



The SnowFlower Sun

January – February 2006

THE SCENT OF SANDLEWOOD

A Vietnamese fairytale retold by Thầy Pháp Dung

There was once a man named Do who heard that sandalwood had a wonderful scent. A strong desire arose in him to smell it himself. When he went into the forest to look for it, he met a woodcutter. Do was glad as he knew that a woodcutter could help him.

“Dear woodcutter,” he said, “I am looking for sandalwood. Do you know how to find it?”
“Of course I do, my friend. Someone who doesn’t know how to find sandalwood is not a woodcutter.”
Do was delighted. “Would you help me,” he asked politely. “I can pay you handsomely.”

The man looked at Do mysteriously. “Yes, I will help you, but I ask no money of you. Sandalwood is sacred and cannot be bought. I will help you find it if you have patience. Tomorrow we will start looking.”
Do was surprised by these words. “Tomorrow?” he asked.

“Yes,” the woodcutter replied. “Someone who can wait until tomorrow is capable of finding sandalwood. Today you can help me with my work.” So Do began to help the woodcutter with his work. He was in good spirits.

Tomorrow

When Do awoke the next morning, it was already late. He was filled with the happy thought that today he would look for sandalwood. The woodcutter was already hard at work. “Today is the big day; we are going to look for sandalwood,” said Do.

“Good friend, it is not yet that day,” said the woodcutter. “You got up late today. We’ll have to go looking tomorrow. Do you have the patience to wait until tomorrow?” Do was disappointed, but he realized that it was his own fault for getting up late. So he agreed. “Help me with this work, will you?” said the woodcutter.

One morning when Do awoke, he realized that three years had gone by. Every morning the woodcutter had had a reason to postpone the search until the next day. “Tomorrow.” A “tomorrow” that never came! Then Do realized something very important: there is no tomorrow. The woodcutter knew nothing about sandalwood. Sadly Do left the woodcutter.

Everywhere

Do’s search led him to another woodcutter, woodcutter number two. “I’m looking for sandalwood, dear woodcutter, can you help me?”

“Looking for sandalwood? But there is no reason to look for sandalwood.”

“Are you saying that it doesn’t exist? What do you mean?”

“Of course it exists, but you don’t have to look for it because sandalwood is all around you, everywhere,” replied the woodcutter. “If you don’t see it, it’s because you don’t have enough understanding of trees. Stay and help me with my work and learn more about this forest and then you will be able to find it yourself. I assure you that sandalwood is all around you.”

So Do stayed with woodcutter number two. He worked hard and acquired both knowledge and skill. He learned about every kind of tree in the forest except sandalwood. “You don’t need to learn about sandalwood,” assured the woodcutter, “but only about the trees that aren’t sandalwood. Then you will automatically see what you are seeking.” Do believed the woodcutter, and again three years passed.

One morning when he awoke he realized that this woodcutter didn’t know anything about sandalwood either. He was sad, for himself and also for the woodcutter.

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JANUARY CALENDAR

Tuesday (7:00 – 8:30 PM)	Friday (7:00 – 9:00 PM)
1/3 Practice Basics: Guided 'Beginners Mind' Meditation – Led by Fred Brewster	1/6 New Beginnings/Watering the Seeds of Joy – Led by Cheri Maples
1/10 True Happiness – Led by Heather Mann	1/13 Report on My Pilgrimage to India in the Footsteps of the Buddha – Led by Celeste Robins
Saturday, 1/14 at 6:30pm Holiday Party at Susan O'Leary's and Jim Roseberry's We'll begin with a short sitting meditation; bring a dish to pass (please, no soup) Call (608) 256-0506 for more info.	
Monday, 1/16 from 9:30am – 12:30pm Half Day of Mindfulness in Vipassana Style: Rounds of 45 minutes sitting meditation and 10 minutes walking meditation, at Jane Peckham's home. Call Jane at 829-2466 for more info and directions	
1/17 Mudras – Led by Mary Gallagher	1/20 Recitation of the 14 Mindfulness Trainings – Led by Melissa Thielman and Cheri Maples
Saturday, 1/21 from 9:30am–12:30pm Half-Day of Mindfulness in Vipassana Style Rounds of 45 minutes sitting meditation and 10 minutes walking meditation, at David Haskin's and Mary Michal's home. Call David at 608-924-3060 for more info and directions.	
1/24 Readings and discussion of Thich Nhat Hanh's book, <u>Anger</u> – Led by Mary Michal	1/27 Setting Free the Cows – Led by David Haskin
1/31 <u>Old Path White Clouds</u> , Ch. 14– Led by Celeste Robins	

