

## NOTE TO THE READER

These offerings are compiled from notes taken over the years by Jain. They are not necessarily verbatim as Ruth spoke them, but are Jain's best impressions of what Ruth was trying to impart. After Ruth had distributed the book to her students she re-read it and felt that there were some inaccuracies, but sadly, she did not have the time or inclination to edit them out. So, dear reader, any issues you might take with the dhamma contained in these passages are most likely a result of the note-taker's inability to capture fully Ruth's intentions, and not of Ruth herself. That said, those who have been privileged to own their own copy of *The Book of Ruth* have found great wisdom, comfort, and inspiration in these passages. It is our hope that you will as well.

## FURTHER INFO ON RUTH DENISON

<http://www.ruthdenison.com>

<http://www.dhammadena.com>

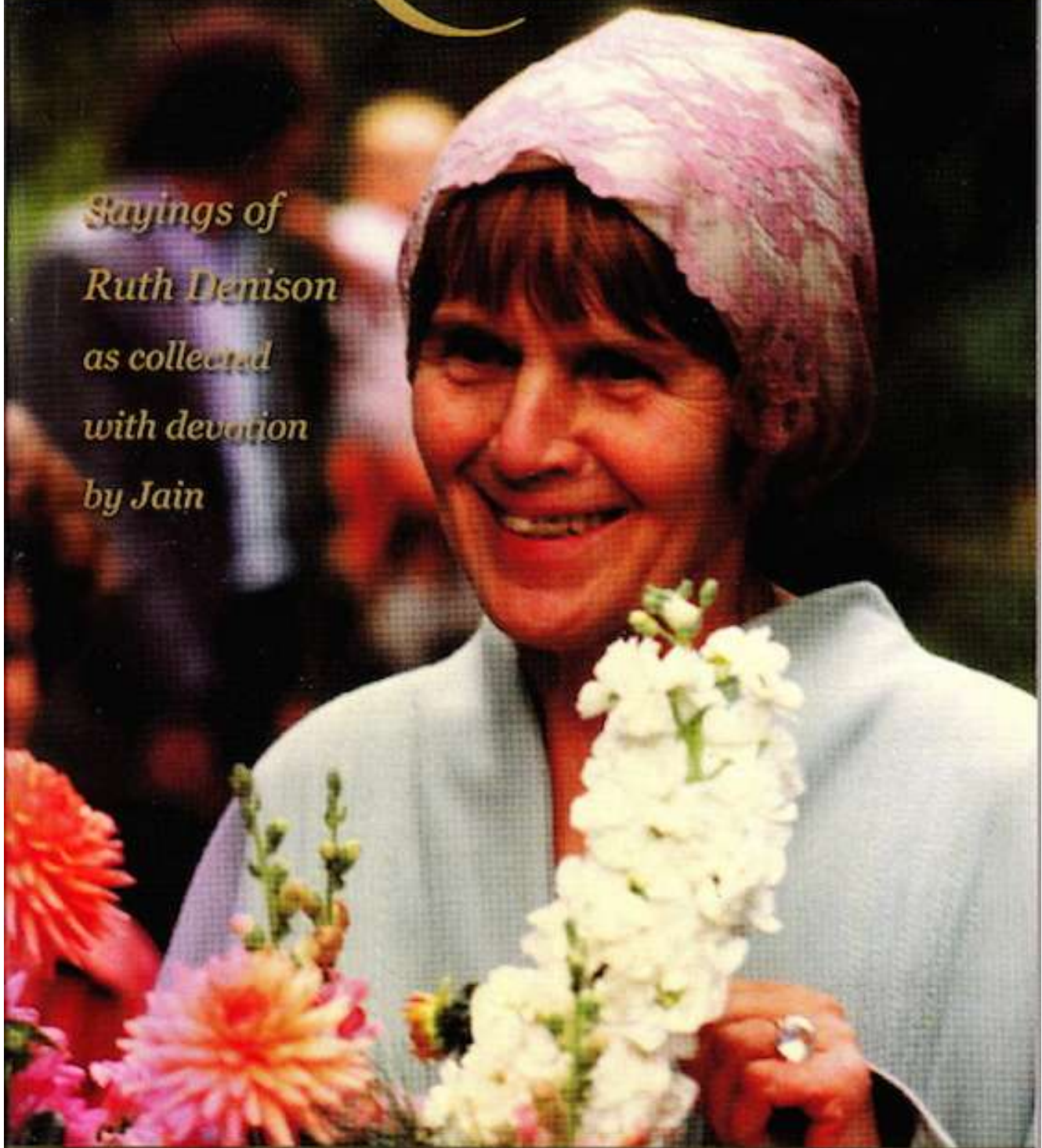
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THE BOOK of

