



Dharma Soup

Notes from Karida

El Morro Buddhist Sangha
July 2009

**Our July Sangha meeting will be at
Inscription Rock Trading Post at
7:00pm, Tuesday, the 21st.**

Independence Day

When Shakyamuni leaves the palace and his family in search of the answers to his burning questions he proclaimed his own "Independence Day." Some have suggested that abandoning his family was an inauspicious start for a journey of the spirit. However, literalists always have problems. The point of the story is that the true journey of the spirit can only begin when one takes full responsibility for one's own journey. Later, in the story, he returns to family and they join his much larger family – the *Sangha*. Leaving was, for Shakyamuni, INDEPENDENCE DAY.

Later, when Shakymuni searches out the religious leaders of his day he finds the traditional answers unsatisfying. For his journey to continue he must leave behind these traditional religions and philosophies. Once again it was INDEPENDENCE DAY.

Next he tried extremes of spiritual practices – fasting and asceticism. To allow one's spiritual practice to crowd out life is extreme. Life calls us to community: not to isolation in esoteric extremes of spiritual practices. Failing miserably in this (almost to the point of death) he once again seeks his

own unique path. Another INDEPENDENCE DAY.

Now the moment of true independence comes.

He finds the deeply profound nature of impermanence.

Coming to terms with impermanence is one of the most truly liberating experiences possible. Things are changing, becoming, moving on. We each in our own uniqueness have different ways of living with this impermanence. Even the forms of Buddhism in America are changing and moving on.

Yet there are other moments of independence in the history of Buddhist thought. When Amida made his vow to liberate all beings who called upon him, another way burst forth. The distance between the Buddhas and today's individuals became exceedingly short. A direct connection emerged between Amida and each individual, making the teaching lineages very short. Zen speaks of this short lineage when it asserts that it is a "special transmission outside the scriptures; no dependence on words and letters; direct pointing to our essential nature." It is yet another INDEPENDENCE DAY.

The mythic stories of antiquity tell us of another moment of independence that arrived when a ray of light emanated from Amida and created the Kuan Yin. She embodied compassion in a most creative way. Her name means "She-Who-hears-the-Cries-of-the-world." She is described as responding to the unique needs of every individual thereby destroying the "one size fits all" model of oppressive forms of religious dogma. The principle foundation of Kuan Yin's compassion is in the recognition of individual diversity. This is the point in all the folk tales of her varied manifestations.

The theme of independence runs deep in Buddhism. Karida Buddhist Sangha is an independent Buddhist Sangha. The Sangha determines its own practices, and ordains its own Dharma Teachers, and chooses its own style of expression. We honor the lineages—both long and short. We deeply believe that our lives exist in connection to all other lives. We also believe that the particular feminine emphasis of the compassion of the Kuan Yin is most appropriate to balancing the patriarchal forces current in Western culture.

The deepening love of the earth naturally flows out of this particular spiritual energy that celebrates diversity.

—Roger

"Look at the truth. Talk truth. Throw away those conventional rules which don't help at all. Touch life the way you want to. Inevitably, all people must make their Declaration of Independence along with me." --Haya Akegarasu 1877-1967

(Note: Haya Agekarasu was my teacher's teacher. I suppose this makes him my "grand teacher.") —R

TAI CHI (at Old School Gallery)

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

Free long form Classes

Reed has also begun teaching the Tai Chi long form at the Timberlake Community Center on Tuesdays at 4:00 p.m. The class meets once a week, and is free. Everyone is invited to attend.

**If you haven't done it yet, check out:
www.karidasangha.net
If it pleases you, light a candle;
it will burn for 48 hours.**



Set aside Saturday, September 5 from 9:00am to 3:00pm to caravan to the consecration of the new Tibetan Buddhist Stupa built new the Ice Caves.