

NKARC Letter: July 2015

Dear friends,

Most contributions to this month's letter resulted from a meeting with a small group of Nonkilling colleagues who surprised me with their inspiration and creativity when we got together in Hawai'i for a futures envisioning about the Center for Global Nonkilling, June 12 -14. The setting was appropriately the MuRyangSa Buddhist Temple and its green surroundings. (More on this at: www.nonkilling.org)

The visit also provided me with an opportunity to meet NKARC colleague Dr. Olivier Urbain who specializes in scholarly examination of relationship between music and conflict transformation. This is an area in which there has been little conversation in our Letter. The first section of the letter on Music and Nonkilling covers that theme which emanated from conversation with Olivier and Joam Evans Pim.

1. Music and Nonkilling

(a) Music and Conflict Transformation

Music and Conflict Transformation: Harmonies and Dissonances in Geopolitics (2008) is a rare scholarly book edited by NKARC colleague Dr. Olivier Urbain. Originally published in hard cover in 2008, a new paperback edition was published this year (2015), with a new foreword by jazz great Wayne Shorter, one of the top jazz composers alive today. This collective volume explores how music can be used to build a less violent and more harmonious world. Like geopolitics, music can have both harmonies and dissonances.

A rich academic book with bibliography, index and references, it is divided into four parts: politics, healing and education, stories from the field, and a section on heuristic frameworks, having contributions of both theorists and practitioners. Johan Galtung, one of the founders of peace studies, has contributed a chapter entitled "Peace, Music and the Arts: in Search of Interconnections." There is also an original interview of Pete Seeger, one of the leading figures of protest music in the US, in the chapter by Rik Palieri "Working in the Trenches: Surviving Conflicts through Folk Music and Tales."

The chapter "Unpeaceful Music" by George Kent is an example of this volume's diverse perspectives written with a critical eye. It shows also how music generally thought as a source of peace and harmony has been abused/misused (Repellent Music, Nationalistic Music, Insurrectionary Music, Hateful Music, and Capitalist Music). Felicity Lawrence in her chapter "Music and Empathy" writes about the accepted epitome of Western musical culture: "the symphony orchestra which is entirely based upon a rigid hierarchical structure. Creating emphatic relationships is hardly the purpose in such contexts, music is doing other work." She suggests, "what if we take another kind of musicking? A musicking based, for example, upon cooperation, democratic participation, mutual, respectful listening, and care for each other's differing musical values" (pp.23-24).

There are chapters showing the importance of music to understand history and lead to reconciliation in South Africa and the role played by music of protest during the civil rights and Vietnam war in the USA. There could be lessons learnt for other movements and issues of social and political change in other regions of the world. A missing component in all this is finding examples in the book about “musicking” from South and East Asian rich musical and peace song traditions. This book will hopefully spur research in that direction. Thanks and Kudos to NKARC colleague Olivier on this seminal work.

Music and Conflict Transformation: Harmonies and Disharmonies in Geopolitics, edited by Olivier Urbain. London: IB.Tauris, 2015.

(b) Rabindra Sangeet from Bangladesh

It so happened that a song of peace and prayer came last month from a colleague from Bangladesh Dr. Rashida Khanem who is a political scientist working on gender and nonkilling, and also an exponent of soulful Rabindra Sangeet (music developed by the Nobel Laureate for Literature Rabindra Nath Tagore).

See mps3 attachment of Rashida singing and its English translation below.

Boriso Dhara Majeh Santiro Bari

(Bestow showers of Thy blessings unto the world).

By Rabindra Nath Tagore

Bestow showers of Thy blessings unto the world.

With dried heart men and woman looking to You

There be no darkness, no lust & sin; not there be grief agony and pain.

Let the heart be transparent, life be strong

Remove all the hindrances.

Why this envious violence, this sort of deception

Why the indignation, mental perturbation.

Bestow love into the hearts of unfeeling hearts (unfeeling hearted people)

Applauding for joy of Thy success.

(Sung and English Translation by Prof. Rashida Khanem)

Thank you Rashida and Olivier.

(c) Qawalli and Nonkilling

The following link of an unusual Sufi devotional singing Qawalli made Olivier Urbain ask me a question about the relationship between Qawalli and Nonkilling. Please hear this unusual Qawwali on Hindu Lord Krishna, sung by Pakistani singers Farid Ayaz and Abu Mohammed. For music, click on:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=GHAMyHerv90

Oliver Urbain: What can you tell me about the connections you see between this 9 min video and nonkilling?"

