



The SnowFlower Sun

September / October 2018

THE PRACTICE OF INQUIRY

From a talk by Suzanne Kilkus

Sitting meditation is a quest, an inquiry. Even when sitting quietly, gently, at the core of our sitting is the activity of questioning. We all have something that brought us to the cushion, maybe something personal to our lives or something of larger consideration that we've encountered in the world. That something is a question. In Zen, a basic question is "Who am I?" another is "What is this?" a third is "What is the nature of suffering and how can we bring an end to it?"

The practice of inquiry opens up the potential and possibility found in the Three Pure Precepts: 1. Avoid evil or unwholesome activities 2. Do good or engage in wholesome activities 3. Purify your mind. We can ask "beautiful questions" as the poet David Whyte calls them: Will this thought/action lead to health and wholeness? Do the wise ones support it? Will this lead to liberation? Such questions as opposed to "conditional questions" which come from criticism, fear, and judgment: What's going on here? Why are you the way you are? Who do you think you are?

A foundation practice in Zen, zazen or sitting meditation, hinges on the question, but not necessarily on the answer. Rather on finding a space in which we may sustain uncertainty and remain present in the midst of investigation. This attitude of sustained inquiry offers an entryway into deep restfulness and joy.

In the following description of the Buddha's experience on the night of his awakening (from David Brazier *The Feeling Buddha*) it is clear that the Buddha's awakening arose from cultivated inquiry. "He meditated all night and watched everything that arose in his mind. Many fantasies and emotions assailed him: some violent, some lustful, some terrifying and some tempting...Not only did he experience all these emotions, thoughts and fantasies flooding into his mind and body (as we all do – ordinary human experience), he also realized how they arose and experienced how insubstantial and impermanent they were. He recognized their relationship to the affliction which he sought to understand. This was a deeply cathartic experience. He saw how the mind worked, how the body gets impelled into behavior by the mind, how a person thus builds an inauthentic identity, and how the continuing defense of this identity enslaves and hurts us.

He realized that the arising of such impulses could not be prevented. By seeing their true nature, however, he could remain undefeated by them. He saw that each such impulse was like a seed which, if encouraged to grow, could take over and blight one's life. Although he could not prevent them from arising, there was something he could do. By understanding their source and their effect he could change their consequences. They could be converted."

What occurred here, known through the centuries as the Turning of the Wheel of the Dharma, was supported by the kindness, care, and compassion of a village girl, Sujata, who found Siddhartha near death from his ascetic practices and brought him food for several days. We can say that this simple act of engaged kindness and compassion...gives us a way today to engage the big questions of our personal existence and of life.



September 2018

Sundays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Fridays
9/2 The 5 MTs Recitation Tod Highsmith and Joan Braune	9/4 Some Reflections on Happiness Joe Schubert	9/5 Fragrant Palm Leaves Farm Zendo	9/7 Intro to SnowFlower Amy Krohn Joy, Happiness, Contentment and Equanimity Steven Spiro
9/9 Answers from the Heart Joe and Nancy Schubert	9/11 Interbeing Finn Enke	9/12 Fragrant Palm Leaves Farm Zendo	9/14 The Meaning of Thay's Songs Rosebud Sparer
9/16 Answers from the Heart Gerri Gurman	9/18 The Mindfulness Trainings and the Three Refuges Zach Smith	9/19 Fragrant Palm Leaves Farm Zendo	9/21 Being Time Amy Krohn
9/23 Answers from the Heart Celeste Robins	9/25 The Mindfulness Trainings and the Three Refuges Steven Spiro	9/26 Fragrant Palm Leaves Farm Zendo	9/28 The Obstacle Is the Path Elizabeth Galewski
9/30 Answers from the Heart Gerri Gurman			

SPECIAL EVENTS – SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

SnowFlower Annual Retreat

What Zen? Suggestions from the Buddha, Thay and the Zen Tradition on Living Mindfully in Chaotic Times
October 12-14, 2018 at Bethel Horizons in Dodgeville, WI

Lead by Dharma Teacher Jack Lawlor

Registration now open. See SnowFlower Website for Registration Information

Scholarships are available.

