

Miksang



Miksang photos by John McQuade (top) by and Nina Mudita (left)

for more about Miksang, visit www.miksang.org or www.miksang.com

Miksang is a Tibetan word that translates as "Good Eye"

In general, meditation refers to the state of being awake: the realization of unselfconscious awareness which allows us to connect with the full reality of our being. **Meditation also refers to practices of synchronizing mind and body which enable us to cultivate that state of being.**

Contemplative photography works with the synchronization of eye and mind. **When eye and mind are in the same place the moment by moment vividness of the visual world manifests and is appreciated fully.** This manifestation is spontaneous - a flash of perception - the ordinary magic of the phenomenal world. When one connects with pure perception there is no struggle in making a heartfelt and brilliant photographic image that one can share with others.

These moments of pure perception and appreciation happen all the time but we often ignore and devalue them. However, it is worthwhile to recognize and cultivate these moments because they recollect the inherent openness and goodness of our being.

Although the experience of clear seeing is available to everyone, people come to contemplative photography with different motivations. Some want to give expression to what they experience through the discipline of meditation. Some have recognized some direct and vivid quality of perception in their own experience and want to explore and express that potential. Others have trained in photography or other arts and are curious about the contemplative approach. The common element is an interest in clear seeing.

Escape of the Flower Bird

Many days the small bird flew,
mute from the shock of the noise and smell of fire.
His shadow caste a dark image of planes of war.
Weak and hungry, he eyed a field below
and a carpet of blue flowers.
At the edge of the field
he took refuge in a wood.
Here under cover of trees
he found his place to sleep
and dream of the fragrance
of peace.

Barbara Roux 2007

During recent wars, the million gallons of oil released into the Persian Gulf was the equivalent of the largest oil spill in history, 20 times larger than the Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska and twice as large as the previous world record oil spill. In 1999, some 400 to 500 tons of fish died in the Persian Gulf, a problem traced to a lack of oxygen in the water and the growth of phytoplanktons.

Ahmad Nadalian, of the Paradise International Environmental Art Center, has organized more than 50 environmental arts festivals in Iran. These photos and poem are from a January, 2008 festival. Even now, countries in this region are dealing with problems left from oil that has formed many oil lakes and pools that are sinking into the sand, contaminating some million tons of soil. Thousands of cormorants died as a result of exposure to oil or polluted water. Many Karan Island green turtles developed lesions. A complete report and more photos from the festival are at www.payvand.com/news/08/feb/1111.html.



Young artists also depicted patterns of living creatures that lost their life due to pollution, which was caused by war. Barbara Roux's poem was sealed in water bottles found on the beach and released into the Gulf.

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War, peace & the ENVIRONMENT

By Ellen Goodman

I wasn't sure how the politician-turned-environmentalist fit the profile for a Nobel Peace Prize, but his acceptance speech connected the dots. "Without realizing it," Gore said, "we have begun to wage war on the Earth itself. Now, we and the Earth's climate are locked in a relationship familiar to war planners: mutually assured destruction."

How many Americans actually heard these words of war and peace? The coverage from Oslo was overshadowed by the coverage from Iowa. The presidential campaigns used up the oxygen that might have been reserved for the greenhouse gases.

The inconvenient truth of the 2008 election year is that climate change is still way down the dance card of most-talked-about topics. It's ranked number 12 among Democratic candidates, and number 15 among Republicans. Of the 2,275 questions on the Sunday morning talk shows, the League of Conservation Voters counted only three on global warming. . .

From time to time, the candidates doff their carbon caps and calculate their carbon footprints. But the warming of the globe, the fact that the ice cap is "falling off of a cliff," as scientists say, doesn't heat up the campaign as much as paying for the education of an illegal immigrant.

Gore told the Nobel crowd, "We have everything we need to get started, save perhaps political will." But, he added optimistically, "political will is a renewable resource." Will it get renewed?

When 187 countries met in Bali in December, 2007 to form a climate change treaty, our country was booed and isolated. We refused to join other industrialized nations in guaranteeing cuts of greenhouse gas emissions. A frustrated man from Papua New Guinea finally told the Bush delegation, "If you cannot lead, leave it to the rest of us. Get out of the way."

It was at the last minute that our wrecking crew of delegates compromised on a meager road map. They agreed only to work for an agreement . . . by 2009. For the first time, industrial and developing countries are on the same path, but any real action has been kicked down that path.

Today America remains the leading producer of one product: greenhouse gases. Congress finally passed an

energy bill that will raise fuel standards for cars to 35 miles a gallon by 2020. After 30 years of stalling, we are moving into first gear, too little and maybe too late. Meanwhile, the EPA just denied the more ambitious attempts by California and other states to control emissions. Political will as a renewable resource?