BB: Qawalli is a form of Sufi devotional singing which has been popular in the Indian sub-continent for over past 700 years. Wikipedia on Qawalli (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qawwali>) looks surprisingly quite comprehensive.

Sufi tradition is in fact about Nonkilling as it doesn't exhort its audience to kill or take revenge, it's mainly about piety, the mystic singers make a direct connect with Allah/God transcending religious boundaries of Islam's Shia and Sunni and other sects (and Hinduism) wherein Allah becomes the beloved, object of love, and singing and sometime dance are often a wail of longing for the beloved.

There are Qawalli singers in India and Pakistan, but in this case, these Muslim singers were invited from Pakistan to visit India to sing among other themes about love for a Hindu God Lord Krishna reinforcing the transcendental message of universal love, which makes it even more significant.

Check out the words:

"O'beloved (my Lord Krishna) do you ever remember me? Oh well, I adore even thy forgetfulness!

O Krishna do you ever think of me at all."

Then there is a moment of reflection, described as 'Tussover' (contemplation), in it the poet reflects, the gatekeeper's name is perhaps from Islam, though there is one in Hinduism too:

"Who am I, what am I?"

Ask this from Rizwan, the gatekeeper of Heaven

why me and my ancestors who have been always refused to enter?"

Here the point of longing gets layered depending upon a listener's personal state -- physical, intellectual and spiritual - a rejected lover seeking reconciliation, a search about the meaning/purpose of life, an émigré's longing for his/her homeland, sadness of a refugee uprooted from his culture and geography for ever. The intense desire to Unite despite all obstacles and the Universal Love is the Nonkilling moment in my view. Six decades after the Partition of the subcontinent, the theme of cultural separation and union resonates with families of over 100 million people who were displaced and a million killed in August 1947.

In the past, famous Pakistani Qawallis singers have come (in fact invited) to sing/perform in India, names such as Nusurrat Ali Khan and Adiba Pervin are popular on both sides of the border as well as in Bangladesh. There have been Hindu Qawalli singers like brothers Shanker and Shambhu whom I personally heard as a young man at our family home in Delhi. The two brothers travelled across the world

as famous Qawalls known for their devotion of Pir Khawaja Moyuniddin Chisti of Ajmer Dargah in India singing before large immigrant communities from the subcontinent settled abroad. I am sure there has been cultural transactional traffic in other directions also as part of the sub-continent's cultural diplomacy.

The universal message of love because of the broadly shared culture of common languages (Punjabi, Hindustani, and Bangla) shared melodies and ragas bring together people of Pakistan and North India in Nonkilling spirit listening to the music overriding politics once in a while. The beauty of the sub-continent's musical culture accessible to both religious communities is such that the music integrates different national and sub-national identities through common classical ragas which are based on nature's rhythm than religions, changing lights of 24 hour divided into 8 periods/'pehars' of a day and the four seasons evoking different musical structures and shades in a raga, the classical ragas have been there since the beginning of Indian civilization, enriched by influences of Persian and Arab invaders and later on by colonial British bringing in symphonic orchestral music eventually fusing all that into more popular Bollywood singing and dancing. In addition, in the Eastern part of the country, Rabindra Sangeet (based on tradition of singing in Bangla conceived by Nobel Laureate Poet Rabindra Nath Tagore in the early 20th century) is sang with love and devotion in Bangla regions of India and Bangladesh. Such musical tradition has survived over generations through Guru-Shishya/ Ustad-Shagird training offered through a music master taking on a student regardless of his/her religion.

We need more such passionate music expressing love and oneness of all life. Maybe similar to Sufi songs can be found in other cultures. Maybe "Amazing Grace"-- I was blind and now I see. I was a blind killer but now I see nonkilling? They could inspire new nonkilling music creations.

2. Plays and Nonkilling

As part of Canada's Magnetic North Theatre Festival, last month Horseshoes & Hand Grenades Theatre Production presented a play **Re:Union** by Sean Devine in Ottawa. The play is about American Quaker activist Norman Morrison who immolated himself in front of the Pentagon protesting against the Vietnam War on 2 November 1965.

Devine's thought-provoking play raises profound questions about: Is extremism (acts of immolation, fast unto death, suicide bombers) in activism a legitimate form of political action? What is the responsibility of an individual when the nation is at war or in peacebuilding?

The play's protagonist Norman's daughter Emily was at the site of her father's self-sacrifice. The play's fictional narrative is told by her 36 years later confronting the former US Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara accusing him to be the cause of her father's tragedy. Sacrifice is an essential virtue about love and practicing nonviolence but not when it becomes a suicide, homicide or killing oneself and others in a conflict. Nonkilling is not just about absence of war, it is a reminder that means are more important than the end.

