

# *The SnowFlower Sun*

September/October 2017

## **LOVING SPEECH AND DEEP LISTENING**

**From a speech by Gloria Green**

Words can cause much happiness or much suffering. The way we speak to others can bring them much joy, happiness, self-confidence, hope and trust. While today technology enables more instant communication than ever before, we know that these new communication channels encourage very superficial communication. We often hit 'send' before we have stopped to review the communication from the eyes of the receiver. With this type of communication we may not feel deeply understood, nor do we have the ability to understand others.

Thay says "The art of great speech needs right fuel, right thought and also correct practice. With mindfulness, we see clearly all of our thoughts and feelings and know whether this or that thought is harming or helping us." The content of Right Speech includes speaking truthfully; not speaking with a forked tongue; not speaking cruelly; not exaggerating or embellishing.

We must also consider the form of our speech. Thay says, "If our way of speaking causes unnecessary suffering, it is not right speech. The truth must be presented in a way that others can hear; we must consider each word carefully before saying anything. If we are not able to speak calmly, then it is better not to speak.

Mindful speech requires learning to listen deeply. If we cannot listen mindfully, we will not speak mindfully. Thay says we will be speaking only our own ideas and not in response to the other person. So, unless we look deeply into ourselves, deep listening will not be easy. Listening to others requires listening to oneself. It requires that we give up preconceived notions, judgments, and desires. If we can't recognize our own beliefs and opinions, needs and fears, there won't be enough inner space to really hear anyone else. Mindful listening begins with us.

At the week-long Mindfulness Meditation Teachers Retreat I was fortunate to attend, I could see the 4<sup>th</sup> Mindfulness Training embodied in Tara Brach and Jack Kornfield who led the retreat. While the 4<sup>th</sup> Training was not the subject *per se* of the teaching training program, it was always the format for processing the topics under discussion. Meeting in small groups multiple times a day, there was the opportunity to watch my peers model deep listening. At first I felt uncomfortable with the seemingly long pauses where you just look kindly at the person who has shared, and I thought about what I was going to say. But seeing the half smile on the speaker as the listeners gazed at them brought about a shift in me.

With the next speaker I really tried deep listening, probably for the first time in my life, and it felt wonderful just to be there for the person speaking. I did not worry about what anyone would think of me, how I would respond, or how I should fix it for them. I just listened. And with the deep listening came compassion. I wanted to gaze at them and let them know I heard them. When my turn came, I really felt safe to speak from my heart. I felt the compassion and caring from those in my small group, and also the strong connection that this forms -- another first for me. I learned that deep listening nourishes both the listener and the speaker and that it brings about healing.

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**SnowFlower Sangha invites you to the Annual Autumn Regional Retreat October 13-15, Bethel Horizons, Dodgeville, WI. A weekend of Mindfulness with Dharma Teacher Jack Lawlor, vegetarian food preparation by Rajan Pradhan. Questions, contact Tom Loomis, [telgreen59@gmail.com](mailto:telgreen59@gmail.com)**

## September 2017

Sundays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Fridays
			9/1 No Sangha this day
9/3 Host and Lead Tod Highsmith	9/5 Walt Keough Intro to Sangha  Gloria Green The Five Hindrances	9/6 <u>The Sun My Heart</u>  Farm Zendo	9/8 Finn Enke Holding Lightly
9/10 Host and Lead Celeste Robins	9/12 Susan O'Leary Present moment: The Poetry of Zen Nun Chiyo-ni	9/13 <u>The Sun My Heart</u>  Farm Zendo	9/15 Sangha 49 <sup>th</sup> Day Service for Cheri Maples
9/17 Host and Lead Gerri Gurman	9/19 Walt Keough The Five Mindfulness Trainings	9/20 <u>The Sun My Heart</u>  Farm Zendo	9/22 Papa Fall Teaching Secular Mindfulness
9/24 Host and Lead Gerri Gurman	9/26 " There will be a community memorial service for our sangha sister and Dharma teacher Cheri Maples at the Unitarian Church at 7pm. Out of respect, and to allow the sangha to attend the service, there will be no SnowFlower meeting at Friends'."	9/27 The Five Mindfulness Trainings  Farm Zendo	9/29 David Haskin The Freedom of Impermanence

9/26 " There will be a community memorial service for our sangha sister and Dharma teacher Cheri Maples at the Unitarian Church at 7pm. Out of respect, and to allow the sangha to attend the service, there will be no SnowFlower meeting at Friends'."

### **SnowFlower Sangha Cancellation Policy**

In case of inclement weather, an email will be sent to the listserv by 3:00 pm the day of sangha and a notice will be posted on the door of the Friends Meetinghouse.

**Join the SnowFlower email list** by emailing Ann Varda at [annvarda@gmail.com](mailto:annvarda@gmail.com).



Calmness of mind is beyond the end of your exhalation, so if you exhale smoothly without trying to exhale, you are entering into the complete perfect calmness of your mind.