For questions email: sfretreats@snowflower.org

For Schedule Information, see page 4

Buddhist Education Series

Bi-Annual 8-week series on Buddhist concepts

Sept 6 – Oct 25, 2018 at 7:00 – 9:00 pm - Friends Meetinghouse

For questions email: education@snowflower.org

Community Tea Time

Enjoy a delicious cup of tea and conversation with SnowFlowers

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

Tea with Susan Pearsall

Quiet Conversation and Turkish Tea in Susan's home.

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

October 2018

Sundays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Fridays
	10/2 Intro to SnowFlower Walt Keough How Taking the Mindfulness Trainings Has Affected My Life Jon Reed	10/3 Fragrant Palm Leaves Farm Zendo	10/5 Taking the Mindfulness Trainings with the Sangha Zach Smith
10/7 Answers from the Heart Joe and Nancy Schubert	10/9 My Path to SnowFlower Leah Owens and Don Katz	10/10 Fragrant Palm Leaves Farm Zendo	10/12 The Mahayana Tradition Through Dogen's Time- Being Susan O'Leary SNOWFLOWER RETREAT
10/14 Answers from the Heart Gerri Gurman SNOWFLOWER RETREAT	10/16 How Engagement Deepens Our Practice David Haskin	10/17 Fragrant Palm Leaves Farm Zendo	10/19 Reflections on the SnowFlower Retreat Tom Loomis
10/21 The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching Tod Highsmith and Joan Braune	10/23 Working with the Hindrances Gloria Green	10/24 The 5 MTs Recitation Farm Zendo	10/26 My Path to SnowFlower Don Katz and Leah Owens
10/28 The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching Celeste Robins	10/30 Metta Meditation Walt Keough		

Weekly Meetings

Tuesday and Friday Sangha Meetings

Weekly Tea Time, Tuesdays 6:00 – 6:50pm

The Friends Meetinghouse, 1704 Roberts Court, Madison, WI. 7:00 – 8:30pm.

Wednesday Daytime Sangha Meetings

Farm Zendo, 1:30-3:00 pm – Refer to Sunday listsrv emails for location information and updates.

For more info, call Karuna at 608.832.6658 or email bnamenwirth@yahoo.com

Sunday Morning Sangha Meetings

Locations Rotate, 10:00 – 11:30 am. Refer to Wednesday listsrv emails for location and topic.

For more info, call Tom Loomis 608.334.4532, or Finn Enke (608) 238-5929.

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.

Join the SnowFlower email listsrv

Send an email listserv@snowflower.org

"Honoring Jack Lawlor's 25th Year Leading SnowFlower's Fall Retreat"

GUIDED MEDITATION ON THE BREATH

Presented June 19, 1994

by Jack Lawlor

SITTING IN MEDITATION,
JUST BEING IN THE PRESENT MOMENT

SITTING,
JUST BEING

SENSING THE BREATH,
FEELING THE RISE AND FALL OF EACH BREATH

SENSING BREATH,
FEELING EACH
BREATH

AWARE OF THE LENGTH OF EACH IN BREATH,
ALERT TO THE LENGTH OF EACH OUT BREATH

AWARE OF LENGTH,
ALERT TO LENGTH

SMILING TO THE APPEARANCE OF EACH THOUGHT,
RETURNING TO THE RISE AND FALL OF EACH BREATH

SMILING,
RETURNING

FOLLOWING THE BREATH,
LETTING GO OF EVERYTHING ELSE

FOLLOWING,
LETTING GO

TOUCHING THE PRESENT MOMENT,
TASTING THE WONDERFUL MOMENT

TOUCHING,
TASTING

SITTING IN THE LOTUS POSITION,
THE HUMAN FLOWER BLOOMS

SITTING,
BLOOMING

SnowFlower Annual Retreat

RETREAT SCHEDULE

Check-in begins 6:00 p.m. Friday

Hearty snack and quiet conversation 7:00 p.m.

Retreat officially begins 8:00 p.m. Friday. Noble Silence begins.

Saturday through Sunday

Dharma talks

Mindfulness practices, including indoor/outdoor walking

Discussion groups

Tea Ceremony

Chanting of the Heart Sutra in honor of Cheri Maples

Mindfulness Trainings Ceremony

Departure Sunday 2:00 p.m.