



Supplement
Book of Recitations

Index	Page
About Karida Buddhist Sangha.....	3
What is Buddhism?.....	7
Some Mantras and Prayers.....	9
Heart Sutra, ca. Seventh Century CE, Chinese.....	10
Glossary.....	11
For Further Study.....	13

About Karida Buddhist Sangha

What does “Karida” mean?

Karida is a Japanese word that means “essence” or “heart.” It is equivalent to the Sanskrit “Hridaya” or English “Heart.” In its Sanskrit form it begins with the root syllable “Hrih”—the seed mantra for the Bodhisattva Kuan Shih Yin who occupies a central place in Karida practices. Also, of central importance in Karida practice is the “Hridaya Sutra.” The term is especially fitting since Karida Sangha attempts to focus on the heart of teachings and practices of the Buddha Dharma. The Japanese term was chosen in order to honor the Reverends Haya Akegarasu and Gyoto Saito whose teachings were of seminal importance to the Sangha.

How did Karida Sangha start?

At the beginning of the 100-day Gulf War in 1991, a number of Buddhists, Sufis, and others gathered in public meetings, on a regular basis, in Tucson, Arizona, in order to chant sutras associated with Bodhisattva of Compassion, Kuan Shih Yin. It was the hope of this group that this focus on the Bodhisattva would help nurture our desires that the war be short and the suffering of all those involved and the Earth itself be minimized. After the war ended, many of the members of the group chose to continue meeting as a Buddhist Sangha.

What does it mean that Karida is “independent and non-sectarian?”

Some Pure Land and Zen Sanghas consider Karida a “sister” organization rather than an integral part of any particular tradition. In practicality, this independence means that the power to ordain ministers, set policies, produce teaching materials, and conduct various religious services resides within the local Sangha rather than flowing from an outside hierarchy or organization. The term “independence” means nothing more than this. Non-sectarian means that all mutually accepting religious traditions are accepted. We believe this practice of mutual acceptance moves us toward the goal of ending, or at least reducing, religiously motivated aggression in the world.

Karida places a high value on the “short lineage.” What does this mean?”

Most Buddhist congregations (Sanghas) are associated with a specific lineage, which is like one's genealogy in that it shows the connection of a succession of teachers and students down through great expanses of time to the present-day. Most lineages claim to reach, unbroken, back to the Buddha Himself, or even earlier. For many Sanghas, lineage is important because, especially in these dark times, it is easy to deceive oneself and be deceived, so a long tradition back to the Founder is, in a sense, preferred by many Buddhists because it's seen as being vouchsafed. However, nothing in the nature of Wisdom, as

Such, requires an historical lineage/heritage/parentage. For many seekers of the Inner Way (the Buddha's own term for his body of teachings), detailed instructions are preferred; some of us like to follow a recipe with intense precision. Besides, having faith in a tradition handed down over the ages instills confidence that others who have tried this before have succeeded by doing so.

On the other hand, Karida is one of many congregations that, while respecting these lineages, is not connected to any particular lineage in the traditional sense. In Karida Sangha we feel that the most important lineage for us is called the “short lineage.” This “short lineage” comes about through the limitless compassion of the Buddhas directly touching the heart/mind of the individual thereby giving rise to Bodhichitta. In Theravadin Buddhism, for example, only the “Long” lineage is recognized. In Tibetan Buddhism, both long and short lineages are recognized as valid. Short lineage has its basis in Padmasambava, or Guru Rinpoche, and is more closely associated with the Nyingma School or lineage. As His Holiness Penor Rinpoche (head of the Nyingma lineage) put it in a teaching in Tucson, experiential awareness of the Truth, or Transcendental Wisdom, arises spontaneously anywhere and everywhere, and anytime, as needed.

Finally, the Buddha Himself seems to have left it up to each of us to decide which Path to take and whether to associate with “short” or “long” lineage teachings. His very last words on this Earth were,

“I have held back nothing from you. Now work out your own liberation.” Buddhism is all about taking responsibility for oneself. So, as with everything else on the Path, the value of lineage, long, short, or something in between, is up to you.

[What is the meaning of “ordination” for Karida ministers?](#)

To “ordain” means to appoint, or officially invest, an individual with a specific role in the spiritual community. For Karida, the power to ordain comes from the polity of the Sangha rather than from an outside hierarchy. The official title of a Karida minister is “Dharma Teacher,” (or “*Sensei*” in deference to our Zen roots.) Ordination as a “Dharma Teacher” is recognition of the power of the limitless compassion of the Buddhas at work in an individual’s own study, practice, and motivation to serve the Sangha in a particular way. In general, Karida ministers serve many of the needs of the Sangha such as weddings, funerals, memorials, house blessings, to name a few.