Our Doukhobour colleague Koozma J. Tarasoff who was at this play sent the following, click on: goo.gl/YdUCAQ

3. Film and Nonkilling

A. Hope from Colombia doc: I saw this powerful Nonkilling doc film, '*Hope from Colombia*' at our CGNK gathering. The 24 minutes documentary is about the nonviolent peace march Governor Guillermo Gaviria Correa led in 2003 in Antioquia, Colombia. It shows the courage and character of nonviolent champions as well as careful organization needed to plan and undertake such political action. A must for those who work in Nonkilling field.

Rich Panter, maker of this documentary, has worked as a writer, producer, and director for twelve public television documentaries which have collectively won twenty-one awards, including a the Tokyo Prize at the Japan Television Festival, a CINE Gold Eagle, and an Emmy nomination. The site has two additional short videos on Nonkilling movement.

For 'Hope from Colombia', click on: <https://vimeo.com/user617624> <<https://vimeo.com/user617624>>.

B. New Mad Max Film Review

Original Mad Max franchise films many years ago reveled in violent masculinity. The new version of the 'Mad Max: Fury Road' has new twist to its thematic, telling viewers that the only escape from violent masculinity is to start over without it and the important role of its women protagonists in bringing hope to end the violence. Chu in his review of the film published on-line in The Daily Beast writes:

"To the extent that *Mad Max: Fury Road* does something other movies starring Strong Female Characters kicking ass doesn't, it's not because of Charlize Theron's Imperator Furiosa, even though she is an awesome character. It's because of the women she's "saving," Joe's Wives, who see the potential of a better world beyond fighting and killing. It's because of the reappearance of people in the *Mad Max* universe who aren't warriors and demonstrate a way to live that isn't war....The messages graffitied on the walls of their prison before their escape show them thinking about the future—"Our Babies Won't Be Warlords"—and the past—"Who Killed the World?"

For full review, click on: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/05/20/mad-max-how-mras-killed-the-world.html?via=desktop&source=facebook>

Thanks Rich Panter for your doc and James Loney for pointing to the Mad Max review

4. Poems and Nonkilling: Nonkilling Awakening

Two Odes to Nonkilling by Francisco Gomes de Matos and Rashida Khanem

The massacre of 6 black parishioners in Charleston, South Carolina got our Nonkilling poet laureate Prof. Francisco Cardozo Gomes de Matos, Brazilian peace linguist write a poem which generated a string of emails which I share with you.

The poem:

“ Global Education for Nonkilling: urgently needed”

by Francisco Gomes de Matos

As the recent killings in a Charleston church has painfully shown
Deadly discrimination has grown

When easy access to firearms is possible
Why does Police protection seem impossible?

Educating Humankind for Peace/nonviolence/nonkilling is globally needed
When will life-enhancing/saving/supporting be effectively heeded?

The time is ripe for all concerned global citizens to act
and learn how to prevent deadly discrimination from becoming a common fact.”

The above poem generated the following response from Francisco’s friend Uli
Spathoff from Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies Network:

----- Weitergeleitete Nachricht -----

Datum: Sat, 20 Jun 2015 15:02:38 +0200

Von: Uli Spalthoff <mailto:uli@spalthoff-web.de> <uli@spalthoff-web.de>

Dear Francisco,

I hope you are well. Indeed, from your untiring creativity I assume this to
be the case. Just wanted to say thank you for your reflection on the need to
educate for non-killing.

At our recent HumanDHS conference in Rwanda I experienced another example of
this need. We, a small group of conference participants, were in a dialogue about
how human dignity can be promoted by people with strong Christian beliefs. Some
students from Tanzania shared with us the situation in their country, focussing on
traditions still practiced. Some of these pre-colonial traditions appear very inhumane
to me: For instance, it still happens that elderly women are killed by younger
members of their family, because of the belief that very old women develop
witchcraft and thus become dangerous. **My conclusion was that in such societies
a dialog on "human dignity" is somehow a luxury, because the primary focus
needs to be on the need for a "non-killing culture".**

Of course, this should not prevent us from reflecting about our own situation. Our
economic and social structures, for instance, also need to be checked to see where
they may be killing others. Thank you for constantly reminding me on the need to
design a non-killing life.