# *Ruth*

*Sayings of  
Ruth Denison  
as collected  
with devotion  
by Jain*



THE BOOK of  
*Ruth*

The Sayings of Ruth Denison  
as collected with devotion by Jain

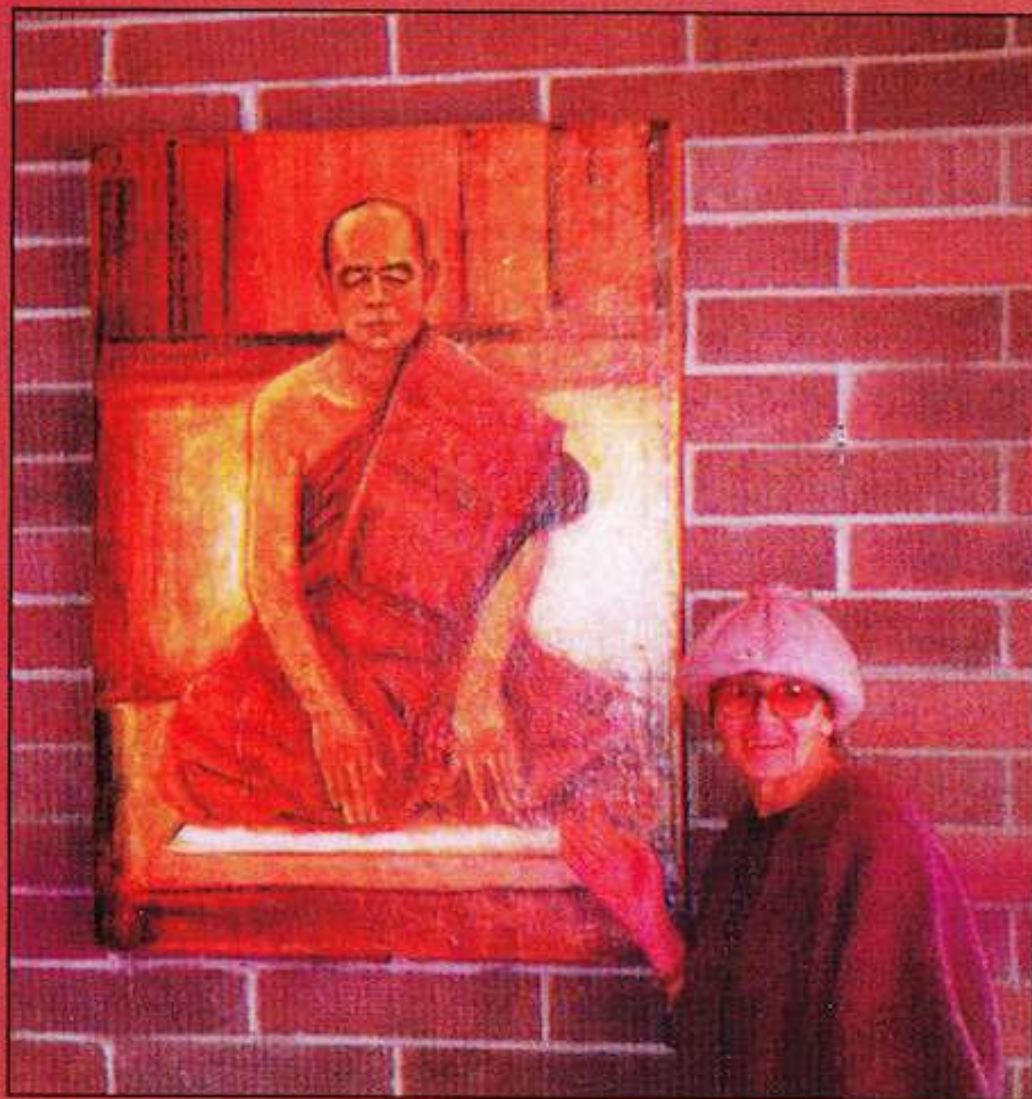
Edited by Lucinda "Treelight" Green, Ph.D.

The Book of Ruth  
Sayings of Ruth Denison  
as collected with devotion by Jain

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*To Ruth,  
In honor of your 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday!  
Dharma teacher extraordinaire*

*With deep gratitude*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Without the Buddha this book would never have been written. Without monks, nuns, lay teachers and lay people sharing the Dharma for over 2,500 years we would also not have this book.

Without Ruth Denison and her magnificent, profound, and down to earth teachings The Book of Ruth would not exist. Without ever faithful Jain taking notes upon copious notes as part of her Dharma training...Shirley Rosati working with Jain's notes...Lucinda Treelight Green reworking them, formatting them into themes... Marge Driscoll inputting myriad photographs into computer readability...unnamed photographers (you know who you are) catching Ruth's spontaneity on film...Carolyn McKnight funding the printing of this book... all of Ruth's students...Accent Photo aligning with this project... the trees which have given their lives... without this interdependent web of all sentient beings, this book would never have come to fruition.

A deep bow of gratitude to one and all, most especially to Jain for scribing Ruth's teachings and to Ruth Denison, for her life, her presence, and her embodiment of the Dharma, with her every breath, with her every step.

*May all beings be at peace.*

*May all beings be happy.*

*May all beings be free.*

Lucinda Treelight Green, Ph.D., Editor  
Colorado Springs, CO

## PREFACE

The first time I met Ruth was at IMS retreat center. Little did I realize how that encounter would alter the course of my whole life.

She came into the hall, that first evening, a small person with regal and graceful bearing. After mounting the platform, she did something she has never done since. She began to look at every single person, slowly and penetratingly, starting at the back of the hall. There were 103 people. As she looked from one to the next, an indescribable excitement began mounting within me, as I waited for her glance to fall on me, the next to last person in the front row!

When at last she looked at me, a smile filled the inside of my whole body, and I felt it spreading all over my face! It was as though I had opened a birthday present and found it contained the very thing I wanted most in all of the world! She smiled back and I could tell she was wondering who I was and where we had met before! Then she gave her opening talk and the retreat began.