Shunryu Suzuki Roshi

### October 2017

Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Fridays
10/1 Host and Lead Tod Highsmith	10/3 Rosebud Sparer Open-Hearted Engagement in Each Moment	10/4 <u>The Sun My Heart</u>  Farm Zendo	10/6 Steven Spiro Intro to Sangha  Rosebud Sparer Open-Hearted Engagement in Each Moment
10/8 Host and Lead Pam Moran	10/10 Don Katz Four Thoughts That Turn the Mind	10/11 <u>The Sun My Heart</u>  Farm Zendo	10/13 SnowFlower Retreat No Sangha at Friends
10/15 No Sangha due to Retreat	10/17 Bonnie Trudell and Jon Reed My Path to SnowFlower	10/18 <u>The Sun My Heart</u>  Farm Zendo	10/20 Steven Spiro Objects of Mind and Habits of Mind
10/22	10/24 Gloria Green The Divine Abodes	10/25 <u>The Sun My Heart</u>  Farm Zendo	10/27 Lisa Glueck The Second Foundation of Mindfulness: Mindfulness of Feelings
10/29 Host and Lead Gerri Gurman	10/31 Finn Enke Creatures, Costumes, and Compassion	<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <p>Thich Nhat Hanh movie Walk With Me on Sept 25th, October 2nd and October 12 (tickets available for October 12) at <a href="https://gathr.us/screening/20826">https://gathr.us/screening/20826</a></p> </div>	

**Tuesday and Friday Sangha Meetings** are held at The Friends Meetinghouse, 1704 Roberts Court, Madison, WI. 7 – 8:30pm.

**Wednesday Daytime Sangha Meetings** are from 1:30-3 pm every Wednesday at Farm Zendo, 1834 S. Sharpe's Corner Road, Mt. Horeb. Information regarding location and topic will be sent to the listserve every Sunday. For info, contact Mary Gallagher (608) 274-2769 or Susan Pearsall (608) 238- 5929. Wednesday Sangha includes sitting and walking meditation followed by dharma sharing and discussion.

**Sunday Morning Sangha Meetings** are held at the homes of SnowFlower members from 10 – 11:30 am. Information regarding location and topic will be sent to the listserve every Wednesday. Join by emailing [listserv@snowflower.org](mailto:listserv@snowflower.org). Or, call: Tom Loomis (608) 334-4532, Finn Enke (608) 243-7971. Sunday Sangha includes sitting & walking meditation followed by dharma sharing and discussion.



To study Buddhism is to study yourself. To study yourself is to forget yourself in each moment.  
Then everything will come and help you. Everything will assure your enlightenment.  
Dogen Zenji

## **MINDFULNESS TRAININGS IN THE BUDDHA'S WORDS**

**Provided by Jane Peckham**

The following historical perspective is from the earliest texts of the Buddha's words. "There are, O monks, these five gifts – pristine, of long standing, traditional, ancient, unadulterated and never before unadulterated, that are not being adulterated and that will not be adulterated, not despised by wise ascetics and brahmins. What are these five gifts?"

Hear, monks, a noble disciple gives up the destruction of life and abstains from it. By abstaining from the destruction of life, the noble disciple gives to immeasurable beings freedom from fear, hostility, and oppression. By giving to immeasurable beings freedom from fear, hostility, and oppression, he himself will enjoy immeasurable freedom from fear, hostility, and oppression. This is the first of those great gifts...

Further, monks, a noble disciple gives up taking what is not given and abstains from it. By abstaining from taking what is not given, the noble disciple gives to immeasurable beings freedom from hostility and oppression. This is the second of those great gifts.

Further, monks, a noble disciple gives up sexual misconduct and abstains from it. By abstaining from sexual misconduct, the noble disciple gives to immeasurable beings freedom from fear...and oppression. This is the third of those great gifts.

Further, monks, a noble disciple gives up false speech and abstains from it. By abstaining from false speech, the noble disciple gives to immeasurable beings freedom from fear, hostility, and oppression. This is the fourth of those great gifts.

Further, monks, a noble disciple gives up wines, liquors, and intoxicants, the basis for negligence, and abstains from them. By abstaining from wines, liquors, and intoxicants, the noble disciple gives to immeasurable beings freedom from fear, hostility, and oppression. By giving to immeasurable beings freedom from fear, hostility, and oppression, he himself will enjoy immeasurable freedom from fear, hostility, and oppression. This is the fifth of those great gifts.

*In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pali Canon*, Edited and introduced by Bhikkhu Bodhi, Wisdom Publications, 2005. '...from the earliest period of Buddhist literary history roughly 100 years after the Buddha's death before the original Buddhist community divided into different schools.' (Bhikkhu Bodhi)



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End of story? It is much easier to do all this in a retreat setting than in everyday life. My intention however is to be mindful of the feeling in my body when my mind drifts from really listening. Once I recognize that I'm off track, a couple of breaths allows beginner's mind to return and I can hear what is being said.

Practicing the 4th Training allows our speech to arise from the seed of the Buddha that is in us and not from our unwholesome seeds. This Training is the practice of compassionate speaking and listening. Everyone needs understanding and acceptance. To really love someone, we must train ourselves to speak in the most skillful way and to listen with compassion.