SANGHA WEB SITE & E-MAIL LIST

The SnowFlower Sangha web site is <http://SnowFlower.org>. You can subscribe to the SnowFlower listserv on the web or by sending an email to SnowFlower-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. David Haskin currently maintains the mailing lists. Contact him with any questions (608-924-3060 or questions@SnowFlower.org). Mike Winckler maintains the web site. He can be reached at mwinckler@matcmadison.edu.

MEETING TIMES & LOCATIONS

We meet Tuesdays (7–8:30pm) in the Wesley Room of the Trinity United Methodist Church, 1123 Vilas Ave. (2 blocks west of Park St.). Enter through parking lot door on right side of building, go through double door to right, turn left to go upstairs, and Wesley is on the right. *NOTE:* All entrances locked at 7:30pm per church policy.

We also meet Fridays (7–9 pm) in the Sanctuary of the Friend's Meetinghouse, 1704 Roberts Court, near the Stadium in Madison (straight ahead after entering, leave coat and shoes in the hall). For both, please try to arrive at 6:55pm so that we can begin our sits in quiet (earlier if you can help set up).

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

Tuesday (7:00 – 8:30 PM)	Friday (7:00 – 9:00 PM)
	2/3 Shamanism & Buddhism – Led by Efrat Livny
2/7 Practice Basics – Led by Lisa Glueck	2/10 Life & Death & Walking Meditation – Led by Susan O’Leary
Saturday, 2/11 from 9:30am-12:30pm Half-Day of Mindfulness in Vipassana Style (followed by brown bag lunch): Rounds of 45 minutes sitting meditation and 10 minutes walking meditation, at Jane Peckham's home. Call Jane at 829-2466 for more info and directions	
2/14 Readings and discussion of <u>Destructive Emotions</u> by Daniel Goleman – Led by Don Katz	2/17 Health Challenges & the Practice – Led by Jim Roseberry
Monday, 2/20 from 1pm - 4pm Half-Day of Mindfulness in Vipassana Style Rounds of 45 minutes sitting meditation and 10 minutes walking meditation, at Blue Mounds Dharma Center DIRECTIONS: Take Highway 18/151 West to County F. Turn right onto F and turn left onto HWY ID; go for a few blocks before turning right (north) on Main Street in Blue Mounds. Go forward on Main Street for two blocks – the dharma center is on the northwest corner. Call David Haskin at 608-924-3060 for more info	
2/21 Five mindfulness Trainings – Led by Anne Forbes	2/24 <u>True Love</u> – Led by Suzanne Kilkus
2/28 The Razor’s Edge from <u>Everyday Zen</u> – Led by Sarah Carroll	

WHY I JOINED THE ORDER OF INTERBEING

Contributed by Karuna Namenwirth

Savitri’s recent ordination into the Order of Interbeing may have awakened curiosity in some of our readers as to what the OI is and why join? The editors have asked SnowFlowers who took that decision to write about it for the newsletter. In this issue we hear from Karuna.

Thây started the Order of Interbeing in the 60’s, during the thick of the Vietnam War in order to get the young monks and nuns out of the temples--off their cushions’ is how he puts it--so that they could both help in whatever ways they could and so that they could be in touch with the reality, however tragic, that was playing itself out before their very eyes. There were six ordines in the original group, Sister Chan Khong (True Emptiness) was one of them. I believe that the others have passed away.

My spiritual background lay in the Hindu tradition where for more than 30 years I sought and ultimately found a comfortable niche in the study and practice of a form of Advaita Vedanta called “self-enquiry” (vichara) – which is not all that different really from Zen. It wasn’t until the early 90’s that a lucky bend in life’s road led me to Plum Village. There, for a magical three and a half weeks, I never ceased to marvel at this community that actually worked, something I had never expected to find anywhere. For the first time I started to understand and experience the difference between ideas and reality -- how our ideas can allow us to keep the present moment and thus real life, our actual everyday life, at arms length.

