

The SnowFlower Sun

March /April 2017

THE SURRENDER EXPERIMENT: My Journey into Life's Perfection by Singer, Michael A.

From a talk by Don Katz

Sitting on the couch with my friend who had come down for a visit, I remember a lull in the conversation on that fateful day in 1970. I noticed I was uncomfortable with the silence and found myself wondering what to say next. I had been in similar situations many times before, but something was quite different about this time. Instead of simply being uncomfortable and trying to find something to say, I noticed that I was uncomfortable and trying to find something to say. For the first time in my life, my mind and emotions were something I was watching instead of being.

It was like I was suddenly able to be above my mind and watch the thoughts being created...At first, there were only a few degrees of separation between me and this watching. But every second the separation seemed to become greater and greater. I was not doing anything to cause this shift. I was just there noticing that my sense of me no longer included the thought patterns that were passing in front of me. This process was practically instantaneous. Like when you stare at one of those posters that has a hidden picture inside and then suddenly you see an entire 3-D image emerge from what originally looked like chaos. Once you see it, you can't imagine how you hadn't seen it before. Such was the shift that happened inside of me...I was in there watching my thoughts and emotions.

Within seconds, what previously seemed like solutions for how to break the uncomfortable silence was now sounding like a voice talking inside my head. I watched as that voice tried out things to say: The weather's been awesome, hasn't it? Did you hear what so-and-so said the other day? Do you want to get something to eat? When I finally did open my mouth to say something, what I said was: "Have you ever noticed that there's this voice talking inside your head?" My friend looked at me a little weird, and then a spark lit in his eyes. He said, "Yes, I see what you're talking about – mine never shuts up!"

I distinctly remember making a joke out of it by asking him what it would be like if he heard someone else's voice talking in there. We laughed, and life went on. But not my life...in my life nothing would be the same again. I didn't have to try to maintain this awareness. It was who I was now. I was the being who was watching the incessant flow of thoughts pass through the mind. 

Spring SnowFlower Daylong Retreat: Coming Home to Sangha in the Thich Nhat Hanh Tradition
Saturday, April 22nd, 8:30am – 5:00pm Holy Wisdom Monastery, Middleton, WI. Led by
members of SnowFlower Sangha. No charge for this daylong retreat, although participants will
be invited to contribute toward costs. Register by e-mail to Celeste Robins
at celestialr@charter.net.

"When it comes, don't try to avoid it.
When it goes, don't run after it.
There is only this, there is nothing else."
Chinese Zen Master Ta-Mei

For the raindrop, joy is in entering the river.
 Unbearable pain becomes its own cure.
 18th century Urdu poet, Ghalib

March 2017

The theme for this two month period is “Practice Tools to Alleviate Suffering.” The Buddha’s teachings were meant to be practical, to help us understand how suffering arises and how suffering can cease. He gave us many tools to help us alleviate suffering. The focus in March and April is on those tools.

Sundays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Fridays
		3/1 Silence – Host and Lead Amy Krohn	3/3 Steven Spiro: The Wisdom of No Escape
3/5 Good Citizens: Creating Enlightened Society – Host & Lead Gerri Gurman	3/7 Intro to Sangha: Lisa Glueck Steven Spiro: The Wisdom of No Escape	3/8 Silence – Host and Lead Amy Krohn	3/10 Tom Loomis - 5 Mindfulness Trainings
3/12 Good Citizens: Creating Enlightened Society – Host & Lead Tod Highsmith	3/14 Jon Reed: Stopping, Calming, Resting and Healing	3/15 Silence – Host and Lead Amy Krohn	3/17 Jon Reed: Stopping, Calming, Resting and Healing
3/19 Good Citizens: Creating Enlightened Society – Host & Lead Gerri Gurman	3/21 Larry Mandt: Buddhism On A Page	3/22 Silence – Host and Lead Amy Krohn	3/24 Don Katz: The Nature of Suffering (At Don Katz and Becca Krantz’ Home)
3/26 Good Citizens: Creating Enlightened Society – Host & Lead Celeste Robins	3/28 Jim Roseberry: Investigating My Mind	3/29 5 Mindfulness Trainings – Host and Lead Amy Krohn	3/31 Jim Roseberry: Investigating My Mind

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.

"Lucidity, Transformation, and Healing: Meditation-based Mindfulness in Times of Need" A residential retreat hosted by Lakeside Sangha and led by Dharma teachers Jack and Laurie Lawlor at LaSalle Manor Retreat Center, Plano, IL. Friday, April 21-Sunday, April 23, 2017

Call Lynn Bement [708-606-0953](tel:708-606-0953) or thecompostqueen@icloud.com. or download applications at <http://www.lakesidebuddha.org>. SNOWFLOWER SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE.



