our focus on the programs that we directly sponsor. The Institute is a tremendous asset for the contemplative community, and we want to share it as widely as possible."

For some, retreats at Garrison has filled a gaping hole. Before, it was hard to find a place near New York City that had the right kind of environment, the right size, and that actually felt like a sacred environment. "Because of its location and the kind of people who will use it, the contemplative work that takes place at the Garrison Institute will have a major impact on society," said Sharon Salzberg.

"Change in the world begins with the individual," concluded Gabriele. "We hope many, many individuals will come here year after year after year to engage in sustained spiritual practice. Then, they can go back out in the world and effect that change."

HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR SECOND YEAR

In its second year of operation, the Retreat Center has been blessed to host some very special retreats. Here are a selected few:

GUHYASAMAJA: A Highest Yoga Tantra Retreat

Kyabje Locho Rinpoche, one of the foremost masters of Tibetan Tantra, led a rare and advanced Tantric retreat in May 2004. Many ordained monks of different lineages attended, as did a number of reincarnated lamas and laypeople from across the US, Canada and South America. The retreat was held in conjunction with the Drepung Loseling Institute and Jewel Heart.

Guhyasamaja, or the "Tantra of the Secret Gathering," began with a teaching on the preliminaries of Tantric practice, followed by the complete initiation (wang, loong and tri) over two days. The remainder of the nine-day retreat was devoted to teachings and meditation.

Rinpoche, who was born in 1928 in Kham, Eastern Tibet, is especially



Kyabje Locho Rinpoche with translator, Geshe Lobsang

renowned as a holder of the Tantric lineages, and as a master of the Tantric yogas. He studied at the Drepung Loseling Monastery under many of the greatest Tibetan masters alive at the time. After receiving his Geshe degree, which requires 20 years of study, he attended Gyume Tantric College.

Like his predecessor, the legendary master Gen Locho, he exhibited exceptional skills of learning and practice, and soon achieved realization. With the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1959, Rinpoche came into exile in India, where he currently works to preserve Tibet's ancient traditions.

12 Issue 1

Orbil Sanders



LAMA SURYA DAS: Dharma On New Shores

Lama Surya Das, the preeminent Western-born teacher of Tibetan Buddhism, leads 2-week long retreats twice a year at the Garrison Institute for his Dzogchen Center where he serves as Spiritual Director. These intensive and mostly silent retreats offer participants multiple teachings and guided meditation sessions.

Lama Surya was born as Jeffrey Miller of Valley Stream, Long Island. After graduating from the State University of New York at Buffalo he went on to spend nearly 30 years studying Zen, vipassana, yoga and Tibetan Buddhism with many of the great old masters of Asia. He is a lineage holder in the nonsectarian Dzogchen lineage and founded the Dzogchen Center to help make his teachings available to a greater number of students. "We're a Buddhist group" he said, our mission is the transmission and transformation of the Buddhist teachings to help make them accessible."

Lama Surya dedicates himself to the transmission and preservation of the old tradition, but also adapts it to the conditions of the Western culture where it is being taken up. "I think that in our information age, what's really missing is wisdom and compassion," he explained.

Lama Surya feels that the goals of the Garrison Institute are in close alignment with his own. He is also inspired by its location just across the Hudson River from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. "I never fail to point out on retreats," he said, "how appropriate it is that in plain sight of the great army base we are praying for peace and harmony. It fits right in with the whole mission and intention of the Garrison Institute board."



Lama Surya Das teaching a meditation retreat at the Garrison Institute

"This ancient but timeless spiritual practice gives us ways to become like those masters of old, and to bring a higher form of sanity to our materialistic consumer society and our volatile and dangerous world."

—Lama Surya Das

Lama Surya has authored five books about Buddhism, as well as numerous video and audio recordings, articles and essays. His new book, *The Bodhisatt va Code*, will be published in 2006.