With kind regards,
Uli

Importance of Uli's reply as pointed out by Glenn Paige elsewhere in his insightful comment to Francisco:

“Uli's email to you it is extremely important because it demonstrates awakening to nonkilling produced by the interaction of your introduction to the concept of nonkilling with his direct experience with killing in Africa. Profound understanding produced by the interaction of the nonkilling idea with killing reality. Not by academic intellectual exercise or education.”

Beginning before and since creation of 150 poems for nonkilling awakening in Nurturing Nonkilling: A Poetic Plantation (2009) book, Francisco has contributed virtually daily to the Spirit and infinite creativity called for in the mission of the Center for Global Nonkilling toward a killing-free world. The book and 64 new poems are freely available on the CGNK website (www.nonkilling.org)

Poem by Rashida Khanem:

On Nonkilling

You are the Joyous Joy of Babies 'Divine Laughter
You are the Pleasant Feeling of the Greenish Green of Ever Green Leaves
You are the Aesthetic Beauty of Different Colorful Flowers

You are the Bouncing Dance of Boys and Girls over the War Ravaged
Wreckages Proclaiming Reverence for Life
You are the Loving Desire of Heart to be with Grief-Ridden Afflicted People

You are the Beauty of Mind of Children
Wiping up the Tears of Moms
You are the Love and Care of Moms for the Off-springs

You are the Bonding of Love among Faiths
You are the Plurality of Culture
The Transcendental Fraternity among Human being

You are the Seventh Notes of Octave
You are the Cultivation of Knowledge of Social Grace
The Attainment of Felicity in the Gamut of Life

You are the Philosophic Forms knowing the Intrinsic Ideas
Of Beauty and the Truth of Life
You are the Attempt of Conjoining Philosophic ideas
In Political Practices
To Make the World a Nonkilling One.

Also thanks to Rana Ehtisham Rabbani from Lahore for his book of poems, **Ruminations** (Lahore: Jumhoori Publications, 2015, pp.93). Ehtisham's poems have been in previous NKARC letters)

5. Press and Nonkilling

Two published opinion pieces from NKARC colleagues Dr. Anoop Swarup and Bob Koehler in the Newsroom and the Chicago Tribune:

A. **Anoop Swarup from his 'Newsroom 24x7'** in his column writes:

"In our futures exercise at Honolulu we did focus on the preferred assumption of a measurable goal of a nonkilling world in the next 30 years in place of a possible or probable world. The unexceptional conclusion was that though a time frame until 2045 may not be a fantasy as such as it can be visualised when we look back at our own past and the pace of change. The nonkilling spirit is all pervasive among humans and with the right resolve it may be brought to the fore. Indeed violence and killing is not only self-defeating but also makes the attainment of other goals almost impossible such as sustainable development and universal education, hunger and poverty, conflict resolution and disarmament, human rights and religious tolerance, gender equity and unemployment, and the list goes on." For more, click on:

<http://newsroom24x7.com/2015/06/18/a-measurable-goal-for-a-nonkilling-world/>

B. **Bob Koehler in his weekly column, entitled, *WAR, MURDER AND THE AMERICAN WAY*** writes about the Methodist church massacre in Charleston South Carolina where white 21- year old Dylann Storm Roof killed 9 black parishioners in prayer, pointing to continual racial wars in America:

"...But this is bigger than racism and the pathetic monster of white supremacy. Racism is a name for one of the currents of righteous hatred that coils through our collective unconscious, and over the decades and centuries it has motivated terrible crimes against humanity. But the "civil war" that Roof participated in is, I think, much larger and much more meaningless. And not all the participants are loners."

For full article, click on: <http://commonwonders.com/world/war-murder-and-the-american-way/>

A new book, "**Nonviolence Unbound**" by colleague **Dr. Brian Martin from Australia**. It describes application of ideas from nonviolent action to non-standard domains: defending against verbal abuse, responding to online defamatory pictures, and engaging in the struggles over euthanasia and vaccination. how to analyse options for opposing injustice. The book is available free online at <http://www.bmartin.cc/pubs/15nvu/> .

Let me close with a rhymed reflection by friend Francisco Gomes de Matos

On Global Happiness

When pleasure we show or enjoy
How can there be collective joy?

When happiness to others we wish to bring
What cheerful songs can we sing?

When will a happy Humankind come to be?
When on a sustainable peace governments everywhere can agree

Why is global happiness hard to achieve ?
Because in a peaceful, nonviolent, nonkilling Life all human beings
must believe.

My gratitude to all the colleagues and sources for this Letter. Please continue
sending your suggestions and comments.

Enjoy a safe summer.

Nonkilling Regards,
Bill

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