

Dr. Lisa Malin

Healing suffering from our historical past Healing Retreats Healing Ceremonies Peace March

Healing is very closely related to peace work and manifests itself in many forms and shapes. May this report be an example of that.

Towards the end of the 1990s, His Holiness the Dalai Lama comes to Vienna and visits the Peace Pagoda on the Danube. This is a wonderful opportunity to see him. On this occasion I meet the Japanese Buddhist monk Gyosei Masunaga, who is in charge of the Peace Pagoda and the future temple. He asks me for help, as he has to build a temple of about 450 m² and time is already limited. I promise to help him. So I am involved in the construction management during the building period from 1989 - 1992.



Photo: Lisa Malin



Photo: Lisa Malin

At the same time I build a Kiva (ritual room) in Vienna from 1989 - 1990 with the help of friends, following the example of the Indians of the Picuris Pueblos for the healing of heaven and earth. Beautiful Painted Arrow from this tribe connects these spaces worldwide, like a net for peace. This place also always has an Indian sweat lodge for purification and healing. From 1990 - 2022 there is a monthly sweat lodge and a Ritual Posture according to Prof. Felicitas Goodman.



Photo: Lisa Malin

At the beginning of 1991 I am invited to Japan to attend the memorial service of the Peace Monk Ven. Nichidatsu Fuji Guruji. Many people from all parts of the world gather on the 7th anniversary of his death, 9 January 1991, to pray ceremonially for peace at his tomb and temple. This particular monk built about 90 peace pagodas around the world. He was associated with Ven. Mahatma Gandhi and founded the Buddhist Nipponzan Myohoji Order. Ven. Mahatma Gandhi integrated the peace mantra NA MU MYO HO REN GE KYO (Lotus Sutra in Japanese) into his daily prayer.

Afterwards, the monk from Hiroshima invites us to his Buddhist temple. We first visit the Peace Pagoda, which was donated by American soldiers.



Photo: Lisa Malin



Photo: Lisa Malin

Then we visit the Hiroshima Memorial. The sarcophagus contains 300,000 names of victims of the atomic bomb and helpers. When I arrive at the memorial

park, a journalist comes running up to me: "What are you saying, they started bombing Baghdad 5 minutes ago!". For me it is a great shock to receive such heavy news in such a place. We, 2 monks, 2 friends from Europe and I, sit in this place for a day, reciting the Lotus Sutra and beating the drum. During the lunch break, people come from factories and offices to silently demonstrate against the war with a tablet in their hands. Returning to the Buddhist temple in the evening, we hear a pilot speaking on TV: "We have lit up Baghdad like a Christmas tree." (with bombs)

Back in Tokyo, we sit with the Buddhist nuns and monks in a public square to chant for peace. On the coldest day, we walk a long way with them drumming through Tokyo - 'cold practice' it is called.

In 1993 I participate in a retreat with the Sufi master Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan in Bodhgaya, the place of Buddha's enlightenment.

In 1994 Pir Vilayat asks me to organise a memorial service for his sister in Dachau. He tells me that he cannot make it because of his health and that it is too painful for him to visit this place where his sister suffered so much. Noor un Nisa Inayat Khan went to France as a radio operator in the Resistance against the Nazis and was betrayed. She was first imprisoned in Paris, and after two attempts to escape, she came to Germany. Her prison conditions in Pforzheim were inhumane. Transferred to Dachau concentration camp, she was tortured and murdered on 13 Sept. 1944.



Photo: Lisa Malin



Photo: Lisa Malin

In 1994, the international interfaith peace march from Auschwitz to Hiroshima begins under the leadership of Ven. Gyoso Sasamori of the Nipponzan Myohoji Order on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II.

On 27. 11. 1994 the Peace March in Dachau starts with the ceremony for Noor un Nisa and all those who suffered at this place. It is even possible to celebrate this commemoration with survivors. A children's choir sings for all the children, participants of the peace march and visitors support with prayers from different traditions and countries.

Afterwards we will go to Auschwitz.

In December 1994, led by Buddhist nuns and monks, we have an international inter-religious fast on the selection ramp in Auschwitz-Birkenau. 6 days of no food no water (after 3 days of fasting 1 day of cleansing and then 3 days of fasting again, then cleansing again) and 12 hours of chanting, drumming and inter-religious prayers. The fasting and praying is what is sacrificed for the souls. At first there is a feeling of not being able to breathe and unimaginable pain. It becomes very tight, depressive feelings also emerge. It goes into the depths. One thing is important - to stay, to continue and not give up. We celebrate Hanukkah in front of the gate of Auschwitz with the inscription "Arbeit macht frei".



