

**“Transforming Organizing Culture through Contemplative Practice:
A Gathering for Emerging Leaders”**

Garrison Institute, Garrison, NY,

September 22-25, 2005

List of Mentors

(partial)

Francisco “Paco” Lugovina is President and founder of Principle Centered Associates, Inc., a company dedicated to providing leadership training; a member of the Board of Directors of the Greyston Foundation and the Zen Peacemaker Order.

Rev. Hilda Gutiérrez Baldoquín (Ryumon Zenji) is a Soto Zen priest in the lineage of Shunryu Suzuki Roshi and the editor of *Dharma, Color and Culture: New Voices in Western Buddhism*. She is the founder of the People of Color Sitting Group at the San Francisco Zen Center and a co-founder of the Buddhist Meditation Group for the LGBTQ community at The Center, also in San Francisco. For the past twenty-five years she has worked in the fields of multicultural organizational change and conflict resolution. Hilda Ryumon was born in Cuba, grew up in Harlem, lived in Miami, Florida and now makes her home in San Francisco, CA.

Lisa Charley was raised on the Diné reservation near Farmington, New Mexico. Her grandparents raised her until she was thirteen, when her grandmother passed away. During this time she was taught the importance of living in harmony with “Mother Earth” and all the elements that we need to make us balanced. Traditional ceremonies were passed down through several generations of her ancestors. She has implemented her traditional practices through working with activists and individuals who wish to create internal healing and balance in their lives. For the past 13 years she has worked as a community organizer on issues ranging from indigenous sovereignty issues to racial equity in schools. Her passion has been intergenerational work with a focus on youth organizing. Working in indigenous communities allowed her to experience movement work that never separated spirit work from organizing work. She recently took a huge step by deciding to be on her spiritual walk 100% and help her sisters and brothers in the movement to bring spirit through their work. IN doing so she is honored to be working with the Movement Strategy Center as the first Spirit in Motion Fellow.

Neelam Pathikonda is a community organizer currently living in Oakland, California. Neelam works as the Organizing Director for the local environment justice organizing project at the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition in San Jose, CA. She holds a Masters in Public Health from San Jose State University’s Community Health Education Program and is interested in the intersections between health, healthcare access, political education and community organizing. Neelam is on the board of SOUL, the School of Unity and Liberation, a political education and organizing training center for young people located in Oakland, CA. Neelam is also on the Spirit in Motion council which seeks to infuse spirituality into the work of community organizing and activism. She is part of a two-year intensive training and discussion series called Sanctuary with Manzanita Village, a Buddhist community engaged in Zen practice, Vipassana meditation, and deep ecology in Southern

California. Neelam is part of various sanghas in the Bay Area and started a South Asian sangha that meets monthly. Neelam is a visual artist and her artwork was recently displayed at the International Women's Day Event in San Francisco, CA. **(invited, to be confirmed)**

Nghia Trung Tran started doing community organizing with the anti-apartheid movement, while he was a student at the University of California Los Angeles. He then worked for Senator Alan Cranston in Washington, D.C., and as deputy for Assemblywoman Gwen Moore, who represented the Crenshaw District in the California State Assembly. After leaving legislative work, Nghia worked at numerous nonprofit organizations, including the National Mental Health Association, National Community Development Institute, NAVASA (National Vietnamese American Service Agencies) as well as several foundations, including Shinnyo-en Foundation. He was also the director of the Community Fellows Program, funded through the Violence Prevention Initiative of The California Wellness Foundation. Currently, he works with various community-based organizations and foundations that seek social, cultural, spiritual transformation.

For the past 10 years, Nghia has been focused on healing our communities by integrating traditional medicine, energetic healing forms, spiritual and ancestral sources, as well as traditional ceremonies. Through this work, he has been incorporating the spiritual dimensions of our existence with community development. He believes that transformation, at the individual, family, organizational and community levels, is part of an integrated systemic make-up of our lives. Nghia is committed to "continuing to move the energies to higher levels within ourselves and our communities.

Nghia is a father of two children, Pierre-Julien and Josephine Adele. He was born in Vietnam, and arrived in the US in 1975, at the end of the Vietnam War.

Rev. Vincent G. Harding is one of the founders and Executive Director of The Veterans of Hope Project (VOP) at the Iliff School of Theology, Denver, CO. He is an activist, historian and advisor who have worked for more than forty years in many of the major movements for democracy, justice, and reconciliation in the United States. From the roundtable discussions sponsored for movement participants in Atlanta, GA in the 1960s, through audio taped interviews with activists in the 70s and 80s, to the present work, VOP is an unparalleled project -- drawing on the personal stories of grassroots movement participants to provide models of encouragement, healing and social transformation for the 21st century.

