

參訪動物庇護中心 認識實踐理性放生

美國佛教聯合會與國際人道協會在9月中旬合辦了一次很具意義的活動，由會長瑞法師及諸位法師、居士們一同前往 Catskill 動物收容中心。當天天氣晴朗，CAS 動物收容中心廣大舒暢的綠地，及各式各樣可愛的動物，大家不僅玩的愉快，還有慷慨捐款。最具意義的是為動物祈福！！莊嚴慈悲的儀式使得這趟旅途格外有意義，告訴大家以護生素食來減少不正確放生，既遵守美國的環保法例，又能達到真正愛護動物、護生的目的。

那天的參訪，國際人道協會的何燕青小姐以英文寫了一篇文章，供大家參考 http://www.hsi.org/news/news/2011/09/catskills_visit_092211.html。

Rescued Animals Receive Buddhist Blessings

Humane Society International by Iris Ho

Humane Society International has been working with Buddhist communities in both the U.S. and Asia since 2009 to address our concerns about the Buddhist practice of "mercy release." The release ritual, based on the Buddhist belief that freeing a captured animal creates good karma and fortune, causes the suffering of millions of animals every year, as well as serious environmental damage.

Offering an alternative

In September 2011, we arranged for a group of more than 40 Buddhist abbots, abbesses, and congregation members from Chinatown in New York City to visit the Catskill Animal Sanctuary in upstate New York. The purpose of the day-long tour was to demonstrate that supporting and working with animal sanctuaries or animal welfare groups-instead of participating in the harmful mercy release ritual-is truly the best and most compassionate way to help animals.

Help by signing our "No Mercy Release pledge" or donating to support our work.

Located two hours north of New York City in the Hudson Valley, the sanctuary provides a safe and loving haven for abused horses and other farm animals. More than 1,700 animals have been cared for there since it was founded in 2001. The sanctuary also serves as a means for raising awareness about the mistreatment of farm animals and how this impacts all of us.

Making new friends

Kathy Stevens, founder and director of the sanctuary, took the group on an enchanting tour. We were greeted by all sorts of adorable animals, including horses, pigs, chickens, goats, cows, ducks and geese who seemed equally thrilled to see us.

Several pot-bellied pigs congregated by the fence to get acquainted with their visitors. A turkey and a goat followed the group around like self-appointed chaperones. Kathy told us a moving story about how the horses were rescued from their previous abusive owners.

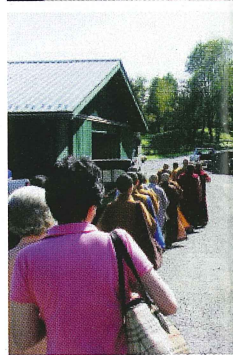
Blessings, offerings and thanks

The visitors performed Buddhist blessings for their new friends. The Chinese blessing was led by the president of American Buddhist Confederation, the Venerable Shi Rui Fa, while the Tibetan blessing was led by the Dorje Ling Buddhist Center from Brooklyn. Holding back tears, Kathy said to the visitors, "I don't know what you are chanting. But I thank you. I thank you for your love for these animals." It was a moment that required no translation. In addition to the spiritual blessings to show compassion, the visitors also generously donated to the sanctuary to help buy enough hay to feed the animals for an entire winter.

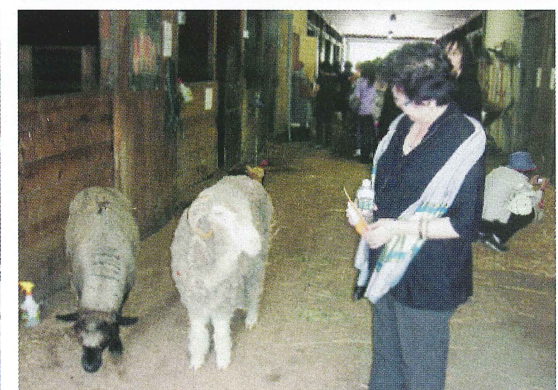
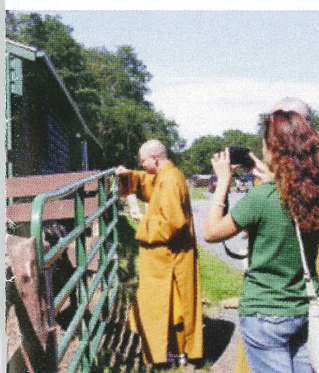
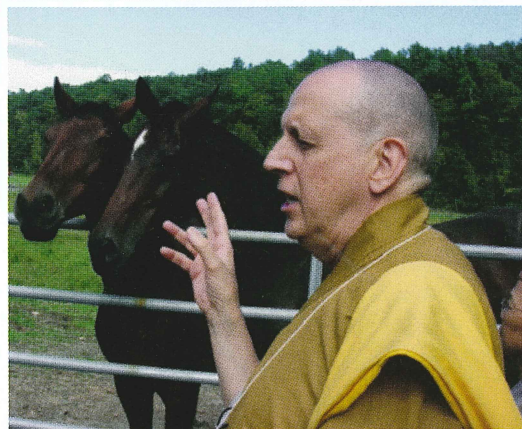
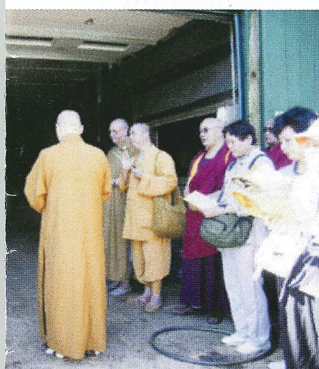
This visit could not have happened without the enthusiastic support from the Ven. Shi Benkong of Grace Gratitude Buddhist Temple, the Ven. Shi Rui Fa of Buddhist Peaceful Enlightenment Temple, member temples of the American Buddhist Confederation, the Dorje Ling Buddhist Center, and Joan Wai of Youth Buddhism Communications.

A bond between these rescued animals, the Buddhist community and the sanctuary was formed that day. And HSI is glad to have played a role in this wonderful experience, thoroughly enjoyed by all. In the future, we plan to roll out a series of such visits to local wildlife rehabilitation centers and animal sanctuaries for more members of the Buddhist community in the New York City area.

Iris Ho is wildlife campaigns manager for HSI.



青年佛教通訊 296 OCT 15, 2011 Youth Buddhism Communications



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