My gratitude to Thây was and is more than I can say in words. While my heart was apparently already satisfied elsewhere, Thây answered my questions, questions in some cases that I didn’t even know I had. So joining the Order of Interbeing was simply a way to commit more deeply to Thây and the practice. On August 3, 1994, at the Fragrant Mountain Ordination Ceremony, I became part of the core group of the OI with the name Chitta Karuna (True Great Heart). I joined with the aspiration to practice for the sake of all living beings and to build Sangha. My gratitude and devotion to Thây only grow with time. Reading and re-reading his texts, it never ceases to amaze me how much there is to learn and how wonderful the practice is.

Real Sandalwood

(continued from page 1)

After searching for some time, Do met woodcutter number three. When he told him about the last six years, years spent working without the least result, the woodcutter smiled. "Don't be disappointed, my friend. With every effort you have been getting closer to your goal. Now I will show you sandalwood."

They walked together for half a day and then, near the end of a great swath of forest, the woodcutter pointed to a large and beautiful tree. "That is sandalwood." Tears ran over Do's cheeks and he thanked the woodcutter who had shown him sandalwood without asking a single favor in return. Do returned to his home and told his friends of his luck. He even took them to view the splendid tree. They were all enthusiastic and thrilled for Do, except one. One friend remained silent. When Do questioned him, the man said quietly, "This is not sandalwood, Do."

Do felt anger grow inside him. "Why are you saying this?" he cried. "Because it has no wonderful scent, my friend."

Do was shocked. His friend was right. He had been so excited that he had forgotten about this essential characteristic of the tree he sought. His longing had blinded him and his pride in all he had learned had fooled him. His friend, who knew nothing at all about trees, had needed only a moment to know that this was not a sandalwood tree.

Disappointed and humbled, Do settled down to live quietly and rest from the avid seeking of the past years. With skills he had learned from the woodcutters, he was able to build himself a small hut at the edge of the forest, quite near the beautiful tree he had thought was sandalwood. Twenty years passed.

One winter morning Do awoke to see someone slowly approaching in the distance. Finally Do made it out to be the bent figure of an old ascetic who was known in those parts, but who rarely showed himself to anyone. As he drew nearer, Do saw how frail the man was and that his limbs shook as he moved. A small dog walked slowly beside him as if to offer support. Do hurried to meet the man and to help him be seated. He put before him the bowl of steaming noodle soup that would have been his own breakfast. The he ran to the beautiful tree he had hoped was sandalwood.

"I must honor this old man properly," he thought to himself. Then he cut a few sticks and twigs from the lower part of the tree. Never before had he dared to take so much as a leaf from the tree, but now he knew that he must do this. He hurried back and lit a small fire close to where the old man was seated, and, as the sticks burned, the wonderful scent of sandalwood filled the air all around the tiny hut. Do had found at last what he had been seeking.

DONATION REQUEST

Thầy and the Plum Village Sangha are asking for donations to help support the two monasteries in Vietnam. In August Thầy ordained ninety-one new monastics in Vietnam via the internet. Since Thầy's trip, new young people come to the monasteries each day to ask for ordination. Living conditions are crowded and the material needs are great, however.

Our donations which can be of any amount, would help provide for the new monastics:

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| Beds - \$30 each | Bunk beds - \$60 each |
| Blankets - \$8 each | Sweaters - \$8 each |
| Mosquito nets - \$3 each | Old scooter - \$1,000 each |
| Photocopy machine - \$500 each | Computer - \$500 each |

Rice \$25/100 kilos. The two monasteries need 24 tons X \$25 = \$600 per month
To sponsor a monastic (food, medicine, toiletries, electricity, water, etc.) - \$25/month

Please make your check to **UBC Deer Park**, and mail to Deer Park Monastery, 2499 Melru Lane, CA 92026, OR transfer it directly to the account of Deer park Monastery – Account # 029 131 40 78 at Wells Fargo Bank 145 North Escondido Blvd, Escondido, CA 92025, Routing Transit Number 121-04-28-82.