

Chanting and Recitations from Plum Village

I am not limited by this body.
I am life without boundaries.
I have never been born
and I have never died.
Look at the ocean and the sky filled with stars,
Manifestations from my wondrous true mind.
Since before time, I have been free.
Birth and death are only doors through which we pass,
Sacred thresholds on our journey.
Birth and death are a game of hide-and-seek.
So laugh with me,
Hold my hand,
Let us say good-bye,
Say good-bye to meet again soon.
We meet today.
We will meet again tomorrow.
We will meet at the source every moment.
We will meet each other in all forms of life.

By Tich Nhat Hanh.

From Swami Sivananda (courtesy of Saraswati): 'If you are just going to follow nature and get tossed by the "waves" then why should you go to surf? The nature of the ocean is to try to dump you. You are going there to learn to surf without getting dumped. It is the nature of the mind to constantly change. You should learn how to surf on the waves of the mind, rather than being tossed and beaten by them. Always affirm that you are not going to be the slave of the mind; you are going to be the master. Exercise your mastery.

If something terrible comes, you think. "Oh, I can't bear it. I can't stand it another minute". But if you just hold on a little longer, it passes. Then you are so relieved. Good and bad are all a mental matter. Sometimes white clouds come; sometimes black clouds come. Wait a little; everything passes away. Don't give up. When a restless cloud passes, you are peaceful again.

If you give up and run somewhere else, there will be a difficult situation to face there too. Wherever you go, your own mind goes with you. It will create the same problem, maybe in a different way. If you can keep control over the mind, wherever you go will be a heaven. If you do not have that control, even if you are in heaven it will be a hell for you.'

Imagination can be as real as we care to make it and can be either positive or negative, and if used wisely be a positive force for good. An idea is an energy form that appears not only in the mind but us also felt in the nervous system. Therefore all ideas affect the way we feel and act. There are two types of people, the pessimist and the optimist. In that one group some always see their glass half empty and the other half as full; those who are negatively disposed creating a negative energy field which ultimately is self destructive.

It would be a strange yoga class that created a negative environment, rather than the positive and helpful directives that leave the majority feeling relaxed and optimistic about life and the future. We are all positive, in that we have been posited into life by an absolute field of sentient power. This life-field that transcends all limitations we call God, who transcends every definition that we care to make, and it is God that writes the book of life through each one of us.

One of the great mysteries of life is our appearance from out of the void that is the space that preceded creation. This void or level of non-being is '*sunya*' or '*sunyata*', which according to Buddhism, is the suchness of existence. Space, according to yoga tradition gives rise to movement and therefore is self mobilising. Space or '*sunya*', is potential form, which is spirit or power, that during the days of Brahman is creative and active; and during the nights of Brahman is quiescent and still, like the motionless water in a lake, without a ripple on its surface.

There are many threads or '*sutra*' within the field of life from which is woven the garments of life. These lines of force or strings are more numerous than the words in all the books and libraries of the world, their light is captured in the light and fiery intelligence of the many stars or Suns that shine in the far reaches of space. The Sanskrit word for Sun is '*surya*' and for a divine being '*sura*', hence the Sun/Son, for many, is still the focus of life and worship to this day.

The Sun provides heat and light, also generating an actinic ray that initiates a chemical action, assisting the change necessary for the development of life. It is interesting to observe the heliotropic nature of plants as they follow the path of the Sun, many closing their petals at sunset. The Sun not only provides the fuel and energy for lift but also patterns creation, its formative energy originating in the space and power or no-thing prior to existence.

Ultimately the only difference between space and its potential power to form life as we know it is that one is visible and the other invisible, not unlike two

sides of the same coin. The potential for life exists in the smallest areas of space and the Sun is like a step down transformer and encapsulates the energy and form of the Cosmos. Hence the sense that we get that each plant opening to the light of the Sun is embodying what is already there in the mind and heart of a Divine artist.

We all have this capacity to visualise that which is perfect, even if we can only approximate to it on planet earth, hence visualisation and imagination can be useful tools in the meditative life of the yogi. Every thought in the mind has its affect on the nervous system and by visualising that which is perfect we can set the form that can be a guide to our future development. This can be speculative and imaginative, such as visualising the angel of the Sun '*surya*', as brilliant and beautiful. Or as a Christian Yogi, seeing Christ in your mind's eye as you believe he truly is, or perhaps the Buddha or some other saintly figure, then holding this for an inner reference when making decisions in life.

Gordon smith, Founder Member



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WORDS can be like the buoys that guide the Mariner when entering unfamiliar waters, they have different forms and shapes that indicate the middle ground or direct to the left hand or right hand path. Take the wrong channel and you are in danger of collision or shipwreck. Words can be a sure guide when navigating the uncharted waters of life, therefore words that you consider to be of the greatest importance and significance are to be kept at the forefront of your mind.

Words can not only change us but also the world in which we live, and if we could persuade all nations and people to live within the spirit of three words, Truth, Love and Goodness the health of the planet would be transformed.

Rather than engage in the improbable, words can be used by individuals, in a practical sense, as seed ideas that have the support of life enhancing energies and act as transformative and directional guides when decision making.

Words arise out of the need to communicate and are crystallised forms of feeling perception. Feeling can never be entirely locked up and limited by the ideas that may seek to define it; hence words are stepping-stones across an infinite ocean of possibilities and act as reference points on the greater journey of life.

An example of 'Self' exploratory words, are 'Happiness', 'Let Go and Let God', "Not this, Not this" (*neti neti*). To be happy is to be 'Self Positioning', and to meditate upon and unlock the meaning of the word is to enter the word dynamic, so that if happiness be your aim, the feeling when committed to memory can determine the course of future action. Likewise how many times do we get caught in the merry go round of one thought chasing another, when the simple command 'Stop' or 'Let Go', breaks the inertia and precipitates the refreshing return to the 'Here and Now'.

There are many words on our own internal tree of life, some more closely linked to our preferred way of life than others. Select from the hierarchy and through meditation and study unlock their energy, so that when making choices we can start operating within the spirit of the ideals invoked.

Gordon Smith, Founder Member