

## Nonkilling Arts Research Committee(NKARC) Letter: October 2015

Dear friends,

This month's letter covers reflections on CGNK's new book, "Nonkilling Spiritual Traditions", Oregon's peace festival, two film documentaries and a rhymed reflection on dilution of Article 9 in the Japanese Constitution etc.

### 1. Spirit, Spiritual and Nonkilling:

The Center for Global Nonkilling (CGNK) released this month another path-breaking book: "Nonkilling Spiritual Traditions, vol.1" (2015). It's a collaborative academic project of the CGNK's Religion/Spirituality Research Committee. The book aims at understanding and analyzing: 1) the impact of the "Thou Shall Not Kill" / "Do not take any human being's life" imperative across world spiritual traditions and non-religious humanist ethics, and also its internal intra-religious contradictions and controversies; 2) faith-inspired nonviolent/nonkilling leaders and movements throughout history and 3) spiritual practices related to nonkilling behavior and way of life, including meditation, prayers, art and spiritual guidance, with special interest in behavioral change-individual or social practices. Kudos to colleague Joam Evans Pim who initiated this ambitious project and edited this first volume with Dr. Pradeep Dhakal. A cursory browse through the book's pdf provides a feel of the topics covered and list of expert contributors. For a pdf copy, click on: <<http://nonkilling.org/pdf/nkspiritual.pdf>>  
<http://nonkilling.org/pdf/nkspiritual.pdf>

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### 2. Peace Festivals:

NKARC colleague Pritam K. Rohilla from Oregon, USA brought to our attention the '34 days of peace' project described as - "Oregonian Peace Month". For details click on its interesting website: <http://oregoniansforpeace.org/>. Importance of nonkilling peace in the Oregon state got highlighted last week with yet another killing in USA by a deranged person of 10 innocent individuals at one of its college campuses. Our peace festivals have to be more than feel good celebration of culture of peace, but driving the fundamental message of 'nonkilling' peace through works of art and panels raising consciousness about root causes of violence.

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### 3. Music and Nonkilling:

#### Rabindra Nath Tagore's 1905 Ekla Chalo song

A friend's visit last month to Naokhali in Bangladesh reminded me of this favourite song of Mahatma Gandhi penned by Nobel Laureate Rabindra Nath Tagore in Bengali in 1905. The song exhorts the listener to continue his or her journey, despite abandonment or lack of support from others. It is often shown with Gandhi's iconic image marching onwards in his loin cloth holding a staff bringing his message of nonviolence amidst sectarian and communal massacres taking place around him. Courage is first virtue, once we discover that in our deeper Self, other virtues follow.

Here is the translation in prose of the Bengali original rendered by Rabindranath Tagore himself.

If they answer not to your call walk alone  
 If they are afraid and cower mutely facing the wall,  
 O thou unlucky one,  
 open your mind and speak out alone.  
 If they turn away, and desert you when crossing the wilderness,  
 O thou unlucky one,  
 trample the thorns under thy tread,  
 and along the blood-lined track travel alone.  
 If they shut doors and do not hold up the light when the night is troubled  
 with storm,  
 O thou unlucky one,  
 with the thunder flame of pain ignite your own heart,  
 and let it burn alone.

For more on the song, check out the wikipedia page:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ekla\\_Chalo\\_Re](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ekla_Chalo_Re)

The **Physicians for Global Survival** has just concluded a global survey to prepare list of **top 40 social protest -- peace songs**. You may find some of your favourites on the list: Click: [http://pgs.ca/?page\\_id=6103&lang=ag](http://pgs.ca/?page_id=6103&lang=ag)

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#### 4. Films and Nonkilling:

The two award winning documentary films below deal with exploitation of indigenous first nations by settlers, and civil society resistance to reverse the trend.