This Christmas we had a national anxiety attack about unsafe toys. Eighty percent of our toys are made in China. But what is more dangerous for our children, the lead paint in some Chinese factories or the fact that China's emissions may soon surpass our own? What's worse, that we are China's biggest customer or their worst role model?

In 2007, consciousness rose with the thermostat. Scientists layered one set of facts on another. Gore wrapped these facts into an attention-grabbing movie. After Bali, the world's leaders are just waiting for this presidency to pass. But we are still waiting for the renewable energy to fuel election-year politics.

On the day Gore spoke to the Nobel audience, he said, "we dumped another 70 million tons of global-warming pollution into the thin shell of atmosphere surrounding our planet, as if it were an open sewer . . . We are what is wrong, and we must make it right."



Fire and Ice

Robert Frost

SOME say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To know that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

National Security and the Threat of Climate Change

VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

In April, 2007 a bipartisan panel of military and security experts released a study commissioned by the Center for Naval Analyses, a government-funded think tank, called the "National Security and the Threat of Climate Change" report. Their assessment? Global warming "presents significant national security challenges to the United States," which the nation must address or face serious consequences.

Former U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gordon Sullivan

"We seem to be standing by and, frankly, asking for perfectness in science," Gen. Sullivan said. "People are saying they want to be convinced, perfectly. They want to know the climate science projections with 100 percent certainty."

"You have to act with incomplete information. You have to act based on the trend line. You have to act on your intuition sometimes."

In discussing how military leaders manage risk, Gen. Sullivan noted that significant attention is often given to the low probability/high consequence events. These events rarely occur but can have devastating consequences if they do.

During the Cold War, much of America's defense efforts focused on preventing a Soviet missile attack—the very definition of a low probability/high consequence event. Our effort to avoid such an unlikely event was a central organizing principle for our diplomatic and military strategies.

When asked to compare the risks of climate change with those of the Cold War, Gen. Sullivan said, "The Cold War was a specter, but climate change is inevitable. If we keep on with business as usual, we will reach a point where some of the worst effects are inevitable."

"If we don't act, this looks more like a high probability/high consequence scenario," he added.

"The situation, for much of the Cold War, was stable," Gen. Sullivan continued. "And the challenge was to keep it stable, to stop the catastrophic event from happening. We spent billions on that strategy."

"Climate change is exactly the opposite. We have a catastrophic event that appears to be inevitable."

And the challenge is to stabilize things—to stabilize carbon in the atmosphere. Back then, the challenge was to stop a particular action. Now, the challenge is to inspire a particular action. We have to act if we're to avoid the worst effects."

Some Americans believe we don't need to worry about climate change for decades. They say the issue isn't as urgent as the war on terror.

Admiral T. Joseph Lopez

Adm. Lopez, the retired top NATO commander in Bosnia, has a different take. He sees a strong connection between the two.

"Climate change will provide the conditions that will extend the war on terror," Adm. Lopez said.

"You have very real changes in natural systems that are most likely to happen in regions of the world that are already fertile ground for extremism," Adm. Lopez said. "Droughts, violent weather, ruined agricultural lands—those are the kinds of stresses we'll see more of under climate change."

Those changes in nature will lead to changes in society. "More poverty, more forced migrations, higher unemployment. Those conditions are ripe for extremists and terrorists." In the controversial war on terrorism, Adm. Lopez noted, there is general agreement on at least one thing: It's best to stop terrorism before it develops. "In the long term, we want to address the underlying conditions that terrorists seek to exploit. That's what we'd like to do, and it's a consensus issue—we all want to do that. But climate change prolongs those conditions."

Take nothing but memories
leave nothing but footprints
kill nothing but time

DID YOU KNOW?

In the past 20 years, 16 Nobel Laureates, including the Dalai Lama, Mikail Gorbechev and Nelson Mandela, Kofi Anan and Jimmy Carter, have all emphasized the importance of the environment in their Nobel lectures.

"When the well is dry we know the worth of water."



This issue of beCAUSE was produced by James Benzschawel, a peaceCENTER intern from Texas Lutheran University.