As the week progressed, I was amazed at how simply, heartfully and creatively she presented the Buddha Dharma. I was even more astonished at my ability to follow and understand her teachings! I realized then, that something new was entering my life and that it was absolutely essential for me to briefly record some of the things she said that were having such an impact on me. I knew that if I didn't, I might return home remembering very little of what she had taught that week.



At home, I typed up these phrases, and then, in my best calligraphy, printed them laboriously onto cards which I studied constantly. I carried them around with me during the day and looked at them often. I pinned them up in conspicuous spots in my room and knew that this was the best way for me to begin to learn some of the material she was teaching!

Feeling tremendously compelled to be in her presence, and receive more of her incredibly clear and gentle teachings, I gradually eased myself out of my work, and began to go to as many retreats with her as I could. I continued to take notes and study them assiduously.

And so the collection of her teachings grew for me and is still growing. Some of my dharma friends saw this collection and tried to find a way to offer it to other students, but no practical or organized way was found to do this. Treelight saw it and felt Ruth should have it as a tribute to her 80th birthday, and so it is done!

I reflect constantly what a precious gift it has been to learn the dharma from Ruth, an extraordinarily skilled and gifted teacher. These past 21 years under her patient, watchful and compassionate eyes have totally changed the direction, quality and meaning of my life. They have brought me unexpected delight, satisfaction and contentment. I see her generosity, thoroughness and love of all life reflected in everything she does, from the running of her desert center, her concern for even the tiniest of plants and animals, to her devotion to all who come to her for guidance.

*Ruth, I offer you my profound gratitude, and never ending wishes for your continuing well-being. jain*

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*Mindfulness*



**THE FOUR FOUNDATIONS OF  
MINDFULNESS PROVIDE A FOCUS FOR  
THE MIND AND HELP TO CLEANSE IT.**

Observe what the mind is doing all the time. Train it.

Mindfulness allows us to see the condition of life more clearly.

See the effort required to overcome our conditioning,  
the inertia, wanting the easiest way.

Where we put our minds is in our own hands.

With mindfulness we experience life deeply.

We are usually engaged in experiences outside of ourselves  
rather than being engaged in our own aliveness.

Be open and gentle.  
Greed creates striving toward a goal.

In the midst of a difficult experience,  
take a deep breath and watch it mindfully.  
This can help you detach from the “story.”

Understanding the four foundations of Mindfulness  
changes our relationship to ourselves.

We are no longer overrun by our emotions.

Remain alert and present in the difficult times,  
maintaining an equanimous attitude.

This creates a balance  
and shelters you from karma-producing reaction.

Studying our own attitudes  
encourages us to be responsible for ourselves.

Two aspects of mindfulness  
are comprehension and attention.

Mindfulness cannot arise without an object.

We calm the mind when we take a mindful step.

The expression of affliction  
is a symptom of the untrained mind.

Transgressions are due to lack of mindfulness.  
We ask not who is wrong but what is wrong.

The most important factor of mindfulness  
is that it brings you to the present moment  
and keeps you there.

Each moment is different.  
There is a hidden jewel in every one.

Each moment has its own fulfillment  
and completes your life.

Ask this question often: "What am I doing?"

The attentive mind is without attributes—  
without thinking, judging, wanting, etc.

If you don't notice what is in the mind,  
it fills itself with negativities and turns unpleasant.

We have to watch the mind  
and see the arising of the negative tendencies  
if we want to uproot them.

When you identify with the negative you give it power.

Mindfulness cultivates wholesome qualities  
and diminishes the unwholesome ones.

*The application of mindfulness leads to joy.*







*Awareness*

---

BATHE EVERYTHING IN AN INTERESTED  
AND ATTENTIVE ATTITUDE.

Notice your own awareness  
Endless are the ways to be attentive.

Awaken to this being you are.

Watch every action and motion you do.

Simply attend.

Be open  
and accept whatever arises  
with the clarity of attention,  
without liking or disliking.

Let go of grasping. Simply open.

Awareness absorbs tension.

Seeing comes from inside to outside,  
not from outside to inside!

Notice not what you see,  
but that you are seeing.  
Seeing is occurring.

Sound and awareness meet.  
Pleasant or unpleasant arises as a result.

Witness life within you.

Not “my” life, since there is no possessor.  
Direct the observing mind  
to where the sensations are,  
to the energy field.

---

First comes the impression,  
and if that is not noticed,  
the reaction comes  
and then the thought.

Pleasant feelings  
can lead to desire and greed if  
you are not aware of the process.

If we don't notice the vedana,  
we slip into the negative.

If we don't notice the positive vedana,  
the good feelings will vanish.

Negative states  
are the outcome  
of the absence of awareness.

When the mind is not taken care of it becomes negative.

Lacking awareness of our true nature  
leads to insecurity and fear.

We react to feelings.  
Without awareness, we often act unskillfully.

To know happiness  
you have to learn what causes unhappiness.  
To become happy look at the unhappy moments!

Consciousness needs an object in order to arise.

Consciousness registers tactile experience  
and the result is knowing.

Fill the body with increased attention.

Just as the lotus grows in cool water,  
covered from roots to tips with cool water,  
fill the body with increased attention.

The tree and I are not one,  
but the energies of the tree and myself  
are the same.

Always reflect upon the intention of your actions.

