



# Dharma Soup

Notes from  
Karida El Morro

Buddhist Sangha

November, 2009

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**Our November Sangha meeting  
will be at Inscription Rock Trading  
Post at 7:00pm, next Saturday, the 14<sup>th</sup>.**

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## Beginner's Mind

In his book, “Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind” the Zen master Shunryu Suzuki describes a desirable approach to new experiences that can be found by being centered in the moment. He called this “beginner’s mind.” I understand this as sort of a childlike openness. Perhaps Jesus had something similar in mind when he said, “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” There are probably a lot of different ways to approach and understand this “beginner’s mind.” Perhaps a herd of buffalo will help.

I first met my own “Zen master” forty years ago when he came to our Midwestern university to lecture during a “World Religion Week.” Rev. Saito, Head Minister of the Buddhist Temple of Chicago, came to represent Buddhism. At the end of the week, as I was driving him to the airport, we chanced to approach one of our State parks.

I have love for the footless,  
for the bipeds too I have love;  
I have love for those with four  
feet,  
for the many-footed I have love.

Aṅguttara Nikāya 4.67

Grazing in the field was a herd of about twelve buffalo. I pulled over and stopped so we could get out and look at them. Rev. Saito suddenly appeared childlike as his eyes got big, having never seen a buffalo before. He was astonished: it was a magical moment for him. We never discussed the experience.

Twenty five years later I was at my teacher’s bed in a hospital in Hawaii—he was dying. He had ceased being able to make any conversation for several hours prior. The painful silence was quietly broken as he opened his eyes. His face brightened, looking at the hospital ceiling as if it were a bridge across time he uttered the last word

I ever heard from him —  
“buffalo—” his final teaching.  
Whenever I think of that moment  
I feel deeply touched by Suzuki’s  
“Beginners Mind.”

-Roger

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## “Winter Course”

The coming months of December, January, and February are times of long nights, occasional snows and icy highways, as is true of much of the country. They are also busy times of family visits and a number of religious holidays—not just Chanukah and Christmas. Adding three Karida Sangha meetings into this mix seemed less of a pleasure and more of a burden—not to mention some dangerous highway driving.

Instead of meetings, as winter “plies its course,” a reading list of ten books addressing Buddhist

topics, from history and sutra interpretation, to meditation practice, is offered as an alternative.

The Suzuki book, "Zen Mind: Beginners Mind," Aitken Roshi's, "Taking the Path of Zen," and Thich Nhat Hanh's, "The Heart of Understanding: Commentaries on the Prajnaparamitta Heart Sutra," are especially recommended.

These three books are all short, very inexpensive, and just right for a winter evening read. Consider the winter an opportunity for Buddhist "higher education."

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## TAI CHI

(at Old School Gallery)

**Sundays, 9:30am join Reed and Fran Anderson for abbreviated Wu style movement and basic Wah Mountain breathing discipline. Easy for beginners. Call Reed or Fran for info at 783-4067.**

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**If you haven't done it yet, check out:**  
[www.karidasangha.net](http://www.karidasangha.net)

**If it pleases you, light a candle;  
it will burn for 48 hours.**



**PLEASE NOTE— THE  
NOVEMBER MEETING IS THIS  
NEXT  
SATURDAY NIGHT**

***Our next meeting will be  
March 20 with a potluck and  
an evening of Chanoyu to  
celebrate the Birthday of the  
Bodhisattva Kuan Yin.***

***2010 the Year of  
"Precepts & Practices"***

Events planned for 2010 include workshops on flower arranging and "Journeys of the Heart meditations" as well as regular monthly meetings with an emphasis on Buddhist teachings and meditation practice.

The regular "Dharma Soup" will continue throughout the winter months.