

Suu Ho and I get passports and do some last-minute things. We fly to Vietnam in morning to see his grandfather who is passing away. Suu Ho has many family members in Boston ,we go to several houses, to collect money and gifts, to help those back home. It takes a lot of work with so many family members; but it's worth more than anything. He interacts with many throughout the day, which is why he has such a good understanding of life. I'm very proud of him , his heritage and his culture, even though pride is extra:: 3 o'clock in the morning I smell food cooking ,Suu Ho must be eating again. But it is welcoming me to rise. The tea is ready, just as the day is. Kenny, his nephew gives us a ride to the airport and he is happy to do it; he has only had a couple of hours sleep: If we can only bottle or package his enthusiasm! Five in the morning, while in the check-in line at the airport , Uncle Gabe calls to warn me against mosquitoes and drinking the water. It's nice he was thinking of me though, but I'm not worried about mosquito's and water: My uncle has been interested about my trip, because he was in the Vietnam war back in 1969. It was an easy four hour flight into Dallas, Su Ho and I dine on Chinese food at nine o'clock in the morning; luckily I practiced no borders no boundaries, I'll eat breakfast this evening , HA! Long 14 hour flight to Japan, but it went short. The food was good, flight was good, Suu Ho is sitting next to the happiest man in the world. Japan is immaculate, very organized, very clean, crisp and disciplined. Uniforms are tailored and clean,there are no slouches here. It is nice to see a culture taking pride in their work effort:: we have a 16 hour overlay in Tokyo, we grab a room and stretch out, a shower is nirvana! 630 in the morning: we go to the airport and grab the closest thing to breakfast, pork in an egg noodle soup, it was delicious. Vietnam Airlines has the best uniforms and staff I have ever seen. The ground crew and the guys who throw your luggage in the plane all line up, and wave goodbye to you with a big smile on their face. It is so beautiful to see humans so caring and proud of their work. There are so many people back home that I work with, who could benefit from seeing the way these people take care of themselves. I used to own a restaurant, and when servers came in without their shirt pressed or a dirty apron, I would send them back home to press their shirt or clean their apron ..They would get angry, but I would say to them you will make more money if you are clean , then if you are sloppy. They also would not do it that often , because they knew I would send them home. I still work part-time in a restaurant , while I am continuing my education and the servers come in very sloppy and make terrible money. Then they complain about the terrible money; I remind them if they treat their station as their own business , clean and pressed, they'll make more money. But they figure, if the owner doesn't care , why should they? We arrive in Ho Chi Minh City it's a beautiful day, like June back home. Suu Ho's father and sister's father-in-law picks us up at the airport. They are very happy to see us. We will only be here for

the night , we fly out again in the morning. The family is very warm and friendly, very accommodating. The houses are built like mini palaces, going straight up with wraparound outdoor terraces and huge sliding glass windows. So , it feels like you are outside, if you slide the glass doors back. We go for a short walk and within a couple of blocks , little children run up to me and grab my hands. It's like, they either want me to go with them or them to go with me, either way is all right. The streets of Ho Chi Minh are perfectly beautiful chaos. Everything flows the way it's supposed to. Whole families of four to five are on one scooter. Some women are bottle feeding their babies, old men with piled high materials on rickshaw tricycle's , he literally has a whole 3 piece living room set on a bike , two boys carrying a 14 foot ladder on a three foot scooter .I say, perfect beautiful chaos , because although there are no apparent rules on traffic safety , but people are looking out for one another's wellbeing . They realize if they hurry too fast they may crash , not alone hurting someone else , but themselves as well. Because of their culture based on selflessness , it shows concretely in the flow of traffic . I have not seen an accident ,some close calls , but no major collisions , AMAZING !

As we drive through town, the taxi driver knows where one of my favorite teachers Thich Nhat Hahn studied as a young monk . I guess Thay , (which means teacher), has donated a huge wooden Buddha, that was carved out of one huge tree. I'm sure he must be very excited to be back in his home country. A young monk turns on the lights and opens the doors so we can see inside. Suu Ho lights incense and hands it to me ,so I can offer to our ancestors. I prostrate three times, I then turned to the young monk, and said "don't worry your teacher, Thich Nhat Hahn knows absolutely nothing". We laugh. Back at the house, I sleep hard, more people and family members are arriving downstairs. They stay up all night talking and visiting. We leave Ho Chi Minh city for Hue, the closest town to the village of the Suu Ho and his grandfather. At the airport we are charged extra for luggage, for domestic flight you're allowed 40 pounds each. There are six of us, it should equal 240 pounds, we have over 550 pounds, we are carrying two and three bags each, not for ourselves but for all the people in the small village, who do not have much. It's much cheaper than shipping it. It only cost us 20 American dollars for over 250 pounds. Suu's parents live in Hue itself, only some still remain in the small fishing village. All the houses like Ho Chi Minh are built straight up. The business storefront is the living quarters also. Very economical, no rent for business space. But, on the other hand Suu Ho says business wise it's not too good because it's their home also and it's very difficult to charge people who do not have it. So basically, it's everybody helping each other. Where in America, business is business. Which is okay to, I'm sure though when we first had business hundreds of years ago, maybe not even that long ago, it was the same set

up. And then one day someone said "maybe if I move my house somewhere else I won't be responsible to help others so much anymore." Anyway, a few houses I have seen are pretty much the same set up. Very high ceilings, no furniture except one room which also has the family altar and statues. Most statues are of Kuan Yin the Bodhisattva of Compassion. There are also different ornaments and singing bowls . I guess when communism was having its heyday against religion most of the people had to practice out of their home, that's why there are so many alters in people's houses. The woodwork on the alters are very intricate and detailed, sometimes with inlays of abalone or Mother of Pearl , otherwise no furniture anywhere! Rooms are just a bed, sometimes one table, no closets ,to accumulate too much stuff, much have two pairs of clothing one being washed and hung out to dry the other on your body! After the clothes are worn out , they are used for rags. We go to the island village to see grandfather, you can tell we're starting to leave town, you start to see chickens, ducks, pigs and yes water buffaloes! They are grazing on the side of the road. There are no fences, no structure no boundaries. I love this place! The drive to the rice paddies on the way and people are plowing and picking rice. You really do not see machinery, except the vehicle you are in ,so it seems that you have gone back in time. I remember Grandfather Klein , out in Nebraska ,scolding us because we complained about working too hard during the harvest. You see we had air conditioning , heating, fridges and phones in the cab of the tractors. He reminded us , that when he was a boy they picked all those square miles of corn by hand . Yes, 26 mi.² of corn picked by hand. At the time it was inconceivable, but after seeing this; I understand what he meant. We take a junk, which is a wooden boat, over to the island village. People on the island are so happy to see me, the little children yell "HELLO" as I wave back. I cannot stop smiling. It must look pretty funny to them though, to see such a big man, on the back of a little scooter. Here they call me "Oak Tree" at home they call me "Stillwater" . Grandfathers very happy to see me, for some reason, everyone says he perks up, like he knew I was coming. He tells his granddaughter, Kim that he has been waiting for me for a very, very long time and he is happy I am here. My intuition says, we have crossed oceans of time to see each other again. He laughs and says" that he has come to accept everything", I tell him" I haven't," he laughs even harder. To have and have not, at the same time , this is the "Way". I've seen on a small-scale, people keep looking outside themselves for happiness. It doesn't surprise me because , I know big and small are the same thing. When you see it directly, you start to get insight and your wisdom shines through. It's funny on the larger scale many want to go America. But, after seeing this breathtaking remote village on the ocean; most of America wants to be , or dreams of being here ,on a remote beautiful island. They want to be where we are, and we want to be where they are.