Photo: Lisa Malin

It is cold with snow and ice. However, the compassion for oneself shames, for these souls suffered unimaginably. We keep asking ourselves "Why, why.....". Towards the end, rain sets in. We still have to go into the surveillance tower as it is so wet. Suddenly there is a turnaround. Such a positive experience emerges, it is an ecstasy-like state. The sun rises from the rain clouds, and the end is accompanied by this ball of sunshine with all its light.

Then we walk about 100 people from Auschwitz to Vienna, the route of the death march 50 years ago. The prisoners of Auschwitz were sent on the death march shortly before liberation. As they were completely debilitated, many died on this walk. The survivors were sent to the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria.

We walk 30 km a day. We experience unspeakable pain and much harrowing historical information. We experience wonderful receptions in the villages of Poland and the Czech Republic, with the best Christmas baking and various other foods. In all these places, Shalom resounds from our Jewish participants of the Peace March. There was a Jewish population in these villages, but no Jew lives in these places anymore.

For some time I am constantly afraid of not being able to keep up with the group, I don't understand the language and don't know the way. People talk about their painful past. Again and again we experience this heaviness that has to be passed through until one becomes light, like a feather. Along the way, the Lotus Sutra for peace and healing is sung and drummed.

The Allies decided that in 1946 all Germans must emigrate from Czechoslovakia. So the Czechs retaliated for the Nazi atrocities by sending the resident Germans on a death march from Brno, where there was a particularly cruel prison. They were given neither food nor drink. As it was summer and hot and the people were exhausted from the war, all the old people and children under 10 died.

The Czechs ask us to go to the cross where 700 Germans are buried to pray there. A woman from Brno tells us that after the war the 'American liberators' raped all the women.

When we reach the Austrian border and the officials just wave us through and don't check anyone, there are tears in my eyes.

I realise that I wanted to go home symbolically for all those who were deported from Austria and never returned or returned in great pain after terrible experiences.

Over Christmas we are in Poysdorf. The priest invites us to come to the Christmas mass and talk about the peace march. The next day we are welcome again at the high mass. Representatives from four religions are invited to pray and sing. The peace mantra is offered by the Buddhists. An American woman offers an Indian ceremony. The Jews sing Shalom and a participant from Mexico prays a Christian prayer.

The residents of this place are very open to us. We meet Maria Loley. She was honoured for the best refugee programme in Austria. She made sure that every refugee in this area has a local person to support them. Unfortunately, Maria later became the victim of a letter bomb. She was injured and also lost a finger.



Photo: Skip Schiel

After 17 days, we enter Vienna in the ice and snow. As we walk up the steps of the Buddhist Peace Pagoda on the Danube singing, a flock of birds flies overhead.

I go with them to Croatia. Here we encounter the Bosnian war. In Zagreb we meet with representatives of five religious communities, Jewish, Muslim, Christian Orthodox and Catholic. Here we also make contact with the peace movement. We have a very good meeting with the group 'Mothers for Peace'. Unfortunately, I have to leave the peace march here.

I go to Suresnes, a suburb of Paris, to support Pir Vilayat for 3 weeks. There I report on the retreat in Auschwitz and the peace march to Vienna. The following day Pir Vilayat comes and says: "If you fasted in Auschwitz and went as far as Vienna, I have to go to Dachau. I will perform the Mass in B minor there." So it happens. In 1996 Pir Vilayat, with the support of Ophiel Maarten van Leer, conducts the Mass in B minor in Dachau for his sister, for the sufferers of that place and as a peace initiative. After the war, Pir Vilayat experienced healing from war wounds through repeated listening to Bach's Mass in B minor, which enabled him to return to life.

The Peace March continues to Bosnia, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Iran, India, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and the Philippines.

In August 1995, I joined the march again in Japan. Peace march and 1 day fasting in Hiroshima. Then the 50th anniversary celebrations begin in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

An American brings water from Pearl Harbour, mixes it with water from Hiroshima and says: "It pains me that to this day my country cannot apologise for those two atomic bombs."