THE FUTURE OF ISLAM IN AMERICA

In November of 2004, the American Sufi Muslim Association (ASMA) held a retreat for its Cordoba Initiative at the Garrison Institute. Iman Feisal Abdul Rauf and Daisy Khan, respectively the founder and executive director of the Society, organized the event for about 125 American Muslim Leaders of Tomorrow.

"We wanted to identify a network of successful American Muslims aged 25 to 45 years to be the voice of American Islam in the next generation. This particular generation is the first generation of American Muslims, as distinguished from Muslims in America," says Iman Rauf. "It is this generation that grapples with the issues of what it is about our heritage that we can carry and move forward, and what aspects of our heritage we can let go of in this cultural context."

The attendees went through three days of spiritual nourishment, networking and brainstorming. As a self-selected group of mixed races, ethnicities, backgrounds and Islamic traditions, they were a reflection of the varied American Islamic scene, which includes everything from African Americans who have decided to adopt Islam and immigrants from almost every Muslim society in the world today. In one of the sessions, participants were asked what was their biggest worry, as Muslims in America. Almost unanimously the answer was, "Another 9/11."

"If there were one message for ASMA to communicate to non-Muslim Americans," says Imam Rauf,

"it would be that the core Islamic values and the core American values are identical." We are forging a sense of an Islamic identity that is authentic to its spiritual, religious and liturgical tradition, and simultaneously true to what it means to be an American in the best sense of the word."

TENT OF ABRAHAM, HAGAR & SARAH: An Interfaith Conference

The Garrison Institute was witness to the birth of a new interfaith organization of Christians, Jews and Muslims, which coalesced around a shared concern for peace, justice and the earth during two Abrahamic Retreats, held here in September and January. During the retreats, participants engaged in each other's spiritual practices, practiced deep sharing with the group, and discussed ideas for carrying the energy forward into continued retreats and into social action.

According to tradition, Abraham, Hagar, and Sarah opened their tent to all four directions, the more easily to share food and water with travelers from anywhere. In that spirit, the new group has named itself the Tent of Abraham, Hagar & Sarah. They welcome "all those who thirst and hunger for justice, peace, and dignity."

Among those who participated were Rabbi Phyllis Berman, Sulayman S. Nyang, Jamie Lynn Hamilton, Dr. Vincent Harding, S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana, Charles Lenchner, Anne McCarthy, Robert Corin Morris, Rev. Elizabeth A. Reed, Ph.D., Rabbi Arthur Waskow, Ph.D., Imam Al-Hajj Talib Abdur-

Rashid, and Rabbi Sheila Weinberg.

"We found the calm, the beauty, and the spiritual ambiance of the Garrison Institute deeply helpful to our explorations with each other and our moving from the sharing of our spiritual journeys to the defining of our joint action to help heal the world," said Rabbi Waskow, who organized all the retreats in conjunction with his Philadelphia-based organization, The Shalom Center.



Arthur Waskow, Shalom Center shares a moment with Rabbi Phyllis Berman.

The new organization is currently making plans to organize a nation-wide, daylong Fast for Reflection, Repentance, and Renewal in the Fall of 2005.

TEACHING SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Rockwood Leadership Training Institute has hosted a number of social justice training retreats for activist leaders at the Institute. Their four-day training program, the Art of Leadership, is an intense exploration of the basic requirements of authentic leadership and is open to participants representing many different social justice causes.

"Rockwood's purpose is to build a strong network of powerful social justice leaders in the world," said Akaya Windwood, the organization's director of training. "This is important because society is evolving and new forms of leadership need to evolve with it." While on retreat, participants learn about leading from the inside out, according to Windwood. "We look at who we are as leaders, what the impact is on others and what it means to be authentic."

All of Rockwood's retreats are informed by a basic premise that leadership is inherently sacred and that leaders must understand what their ultimate purpose is and how their actions fit that purpose. In one exercise participants are asked, "If you had only a year to live, how would you live?" "It really clarifies for people whether they are on purpose and -if not- what they need to do to correct that," said Windwood. "We believe that one cannot successfully lead without a purpose."