Dr. Harding has authored several books – *Martin Luther King: The Inconvenient Hero*, *There is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America*, and *Hope and History: Why we must Share the Story of the Movement*. **(invited, to be confirmed)**

Rev. Norma Iris Rivera-Diaz holds a BFA from the University of Massachusetts and was ordained as an Interfaith Minister at the New Seminary in NYC. She has taught intergenerational art programs in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Florida and Puerto Rico. Her Paintings and installations are best known for their bold portrayals and vibrant use of COLOR depicting the Fe/Male Body energy of the human race.

Dr. Augustin Laó-Montes, professor of sociology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and co-author of Mambo Montage: The Latinization of New York City states: Norma Iris Rivera-Diaz's art is an aesthetically beautiful celebration of the sacredness of the spirit and the body. Norma is a versatile artist who cultivates a variety of visual languages and means of creation. One of her main strands of artistic production entails the creation of a magical world, a quintessentially Caribbean universe in which the wisdom of the soul is expressed through pleasures of the body, a tropical space of primal encounters and self-discovery, expressed by the richness of color, a dream-like atmosphere and characters that represents an erotica of spiritual development. In Norma's art we have a sight, the intellectual and aesthetic product of a great talent, a sensitive human being, and a politically and humanly committed artist.

Rivera-Diaz may be best known for the Art of Miracles 2002, A Love letter to the White House/*La Casa de Colores*. In that show she sought for the first time to create a symphony of her total visual self-expression. It was the first time that all of her major pieces were viewed in one setting. In this confluence of forces, she placed her personal and inner struggles into the larger context of a global picture. Her main theme was to explore the family tension that can be generated in a capitalist society after the iatrogenic death of a mother of little means. She relates how divisions arose in her family as they each struggled over a possible favorable judgment in a case that would argue the medical mismanagement of her mother's health. Distraught to see her family at such odds over just a few dollars that might be won, she chose not to pursue the court case rather than to continue the conflict, and she wishes that this is what most people would do when she sees similar conflict emerge in government and on the world stage. Compelled by such events, she chose her own peace of mind although the family wanted her to choose otherwise in the interest of material gain. In this show, she sought to demonstrate that the War in Iraq, and other major social issues, presents us with similar opportunities to choose peace over war. In other words, her evolving belief system was placed on display to be seen by all from their different perspectives. It was her aim to remind her viewers that conflict demeans our spirituality but she also reminds them to stay in touch with that spiritual base even when conflict cannot be avoided. In her opinion, saying no to conflict, and other forms of war, is the most revolutionary act that she believes more people will have to realize for their selves.

Her work has been widely accessible in the northeast where she lives and works. For instance, her more recent exhibitions were at the Amherst Regional High School (2004) where her images supported teenage youth who for the first time in history had produced, *The Vagina Monologues*. She also has exhibited for the underground social movement known as Culture Shock (2004, 2005). She was called on to display her work at a conference put on by Hampshire College and by the American Friends Service Committee who sought to organize Anti-racist Networking called, *The Struggle Continues* (2005), and she co-exhibited with the national Mother Tongue Project. At Smith College, she presented several shows in the late 20th century, including: *Encuentro de Latinas*, *Peace for Life*, *Artista Group Exhibition*.

Sule Greg Wilson is best described as an edu-tainer, percussionist, teacher, author, and storyteller. His DRUMSPEAK programs provide an interactive experience: song, dance, story and fun! He has authored three books –*The Drummer's Path: Moving the Spirit with*

Ritual and Traditional Drumming, Kwanzaa: Africa Lives in a New World Festival and African American Quilting. He contributed to the six-part PBS series titled *This Far by Faith: African-American Spiritual Journeys* which examines the African American religious experience through the last three centuries and explores the connections between faith and the development of African-American cultural values.

Sule has studied drumming and folklore with Tunda, Baba Ngoma and Baile McKnight. After two years at Oberlin College, where he studied Western, Indian and Indonesian percussion, performing with such noted players as John Jang, Wendall Logan and Abraham Laboriel, Wilson moved to New York City and continued his education at New York University, receiving a Bachelors in TV Production and MA (History) and a Certificate in Archival Management, Historical Editing and Manuscript Conservation.

On the cultural front, Wilson performed with Babatunde Olatunji, the International African American Ballet, Boston's Art of Black Dance and Music as well as studies with Charles "Cookie" Cooke of the Copasetics, Mama Lu Parks' Lindy Hop Ensemble, capoeira with Jelon Viera and Loremil Machado in New York and Cobrinha Mansa in D.C., and cultural studies with Raymond " Pata Larga" McKeithan. Wilson has also worked with banjoist Tony Trischka, Children's music makers Cathy Fink and Marcy Marxer, Native American artists R. Carlos Nakai, Keith Secola and Brent Michael Davids. His work as an "edu-tainer" has taken him from Ghana to Hawaii, Mexico to Ireland, Mississippi to Minnesota and Seattle to Miami Beach. Wilson' has recorded with Fink and Marxer, Cloud Dance, Pastiche, and has produced two CDs of his own music. His writings have graced Sing Out! magazine, the Village Voice, Rhythm Music magazine, and Banjo Newsletter.