WATER WARS

This is a term devised by environmentalists for a type of conflict (most probably a form of guerrilla warfare) due to an acute shortage of water for drinking and irrigation. About 40 per cent of the world's populations are already affected to some degree, but population growth, climate change and rises in living standards will worsen the situation: the UN Environment Agency warns that almost 3 billion people will be severely short of water within 50 years. The term has been used for some years to describe disputes in the southern and south-western United States over rights to water extraction from rivers and aquifers. — Michael Quinion

water given us by the earth

A Declaration of Water Rights

In the year 2000, the citizens of Bolivia's third largest city, Cochabamba, battled the Bolivian government against the privatization of their water resources that were sold at a cheap price to the only bidder— *Aguas del Tunari*. The citizens fought against the privatization of their water resources because *Aguas del Tunari* capitalized their water system by increasing the price of water one week after taking over control of the water system. **The Cochabamba Water Wars should be a model for everyone showing that the privatization and then capitalization of a resource that is necessary for life is a crime against humanity.** It's unfortunate that the entire world doesn't acknowledge how precious our water resources are except for the evergrowing impoverished areas around the world where the scarcity of water is already clear. This is a declaration made by activists in Cochabamba that all people should acknowledge:

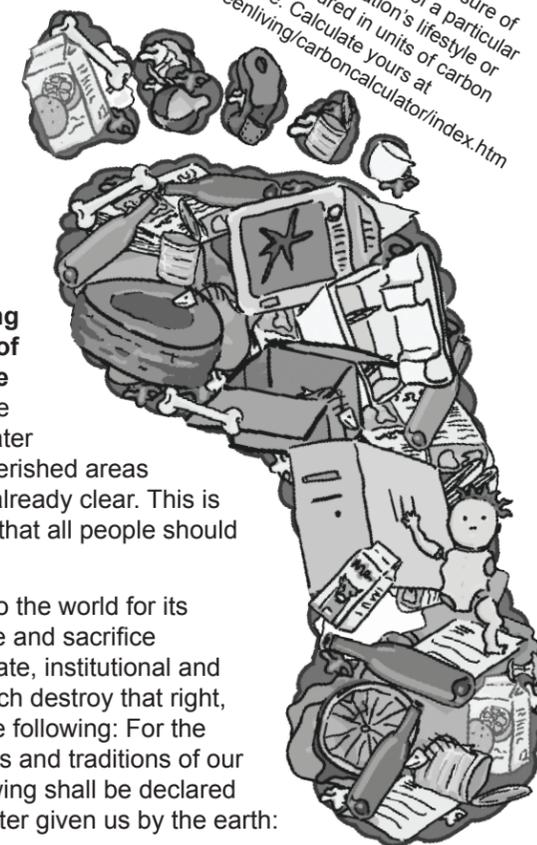
Here, in this city which has been an inspiration to the world for its retaking of that right through civil action, courage and sacrifice standing as heroes and heroines against corporate, institutional and governmental abuse, and trade agreements which destroy that right, in use of our freedom and dignity, we declare the following: For the right to life, for the respect of nature and the uses and traditions of our ancestors and our peoples, for all time the following shall be declared as inviolable rights with regard to the uses of water given us by the earth:

1. **Water belongs to the earth and all species and is sacred to life,** therefore, the world's water must be conserved, reclaimed and protected for all future generations and its natural patterns respected.

2. **Water is a fundamental human right and a public trust** to be guarded by all levels of government, therefore, it should not be commodified, privatized or traded for commercial purposes. These rights must be enshrined at all levels of government. In particular, an international treaty must ensure these principles are noncontroversial.

3. **Water is best protected by local communities** and citizens who must be respected as equal partners with governments in the protection and regulation of water. Peoples of the earth are the only vehicle to promote earth democracy and save water.

A carbon footprint is the measure of the environmental impact of a particular individual or organization's lifestyle or operation, measured in units of carbon dioxide. Calculate yours at nature.org/greenliving/carboncalculator/index.htm



Want to read more? Get the entire report online: <http://securityandclimate.cna.org/report/>

In Egypt's vital, low-lying Nile Delta, the livelihoods of millions may be at risk from rising sea levels and salinization of agricultural areas.

In the Asian subcontinent, the retreat of Himalayan glaciers will dry up downstream water supplies, and rising seas and stronger cyclones will threaten tens of millions on the Bay of Bengal coast.

In the poor nations of Central America, more intense hurricanes could severely damage economies, destabilize political systems and send streams of uprooted people toward the U.S. border.

The stunningly swift shrinking of Arctic Ocean ice in recent summers has drawn attention to looming international disputes over rights to the newly-open seas.

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Since 1995, the all-volunteer and interfaith peaceCENTER continues to be a significant community catalyst for peace in San Antonio, Texas. Compassion and Justice are our strong guiding lights. Contemplative Practices, Experiential Education, and Nonviolent Actions are our working expressions throughout the community at large.

The peaceCENTER is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

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