[What is the doctrine of the “Transfer of Merit?”](#)

We believe that the merit obtained by the Buddhas of the past, present, and future, benefits each one of us and that, in turn, the merit we attain is shared with countless others. This benefit is freely available to all beings today to assist them in the development of their own unique understanding of the impermanent

world of cause and effect. All acts of compassion benefit all beings. This benefit is what we call the “Transfer of Merit.” It is made possible because of the underlying interconnectedness of all that exists.

What is the doctrine of “Interconnectedness?”

The weather in Central America affects the price of my cup of coffee. Likewise, a random act of kindness may plant a seed that bears fruit years later. This is all possible because of the interconnectedness of everything. Buddhism teaches that nothing exists independent and unchanging. This interconnectedness is the foundation, or mechanism, that makes the Transfer of Merit possible. The Avatamsaka (or Flower Garland) Sutra tells us that everything in the universe is woven together by countless causes and effects. “Everything in this universe is enmeshed together like the lines and ties of a fisher’s net. To think that any part can stand alone is as foolish as it is to think that one small knot in a fisher’s net can catch a fish.”

How does one become a member of Karida?

Joining Karida is as simple as establishing one’s name on the membership list. Conversely, removing one’s name ends the membership. Membership lists are not shared with others.

Does one need to be a Buddhist to be a member of Karida?

No. Although Karida is a Buddhist organization, our membership has always fully included non-Buddhists who wish to share our practice. We encourage people to apply whatever insights they may find in the Buddha Dharma to whatever spiritual path they may be on. Karida does not proselytize. However, we recognize that some may wish to publicly make the Buddhist Path their own. We provide an opportunity for them to do so by recitation of the *Vandana Ti-Sarana* (the Three Refuges) before witnesses.

What role does art play in Karida practice?

We see all of the arts as potential expressions of the Buddha Dharma. In particular, we encourage the “meditation arts” of calligraphy, flower arranging, and poetry.

What role does ecology play in Karida practice?

Living in harmony with the Earth is a principle goal of Karida Sangha. It is our belief that this becomes possible only through the establishment of a Pure Heart. The involvement of members in caring and loving activities designed to help establish our harmony with the Earth is seen as exemplary example of “Living Buddhism.”

What is “Living Buddhism?”

We believe that the aspiration or Vow of the Bodhisattva for the welfare of all beings is so powerful that the Vow itself gives rise to whatever interest an individual may have in learning about the Buddha Dharma. How this interest may grow and develop is unique to the individual. We celebrate this uniqueness. This individual development is what we call “Living Buddhism.”

What role does meditation play in Karida practice?

We believe that *Samatha*, or “calm abiding meditation,” is central to the Buddhist tradition. It is also an example presented to us by the Founder Himself. This being the case, we feel that meditation is important in any modern Buddhist practice.

Why is the Bodhisattva Kuan Shih Yin so important to Karida practice?

Central to the practices of Karida Sangha is the “Evocation of the Kuan Shih Yin.” In the history of Buddhism, she came to be seen as the ultimate embodiment of Compassion. The literal translation of her name is, “She who hears the Cries of the World.” Let us be clear. For us she is not a goddess to be worshiped or manipulated through magical incantations. We see her as an external representation of our own compassion. She hears through our ears, speaks through our voices, and works in the world through our own hands. Through Karida’s Kuan Shih Yin practices, such as chanting sutras and meditation, we seek to nurture that compassion within ourselves that she represents.

What is “Basic Buddhism?”

The teachings of “Basic Buddhism” are contained in the *Ti-sarana*, or Threefold Refuge in the *Buddha*, *Dharma*, and *Sangha*; The Four Noble Truths, *Dukkha*, *Samudaya*, *Nirodha*, and *Magga*; The Eightfold Path, Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Meditation; and the Five Precepts. In practice, it emerges uniquely, within each individual, with the rise of *Bodhichitta*, or the “Awakened Heart/Mind.”

What is the purpose of Karida’s presence on the World Wide Web?

The interconnected “Jewel Net” manifests according to the needs of beings. In the twentieth century, one of the most significant manifestations of this “Jewel Net” was the development of the World Wide Web. In embracing the Web, Karida seeks to encourage Buddhists who are isolated from other practicing Buddhists by providing them with the resources of a Sangha affiliation. The World Wide Web is a tool for our realization of interconnection. For more information please visit our web site: www.karidasangha.net

What is Buddhism?