We have the chance to meet survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These people tell us how difficult it is for them to continue their lives despite radiation with the painful conditions and secondary diseases. America provides them with medical help, but the survivors think that this is only done because they want to use the results scientifically. After the war, the survivors had to use the back alleys of the villages. They experienced ostracism. Their role reminds me of our Roma, Sinti and Lovara who survived the concentration camp. The survivors of the atomic bombs remember the atrocities of the Japanese in China, Korea, Mongolia, Philippines, etc. They wanted to do something. So they went to places where bad things had happened and planted trees as compensation for these wrongs. I meet Buddhist monks who tell me that they saw so many terrible things during the war that they could not return home. They have become monks for peace. A Christian monk reports that he lost a lung in the Cambodian war and also became a monk because of his war experiences. He went to Nanking as a Japanese, through the mediation of the Red Cross. His wish was to meet survivors of the Japanese massacre and ask for personal treatment. On arrival, he was met by two survivors. He threw himself on the ground in front of them, crying, and called to them for forgiveness. They asked him to get up and undergo acupuncture treatment for his health before meeting them. This Japanese Christian monk also participated in the fast at Auschwitz.

In Japan, we still have the opportunity to meet an old Shinto priest. He takes us to a place of healing, a beautiful natural landscape with watercourses. Then we are guests in his traditional temple. He talks about how important it is to visit places where bad things have happened and to release the souls that are bound to that place - to release the spirits. There is a danger that the same thing will happen again in such places. He reports that in such a place he offered a glass of water. He saw from the movement of the water that the gift was accepted. There was resonance.

Years later, when I visit the former battlefield of Stalingrad in Volgograd and am told that it was already the battlefield of Napoleon, the statement of this Shinto priest immediately comes to mind.

Impressed by the experience in Japan, I realise how important this work is also in Europe, especially after World War 2. So I want to continue this interreligious international healing work at places of Nazi atrocities.

At short notice I am asked in Japan to take part in a lecture tour to various places with the theme of Auschwitz and Bosnia. Since I organised aid shipments of potatoes and cabbage from Poland to Bosnia in the war zone and participated in the fast in Auschwitz, the choice fell on me. They are wonderful encounters. It is a special honour that Ven. Maha Ghosananda from Cambodia to travel with us. He is considered the Gandhi of Cambodia. He is leading the Peace March throughout Cambodia.

In Hiroshima we are grateful to be able to spend the night in a gymnasium on the floor, in August without air conditioning. On this lecture tour we are allowed to spend 2 nights on the west coast of Japan in a flat house of the emperor. So there are always surprises.

Still in 1995, we also fast 5 days dry (2 ½ days fasting, purification and 2 ½ days fasting, purification) in the former women's concentration camp Ravensbrück, accompanied by interreligious prayers. Women from 9 nations, from different religious traditions and the peace movement take part.

The women and girls of this concentration camp had to do forced labour. Sterilisation was medically researched on many of them. It was a cruel death or a painful survival. Women were also recruited for prostitution in the Dachau concentration camp, with the promise of freedom. This turned out to be a lie.



Photos: Dana Garber

We receive Ceija Stojka, a Romni who survived this place as a child, on Day 5 with a bouquet of red roses. We accompany her to the Schwettsee, where the ashes of her friend and relatives are buried. She scatters the petals one by one in the water and calls out in Romanes across the lake. A wind passes over the lake and ripples the water. At her request, we sleep in her room at night, she dreams of the deceased, that they are well, and they tell her "come again". Finally we have a ceremony in front of the crematorium, the firing gallery and the prison. Ceija asks for 2 candles, lights them for her 2 biggest tormentors and forgives them, she starts dancing.....

In 1996 we walk the peace march in the West Bank from Jenin to Hebron. Again our walk is accompanied by the peace mantra, inter-religious prayers and drums. The history is very dense, the suffering very great, the landscape beautiful. For the election of Arafat we sit fasting and praying for 1 day in the centre of Hebron.

In 1996 we go to the former concentration camp Bergen Belsen. Again we fast for 5 days and end with a celebration. Again Ceija comes to Bergen Belsen on the last day and ends our fast. She tells us about her experiences as a child in this concentration camp. It is the third concentration camp she has survived. As a child, she had to carry corpses with others. It stank so badly that birds no longer flew over this area. There were so many bodies piled up that Ceija could no longer see into the distance. There were no more supplies. Her mum showed her a sap from a tree and its leaves to eat. That saved her life. There they were liberated by the Allies. Suddenly there was a tank in front of them and they were free. The American soldiers were cooking in large vessels. food - 'goulash' - and fed them. According to Ceija, they went blind for a day because they had not eaten food for a long time. The mother walked with her all over Germany to Vienna looking for her children.



