



Self-immolation of Thich Quang Duc (1897-1963), Saigon, Vietnam

I was to see that sight again, but once was enough. Flames were coming from a human being; his body was slowly withering and shriveling up, his head blackening and charring. In the air was the smell of burning human flesh; human beings burn surprisingly quickly. Behind me I could hear the sobbing of the Vietnamese who were now gathering. I was too shocked to cry, too confused to take notes or ask questions, too bewildered to even think.... As he burned he never moved a muscle, never uttered a sound, his outward composure in sharp contrast to the wailing people around him.

– David Halberstam, eyewitness and *New York Times* reporter

What have the Buddhist leaders done comparatively...the only thing they have done, they have barbecued one of their monks whom they have intoxicated, whom they have abused the confidence, and even that barbecuing was done not even with self-sufficient means because they used imported gasoline.

-- Madame Nhu, wife of President Ngo Dinh Diem

*May those who malign me, or harm me, or accuse me falsely, and others all be recipients of awakening;
May I be a protector of the helpless, a guide for those on the path, a boat, a bridge, a way for those who wish to cross over....
As earth and the other elements are enjoyed in various ways by innumerable beings living throughout space,
So may I be the sustenance for various kinds of beings in all the realms of space for as long as all are not satisfied.*

-- Shantideva (700s CE, India), *Bodhicaryavatara*, trans. Marion Matics