Ask yourself these questions:  
What is the intent of my speech?  
My action? My decision?

We awaken from ignorance to our original self.

The opportunity to live in openness and awareness  
is always at hand.

*Allow the world to occur without you.*







# *Breath / Breathing*

## HOW CAREFULLY CAN I FEEL EACH BREATH, ONE AT A TIME?

We are not breathing, we are being breathed.

Let the breath breathe itself.

The more I allow the breath  
without manipulation,  
the more I no longer need  
to manipulate my life  
and the lives of others.

If one can stay with five consecutive breaths,  
one has a chance of losing the sense of "I."

Don't just breathe.  
Be aware of your experience of breathing.

Note the sensations arising with the breath.

Notice the breath during all your activities.  
Let this become a continuous practice.

Attention to sensations  
naturally deepens breathing.

The way we breathe can change our emotions.

Conscious breathing eases the mind  
and puts you in the present moment,  
fully in touch with life.

Awareness of breath  
is both revitalizing and healing.

Breathing in awareness  
gives me the experience of my aliveness.

Aware breathing is a joy.

Say to yourself, "breathe" for a whole hour.

Conscious breathing  
helps you contact your life.

It allows you  
to connect with what is happening  
in the present moment.

*Breath is a master teacher.  
It teaches us the natural laws of life.*







*Mind*

SINCE THE MIND IS THE FORERUNNER  
OF ALL THINGS, WE NEED TO TRAIN IT  
THROUGH AWARENESS.

Stabilize the mind  
in order to stay present.

The mind brings itself into existence.  
It cannot exist without an object.

The mind is not solid; it has qualities and functions.

Mind is misdirected consciousness.

Basic consciousness is equanimous.

The mind enlarges what is uncomfortable.

Do not accept complaining from your mind.

Mind is usually connected to clinging and craving.  
We lose much of our life energy in this way.

The conditioned mind seeks to corrupt us,  
throwing up what we call our “problems.”

The mind needs an object,  
so we give it a conscious one  
to wean it away from conditioned thinking.

We bury the fine qualities of our minds  
when we are not paying attention to this life.

Every time a state of mind is noticed,  
it helps to create distance  
and weaken the mind state.

Thinking is in us, functioning through us,  
but there is no need to identify with it.  
Hold on to the greater mind.

The mind without attention to the body  
roams around “wanting.”

The mind roams because it doesn’t like to make effort.  
Mind likes it superficial and easy.

Mind likes to establish itself again and again in thoughts.  
Use labeling to soften this.

Mind is the troublemaker, not you!

We become dissatisfied because of our thoughts.

Everything the mind can comprehend is dhamma.

It is hard for the conditioned mind  
to be challenged.

We need a refined mind  
to discover our deceptions  
and recognize our misunderstandings.

The unattended mind is dangerous.

The unobserved mind is dangerous.  
It has no rules, is shameless, insensitive, brutal and egotistic.

It is only when the mind is open that change can occur.

When you think something is lovely or touching,  
it is because the mind became quiet and balanced.

When we know our own mind  
we know the mind of others.

We have two minds always running:  
the conditioned and the one which is intuitive and aware.

Allow the mind to come to deep quiet  
and lose its conditioning.

When we use the breath  
to quiet the mind,  
craving ceases.

Let the silence of your mind  
receive the energy of the body.

Calm moments open the mind  
to more patience and forgiveness.

When the mind is quiet,  
interest and joy have a place to arise.

*When the mind sees what is true  
it becomes quiet.*







# *Thoughts / Thinking*

WE THINK THAT WE ARE THINKING,  
BUT THINKING IS IMPERSONAL.

Thoughts are mental functions;  
they form themselves.

Thoughts are energies.  
They activate physical energies.

Don't let thinking  
rob you of your experiences.

Our practice gives us a way  
to relate to our thoughts.

We want to become aware of our thoughts  
so that we can determine if they are useful or not.

Too many thoughts and bad attitudes  
give us unpleasant feelings.  
Then we react to them and become defensive.

We become dissatisfied  
because of our thoughts.

Thoughts create a split between mind and body.

Ask this question:  
Which of my attitudes  
is undermining my life?

We are an apparatus for the five senses.  
Do not suffer from that.  
Awaken to it and step out of the ignorant life  
of being dominated by thoughts.

Thinking takes place  
when we don't observe the body.  
The mind has not got clarity, is not empty.

Noticing sensations eradicates thinking.

Thinking does not stop because we want it to.  
Thoughts arise on their own.  
Keep reminding yourself of this:  
come back and make a new beginning.

Talk to your consciousness.  
Invite it to take another focus  
instead of contaminating you  
and itself with negative thoughts.

Do not think of thoughts as disturbing;  
they are part of the human condition.  
Learn to discern when thinking  
is poisoning or distracting the mind  
and when thinking is a conscious act.

*Drop into a non-verbal level;  
let the thought go  
and come to a deep quiet.*









# *The Practice*

## MEDITATION CAN BE SEEN AS THE CRAFT OF LIFE.

The aim of insight meditation  
is to discover who we are.

We train to let go  
and look into our being.

Vipassana is geared toward  
understanding and transformation

We meditate to notice the effect  
of the mind on the body.  
It is not an easy practice.  
Quite a lot of acceptance is needed  
and not having aversion.

There is a great aversion  
to being close to oneself.