I am happy in both places, I hope more can find this freedom .: Suu Ho and I talk this afternoon, it's the first time I've seen him emotional and I completely understand why. Since he has developed his practice and become clearer (through not practicing foolish unnecessary pleasures) his mind is starting to really settle and see things the way they are. This is very hard for some , most people don't like the truth so they keep running away from it. He is suffering ,because he sees one of the most difficult things, when our own family members suffer from delusion and keep doing selfish acts that hurt the family over and over. Just as my family members went through it with my antics. My mother, father and sister were very frustrated ,because they kept trying to let me know and see the pain ,I was causing them and myself. But, they could not get through! You have all the 'tools in the world' for the job ,all the finances, but you can't break ground. Frustrating . For me; I just wait. Just as everyone waited for me to wake up. I trying not to interfere, I know people are not going to wake up until they have felt enough pain. The Buddha and I are no different, we are the same. We both felt enough pain . We both left our children, wives and families behind to pursue our selfish desire. His was extreme, so was mine . In the relative world, a little different, but absolutely, the same. From his aesthetic practice he became malnourished, lost weight and started passing out. So did I , mostly from drug abuse. So, does a five-year-old child, like Siddhartha's care at the time ,whether his father was a drug addict or an extreme religious person seeking answers? No, the child just knows the parent isn't there for them. The most important thing is our presence. We see it in our society, good hard-working men in business, making money doing all the appropriate things for their family but the adolescent son rebels "because his father never had time for him". How many times have we heard this? Then from our extremities we finally wake up and see the Way. I came from the same family as Siddhartha , all the opportunities in the world, but had to go my own way. There are just so many similarities it's scary. The sheltered life growing up as a child, waking up in our 30s, then expounding the Dharma. To the marrow of my bones I am Siddhartha Guatama,. Even though I studied and practice with many teachers , do I need ,or am I waiting for their endorsement to teach and help all sentient beings, no. The Buddha didn't need any certificates and neither do I. He didn't say to himself, Oh well, so-and-so never said I can go out and teach , I must not be equal to him , so I better not try to teach and help others. If the Buddha thought this way, he would have never left the Bodhi Tree. Even though I go to universities to get letters behind my name, (because it's the only way someone in America will listen to you) I already know and have studied and practiced what I really need to know, to teach the Dharma. I know nothing, have studied nothing and have practiced nothing. So, I keep going to school to throw the letters away after I get them. Is the truth I

spoke of , going to be any different from the truth I'm speaking now? NO ! I'll be saying the same thing in five years , but people will think it's more true because of a college degree. Sad. You are certified with a piece of paper for study , that's not worth the paper it's written on. Wait a second , the piece of paper is the entire universe, so maybe a little education is okay! Yes, a little is okay , but too much of anything is not good. Remember what education means. It's to pull out what's already there. No attainment , isn't it beautiful! Anyway, this morning Uncle Gabe, would have loved breakfasts it was the closest thing to linguine with clam sauce. There is no such thing as breakfast foods, lunch foods or dinner foods. There is just food, and it goes throughout today. When you are hungry you eat . When someone else is hungry you take them with you. When you come to think of it Westerners have categorized everything. They think ,it is for their convenience, but it is the opposite. What would happen in America if there were no English muffins or cereal for breakfast; the kids would undoubtedly not eat anything else. Until you went to the store for them and brought them breakfast foods. This is selfishness from the start. But we keep allowing this. "OH , my poor baby let me get you something else" children are smart now ,they know they can get away with anything. You have become a slave to their unnecessary desires. I knew my mother was the boss and that's the way it is. When you are a child or adolescent you are in better shape , having your mother being the boss ,because you don't know what's good or bad for you yet. Most children can't accept their parents being the boss , because their parents don't know they are the boss. All this came out of breakfast. Talked to my wife on a phone that was hooked up to a computer ,she sounded really sexy in surround sound. Soft. I think of her often ,so I don't miss her ! when I see something and I know she would like it , I tried to get pictures of it But , usually it's gone though, I can swear, I heard somewhere ,life is impermanent ! everything just keeps moving here ,can't put your finger on anything she would really like it here. Reminds me of France. I love my wife. Even though I've been a terrible husband, I hope I can do better for her. She has suffered enough in this life; I hope she is over the cloud .I think things for her ,are going to become more peaceful. Especially, hearing from her side of the family, will bring her much joy! I hope she will start visiting her grandchildren down south. We take a large van with all the brothers and sisters to Da Nang , it's about two hours and we go through a beautiful set of mountains by the ocean. We are stopped in the middle of the highway for a herd of water buffaloes , they are just out for a walk! Imagine coming out of Hartford on I-84 and seeing this!! We stop and eat seafood, the best live shrimp, crab, and fish all displayed in vats ,on the sidewalk .Steamed shrimp and lemon grass over rice. SIMPLY DELICIOUS! We move on to Metro it's like Costco in America, but it has a Carrefour flavor, from France. Suu Ho and his sister Kim buy some necessity

presents for the family. New cooking ware and stovetop for Mom. The children get coats and shoes, things that will last. I hit the jackpot, a baguette of French bread, ham and dijonaise. I get a small peanut butter and jelly, I figure I don't want to waste the baguette. They think I'm homesick. I tell them I am home, most don't understand, the here and now is my address; wherever I am , it is home.: I'm used to eating everything with my hands, sandwiches, pieces of meat or chicken at work get popped in to my mouth.. I'm not used to sitting with bowls of noodles and broth . I think I need to learn how to sit and eat as well as "just sitting". It is like 30 to 40 years ago in America. The women are cooking and cleaning all-day, I mean all day. I hope with the advances in technology in convenience of modern equipment they do not lose the family base that is the strongest part of their culture. That's what we are losing rapidly or a big scale have lost. I think in general , Americans talk a good game of family, but the selfless sacrifice has dwindled ,especially with my generation. Everyone wanted to be free, but did not understand that you have to be able to follow rules completely , to have ultimate freedom. . People in my generation thought if you rebel against the "WAY" you would have freedom, but it is adapting and flowing with the WAY, then you have freedom. In Japan, be Japanese. In Mexico , the Mexican. Here in Vietnam, I am traveling in a junk boat packed with people I look around and see myself. I haven't become them, I was Vietnamese from the beginningless ; beginning . just as I am Indian, Ethiopian, etc. etc.. We only look at the relative viewpoint with our lazy minds. When we start with the oneness, or Sameness of things, there is less fighting and arguments . Because , we are all human, with feet ,hands, eyes skin, hair; there are more similarities than differences. Man in his delusion and suffering, sees only one side, the relative skin color. This is when the arguments and fighting start: tonight is the first night I actually go out with all the brothers. I'm usually in bed by seven to eight o'clock, tonight the brothers are taking out their 20 year old cousin for her 21st birthday. She looks 15 but maybe I'm just getting older. I've seen the girl working at the Village home for their grandfather. She cooks and cleans all-day on the island, so they take her back to the city with us to celebrate. There's about 15 people and all the guys except Suu Ho and I are drinking beer. They can't understand why we don't drink beer! I tell them I'm still the same Idiot ,I just have less dents in my car. I watch Suu ,and all the children keep coming to him, he is paying attention to them while everyone else is paying attention to their own beer and good time. The children are directly benefiting from the fifth precept of not putting intoxicants in your body. The boys than ,take everyone to karaoke, it's much different here ;you have your own private room with just your family members. I told them they are cheating. They ask why? I say I always had to look like an idiot in front of a bunch of strangers it's much harder. They laugh. We still get to bed by 10 o'clock