Photo: Hermine Theuer

Cejja began to paint about 40 years after her liberation. (Stojka, Cejja: Pictures and Texts 1989 - 1995, Concentration Camp and the Mother of God, the Heavenly Guide of Rome).



Pictures: Stojka, Cejja: Bilder und Texte 1989 - 1995

In 1997 we go to Lidice (Czech Republic). We fast again for 5 days, accompanied by prayers and drumming. We have the chance to speak to surviving women.

In 1942 all the men of this place were shot, the women were sent to the concentration camp Ravensbrück. Blond children were Germanised, all other children were gassed in a wagon. The village was razed to the ground with the stolen money of the population. It was revenge for the assassination of Reichsrat Protektor Heydrich, Hitler's representative. The village was innocent.

No one told the women what had happened to the men and children.

The women who survived the concentration camp went home. When they came near, they did not see a church tower. Only then did they learn the truth. These women built a new village next to the old destroyed one, and they searched for their children. The sculptress Marie Uchytilová sculpted all 82 children and brought them together in a bronze statue in remembrance.



Photo: Lisa Malin

In 1998 we travel by train to Volgograd, former Stalingrad. Once there, the wonderful interpreter Helena guides us through the town and its history. The German Wehrmacht was encircled. It could have broken out at one point, but Hitler prevented this. He did not want soldiers to come home and tell that they had not won and tell of the misery. That was a turning point. By 1943, defeat was already apparent, even though the war lasted another 2 years until its final end. Thus 300,000 soldiers of the German Wehrmacht died in Stalingrad, many froze to death in that cold winter.

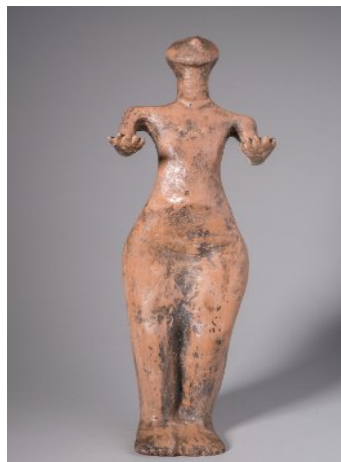
Whoever took Mamai Hill was always the victor. In the end, the Russians won, but at a high price. Two million Russians died in this battle. The Russian soldiers were brought from the east bank to the west bank of the Volga by ship. They had to go forward against the Germans, with or without rifles, with or without ammunition. When they went back, they were shot by their own soldiers. They were used like a human carpet. The whole town was destroyed. After the war, women repopulated this town. They lived in caves. In 1996, the huge figure, the RUSSIA, was installed on Mamai Hill.



Photo: Lisa Malin

Next to the Catholic Church we are fasting again for 5 days, 10 hours continuously accompanied by interreligious prayers, chants and drumming for all the wounded and deceased there and their family members and for peace. In addition, we read from the book "Letzte Briefe aus Stalingrad" (C. Bertelsmann, Gütersloh, 1954). These letters were no longer delivered to the relatives. They were flown out on the last plane. We can only read a few letters at a time, because after a short time the tears come to our eyes. The confrontation with the impending death, not seeing our loved ones again, the idea of what problems the relatives must be struggling with, reflections on the essentials of life, the pain, hunger, cold, the disfigurement of the wounded, the loss of so much and the question of the meaning of this suffering and, for many, the knowledge of having been abused for a senseless purpose - these are recurring themes.