(i) **Nuclear Savage (2011)** by Adam Jonas Horowitz, 87 mins. The doc summary: "Featuring recently declassified U.S. government documents, survivor testimony, and unseen archival footage uncovers one of the most troubling chapters in modern American history: how Marshall islanders, considered an uncivilized culture, were deliberately used as human guinea pigs to study the effects of nuclear fallout on human beings. The documentary follows the islanders today as they continue to fight for justice and acknowledgement of what was done to them. Despite recent disclosures, the U.S. government continues to deny that the islanders were deliberately used as human guinea pigs. The film raises disturbing questions about racism, the U.S. government's moral obligation to the people of the Marshall Islands, and why the government is continuing to cover up the intent of the tests and Project 4.1 after several decades." See 7 min. trailer, click on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqdRlt1EnkY>

(ii) **DAMNATION (2014)** by Ben Knight and Travis Rummel, 87 min. The documentary film is about the need to restore rivers to health by removing low value, high cost dams in USA ( <http://damnationfilm.com/trailer> ). The official summary reads: "This powerful film odyssey across America explores the sea change in our national attitude from pride in big dams as engineering wonders to the growing awareness that our own future is bound to the life and health of our rivers. Dam removal has moved beyond the fictional

Monkey Wrench Gang to go mainstream. Where obsolete dams come down, rivers bound back to life, giving salmon and other wild fish the right of return to primeval spawning grounds, after decades without access. DamNation's majestic cinematography and unexpected discoveries move through rivers and landscapes altered by dams, but also through a metamorphosis in values, from conquest of the natural world to knowing ourselves as part of nature. "

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### **5. Freedom of Expression and Nonkilling:**

NKARC colleague Khaleed Sohail who has written previously on the importance of nonkilling, has taken a controversial topic providing an overview of blasphemy law globally. He writes: "The irony is that while some communities are becoming more liberal, others are becoming more fundamentalist. While some countries are abolishing blasphemy laws, others are becoming more punitive.and freedom of speech." His article "From Blasphemy Law to Freedom of Speech" under these circumstances raises two questions for consideration: Do people have the right to challenge and criticize things that other people consider holy and sacred? Do people have the right to kill those who offend their religious beliefs? For Sohail's article, click on the Secular Web Kiosk at: <http://infidels.org/kiosk/article/from-blasphemy-law-to-freedom-of-speech-903.html> . His comment is significant in view of recent murders of secularist bloggers in Bangladesh and earlier Charlie Hebdo killings in Paris.

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### **6. Japan's Art. 9 and Nonkilling poetry:**

Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution outlaws war as a means to settle international disputes involving the state. In its text, the state formally renounces the sovereign right of belligerency and aims at an international peace based on justice and order otherwise amended by two-thirds super majority of each of the both houses of the a Japanese Parliament as well as a majority approval by a public referendum. However, last year the newly elected Japanese government approved a reinterpretation which gave more powers to its Self-Defense forces, allowing them to defend other allies in case of war being declared upon them.

The Japanese government action made our Nonkilling poet laureate Francisco Gomes de Matos write the following rhymed reflections:

On Japan's new Pacifism: Questions --  
by peace linguist-educator Francisco Gomes de Matos, Recife, Brazil

The mass media say that, in Japan, pacifism is being rethought.  
What kind of perspective/government policy is being sought?

In Japanese culture, isn't Peace still deep- seated?  
Now, how is opposition to war/violence being treated?

Constitutionally, what will the major transformation be?  
A Nonkilling Japanese policy will the world no longer see?

Let's hope Japan's position will honor its global co-responsibility to nurture peace.

May its government do its best for all efforts of peace-sustaining never to cease.

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My gratitude to all those who contributed or pointed to the material for this letter.

Looking forward to your contributions and comments as always.

Warm Nonkilling Regards,

Bill

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***"Nonkilling art explores the spirit and practice of how to prevent, respond to, and to improve individual, social, and global well-being beyond killing." - Glenn D. Paige***

**== Nonkilling is THE measure of Human progress==**