though, we are leaving early for the last day on the island to see grandfather. I sit zazen before we leave for the Village. I'm so peaceful; even in the midst of revving scooters and honking horns. I like sitting in the busyness, everything is so nothing can bother. The human mind is amazing it can decipher a car from a scooter, an old woman crying from a child crying, a dog barking from a cat meowing, without even trying; it's marvelous. I don't even have to try. Matter of fact there is no me to try. The way does it all on its own: We leave for the island village, on our arrival there are many people there, and they are coming from all over. It is a day of the New Year, to pay respects to the ancestors. There are monks at some of the household alters, chanting and performing ceremonies. Everyone thinks, it's wonderful. I think it's beautiful, but it also saddens me, because it's sort of like everyone going to church for Christmas, but the rest of the year they are not truly mindful. It's sort of like when we are seriously partying and drinking, we called the part-timers, "weekend warriors" because they didn't party all week long. I guess whatever we do, we do our best. I listen to my mother well, she told me, be the best you can be. So I did. I became the best drug addicted, deceiving, manipulating person on the planet. Anyway, monks are chanting and performing ceremonies. I'm asked to meet one that has traveled home here to the village, from Delhi where he is studying and practicing. He grew up here on the island just a couple of houses away with Suu Ho. We have a nice visit for a couple of hours. I can tell this is a momentous occasion for Suu, because he is meeting a fellow practitioner from his own village. There is light or brightness for the future generations. I like him, he is very formal, which is good because there already is enough informal. I sort of like the middle, you still got to be a little formal but not be sooooo attached to it. As Master Sekito said "according with sameness is still not enlightenment." He is sort of saying, most people think there is a right path and a wrong path, but there's also a third path right down the middle, the One true essence, most people forget this point. Some people stick to formalness and become self-righteous, and if it's not their way, it's the wrong way. To me, if you want to strike the singing bowl hard, strike it hard. If you want to strike it soft, that's OK also. To me, it's not "how" you are striking it, but that you "ARE" striking it! Sooner or later you'll figure it out, and when you do, you are set. I don't worry if I am doing things right or wrong, I just do things. I hope Suu's friend finds this freedom. He talks of visiting HOLY places, living and practicing in all these HOLY places. To me, there are no holy places; just places. Even Bodhi Dharma said "nothing holy". He traveled to China to spread the truth teaching, because too many were being "Too Holy". All the fancy relics, statues, presents, and monies being corrupted by overzealous priests. The same thing happened in Christianity with Martin Luther. When the church was selling families a "guaranteed spot" in heaven for "just enough" money, so

that the Pope could build a new palace. They'll absolve your sins for a fee, what a racket! So Bodhi Dharma came to China to say, Shut up . Sekito said, Shut up !when the northern and southern schools were in conflict. And now, I'm doing the same thing. Shut up !!! He talks of going to conferences here and there ,they talk about this, and talk about that. That's really great; we need serious practitioners getting together. But, how much time are they spending with the people, who truly need their guidance . We are really starting to get some really "smart" people practicing. But, I love complete idiot's. One of Webster's definitions of an idiot is , a person having the mental capacity not exceeding 3 years old . I remember when I was 3 years old ,it was the most brilliant time of my life . If I got spanked or scolded , for misbehaving , I was right back out playing within minutes . As children ,we don't hold on or become attached to things . Everything was AMAZING and WONDERFUL . Everything was NEW ! I learned easily, because I didn't know anything . But , as soon as I got older , I knew it all ! Since I've become that three year old idiot again , I've seen a lot of "know it all's "running around ! Idiots don't write books and have a yearly calendar, to see which seminar they're going to, they live life simply for today. In the history of the world, I think we're at a turning point that is historic, because there are just so many smart people doing really stupid things. My favorite character is Forrest Gump . Everyone asks me, how? He was such an IDIOT !! I want to be that same idiot, who loved his family , his mother and others, was kind, even made a fortune at business. The best ping-pong player. Why? He kept his eye on the ball. The best at football, because he just ran! He didn't think about running or I should have a better pair of Nikes , he just ran. He paid attention single pointedly to what was in front of him. Forrest, in my opinion is the ultimate Zen Master., I really liked this monk, it's not what he says, what Suu says or what I say that matters. It's the three of us getting together and doing it .The Dharma wheel is moving forward and there's nothing we can do to stop it. So I will do whatever I have to, to go with the "Way." I have the feeling, the three of us will be getting together again someday. My only hope is , that Suu believes in himself and sees himself as important, as this monk friend of his. I remember when I first started practicing, I would sometimes think, I did know as much as some and be awestricken. Suzuki Roshi said "the less you know, the better" he is so right. It was such a liberating experience , when I realized, I didn't have to go anywhere. That I was no more and no less than anyone or anything else. I think what helped, was a 5 Hour Drive to Vermont to show Suu his "grandteachers" retreat center. Being a fellow Vietnamese, I wanted to bring Suu to see how things were done by one of my favorite teachers Thich Nhat Hahn . After a 5 Hour Drive to the middle of nowhere, several monks and nuns taught me , my favorite lesson "I can't thank them enough". They paid attention to the ringing of the bell on the

clock, more than they paid attention to the human beings standing right in front of them. They did not ask us to sit down, if we would like glass of water, could we show you around? Nothing! They made us feel so uncomfortable we ran for the car. Halfway down the hill, I burst out laughing, that at least it wasn't a 16 hour plane ride to Plum Village, France. One of the biggest teachings, is to throw away the raft after you've crossed the shore; and guess what? They all had these huge rafts strapped to their backs and were carrying them around. Instead of going with the "WAY", they are stuck in the Way. I love Thich Nhat Hahn. I think without him, I would in no shape or form, have the mind I have today. He helped break down my confusion and has helped millions of people's lives. There is no but to this statement. I love him. This story sort of reminds me of some people in business though; they start out with a small place and do well, so, they open up a larger one and it slowly goes under. Most people aren't happy with the smaller one. I never was. I paid for it, every time. Thay's teachings are endorsing these places and not once but twice, we were not treated as human beings. Hell with being treated kindly, how about what humans do? That's enough! I'll show you an example of how humans treat each other: OH, you drove five hours to see us, why don't you sit down after your long trip? Would you like some water? Do you need the bathroom? If it happened once you could say, I am crazy or maybe they were having a bad day, but twice in a row within a couple weeks? NAH!! somebody better wake up! Okay, enough about my favorite teacher, if I keep going I'm going to have a lot of upset insects. HA! (To non-Buddhists, there are Buddhist's and non-buddhist's; to Buddhist's everyone's a Buddhist even the bugs)"got that one from Suzuki" HA! Some people must imagine, man if he is so hard on his favorite teacher, I would not want to be his least favorite teacher. Don't worry, I have enough for the both of them. HA! While we are on the subject I picked up a copy of the best Buddhist writings, 2005. YAWN!!! This book has been only coming out a couple of years and already I want it to stop. They have a Who's Who in the back and everyone is SOOOO! Illustrious; he runs this Retreat Center and so-and-so studied and ate ants for seven years in Delhi. She's a Ph.D. LSCC. WAN .DPA whatever. We know you' struggled hard, we know you have suffered, but this is still your ego talking. For a bunch of selfless people, there's a lot of showing off going around. In America, if you do not have a bunch of letters, at the end of your name, you don't know anything. I am happy not knowing anything. I realize, to help change things for the better you have to adapt. So everyone keeps getting letters onto the end of their name; which is good, but they aren't throwing them away after they get them. It's just like the rafts. People become experts and they forget where they came from. There are two points in this one sentence 1) forgetfulness is our greatest enemy and 2) Suzuki Roshi said "in a beginner's mind there are endless possibilities, in the experts mind there