The participants are driven by a desire to be of service, protect nature, or tell the truth. Windwood's own purpose is attaining freedom for herself and others. "As I do anything, I'm constantly at the back of my heart asking, how is this serving liberation?" she explains.

The Rockwood Leadership Training Institute will return to the Garrison Institute in 2006 for additional East Coast workshops and training sessions for public sector leaders in the field today.



LEARNING TO THINK AT THE EDGE

The Focusing Institute has held several retreats at the Garrison Institute to guide people in becoming more in touch with their inner life and learn to express themselves more authentically. The method used is called Focusing. Founded in 1986 as a not-forprofit organization, the Focusing Institute's purpose is to help make Focusing available to the public and the international scholarly community through written materials, research and teachings.

Thinking at the Edge (TAE) is an advanced form of Focusing, a contemplative method for accessing a non-verbal, bodily-felt sense in relation to problems, decisions, and creative challenges that was developed by Eugene Gendlin, a philosopher, psychotherapist and University of Chicago professor-emeritus.

While attending the Focusing Institute retreats, participants learn to articulate in words the knowledge that is uniquely theirs, things they know deeply from a lifetime of direct personal experience. "Most people learn to express themselves only in ways, and about things, that fit what other people have already said," explained Dr. Gendlin. "As a result, we experience a great deal that never gets truly thought about or articulated."

"Thinking at the Edge is a practice that anyone can do—from a young person just beginning to engage her mind in the world around her to the most accomplished academic," Dr. Gendlin added. "It can be used to build complex, logical theories. But, it can also be used simply to help us put into words something we know from our life experience, so that others may know it too."

To inquire about holding a retreat at the Garrison Institute, contact Rob Gabriele at 845-424-4800 or Rob@garrisoninstitute.org.

To see a full listing of all retreats scheduled, please visit www.garrisoninstitute.org

SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER...



Emma Rae enjoying the space in the Garrison Institute.

We are delighted to announce a new (and small) addition to our staff — Emma Rae, daughter of our Director of Administration, Jeanne Johnson, is deemed the official "resident morale officer" by many staff. She brings much joy and a wonderful energy to daily Garrison Institute work life. Welcome Emma!

"Do not pursue the past. Do not lose yourself in the future. The past no longer is. The future has not yet come. Looking deeply at life as it is in the very here and now, the practitioner dwells in stability and freedom."

—The Buddha



SUMMER/FALL 2005 RETREATS AT GARRISON INSTITUTE

Retreats that are open to the public are listed in italics. Register at 845-424-4800 or retreats@garrisoninstitute.org

June 23 - 26

Stone Circles Retreat for Social Justice Activists (closed)

June 26 - July 2

Mind and Life Summer Institute (closed)

July 16 - 31

Dzogchen Foundation Retreat with Lama Surya Das

August 4 –7

Exploring the Dimensions of Self and No-Self: A Retreat with Matthew Flickstein

August 5 – 7

Vipassana Meditation Retreat with Jose Reissig

August 8 - 14

Community Dharma Leaders | Retreat with James Baraz (closed)

September 22 – 25

Retreat for Social Activists Sponsored by Center for Contemplative Mind in Society (closed)

September 29 - October 2

Threshold Society Sufi Retreat with Kabir and Camille Helminski

October 3 – 4

Phillipstown Reform Synagogue Rosh Hashanah Services

October 7 - 10

Jewel Heart Tibetan Buddhist Fall Retreat with Gehlek Rimpoche

October 12 - 13

Phillipstown Reform Synagaogue Yom Kippur Services

October 26 - 30

Hermitage Heart Zen Retreat with Bonnie Myotai Treace, Sensei

November 18 - 20

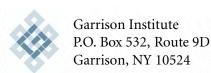
Awakened Mind, Open Heart: Lovingkindness Meditation and Devotional Chanting Weekend with Sharon Salzberg and Krishna Das

December 9 - 11

Empty Hand Zendo Retreat with Susan Ji-on Postal – open for Zen Practitioners

"A beautiful society is a collective society of beautiful beings."

- Gehlek Rimpoche



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