This practice is not about getting rid of  
whatever is unwelcome;  
rather it is about opening  
to whatever arises.

Meditation is not a search for something;  
rather it is a journey of opening  
to discover what is here.

We are training to let go of our conditioning  
and come to greater balance and purity.



Accept the ‘rainy days’ in our practice.  
The unpleasant feelings.

If the attention is slipping away,  
pay more attention to the object,  
to the sensations of the body.

Develop patience and compassion with difficulties,  
and a love for your practice.

Success is marked  
by increased sustained concentration,  
more penetrative concentration.

When you concentrate you discover more.

In silence we are able to see  
what the conditioned mind  
throws into our consciousness.

The way you approach your sitting  
has enormous impact and significance  
on your sitting.

You don't need to go looking for the deepest insights.  
Just sit – calmly and quietly—  
and the insights will come of themselves,  
sometimes after you have finished sitting.

Our hours spent in meditation  
are the greatest threat to the little “me.”

Deep calm allows intuitive understanding to arise.

Interest comes with deeper practice.

There is always a hidden jewel  
in each meditation session,  
whether it is recognized or not.  
Even a negative result,  
if watched and recognized,  
is a hidden jewel.

We are dedicating ourselves  
to look deeply at dukkha,  
to heal,  
with deep sincerity,  
dedication and faith.

We investigate our lives out of compassion.

Vipassana requires applying awareness  
to all aspect of our lives.

Sitting is necessary  
in order to gain the skill  
of meeting life  
with openness and wisdom.

Take refuge in the Buddha:  
surrender to the practice  
that develops the enlightened mind.

Dhamma = law of the truth.  
Be grateful for the Dhamma.  
Be in love with the Dhamma.

Sangha = those who share the efforts  
of the practice with me.

The teaching is powerful  
because we come to live the truth.

The path and the practice are the same.

*The outcome of this practice is a loving, boundless heart.*





*Working with the  
Mind/Body Process*

## CHERISH THIS BODY AS A VEHICLE FOR PURIFYING YOUR MIND.

Body is a backdrop to all sense experiences.

If we pay attention to the body,  
we will automatically train the mind.

Ask yourself the question:  
“What is going on in this body at this moment?”

The body is a wonderful vehicle for watching suffering.

Don't complain. Notice the vedana.\*

Complaining wants attention and sympathy.

When you are ill,  
you can reflect upon what you are feeling  
rather than complain.

Avoid pity, rejection and unhappiness  
about physical symptoms.  
The power of concentration heals.

Accept the truth  
that there is no security  
in living in a human body.

*\*Vedana refers to pleasant, unpleasant or  
neither pleasant nor unpleasant.*



When you sweep the body with your attention,  
you touch different stored emotions  
and then you can take responsibility for them.

Mind learns to let go in a sweep;  
it learns not to reject,  
but to notice and move on.  
It gives up reacting.

It is much easier to be “out there”  
than to stay with the body.

There is a sense of separation  
when you don’t connect and sense purely.

Shifting our awareness  
into body sensations  
relieves painful moments.

Watch carefully  
the beginning  
of every movement.

We can overcome fatigue  
by paying attention to posture.

Increase awareness to body behavior.

Your “story” falls away  
when you stay close  
to bodily sensations.  
Staying close  
encourages steadiness of mind.

---

Little ‘check-ups” in different areas  
can calm small striving and cravings.

The process is difficult  
because it challenges our laziness.

We mistreat the body  
when we scream for a remedy  
to take away the pain.

For pain, work with the throat.  
If that is blocked,  
the breath cannot get through  
to help release the pain.

Let the fire burn  
and just watch it.  
We want more and better.

Learn to accept in humility.  
Watch the arising  
and how you deal with it.

We need nothing from outside,  
only something from inside.  
Conscious awareness.

Experience discomfort as movement of energy.  
Resistance is unwillingness.

You can feel resistance.  
No need to give in to it.

---

We are reactive to information  
brought to us through our senses.  
It is an impersonal process.

We begin to appreciate ourselves more  
when we watch the breath  
and the ensuing sensations of the body  
with acceptance.

Eat up your own impurities  
gathered from various lifetimes.  
Manifest the teaching  
and develop awareness.

We are vessels  
through which energy and consciousness  
pour in from the outside,  
not separate from others,  
who are also vessels.

There is a feeling of groundedness  
when mind connects with body.

A happy mind that notices the body  
can release traces of tension, illness and discontent.

When mind connects on a subtle level to the life force,  
we lose the need to get rid of something.

Be always open to surprises. The body has its own laws.

Being here now doesn't mean in time,  
rather it means being aware  
of the mind/body process.

Recognizing the elements of earth, water, fire and air,  
give us a chance to separate ourselves  
from the concept of "my body."

It is natural to feel a bit let down  
after an exciting moment.  
Notice that it is "low tide"  
and notice the feeling in the body.  
Then the low tide cannot overrun you.

Get rid of negative states  
by bringing the mind to the body  
and what it is doing –  
exercising, washing dishes, walking, etc.

Use all bodily movements for awareness practice:  
hanging laundry, a hand on a doorknob,  
fingers on the ignition key, etc.

The mouth is there for smiling.

As you listen to a Dharma talk, refer to your body.

Offer the body as purification for the mind.

We are not the proprietors of this body.  
Watch it flow like a river.