are few", I see administrative staff and workers forget who they are; they are the client themselves, but they've forgotten. In addition, because we feel and think we are separate individuals we suffer and put other people through suffering. This is due to ignorance. Most of the people, about 80% are from poverty, it's not that they commit 80% of crime, it's just they don't have the money to prevent a jail sentence. White-collar crime rarely apprehends or convicts. So you can pay a big fine or restitution to not go to prison. So the impoverished, for the most part have not been shown an appropriate way to live in the first place, mothers can be prostitutes fathers, if known, can be thieves, pimps and robbers. Their example was inappropriate from the start, to me there is no shame here, but, if you keep doing it over and over though, knowing it's hurting you and your family than that's another story. On the other hand, we have government officials, Governors and Mayor's embezzling millions, President's, cheating on their wives, than lying about it, President's getting DWI'S and then lying about it. Priests, molesting young children. Enron's, Martha Stewart's, swindling stockholders and here's the funny thing, then they make \$1 million on the bestsellers list and TV shows, and you people buy into it. I'm glad I am an idiot that did not contribute one thin dime to President Clinton's book and one second to Martha Stewart's TV shows. It seems to me, we have a multitude of smart people doing stupid things. OH! I'm sorry, it's not stupid, even a stupid person wouldn't lie after getting caught red handed, even a stupid person wouldn't want to illegally make \$100,000 when they have a half a billion in the bank. No, they have gone on to a whole new realm, it's no longer stupidity it's complete foolishness. The transition went from addiction rate, to prison, because the numbers coincide. 80% of all inmates have an addiction problem and only 5 to 8% receive some kind of treatment. And here we go again, back to administration, they are driving a wedge even further in, to divide the separation even more that you feel as an addict, so you feel even more at odds with the world. Let alone you were an addict, now your convict also. And forget about being a part of society after that. Well wait, you can work in a restaurant or mow lawns, there is nothing wrong with this, but forget about working in the addiction field for 5 years and forget about ever working for any of the jobs in Government, D.O.C., F.B.I, etc. The way treatment centers are run in this country, if you did the complete opposite, you would have a better success rate. When nine out of 10 are relapsing back to drinking and drugging. Even with the 12-step program, their own numbers say, 75% go back at the year mark, only 15% have some lasting sobriety. If this is the best we have to offer, I'm not buying it: What private business would survive with a failure rate of 85%, NONE !! Confusion is the biggest stumbling block to man and the 12-step program is confusing. When it was a religious program, its numbers were much better, but when they started sleeping with the government,(

Meaning to keep our kids from DCF, it's mandatory to go to A.A , to get parole it's mandatory to go, to keep your job for an employer, it's mandatory to go to AA.) So when A.A was Religious people expected God and spirituality .Since separation ,here we go again, of church and state ,why do you have God and prayer in 10 of the 12 steps. Wait a minute , I thought this was not religious. Oh yeah, it's a higher power now, that makes things so much clearer. The first step is you are powerless over your addiction. Now remember , you're delusional tunnelvisioned drug addict that sees things one sided or one-way and then all you see is powerless. You throw your hands in the air for the first excuse, which is I can't do anything about this drinking problem, because they told me I am powerless. And I'm such a schmuck , that is so easily influenced ,I'll fall for it over and over. This is the revolving door of A.A and Prison , hand in hand . If you say something like this in public ,then everyone thinks you're an idiot. I'm so happy to be an idiot .I haven't done drugs in over 8 years and imagine, without an A.A meeting. It's like saying something about the church, back in medieval times, they would just execute you. Well, the church won't say anything about A.A , because where do you think all the parishioners they lost are going; to meetings ;and where do you think most of these meetings are? In church halls; and who pays dues to the churches ? That's right A.A. I'm not against A.A or for A.A . It is what it is. It's helped millions of people out over the years. But, it is a living entity. Not just a slogan. And every living being has to look inside of itself to grow. As humans we have to keep looking inside and alter things and adjust things as we need to , so does the 12-step program. They need to take a look at words, so things are not so confusing for people. Oh yeah, all the 12-steppers ,that told me I would use again, because I wasn't going to meetings, have relapsed time and time again. You hear this a lot from 12 steppers, What ? You don't go to meetings! You're going to use again. It sounds like they are wishing the worst on people. On the other hand, if you don't have the 12 steps, you'd better have a serious self-discipline routine worked out. Maybe check out Zen Master Dinty Moore. I love that guy's book, he saved me thousands of dollars and years of emotional pain and suffering. The "Accidental Buddhist" was totally idiotic and love him for being a complete idiot. Dinty Moore is the Forrest Gump of the book world: After visiting with the monk from Suu's village, we go over to say goodbye to grandfather . He even reminds me of my own grandfather, tall, with a full head of gray hair, all his own teeth and a lady's man to boot at 90! Five generations are holding hands and I am a part of that chain. It's a wonderful feeling ! The family offers me the singing bowl and magakyo off their own altar, for me to bring to America to put in the zendo that Suu and I are building this spring . . They want their family heritage to continue on with the grandchildren and great grandchildren that are here in America . My eyes flooded with tears, but I knew these people were looking at me, to direct

the future generations to the teachings of the Dharma. So, I stood firm , but , I wept later from the beauty that this family has shown. What , just because I've seen that Birth and Death are the same thing and that the entire universe IS me, that I am nothing and something at the same time , that I can't get emotional; please! We depart and stop at the Temple. I see the old monk ,he smiles I go up and just hug him and stand with my arm around him, not a word is spoken but we both understand. I take pictures of him in the Temple along with those of grandfather; we will put some in the Zendo. We already have a spot picked out in the woods. A rustic old world Temple no gold, no-frills, no sparkles, just rocks and wood. Nothing fancy. No dues, no fees, just come sit and enjoy your surroundings, (your self). We take the last of the boats back because we are waiting for a cousin , he was doing a little drinking and gambling. We finally leave without him, because we would get stuck on the island . Suu says, " I guess when you're drinking and gambling, you miss the boat." I don't guess, I say" he definitely missed the boat." We stop by a Riverside Café for a late snack, there is a Hibachi ,a small grill placed on the table with a bowl of marinated meat. It takes some effort, but it is fun. Simple , delicious. The people here are very poor. They lived on makeshift houseboats. They wash their clothes and bathe in the river, but they are a happy bunch. They really don't know any different, so they have nothing to compare to, except everyone else around them. I'm sure if they had a television and saw how Paris Hilton lives, may be they would be very pissed off, but I think these people are bigger than that. I think in general , poor people are happier because they interact with others and depend on each other more. Where materialistic wealthy people, tend to think they are independent and do not need anyone. They distanced themselves and become lonely, then blame everyone else for their loneliness; that they have created. Either way, rich or poor you're going to have some difficulties. For my last day in Hue ,Suu Ho takes me to do some sightseeing. We go to the Emperor's palace and see his burial grounds .Just like the emperors in Europe , it's always more than they really need. I suppose I have to show power and authority concretely and they do. Fast water Gardens cons of coy fish, elegant gardens, temples and living quarters, spots larger lien wise than Europe's castles, but the Europeans were more elaborate and their décor, furniture and art work. We stopped to buy some gifts for my American family back home. The things I picked out would be very expensive at home, things like handcarved marble candle holders and incense burners that are very intricate. Silk shirts and Prints and a small ceramic doll hand painted for my little niece Lulu. I see a large statue for my father's garden, it would cost 10 times the amount back home in America, but it's too big, I'm all ready weighed down with too many things to bring back . Back at the house,I have two visitors waiting for me, it's the Tailor's wife and her sister. They have brought a formal sitting outfit, it's perfect. I thank her

