



# Dharma Soup

## Notes from Karida El Morro

### Buddhist Sangha

January, 2010

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**Our March Sangha meeting will  
be at The Old School Gallery with a  
vegetarian potluck at 6:00pm**

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#### Buddhism and vegetarianism

Although Buddhism has had a long and extensive history of vegetarianism many Buddhists are not vegetarian — H. H. the Dalai Lama being a high profile example. On the other hand, vegetarian diets were extensively practiced in the history of Chinese Buddhism. Many auxiliary support groups of lay people living around monasteries were often called “vegetarian societies” even though their work may have had nothing to do with food, e.g., they may have been making robes.

I recognize that what one eats is a very personal decision and that the causes and conditions of each person's life dictate a wide variety of choices as to diet. What we eat, however, is seldom simply a matter of nutrition for the body. It is also nutrition for the spirit. Eating has always been a social expression, a central part of our culture, and the occasion for connection to others. What we eat is unavoidably a political statement, a moment of art, and an expression of philosophy. Even though I fall far short of my goal much of the time I try to apply the following simple principle. I believe it is based upon good science:

**"Eat as low on the food chain as is consistent with good nutrition."**

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.

Añguttara Nikāya 4.67

To the degree I feel I am able to practice this simple principle, I believe I have moved, ever so slightly, towards achieving the following results:

- 1--better health will be created
- 2--more food will be made available to feed the hungry in the world
- 3--fewer animals will suffer inhumane conditions
- 4--damage to many fragile ecosystems will be lessened

These results might also be stated in the following meal meditation:

"May the food I choose nourish my body,  
help feed the hungry,  
relieve the suffering of animals,  
and bring health to the whole  
Earth."

#### Suggested reading:

Fox, Michael W., *Agricide* (Schocken Books, 1986)  
-----, *The Boundless Circle* (Quest Books, 1996)  
-----, *Eating With Conscience* (New Sage Press, 1997)

Jacobs, Lynn, *Waste of the West* (Lynn Jacobs, 1991. To order 520-791-2913, or P.O. Box 5784, Tucson, AZ, 85703)

Lyman, Howard and Glen Merzer, *Mad Cowboy* (Touchstone, NY, NY, 1998)

-Roger

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#### “Winter Course”

**T**he coming months of December, January, and February are times of long nights, occasional snows and icy highways, as is

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—**

***Our first meeting of 2010 will be Saturday night 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.