A friend recorded what ritual postures were found between Willendorf (Austria) and Volgograd. We go into experiencing such a posture every day. This shamanic work was initiated by Prof. Felicitas Goodman. Postures have an influence on consciousness and thus on experience. An example, the Venus of Hluboke, found in Moravia (Czech Republic). It is about 4700 B.C. old, 36 cm tall and made of clay. It is in the museum in Brno. (Retrieved 18. 2. 2023 https://sammlungen.uni-goettingen.de/objekt/record_kuniweb_365454/)



Fasting stimulates personal processes, as well as the confrontation with the events of this place. There is great joy for us at the end of the fast in Volgograd. As it is Pentecost, we go with our beloved interpreter Helena to the Russian Orthodox Church the next day. These Pentecost celebrations with the singing of choir and priest, the many flowers covering the floor, the many candles in front of the pictures of the Mother of God, the incense, all the solemn people and the good atmosphere, touch us. Then we go to Beschanka, where we have a ceremony first at the Austrian memorial and then at the Russian one. We continue to Rossoschka, where a cemetery was built by Germany. There the

dead are buried, partly reburied and buried ceremonially. Here we also offer prayers for peace.

We say goodbye to Volgograd, also to our hotel, which is situated directly on the Volga and from which we could watch the sunrise every morning over the water.

Thanks to all who supported this trip, especially to the Black Cross.

On the return journey we arrive in Moscow and are happy to visit the city. Impressive for us is an evening to which the Quakers invite us. An Orientalist tells us about his participation in a peace march through Chechnya during the war. There we also meet Russian soldier mothers. They tell us about their activities, which they have to finance themselves because they receive no support.

Since there is no alternative to Russian military service, and 6,000 soldiers (1998) alone die every year through 'treatment, i.e. torture' in military service, and many go missing, the soldier mothers dedicate themselves to these soldiers and their mothers in addition to their own work. They help the mothers to find their sons again. They fight to change the military structure. They help deserters who can only live in hiding, even if they have run away from deadly acts of violence for their own protection, to a judicial process to be able to re-enter civilian life. They demand that in wars the soldiers on both sides be buried, e.g. in the past in the Chechen war. In 1989, with the support of the Russian Soldiers' Mothers, 176,000 students who were called up for military service after their first year of study were able to return to university to continue their studies. The Soldiers' Mothers have many other areas of responsibility. In 1998, they obtained an amnesty for all those who left the army of the conscripts. In 1996, the Russian Soldiers' Mothers were awarded the Alternative Nobel Prize. A mother from Chechnya tells us about a slow dying in her country. So many orphans, the homes destroyed, no work, no more productions, the houses bombed, the children's looks destroyed by the war, the psyche of many people shattered. Because of the kidnappings, there was no outside help. This mother went into the forests and looked for children who had fled there to hide. She tried to place them with families in Moscow or the surrounding area. Weeks later, when I sent her a support for her project, she called me briefly, thanked me and told me that she was alive. Her work is honoured a few times with an award.

In 2000, the last 5-day ritual fasting and prayer with chants will take place in Vienna, at the Otto-Wagner-Spital at Spiegelgrund next to the children's death pavilion. We invite different religious representatives and the peace movement of Vienna. They will come and offer prayers and chants for the victims.

Children were persecuted, stigmatised and abused for medical purposes during the Nazi era, especially poor, sick, disabled, 'difficult to educate' and parentless children were targeted by this selection process. The children were abused 'for medicine' and died a painful death. The remains were used for scientific studies,

even after the war. They were buried in a grave of honour by the City of Vienna in 2002.

2004 is the eastern enlargement of the EU. On this occasion, people who are active in the field of healing meet for encounters, healing exercises and healing circles according to the Sufi tradition. First with our Polish friends in Vienna and then again in Poland in Krakow, Czestochowa (place of pilgrimage of the Black Madonna) and Warsaw. There is a short visit to the Czech Republic, to the former concentration camp Theresienstadt and another visit to Lidice. We also meet at the Sufi tomb of the dervish Gül Baba in the Buda Rose Gardens in Budapest.



Photo: Gulnar Elschot



Photo: Gulnar Elschot

In 2007, I am invited to the inauguration of the Peace Pagoda in Delhi. The Buddhist nun Katsu Horiushi has dedicated herself to this cause. His Holyness the Dalai Lama inaugurates it. The ceremony will be accompanied by wonderful cultural performances such as Indian dance, music and singing. At 5am we meet for prayer with the Buddhist nuns and monks at the tomb of Ven. Mahatma Gandhi. At dawn, a man with a beautiful voice recites Hindu chants as a finale.



In 2016, to commemorate Pir Vilayat's 100th birthday, we are again organising a celebration for his sister Noor un Nisa at the crematorium in Dachau. We also sing Bach's Mass in B minor in his honour in the church of the adjacent Carmel monastery, conducted by Tarana Sara Jobin.

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