also for the beautiful robe she sent back with Suu's mother-in-law last time she was here. She and her husband live and have a small shop outside where Thich Nhat Hahn practiced as a young monk. They also do some work for Plum Village in France. They make the robes and garments for some practitioners. They are very hard-working and talented family. She's actually one of the best vegetarian cooks I've ever seen, she put a serious spread out the other day, when Suu Ho and I went to get fitted for clothing. They asked me if I'm a vegetarian, I said, I eat whatever people put in front of me, just like the Buddha did; they smile and understand. In America, there is a pretty wide range of vegetarianism. Some eat eggs, some eat chicken, whatever that may mean. If a cow eats corn and I have a burger I guess I'm a vegetarian if the cow ate corn? Who knows? I don't refuse anything (food wise) that is given to me. The meal was delicious and looked good, even the tofu that was supposed to be meat looked like it. I order two work outfits, they will be ready next week for when Suu comes back. I like wearing clothes like this; I know why Einstein did the same thing. He just didn't want to waste time and energy on something as trivial as dressing. Plus my whole wardrobe fits in about two drawers at home, don't worry though, it makes up for the 60 sweaters my father has in his sweater closet next door. Yes, two rooms full of closets for just one man; literally a whole block of people in Vietnam, don't have as many clothes as my father. He is so kind and generous though I won't be hard on him. We bowed to each other, then pay our respects to the Buddha by prostrating three times in front of the family altar and she is off. I can't believe how nice that was, that she took a cab from the other side of town to say goodbye and surprised me was something to take home. It was so kind and going out of their way, but, they are not going out of their way, this is their way; doing nice things for friends and family. It's not just about their agenda, they change and go according to what's in front of them. Sadly, many people back home have a set agenda and hardly will deviate from it. I have to do this, this and this but, if that comes up, well we are still going to do this. I remember one time, my car broke down and I called someone for a ride, and they said, "they had to go grocery shopping", they wouldn't be able to pick me up until much later in the day. Most people in America, especially this person can go several days without grocery shopping. I have an ongoing joke with my mother, that I can survive a good six months with all the dried and canned goods alone, not counting the freezer. Over here in Vietnam, its shop for the moment, I'm not going to say day, because I've seen them go to market a couple times a day. People may say, people in Viet Nam have the time to shop like that; so do we. We just don't make it. We park it in front of the TV and work "SO" many hours. If you didn't have SO MANY walking closets and gadgets to keep up with the Joneses, you wouldn't be working like a dog. My fridge looks like Sue's moms, empty. Hers is smaller though and

she's feeding seven people a day this is still happening in Europe, going to market daily. Too bad it's one of the traditions that didn't continue in America. People here try to buy for the week and end up throwing out tons of food. What a waste. Sorry Sis', my sisters probably the worst culprit of this, she throws out things on the day of the package. It could be perfectly fine food, but it gets tossed. I try to tell her, that's a suggestion to the retailer to sell by that date, not throw it out by that date, it doesn't work, she literally will even go through my mom's fridge and start chucking good food out, also. For many years when I was completely foolish and delusional I was a huge waste; so I'm not condemning them, I think they're catching up to me though. Imagine, my mother's fridge coming from, my Taylor's wife coming over to say goodbye. Isn't the human mind amazing. You think my mom's fridge isn't connected to the Taylor's wife, how lazy we are, how selfish for years I didn't know my mom's fridge is the Taylor's wife. When I get home and go to open up the fridge, I'll see the Taylor's wife inside. HA! After she leaves, I sit zazen. I don't know why, I just do it. Suu and his entire family greet me as I come down the stairs it's 5:30 a.m. we fly out at 8 a.m. His sister has prepared breakfast. Squid, lettuce and noodles; the chopsticks are humming, everyone is there to see me off, it's absolutely beautiful. I am speechless. I feel like someone important (aren't they beautiful). I grab each one and hug and kiss their cheeks, something you don't see too much, matter-of-fact I haven't seen it; but I do it anyway. His mother is my mother, and I would kiss her goodbye; to me there's nothing else. Suu Ho is going beyond what a host to come he actually flies back to Ho Chi Minh, just so I get out of the country all right. It's an hour and 20 minutes late, not counting baggage checks and taxi rides. We have about six hours until I leave for Tokyo, so we stop over his sister's mother-in-law and picked up their 21 year-old son, who looks 15. We take him shopping for more school clothes. Suu Ho hasn't seen him in a couple of years, He is going to school to be an electrical engineer. The same thing Suu Ho wanted to go to school for, but couldn't because he selflessly escaped the country and spent time in refugee camps and has worked hard and send money home. In the past 15 years since he fled Vietnam, Suu Ho has started his own business and taking care of the family back home; he says it's funny, some customers ask him if he pays taxes. I think Americans in general have a misunderstanding of the "illegals" coming into the country. My Mexican/Vietnamese friends are not taking advantage or for that fact don't use the system at all. Sal, my Mexican friend paid the hospital cash, to have his children delivered. Most of them are afraid of the system. Where, the people I grow up with, are using it to the hilt. Drug rehabs are being used like Club Med to take a vacation, because they are tired of running game to get their drugs. They also get limousine service to the methadone clinic. Then after they get their state insurance reinstated,