Roger Irwin, Dharma Teacher

Karida Buddhist Sangha

Buddhism's central theme is liberation from suffering. Although most Buddhists would be comfortable with describing their beliefs and practices as a "religion," others have said that Buddhism is not a religion because there seems to be no acknowledgement, or worship, of a Supreme Being or God. However, Buddhists would maintain that when most people speak of God, they are thinking of one who intervenes in human affairs, punishes or rewards, or grants favors to some and not to others. Buddhists believe that this kind of a God is most likely a human construct and not the Ultimate Reality. Moreover, such beliefs quite often serve to shift responsibility from the individual to fate or some divine plan. Buddhism, on the other hand, focuses on individual responsibility for one's own spiritual life.

Siddhartha Gautama, the historic Buddha, was asked about the existence of God (or Gods) and refused to say "yes" or "no." Instead he shifted the focus of discussion to the immediate present and the necessity of the individual to assume responsibility for his or her own spiritual development. It is safe to say that Buddhism is neither theistic nor atheistic. Either point of view can lead to extremes that draw our attention away from overcoming of our own ignorance or lack of self knowledge. Most Buddhists would be comfortable with following the lead of the Buddha in these matters and not be drawn into embracing one belief or the other. On the other hand, many Buddhists would feel comfortable with Jesus' explicit teaching that "...the Kingdom of God is within you," (Luke 17:20). Overall, Buddhists tend to chafe at labels that reinforce fixed concepts of self because they draw our attention away from the immediate task at hand.

So, from a Buddhist perspective what is this task at hand? It is the "inner work" of self knowledge. The Buddha Dharma teaches that we must overcome the false idea of a fixed, encapsulated, separate self and begin to experience the self as something constantly changing, flowing, and unlimited. Buddhists are often misunderstood and accused of being negative because they use the terms "No Self and No Mind" to describe this constantly changing, flowing, unlimited self. However, as one touches this "No Self," the way begins to be cleared to experience a larger self and a greater connectedness to the universe—our sense of separateness fades. Also, our compassion grows as the false sense of a fixed isolated self fades. As our understanding of greater self develops, we move toward the experience of Ultimate Reality. We call this step by step development the Bodhisattva Path. We neither look back on nor do we crave the end

of the journey because with each step we take, a foot comes down in the present. It is only in this present that our ignorance falls away and we begin to embrace a greater vision of life.

Buddhists have a “road map” for this journey. It is called the “Four Noble Truths” and the “Eightfold Path.” In following these and other teachings of the Buddha (we call these teachings “The Dharma”), we engage in a number of spiritual practices. The most central of these is the practice of meditation. There are many different types of meditations. The focus on quiet breathing, visualizations, and various arts such as calligraphy, poetry, and flower arranging, are well known examples.

The foundation of the Buddhist journey is what we call the “Three Treasures”: the Buddha (because he is a great teacher), the Dharma (the teaching itself), and the Sangha (the Buddhist community). I will close with a comment from Reverend Kubose (1905–2000) of the Buddhist Temple of Chicago who was a significant inspiration in my life.

Gautama Buddha said, “Seek your own Enlightenment with diligence.” Buddhism knows no authority for truth save the intuition of the individual and this is authority for himself alone. Each man suffers the consequences of his own acts, and learns thereby, while helping his fellow men to the same deliverance; nor will prayer to the Buddha or to any God prevent an effect from following its cause. Buddhist monks are teachers and exemplars, and in no sense are intermediates between Reality and the individual. The utmost tolerance is practiced toward all other religions and philosophies, for no man has the right to interfere in his neighbor's journey along the Way.

Some Mantras and Prayers

Intended to help awaken Bodhicitta—the Mind of Enlightenment

OM MAHA HRIDAYAM—Ultimate Great Heart/Mind Essence

OM MANI PADME HUM—Mantra of Avalokitesvara (Kuan Yin) Translated in various ways, e.g., “Behold the Jewel in the Lotus,” and praise of “Manipadme,” one of the names of Avalokitesvara

OM AMITABHA HUM—Mantra of Amitabha Buddha of infinite light

DU SA NI MA—First syllables of the Four Noble Truths: Dukkha, Samudaya, Nirodha, and Magga

GATE, GATE, HARAGATE, HARASAMGATE, BODHI SAWAKA—Gone, Gone, to the other shore, Gone to the shore of enlightenment!! Mantra of the Heart Sutra

OM SHANTI—Peace



EKO

Dedication of Merit

GAN NI SHI KU KOKU

I vow to give this meritorious virtue

BYO DO SE ISSAI

Equally to all

DO HOTSU BODAI SHIN

And together raise the awakened heart

OJO AN RAKU KOKU

And wake up to the realm of serene joy

Meal Dedication

Our great wish is that all compassionate beings, accomplish whatever task they are engaged upon

and be furnished

With all the Buddha-Dharmas.

