



The SnowFlower Sun

May / June 2018

TAKING REFUGE IN ONESELF

From a talk by Sr. Annabel Laity (True Virtue)

The Buddha advised his followers to take refuge in themselves: to trust their own experience, considered mindfully. There are said to be 84,000 dharma doors, so we must choose those which seem relevant and useful. These doors include the door of self and the door of non-self.

We can think of taking refuge in oneself as going back to our own island. We can use the sound of the bell to bring us back. We can come back to every cell in our body. Every cell contains our ancestors. Our ancestors are also listening to the bell and coming back to themselves. We are even coming back to our descendants and they can all listen to the bell. If we can do this, then we have not been born and will not die.

On the island it is easier to practice mindfulness. However, anything that is found on the island can also be found on the mainland. The island is made of our consciousness. When we allow ourselves to be in touch with the natural environment in our self, we can nourish our self. Doing this we are also nourishing others.

The Buddha is sometimes referred to as the King of Doctors because he has medicines for all our suffering. Different illnesses need different medicines. Sometimes, we are lost in self and need the medicine of non-self or emptiness. Other times we can be lost in non-self and need the medicine of self: to return to the island of this mind and body in the present moment. And sometimes we don't need any medicine!

Our fear is based on an idea of a small self, and we need to be liberated from the small self. The practice of prostration or *Touching the Earth* is to surrender mind, heart and body, to allow the true self of emptiness and interbeing to appear. Empty of a separate, limited self, the non-self = the universe! The true self is completely impermanent and so encompasses change, life and death. Realization gives non-fear and freedom.

We may prostrate to a representation of the Buddha, not the Buddha in person, nor an external divine being. We do well not to get caught up in the word "God". It is the same with the word "self". The Hindu word *atman* carries with it the idea that the one contains the all. We can experience freedom from fear when we realize this. When we are afraid, we can harm ourselves and harm others.

The ideas of non-permanence and non-self are the same. When we say we are empty of a separate self, we are also saying that we are impermanent. Some people find the idea of permanence attractive, they want to live forever and see impermanence and death as cruel. At spring time, we can see the miracle of life and feel that life is wonderful. But we need Winter for there to be Spring. We need the decay of Autumn to produce the nourishment needed for Spring. Death is needed in order to have new life. We cannot have one without the other.

One who was dying was encouraged to focus on good things. This raised his spirits so that he was strong enough to meditate. He focused on each part of himself, his eyes, his ears, and so on. He realized that each part was not himself.

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"Breathing and Smiling"

Back to the future. SnowFlower is a young entity. I am sitting in a large open-at-two-ends kitchen area behind a small mountain of carrots. Next to me and across from me, two more mindful volunteers are also at work peeling carrots. They come in. There is a fluster but we carefully keep our minds on what we are doing. He approaches us and asks kindly, "What are you doing?" "Cutting carrots, Thay" my neighbor says with confidence. Turning to me, "What are you doing?" "Breathing and smiling, Thay", the slightest question in my voice. They smile and walk slowly out.

May 2018

Sundays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Fridays
	5/1 A Rose for your Pocket Amanda Pool	5/2 Five Mindfulness Trainings Recitation Farm Zendo	5/4 Intro to Snowflower – Lisa Glueck The 5 MTs – Adam Kim
5/6 Answers from the Heart Pam and Dave	5/8 - The Ten Line Life- Affirming Verse of Avalokiteshvara Susan O'Leary	5/9 No Death, No Fear Farm Zendo	5/11 The Power of the Present Moment David Haskin
5/13 Answers from the Heart Gerri Gurman	5/15 Sutra on Happiness Walt Keough	5/16 No Death, No Fear Farm Zendo	5/18 Aimlessness (Apranihita) Amy Krohn
5/20 Answers from the Heart Celeste Robins	5/22 Metta with Thays's Nine Prayers Mary Micheal	5/23 No Death, No Fear Farm Zendo	5/25 Metta with Thays's Nine Prayers Mary Micheal
5/27 Answers from the Heart Gerri Gurman	5/29 -Taoist Roots of Zen: Qigong and Meditation Stephen Spiro	5/30 No Death, No Fear Farm Zendo	

Weekly Sangha Meetings

Tuesday and Friday 6:00 – 6:50pm - The Friends Meetinghouse

Wednesday 1:30-3:00 pm – Farm Zendo

Sunday Morning 10:00 – 11:30 am – Locations Rotate

For more information about meetings and locations join the SnowFlower email listsrv

Send an email listserv@snowflower.org

SnowFlower Sangha Mentoring Program - It is natural that newcomers to the practice may have questions. A mentoring relationship supports a newer practitioner by clarifying matters of personal practice and sangha practice. If interested, contact Susan Pearsall, (608) 238-5929. The logistics are up to the mentor and mentee.