they get their teeth cleaned, to check out the local emergency room at the hospital for a common cold, because they get medicine ,without having to buy it. My friends from outside this country don't use the system. But my friends from this country do though. We as humans ,have to blame somebody though and it's always outside us. I used to look outside myself ,when I was doing things wrong to! We think we are the only country with this so-called problem. When I was in France, I saw more British, Italians, German, Polish and American than French people; tell you the truth, I learned how to speak French, because I didn't know how long I would be there, but I really didn't need to; most everyone spoke English, the handful of old-timers and some hard heads in rural areas were the only time s I would have difficulty. But, for the most part they want to learn ,most of Southerner France's part of the economy is due to the tourists from United States and Britain. They are open minded about language anyway, most people speak three and four different languages. In America, we started putting signs in Spanish. I don't know too many people in my area of New England, running out to learn Spanish or trying on their own. The attitude is, if you want to come to this country, you had better learn the language . Then again most my Spanish-speaking friends speak Spanish fluently, but can't read their own language. It comes to find out most are illiterate. Why have Spanish signs, the Spanish can't even read? Maybe we should just have hand signals or pictures. Now , I'm starting to sound like Andy Rooney. I love that idiot, also. I don't watch TV, I love to hear about Oprah. I love Oprah she's a complete idiot, like me. She cares about people, goes on the line for people. I heard something about this James Frey guy, I read the book. YAWN! BORING! But, that's me, it's relative ,I've done way more rehab, had more wild antics , to me, that was like reading Little orphan Annie. I have stories ,that would curl your toes. But that's another whole different beast. I don't know why people are surprised or upset with this guy he's a lying, deceitful, manipulative, selfish, drug addict like I was. You don't think he would make something up , just to get a couple of bucks, please, you're more delusional than he is. Look, if you turn the switch off on a fan , the blades of the fan keep moving. How long is this guy been clean, and how long has he been practicing nothing. Just because he stopped doing drugs doesn't mean he's good to go. Yes, you become clearer from no intoxicants, but now you have take care of the other things that cloud your judgment. Things like anger, jealousy and greed, not to many addicts know they have to work with these negative afflictive emotions. Learn to look directly into them, which medication does. James Frey, if he were a complete idiot, he would have told the truth, the way it was. He had better pick up my next guide an Idiots guide to becoming an Idiot.

. I say goodbye to Suu Ho and become master Sekito or Stone Head ; I just look at Suu and there is nothing to say. It would take days of thanks

and we know what's going on, because we have the same mind. I give him a big hug and tell him to get out of here. At the airport, I start to see many different travelers. I start seeing English-speaking people for the first time in two weeks. They don't even have to open their mouths, they have way too much luggage and they're carrying two carry on's each. It will take them four or five loads of laundry when they get home, they'll never get back to work! I had better not tell my wife I washed my own clothes. She's not going to believe Suu's mom, while raising seven children did not have a laundry room. The kids wash and everyone washes their own clothes. There is a big plastic tub by the shower, you throw your clothes with water and soap and let them soak, while you take your shower; when you're done you rinse your clothes in the tub then ring them out, you then walk up a flight of stairs and hang them on the line to dry. That's it, it's that easy. It takes two minutes, there's no piles of clothes around and no one slaving over it. Matter of fact, they don't have enough clothes to even make a pile. Idiotically simple, efficient, economical, Love it. There's a bunch of idiots over in Vietnam. I keep telling them, if you go to America, you may get too smart. You have everything you need right here, to be idiotically perfect: It starts raining for the first time since I've been here and I mean it's really raining. Suu Ho told me, sometimes when it rains, it just keeps raining for weeks. There must be wild flooding. It's a good thing they have a lot of Ox and carts around, they're probably the only thing that we get through the streets: I'm seeing something a little different, it looks like the sunrise, it's actually the sunset. We're traveling very fast towards Japan. So the sunrise would be behind us. Boy, Siddhartha was an amazing person, there are scientists today that are just starting to understand him. Most scientist will never understand him though. Scientists, mostly look into the known and the known only. You have to be able to sit and look into the unknown. Something scientist won't do, because they think they are not acquiring anything. To me, life without the unknown is meaningless. I value nothing or the unknown, because when it was not in my life, some serious suffering happened. It's like this; life is like crossing a busy street. You have to look both ways before crossing. If you look only to the left you may get hit from the right and vice versa. So when we get into situations in life we don't take the time to look both ways, lazily we usually look to the relative viewpoint or selfish viewpoint and we suffer and cause suffering all around. But, if we train ourselves to stop and look both ways, we cut down the suffering immensely. In our society we haven't had great instruction on how to practice (concretely) the unknown or absolute viewpoint. I call it "the don't know mind". When a difficult situation arises, like someone is acting like a complete Ass, yelling and ranting. Instead of just jumping in and compounding the problem, just stop and go to the "don't know mind." You say to yourself, you don't know why this person's acting like such an Ass, let me see why? Maybe,

they lost their job, maybe their wife cheated on them, maybe their child died, you don't know ;but ninety percent of the time, the person usually isn't angry or mad at you, it's something else that happened before hand, you just take it personally. The "don't know mind" is very compassionate, because you are actually trying to figure out why this person suffering. It seems science and religion keep separating themselves when actually they need each other and are of the same essence. Science looks into the known, Religion into the unknown. When you are supposed to look in to both, or the third path the, middle way, the true essence. With Western religion, it's been hard to look into the unknown, because there are so many ideas behind it. The unknown to our society, is God , but we start putting labels, names, sexes like "God the Father", paintings with an Old Man as God . If it's unknown, there are no ideas, no concepts, but man is uncomfortable with the unknown, because he has to know and he doesn't want to sit and look into this. We are starting to land in Tokyo, Mount Fuji is really beautiful, it has snowed to the north and all the pines are covered; it's breathtaking. I've been traveling 24 hours and I feel great, well rested, good thing because I have a 13 hour flight from Tokyo to Dallas in about 4 1/2 hours. Then another four-hour flight to Boston. I think I would be exhausted if I didn't meditate. I hear people complain and look beat up, worn out. I think some of that comes from the speculating mind, if your constantly wandering off to the other two time zones, you get where you want to go. In the past there is regret , remorse, guilt may be some bad things; in the future there is worry ,fear and speculation which causes anxiety. If you keep going to these two time zones, that's what you are going to be, anxious or depressed. The longer you stay in the present, you shed anxiety and depression, like a snake shedding its skin. We've been on the runway now for 40 minutes ; people are getting edgy, to me it's fine because I have a big comfortable chair, the airlines gave me a first-class seat, because I was tall and there was an open seat. I would be waiting on a plastic chair in the lobby for four hours, so I'm loving it . As it turns out , I need the whole four hours, because it takes time to get a bus to a different terminal, this place is HUGH! I end up meeting this dude named Tim, real nice young man. I've seen him from Ho Chi Minh we have been at arm's-length the whole trip, but we end up in the ticket line together and talked for a good hour. He's a researcher from Albuquerque, New Mexico, very rugged, Outback looking kid, with short dreads ; never judge a book by it's cover. He reminds me of my cousin Patrick, a nice smart easy-going guy, but he's conservative and a little preppy. You would think Tim just came off the TV show survivor, he's going back to school to get his master's degree. He says, you wouldn't believe the money the government is still spending on research for Atomic weapons. It doesn't surprise me. I tell them I wish I knew more open-minded scientists like him. You go back and forth, I tell him that science goes after the known and does not

recognizing and give credit to the unknown. He's sort of following, so I say, most of the big discoveries were a mistake, you didn't know what was going to happen and then the final result, you take credit for, but without the Unknown, you would have discovered nothing. Because you didn't know something, you started testing, if you knew, you would not have been doing that experiment, that found the Result. So, the unknown is essential, but most people, even my old biology teacher, thought I was nuts. She said "you cannot prove the unknown" I said "what are you going to have for lunch today?". She said, "I don't know". I said, "I just proved it". She said, "that's not scientific". I said, "I know".