*Gather this body once again  
in the embrace of your awareness.*







## OUR WHOLE LIFE HINGES ON FEELINGS AND REACTIONS.

It is those feelings that we do not see clearly  
which rule our lives.

Emotions are thoughts  
in combination with feelings.

Feelings rock and rule our lives.  
They are the birthplace of much unhappiness.

Emotions are extremely overvalued states of mind  
which bring pleasant or unpleasant feelings.

We are afraid of our own intense responses.

We react to feelings.  
Without awareness we often act unskillfully.

Fighting with feelings  
is not the skillful way to deal with them.

The subtlest feeling of aversion unbalances us.

The derivation of hate is fear.

Fear creates imbalance in the energies of the body.

We withdraw in anticipation of pain and fear.  
We fear feeling pain due to unwillingness  
to experience the unpleasant.  
When we work with fear  
we open up to this understanding.  
Fear contracts and causes resistance.  
It stops us from opening up to what is  
and being accepting.

Allow yourself to experience the fear.  
Know that it is okay for it to be there.  
Locate it in the body.

Fear is a signal that there is danger.

We don't have to push away  
painful or unpleasant feelings.  
Pain, fear, and sickness  
become more solid when we reject them.

When crying pay attention to the feelings of crying.  
Feel your body and connect with the sensations.  
Let the past come. Have no regrets.  
Right now you are here.  
Listen to the silence.  
Draw air into the lungs.

There is effort involved in feeling sad,  
and even more in depression.  
We need to cultivate attention  
in order to catch it before it develops.

Reflect on the source of the sadness.

Feel the pain, the thoughts  
and sense the effects of the reaction.

Deep insecurities  
give rise to doubt and hesitation.

We are afraid of being insecure, of being unsafe.  
The only security we can find  
is in living the dharma.

Anger is associated with a group of thoughts.

When you become angry,  
you become anger.

We fear anger because we don't trust ourselves.

When we are angry  
we feel guilty, unspiritual  
and this causes feelings of isolation.  
We must bring an open heart  
to our anger and hatred.

If we don't pay attention to anger  
it perpetuates itself, escalates,  
and continues into the next moment.

The person you are angry at  
is acting out of his own karmic necessity.  
Open your heart in compassion.

Anxiety arises when existential questions  
cannot be answered.

They cannot be answered intellectually.

Reacting to emotion and body sensation  
prevents our enlightenment.

Every emotion leaves a trace in the body.

Allow feelings.

Observe their impact on the body,  
but do not act on them.

Always find out where your feelings or moods come from.

What thought gave rise to this emotion?

All our behavior hinges on feelings.

If we cannot handle the emotions  
we fall victim to them.

Emotions are subtler than the hindrances.

Being spiritual means  
purifying the emotions from the mind.

Emotions lead to reactions,  
which could be harmful.

If you don't catch irritation when it arises,  
it turns into anger.

Anger becomes rage  
and then it becomes an act.

The way I feel determines how I will act  
in the next minute.

---

We have the opportunity  
to learn about feelings  
without reacting to them.  
It is the only doorway through which  
we can step out of ignorance.

Happiness comes from opening up to the pain  
and seeing what is true.

Remorse is a useful emotion  
because its message is:  
Something needs to be corrected.

When we look at our feelings  
we create distance.  
Then we can see the situation more clearly  
and act more skillfully.

Noticing the flow of the breath  
without interference  
can calm upset feelings.

*Let us learn to deal with our feelings  
with equanimity and composure.*







*Desire*

## DESIRES INDICATE DISSATISFACTION WITH WHAT IS IN THE MOMENT.

Desire governs our lives.

Desires keep us restless  
and stop us from experiencing the present moment.

Desire always puts you into the future  
and produces tension – dukkha.

A sense of the imminence of death can reduce desire.  
How much will the fulfillment of this desire  
mean at the moment of my death?

Desire is directed to a place outside of ourselves  
and therefore draws us out of our bodies  
and out of the moment.

“If you are my little dish of ice cream,  
then I’ll love you.”

Desires arise from a sense of isolation.

Desire seeks to gratify one of the senses.

Desire is not brought to a halt  
even with gratification.

Desire can be unawareness.

Feeling gives way to craving and desires  
-- wanting to have, wanting to get rid of.

Feeling discouraged  
means there is a desire  
for something else.

Stress comes from unfulfilled desires.

How often does a desire occur during a sitting?  
Take a focus that is not a desire.  
Concentrating on a field of the body  
will weaken a desire.

Desire exists in every unpurified mind.

Desire is closely connected to the life force  
which wants to continue to exist.

*You can transform desire with compassion  
by having a non-reactive response.*





# *Hindrances*



## THE FIVE HINDRANCES ARE

- 1) desire
- 2) anger, hatred and ill-will
- 3) sloth and torpor
- 4) restlessness, worry, and anxiety
- 5) skeptical doubt

The hindrances cannot be dealt with  
until they are recognized.

Do not disturb the hindrance.  
Look at it and watch it pass, or it will disturb you.  
When you look at a hindrance it loses its impact.

Recognizing the hindrances  
prevents being controlled by them.

Sloth and torpor cover up other emotions.

Doubt is a feeling, a resistance, a fear,  
a fear of making effort.

Doubt says, 'It's too difficult, I can't do it.'  
It comes from a string of thoughts.

Conflicts are doubts and cause suffering.

Doubt = unwillingness, resistance.  
Doubt urges us to stop the practice.