Be empty of worrying.
 Think of who created thought!
 Why do you stay in prison
 when the door is so wide open?
 Rumi

April 2017

Sundays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Fridays
	4/4 Amy Krohn: The 14 Mindfulness Trainings	4/5 Silence – Host and Lead Amy Krohn	4/7 Intro to Sangha: Mary Michal Susan O’Leary: Just This
4/9 Good Citizens: Creating Enlightened Society – Host & Lead Tod Highsmith	4/11 Susan O’Leary: Just This	4/12 Silence – Host and Lead Karuna and Micha	4/14 David Haskin: Practicing Non-Self
4/16 Good Citizens: Creating Enlightened Society – Host & Lead Gerri Gurman	4/18 Walt Keough: Metta	4/19 Silence – Host and Lead Karuna and Micha	4/21 Finn Enke – Parents, Teachers, Friends and Numerous Beings
4/23 Good Citizens: Creating Enlightened Society – Host & Lead Celeste Robins	4/25 Gloria Green: Noble Eightfold Path	4/26 Silence – Host and Lead Karuna and Micha	4/28 Rosebud Sparer: Patience
4/30 Good Citizens: Creating Enlightened Society – Host & Lead Don Katz			

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 2117 Chadbourne Avenue, Madison. Information regarding location and topic will be sent to the listserv 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 listserv every Wednesday. Join by emailing 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.



THE FIVE REMEMBRANCES (Upajjhata Sutta)

from a talk by Karuna Namenwirth

The Buddha taught his followers, as does Thay, to recall and recite the Five Remembrances every day. It was, and is, a blanket teaching. Here is one version of the Five Remembrances:

I am of the nature to grow old.

I am of the nature to have ill health.

I am of the nature to die.

Everything I hold near and dear I will one day lose.

My actions are my only true belongings. They are the ground on which I stand.

Many, if not all, of the practices we observe are about coming to a place of non-fear. Which is another way of saying coming to understand that there is no separate self. Fear is fear for our separate self. Fear is always based on a separate self. Fear needs a separate self, an 'I', to attach to. It is fear that can stand in the way of deep looking, the deep looking that is basic to Buddhist meditation.

Think of the many practices that involve coming to a state of non-fear through deep looking. Take Avalokiteshwara in the Prajna Paramita who overcame 'all fear' after finding that the five skandhas were empty. The whole notion of Emptiness is about not having a separate self. In the teaching of the three kinds of gifts, the greatest gift is that of non-fear. The Mindfulness Trainings offer protection on ethical and moral issues so that we will have less fear.

It's a little different with the Five Remembrances though, since there is no gradual unfolding of a teaching. It's: here are the facts, now it's up to you! It is in this sense that we can say that the Remembrances are the direct practice of non-fear. The first four of the Five Remembrances address the fears that lie in the depths of our consciousness, but still influence how we think and feel and act. The practice is to invite them into our mind consciousness and smile to them. When we face our fears directly, we can come to see them as friends. They are us. Thay writes that if we see these four only as ominous warnings of things to come, they will only serve to create more suffering. Instead, he asks us to shine the light of awareness and acceptance in the direction of our fears, since these steps must always precede transformation.

About the 5th Remembrance. The Fifth is the practice of turning our actions into conscious actions. If our actions are our only true belongings and we cannot escape the consequences of our actions, isn't it better if our actions are not driven by the unconscious force of old habits? The practice of the Fifth Remembrance is to use mindfulness to make our habit energies, quite invisible through over-use, visible again.

It's quite natural to pull back from unwanted states of mind. There is a reflex reaction to what we think will bring us pain. We pull back and then fall back on tried and true habits to invent a more acceptable reality. Unfortunately this limits our openness to what is actually taking place in the present moment. We live as a sort of hostage to our old fears and the "realities" we have invented to cope with them. I am now able to see the realities I invented as a child and younger adult. Sometimes I even get glimpses of the ones I am currently inventing.

In *Transformation at the Base* Thay writes "When we die and transform from one form of being to another, and leave behind our possessions and those we love, only the seeds of our actions will go with us. Our actions of body, speech, and mind travel with our store consciousness from this world to another." P. 42.

Here is a meditation for the 5th Remembrance.

Breathing in, my actions are my only true belongings.

Breathing out, I cannot escape the consequences of my actions