the airport is packed and people are sleeping all over the place, lines are long and people are getting cranky. Some serious complaining starts and guess who the majority is. Yes, the Americans. You see, I can say this, because I am one. If I wasn't born and raised, I'd probably be getting death threats. But, in the lines you start to hear the world in which I refuse to go into. The World of should and ought. They should have more people working the desk, there should be more flights, there ought to be more buses, we should get free lunch, we should get a free hotel. The difference between the foreigners myself in the complainers is. The complainers express and lay all their cards on the table, they show all their emotions. There are some other complainers mostly European, but not many. You see, most of the people in America that are complaining are originally from Europe; and in America everything is bigger and better even the complaining. I can tell you one thing, I am talking to people from other countries, because you know the complainers are pissed off and no thank you, I do not want to be in that state of mind. I would rather sit here, writing about others being pissed off, than being pissed off myself. Even though others in line may have a passing thought about being pissed off, that's all it is, a fleeting thought. They haven't become attached to it yet; like the actual complainers. I guess, as a fellow American, I'm asking my people to wake up. People in other countries look to us, we need to be a better example of not being so wasteful. You're only 5% of the world's population, but we use a 40% of all natural resources. It seems like most of the places I go, I feel like I'm returning to the scene of a crime. On this trip, Japan and Vietnam, I felt like saying, I'm sorry for blowing you up, I'm here to show you, were not all self centered asses, here in America, some of us want to observe without interference. We have to start to be kind, more patient and humble. This takes practice. Right now, I'm seriously practicing, we were supposed to leave at one o'clock in the afternoon, and now it's after 6.30 in the evening. We have been sitting on the runway for over 5 1/2 hours. They announce about a half-hour ago to runway was closed down, because of the plane that was landing was in trouble, the probably take the taking off in 10 minutes another hour goes by. I did have one thought go through my head, this airport is absolutely humongous, it probably has

five different runway areas with many more runways, we just keep on building bigger and more and can't even manage to use it correctly or at all. It reminds me of this older couple, friends of the family. They are in their early 70s, semi retired and the two of them live in a 13 room expansive house . They just added a \$55,000 Sundeck with Jacuzzi, they actually use about three rooms out of the 13, but they figured , they need a little more. Now, they use three rooms out of 14. They've only been in the Jacuzzi once in the past year, it's too cold several months out of the year. Yet, they complain about not having enough for retirement, this is the general attitude in America, because they are general people. The Difference is, they are not practicing looking both ways -necessary, unnecessary. Want and need are two different things. Yeah, I want a new car, but do I need a new car! No, it gets me where I'm going, I don't have any car loans , which means I don't have to work more hours and be away from home. Here's another situation that happened couple of weeks ago, it's very similar. I Ran into an old friend while driving to work. He was pissed off because , he is still living downtown and his kids are surrounded by drugs and violence. He started sounding like it was everyone else's fault that he's in this predicament. I look at him and smile (while he sitting in his vehicle) and say, how much they bang you for the SUV. He Starts smiling and say's, OK you got me! \$600 a month not including the gas, licensing etc. etc. I'll guarantee it costs him \$1100 a month. I told him, one of our other friends, just rented a beautiful three-bedroom home over in Wolcott , on the lake, in a great school system. Let's weigh this out here, the bling bling vehicle to look cool and to look better than everyone else in the neighborhood or a safe place ,where the bullets won't be flying over your children's heads. I'll drive my 13-year-old station wagon and live in the burbs thank you! My children's safety is worth much more than a vehicle. An older gentleman in the middle row is really acting up and complain about having to sleep in the airport , that he should be getting free drinks. He keeps asking for Jack Daniels. Finally a stewardess comes by and says, "you're not getting any more alcohol you must have been drinking all day in the lounge, while you're waiting, I can smell it all over you , your nasty." He starts to retort, but she cuts him off, I will have you removed from the plane if you say one more thing or ask for another drink. He instantly shuts up! The truth is, would another drink rectify the many hours of waiting and remove the sleeping on the ground? No. Bottom line. You can't change what happened by having another drink. Other people are pissed off at him and talk about him . I'm understanding of him and accustomed to this behavior, because we are surrounded by it . Wherever we go, someone's with the bullcrap ! But, I can't give up on him , if I do I give up on myself. I remember the years of foolishness , I make him look like Suzy homemaker. The man you see today is and is not the same man you saw 10 years ago. Sorry, did I say man. I meant adolescent, an

adolescent has to be told and reminded what to do. Take out the garbage, do your homework, clean your room, make your bed, catch the bus, over and over many times a day. As an addict, I was an adolescent in a 30 year-old body. So, I figured out the cure for addiction. Tell yourself what to do!! Now, you've become the master of yourself. Now, you've become an adult. Think about it, addicts are always being told what to do. Pay the rent, your two month's behind ! Your phones going to get shut off, pay your bills, the wife telling you to go to work. Are you sick of being told what to do? Then start telling yourself what to do! This may revolutionize the world, if it gets out. Naw! People are always looking on the horizon for something that's right at their feet. You can tell I have alot of time on my hands , with all the travel time on planes .I'm talking way to much , I'd better just sit for awhile and go into the unknown ; the unborn Buddha Mind as Bankei called it . I love Bankei , he was a complete idiot and strived to teach people how to be perfect idiot's . In his sermons he would say, when you go home, and get there people will say, what did Bankei teach you, you've come home stupider than when you left. I think, if I ran into Bankei he would scold me and say " you keep writing page after page with no paragraph's, no page numbers ,and no headings or chapters , NOW GO HOME AND TAKE CARE OF YOUR FAMILY YOU IDIOT !!! This is one continuous thought. Because of the snow in Tokyo, I miss my connecting flight to Dallas, but another one goes out this afternoon. By The time my flight arrives, it will be nine o'clock at night, then I'll drive home from Boston to Connecticut. I may get home at one o'clock in the morning. I am just happy to be home, right now in the present moment. I have to check my bags in again after leaving customs, even though now it's a domestic flight . The woman was very short with people even though part of her job is to put up with some aggravated customers. She asked me , what's in the box ? Suu Ho's Aunt , filled the box with some kind of pumpkin seed type snacks that are not found in America. I truly don't know what they are, I've never seen them before? She says, "WE'VE" got to open the box . I tell her, I've just come through four airports and customs checks and no one asked me to open it . She says "WE" need to open it . I say, "go ahead". She then hands me a pair of scissors. I gave her the scissors back and said" YOU" want to open it. She then says YOU have to open it . I say ,I thought you said ,WE. I finally apologize for her getting caught in words. I say, I'm sorry I've been listening wrong to what your saying. It goes right over her head. I think, it's valuable to use words and speech correctly or you can add to the confusion. One thing about the old Asian Masters is they didn't like to get caught in words. Where in a lot of our western ancient texts, we get caught in words. Like in the book of Job; it says if your wife commits adultery to drag her out and stone her to death on the other hand in the New Testament, if you're enemy slaps you , your supposed to turn the other cheek. Now, some will say you can not