Going through doubt can lead to transformation.

There is ordinary doubt and great doubt.  
Great doubt serves as a springboard for investigation.

As hindrances arise,  
understand that they are dangerous and disturbing.  
Feel the urgency not to let them influence you  
and drop them immediately.  
Redirect the mind. Connect to the body.  
Label the hindrance.  
Where is it located in the body?  
Labeling weakens the hindrances.  
Name a hindrance when it arises.  
What is the desire?  
How does it feel in the body?  
What is the impact of the mental state on the body?  
What part of the body?  
Working in this way with the hindrance  
means you might not have to act on it.

There is a great delight  
in transforming a hindrance,  
through registering it and naming it.

We have to let go of our old habits  
and that means working with the hindrances.  
We have to sit quietly and face them.

Move to a place within yourself  
free from the hindrances.

If you don't recognize the hindrances in yourself,  
you will see and criticize them in others.

Hindrances occur only in the absence of awareness.

Quiet reflections are not possible  
when the hindrances are controlling the mind.

Doubt arises in the body  
and its energies are felt physically.  
The hindrances will arise again and again.  
Through our practice  
we become more skillful  
in working with them.

We need to observe our hindrances deeply  
and open up to our part in them,  
gain clarification and compassion  
and become free again  
from that burden.

Recognition of a hindrance  
causes it to lose its potency.

Be aware of the hindrances and work with them.  
Sustain balance by staying non-reactive.

The aim is to be conscious of the hindrances  
but unaffected by them.

Even great saints have hindrances.  
However, they just let them come and go  
and are not involved with them.

Allow the hindrances to coexist.  
Mindfulness will deal with them.

Find a little joy in working with the hindrances.  
It is your life.

Hindrances are impersonal forces and  
mindfulness stops you from acting on them.

Working with the hindrances  
can lead to seeing impermanence.

We strengthen ego  
and build up the "I"  
by identifying with the hindrances.

The hindrances  
are evidence of my conditioning:  
they are not myself.

*The hindrances are not ourselves,  
rather they are impermanent,  
impersonal mental functions.*









# *The Precepts*

**I UNDERTAKE THE WAY OF TRAINING  
TO REFRAIN FROM TAKING LIFE.**

**I undertake the way of training  
to refrain from taking what's not given.**

**I undertake the way of training  
to refrain from false speech.**

**I undertake the way of training  
to refrain from sexual misconduct.**

**I undertake the way of training  
to refrain from drugs and alcohol,  
which are a cause of carelessness.**

The precepts are meant to protect us  
from unwholesome deeds.

You have to become aware of the wrong things you do,  
before you can do the right things.

If you really understand, you smile  
when you see someone else transgressing.  
You know that he cannot do better.

You cannot rest peacefully in your mind  
if you are immoral or harmful.

*Morality is an expression of no-self:  
not doing anything harmful.*





*Dukkha, Anicca  
and Anatta*

## DUKKHA

Dukkha is the pain of wanting things to be different,  
other than they are.

Suffering is the result of unpleasant feelings.

Suffering comes from feeling the unpleasant,  
wanting things to be other than they are,  
and then pushing away the unpleasant.

We push things away because they feel unpleasant.  
Experience discomfort as movement of energy.

Right Understanding starts with understanding dukkha —  
dissatisfaction with ourselves and others.

When we accept dukkha, compassion arises.

The key to wisdom  
is to get deeply in touch with dukkha.  
Then the selfless nature of our being emerges.

My dukkha creates dukkha for others.

We don't know how to shed dukkha so we blame others.

See how we create dukkha and how we shed it.

Bow to the difficulties of the day.  
Feel and accept the dukkha and the discomfort.

Looking at dukkha is painful, but actually  
it is an act of kindness towards ourselves.



—  
If you don't look at dukkha,  
it will continue to bother you.

As soon as things become difficult  
we have the tendency to turn away in aversion.

We don't want to look at dukkha,  
others or our own.

We turn away  
and spend a lot of energy avoiding it.

We suffer when we are not affirmed.

Dukkha is always where you are.

We can't erase dukkha;  
we can only change our attitude towards it.

Connect and stay with what seems to be hurtful,  
threatening or unpleasant,  
no matter how painful or humiliating.

Dukkha is always there  
when mindfulness has been forgotten.

Second-hand aliveness comes  
from feeling self-righteous  
about old incidents of pain or abuse.

Needing to be right  
is a tremendous source of suffering.

Attachment to opinions and defending them  
is a great source of dukkha.



Moving out of ourselves  
and looking for something outside of ourselves  
is the cause of suffering.

We expect that our partner will totally fulfill us.

When feeling, "I want something  
that makes me feel loved and not lonely,"  
remember, I don't need any other mind to love me.

If you don't acknowledge the pleasant, it disappears  
and the unpleasant takes its place.

There is a tacit assumption among human beings  
that nothing should be unpleasant.  
This assumption is the cause of much dukkha.

We have to learn to become comfortable  
with the harsh and unhappy experiences in our lives.

Pain is part of life.  
We experience it because we were born into this world.

We have settled into patterns with which we are comfortable  
and then we wonder why we are dissatisfied.

When you cannot understand life correctly  
it increases the dukkha.

What gave you pain, also comes from pain,  
a desire to rid be of that pain,  
by pushing it onto someone else.