June 2018

Sundays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Fridays
			6/1 -Taoist Roots of Zen: Qigong and Meditation Stephen Spiro
6/3 Answers from the Heart Tod Highsmith	6/5 – Intro to SnowFlower Lisa Glueck Equanimity: Finding Even Ground after Loss Gloria Green	6/6 No Death, No Fear Farm Zendo	6/8 The Sutra on Happiness Walt Keough
6/10 Answers from the Heart Tod Highsmith	6/12 – Sutra on the Dharma Seals Jon Reed	6/13 No Death, No Fear Farm Zendo	6/15 – The Sutras on the Dharma Seals Jon Reed
6/17 Answers from the Heart Celeste Robins	6/19 Relationships and Community Practice Zach Smith	6/20 No Death, No Fear Farm Zendo	6/22 Relationships and Community Practice Zach Smith
6/24 Answers from the Heart Pam Moran	6/26 The Five Mindfulness Trainings Rosebud Sparer	6/27 No Death, No Fear Farm Zendo	6/29 - Sangha with Sister Flower Adornment and Sister Tranquility

SPECIAL EVENTS – May/June 2018

Intro to Buddhism Education Series

Thursdays in May – Friends Meetinghouse

Community Tea Times

Enjoy a hot cup of tea and conversation with SnowFlowers

Tuesday 6:00 – 6:50pm – Friends Meetinghouse.

Contact Susan at (608) 238-5929 or dmls313@sbcglobal.net

Spring Social at Picnic Point

Wednesday, May 16, 2018 – 6:00-8:00pm

Meet at 6 p.m. at University Bay Drive parking lot/ entrance

Mindful walk to firepit, singing and marshmallows.



Weekend of Mindfulness with Sisters of Blue Cliff Monastery

Sr. Hoa Nghiem (Abbess of Blue Cliff Monastery) – Sister Flower Adornment

Sr. Hoang Yen – Sister Tranquility

Walking Meditation - Friday June 29, 2018 – 10:00-11:30am – Picnic Point

Friday Night Sangha - Friday June 30, 2018 – 7:00-8:30pm – Friend Meetinghouse

Monastic Day of Mindfulness - “BREATHE AND SMILE”

Saturday June 30, 2018 – 8:00am - 5:00pm - Friends Meetinghouse

Sunday Sangha, Q&A and Potluck - Sunday July 1, 2018 – 10:00am – 2:30pm – Farm Zendo

THE WISDOM OF DISAPPOINTMENT

From a talk by Cheri Maples (1/13)

Disappointment is one of our most shared experiences in life, playing itself out in the dance between expectation and disappointment that we all know. It manifests wearing such faces as frustration, envy, and blame of self and others. There is no doubt that disappointment is a glimpse of the First Noble Truth that suffering or dis-ease exists for all of us. This being true, every moment seen more deeply can be a glimpse of the Second Noble Truth, that the cause of suffering is rooted in the wanting and expecting connected with disappointment.

Fortunately, disappointment also holds the seeds of the Third Noble Truth, which is the very real possibility of bringing to an end the suffering born of our insistence that things be other than what they are. The path out of our disappointment aka frustrated attachment, is a real possibility. Can we find the courage to embrace the disappointment, and find the freedom and wisdom that it offers? Disappointment is often a place where the spiritual journey begins. It was for Siddhartha.

So how do we work with it? Do we tell ourselves that life is simply unfair? “Why me?” Do we blame the world? Ourselves? When we turn our attention toward disappointment, we find that hoping, craving, and frustration are all closely connected. The Buddha said that our unwillingness to embrace suffering with grace and understanding is the greatest suffering. The ache of disappointment is really an open door to freedom if we can stay with the discomfort, be interested and curious about it.

We must often work with disappointment in relationships with families of origin, partners, children, where it is part of the landscape of loving, and then we must ask what it is that we hope, wish, expect. How tightly do we hold to these wishes and hopes? Looking carefully, we may see that hope and disappointment are married to each other. Giving up hope does not disable our love in any way. Rather it allows us to find and focus our love in the present moment, rather than in a future moment that does not exist, when things will be “better”.

The way we work with disappointment, like any other emotion, thought, or mental state, is to meet it, investigate it and become familiar with its nature – not to disconnect from it. We come to understand that mindfulness is a practice of non-attachment, which is very different from a practice of non-caring. As we let go of trying to fix things in place with our notions and categories, our demands begin to hold a little less importance. We slowly learn that disappointment does not have to be the gatekeeper of our hearts, our happiness, or our peace. We may even begin asking, “Why not me?”



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He was able to see that the past and the future were not himself either. He began to cry. When asked why he was crying, he said it was because he was so moved. Close to death he realized how wonderful life is and was filled with joy. We may need to go down to the bottom of our suffering before we realize how wonderful life is!