compare the Old testament to the New Testament. I say, why not? I was told ,the same God wrote both. So, let me get this straight, I'm supposed to kill the woman I love, who raised my children and because she "may" have committed adultery. But I'm supposed to embrace My enemy on the cheek after he slaps me and then turn the other cheek . To me, this very confusing. Even Noah, to me, was confusing. How could Noah ,have been the only righteous man left in the entire world , and if all the others are acting badly, isn't God supposed to show the same example and turn the other cheek. Just because, a lot of people aren't doing it your way , does'nt mean lets get rid of them. If my mother gave up on me, like God gave up on the people in Soddom and Gomorrah, I would not be around. Thanks Mom! Man, I'm going to hear from the church. They don't realize, I'm not against them, I support the church and I am very happy to see people attending and getting involved with their worship Center. Like my old friend Suzuki said, life without ' emptiness ' or in our society 'God ', is like winding your watch without setting it . It runs perfectly well, but won't tell you the time. To me, it means it won't function properly. Man's purpose in life is to protect himself and his family. Since the beginning of time, even cavemen picked up a club and warded off Little dinosaurs , hyenas or whatever, from hurting the family. A mother takes the newborn and nurtures the infant with her own breast. These are our natural instincts or our Buddha Nature or human nature. Now, I'm going to be hard on the drug addicts, I can't leave them out or be discriminatory. How are you going to protect your family from prison. Most of you been there ,so you know what I'm talking about, but there are ones who are also saying ,I'm not going to prison. HA! That's what every person in prison said. It won't happen to me! You just haven't got caught yet. Let me explain, ultimately in life you don't get away with anything. I Remember over 30 years ago ,I was a young teenager, throwing beer bottles and cans down the bank , in the woods ,so my parents wouldn't find them in the garbage. Guess what, I am picking them up now! As I started to clear room ,to build the Zendo ,as I am raking and cutting down trees, I'm finding bottle after bottle. Now, I am throwing them up the bank, to throw them away. I "thought "I got away with it. Only we can clean up our own mess, only we can pay our own debts. If everyone else keeps bailing you out of prison, you will keep on going back. The funny thing is , most young people start doing drugs, to be different. You are unique already, there is no other you in the entire universe. Once you put drugs and alcohol in your body, you've become just like the millions of other drug addicts. It's like tattoos in the NBA, Dennis Rodman was unique, wild hair, Wild Tats, because no one else was doing it. But now ,everyone has jumped on the bandwagon and they are no longer unique ;please you younger guys/girls don't be easily influenced. Be your self. Your true self, was not born a liar, it wasn't born smoking cigarettes, it wasn't born gambling. You picked up these

bad habits , somewhere else along the way ,they are not truly you. You started breaking off fractions of yourself, when you started “acting” like other people. Just be yourself, it's an okay person to be. When I give groups, on the benefits of paying attention , Some say to me, Pierce ,how come we don't get to talk in your group. I say, I'm putting down information on the table that you can use for your benefit right now, plus I don't believe a word you say! But don't worry, I don't believe a word the administration says either! They all laugh. What I'd do is just watch them, their actions, because I remember when I was in this state. I said, I would never use again every morning and by noon I'd be running out for more. Words are meaningless in addiction, like “never” or “Borrow”. To me, borrow meant may I have \$20 and never pay you back. So I just watch what their actions are. Talk is cheap, talk is over; it's time to start acting appropriately. You know what you got to do, just do it. You have many menus or guidelines out there to follow, just pick one of them and do it. It's like going to a restaurant when you are starving and just reading the menu, you have to actually dive in and eat the food, this is the “practice”. I don't care which guideline ,The 12 steps, the Koran, 10 Commandments, the Precepts ,just read ,learn and follow. But then, believe in yourself, because ultimately it was you, who got you there. If you can take refuge in yourself, when there is no AA meeting at eight o'clock at night and you want to use, you won't because you learned to take refuge in yourself. Even if you're on vacation and there is no church or 12-step meeting , or Temple ,you won't use , because you can still take refuge in yourself. I'm not going to flush my life down the toilet by picking up drugs, because there wasn't a meeting or I could not find a sponsor! These are two of the biggest excuses of relapse. They didn't know and were not taught , how they can take refuge in themselves. You are with yourself 24 hours a day, meetings only happen a couple of hours or couple of times a week. I can not blame drug addicts completely, because we are independent and dependent on everything. You have not done this alone. You have had a lot of help. Why am I going on in this vein?, because drugs and alcohol are the biggest problem in our society. Over 40,000 die a year from drug and alcohol abuse and 15,000 died from D.W.I' accidents. This is beyond epidemic. We have over 100 million people on prescription medication for anxiety and depression ,we are the nation of the quick fix and we are paying for it. 150 billion is spent on aftercare treatment in medical costs due to addiction. It is causing our society dearly. But there is something we can do about this. It is not an incurable disease, like some say it is. The only disease is selfishness and that can be cured by training your mind. Luckily, my flight is starting to land in Boston ,I'll lighten up after drive home. Don't bet on it! :Boston goes pretty quickly , no lines for checking your luggage out ,which is good, but also bad ,because that means any person from off the street can walk in and take your luggage. I catch a

taxi To my car which is parked about 10 minutes away at Ken's house; it probably saved me about \$300 in parking. The driver has no idea where he is going, it's not in the city of downtown Boston it's on the outskirts and all I have, is the exact address, not the streets leading up to it. See, everything is connected. I tell him it's over near the cinemas, if you get me closer I'll ask at gas stations. Sure enough, it took about four stops, but I actually got us there. So, between this and someone parking behind my car, something doesn't want me to be home yet. I call some of the family members to see when they are coming home, so they can move their car for me, to get out of here. No one answers. After being on planes for two and a half days and going thousands of miles, I just want to get this over with, so I literally drive over the lawn, some bushes and off a short wall onto the street, with a "YES", I'm out of here. I couldn't believe I got out, I was so happy. I jump on the highway and the exit for the Mass. Pike is closed. So, they detour us, but guess what, I'm back in America and there's no detour signs, along the way, so I get lost. Finally, I just keep going south, knowing I'll hit I-95 it will be the long way, but the sure way. I finally get home at two in the morning and I have to be in school at 7:15 in the morning, it was worth the effort: there is a God, school was canceled because of snow. YEAH! I can spend it at home. How come there is a God and he's good, when something we like happens? Convenient no?: I remember a time when a woman came to talk to me about their daughter's problems with drugs, she was distraught, so I tried to console her by saying "things happen for a reason" and she said "I believe in God too!" I said "I never said, I believe in God, I believe in nothing". She looked at me, as if I had had three heads and scolded me over and over from not believing in God. After she was done, I said, oh! you've completely misunderstood. I don't have to believe in God, I know to the marrow of my bones there is the absolute, the unknown (God). When you directly "see" you no longer have to believe. She said, oh, I'm sorry I never met some one with such a conviction. She was happy. She understood. Now, I may believe I'm getting a pizza later, it doesn't mean I have it. Until I go and get it, I won't see the pizza. To me "just sitting" is getting the pizza, it nourishes you completely, you're not just reading the pizza menu or believing it tastes good. You're actually nourishing your hunger. You're no longer wondering in a state of confusion, if it tastes good or not. I think we have to start doing what is good for us, no matter what the name or label is, we have to throw away our preconceived ideas about how things should be. All the great discoveries happen this way, if Copernicus just agreed with the idea that the earth is the center of the universe, he would have never discovered, it was the Sun that was the center. (That's still the relative; you are the center of the universe, but, I may give you a big head). If you were starving and stranded for several days, lost in a forest, and you finally run into someone, If they offered you \$10 to get

something to eat, do you care what Presidents face is on the bill? NO!
(See, I used to ,and it was Holding me back). When I give groups, I'll warn
people, I use many teachers the world is full of them, I use Ghandi ,
Martin Luther King Jr., Jesus Christ, Joe Shmoe, all the way to Buddha ,
Stop getting so upset about words and names, if it gives you a better
understanding of life, so be it. Well, I'm back in school, the trip is not
over and when I opened my refrigerator, the Tailor's wife was looking
right back at me.