We offer this food to all the beings of all the worlds.

Let this food fill the ten quarters, and may all the spirits enjoy it.

We reflect upon this meal and from whence it comes.

We accept it in order to progress on the path of Compassion.

May all beings attain miraculous power!

觀自在菩薩行深般若波羅密多時照見五蘊皆空度一切苦厄
舍利子色不異空空不異色色即是空空即是色受想行識亦復
如是舍利子是諸法空相不生不滅不垢不淨不增不減是故空
中無色無受想行識。無眼耳鼻舌身意無色聲香味觸法無眼界
乃至無意識界無無明亦無無明盡乃至無老死亦無老死盡無
苦寂滅道無智亦無得以無所得故菩提薩埵依般若波羅密多
故心無罣礙無罣礙故無有恐怖遠離顛倒夢想究竟涅槃三世
諸佛依般若波羅密多故得阿耨多羅三藐三菩提故知般若波
羅密多是大神咒是大明咒是無上咒是無等等咒能除一切苦
真實不虛故說般若波羅密多咒卽說咒曰揭諦揭諦波羅揭諦
波羅僧揭諦菩提薩婆訶

Glossary

Amitabha Buddha: (Also Amida Buddha) The Buddha of the West associated with Infinite Light, meditation, and compassion.

Anicca: (impermanence) The recognition that everything is in constant change. There is in existence no unchanging condition of being, but only an ever-becoming flux.

Avalokitesvara: A development from Amitabha Buddha later referred to as Chenrezig in Tibet and Kuan Shih Yin in China. The Bodhisattva of Compassion. Literally, “One who looks down upon, or hears the cries of those who suffer.” The Dalai Lamas are considered to be incarnations.

Bodhicitta: The mind of enlightenment as expressed in the Bodhisattva Vow.

Bodhisattva: One who has vowed to put all other beings first in the journey to enlightenment. The personification of Compassion.

Buddha: A title that usually refers to the historic person Siddhartha Gautama (ca. 563–483 BCE) although the term is a title rather than the name of a specific person. It is derived from the Sanskrit word *budh*, “to be awakened,” referring to one who knows in the sense of having become one with the Supreme Truth.

Dhammapada: One of the earliest sutras.

Dharma: The teachings of the Buddhas. Also the law of cause and effect.

Hridaya: Sanskrit for Heart/Mind or Essence.

Hridayam: A mantra that has the sense of movement toward the Heart/Mind or Essence.

Indra’s Net: From the third century Chinese Buddhist texts. A description of the universe to be like a giant net of jewels, each reflecting all others showing the interconnectedness of all phenomena.

Karida: Japanese transliteration of “Hridaya.”

Kuan Yin: (Kuan Shih Yin) A female personification of Compassion especially popular in China. Also *Avalokitesvara* (Sanskrit) and *Chenrezig* (Tibetan).

Maha: Sanskrit word meaning great.

Mahayana: A school of Buddhism that developed from early Theravada and is primarily found in Tibet, China, Korea, and Japan.

Mantra: A sound used as an aid to spiritual transformation in meditation.

Mudra: A hand gesture that is symbolic of states of consciousness.

Om: Also AUM. A mantra symbolizing the Ultimate Reality. The spelling of “OM” is usually found in Buddhism while “AUM” is typically Hindu.

Om Maha Hridayam: A mantra honoring the greatness of the Heart/Mind Essence.

Prajnaparamitta: The most profound wisdom.

Prajnaparamitta Sutra: Also named the Heart Sutra or Hridaya Sutra. A short sutra of less than 300 Chinese characters purporting to contain the essence of the Buddha Dharma.

Roshi: Japanese term for an old and respected Zen teacher.

Sangha: The Buddhist community.

Sensei: Japanese term for teacher.

Siddhartha Gautama: The given and clan name of the historic Buddha who was born around 550 BCE.

Sutras: Buddhist texts.

Theravada: “The Doctrine of the Elders” who formed the first Buddhist Council immediately at the passing of the Buddha. The earliest form of Buddhism found principally in the southern parts of Asia.

Vajrayana: A form of Buddhism that found its greatest development in Tibet.

Wheel of the Dharma: A figurative term expressing the process of learning and teaching of the Dharma as in, “Turning the Wheel of the Dharma.”

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