Having felt your own pain deeply,  
you can feel the pain of others.

Allow yourself to see the pain of the other,  
the one who is throwing his pain onto you.

Dukkha only goes away  
with our practice of seeing the truth  
beneath the superficial.

*The greatest cause of pain is that we are alive.*

## ANICCA

The Buddha refers to human beings  
as rivers of constant movement,  
and change,  
arising and passing away.

Realize that all objects of sense desires  
are impermanent.  
They arise in the consciousness  
and pass away.

The deep understanding of impermanence  
shows us that there is nothing to grasp.

When you deeply understand impermanence,  
something transforms in you.

What do we value most  
in this life of impermanence?  
Is it worth identifying with that?  
What is more real and enduring?

What is impermanent needn't be clung to.  
Understanding this relieves suffering.

*Nothing is forever.  
Understanding this removes delusion.*

## ANATTA

We empower the ego with concepts.  
We are only a process of consciousness and energy.

Consciousness moves through the sense organs.  
No Self is involved.

See the “me”  
as an unfolding flux of feelings.

Any view of self is wrong view.

There is no personality, no entity,  
which governs or lets this process live.

*Losing the sense of “I”  
is a tremendous accomplishment.*





*Metta*



METTA = ABSENCE OF HATRED  
AND THE PRESENCE OF GOOD DEEDS  
AND RIGHT ACTION.

How can you love yourself  
if you continue to desert yourself?

Metta is not only for a few good friends whom we like  
and who are helpful,  
but also for the ones that don't please us.

Is there somebody you haven't forgiven  
due to some slight or injury?

Reciting the Metta Sutta  
is a lovely way to start a day.  
Memorize it so that it is always with you.

Chanting metta after meditation  
is very effective

Sweeping through the body with awareness  
is a form of metta for yourself.

Metta is a prescription  
that we have to deeply internalize,  
like medicine.

---

Metta replaces old or negative thoughts,  
tendencies or actions,  
and creates wholesome states of being.

Action comes from thought.  
Say metta phrases three times daily.

May I be kind to my difficulties.

May I be free from judgment.

May I be safe from my own mind.

May my metta accompany my actions.

*May all beings find what reduces their suffering.*

## METTA SUTTA

This is what should be done  
By one who is skilled in goodness  
And who knows the path of peace.  
Let them be able and upright,  
Straightforward and gentle in speech.  
Humble and not conceited,  
Contented and easily satisfied.  
Unburdened with duties and frugal in their ways.  
Peaceful and calm and wise and skillful.  
Not proud and demanding in nature.  
Let them not do the slightest thing  
That the wise would later reprove.  
Wishing: in gladness and in safety,  
May all beings be at ease.  
Whatever living beings there may be,  
Whether they are weak or strong, omitting none,  
The great or the mighty, medium, short or small,  
The seen and the unseen,  
Those living near and far away,  
Those born and to be born –  
May all beings be at ease.

Let none deceive another,  
Or despise any being in any state.  
Let none through anger or ill-will  
Wish harm upon another.  
Even as a mother protects with her life  
Her child, her only child,  
So with a boundless heart,  
Should one cherish all living beings.  
Radiating kindness over the entire world,  
Spreading upwards to the skies,  
And downwards to the depths.  
Outwards and unbounded,  
Freed from hatred and ill-will.  
Whether standing or walking, seated or lying down  
Free from drowsiness;  
One should sustain this recollection.  
This is said to be the sublime abiding.  
By not holding to fixed views,  
The pure-hearted one, having clarity of vision,  
Being freed from all sense desires,  
Is not born again into this world.







*Wisdom*

CONGRATULATIONS!  
YOU HAVE SURVIVED  
TO EMBRACE ANOTHER DAY!  
SEE THAT YOU USE IT WISELY.

Awakening begins with right understanding.  
What do I really want and value most in my life?

Wisdom = seeing dukkha,  
impermanence and the absence of self.

What is love? Commitment to something you value.

Hope involves listening to ideas,  
instead of being present in the moment with what is.

Hope carries us into the future  
and takes energy away from the present.

When you live in the present, there is no future.

Patience allows you to listen to others  
without arrogance or a wish to dominate.

Impatience is born of expectation.  
We are often insensitive in our expectations of others.

As we develop insight  
we begin to see the absurdity  
in which we allow ourselves to live.

Use love and good will to shift thoughts  
and let go of rigid view.

Enjoy your weaknesses  
when you discover them.

If you are not patient with your failures,  
you cannot correct them.  
Take your failures and weaknesses gracefully.  
Have compassion for your failures.

Wait until the storm has died down  
before straightening out  
the upset with another.

We are always vulnerable to the negative  
and accessible to the positive.

The subtler you become,  
the less effort you need to expend.

Do not involve yourself in what is not necessary.  
The future depends on how you are living this minute.

Don't follow your heart.  
Retrain it  
and then follow it.

Sometimes you have to step back and understand,  
instead of being understood.  
It is then that you contribute  
to peace in the world.

Being unforgiving  
is an element of wishing to do harm.  
Accept what you cannot forgive.

Take care of yourself  
so that you do not become harmful to others.

Be careful not to strengthen the energies of inertia.

Generosity encourages the quality of compassion.

We are simply an assembling of universal elements.

We don't exist for ourselves, but for all beings.

One value of relationships is to deepen your compassion  
and to awaken your ability to deal with aversion,  
with things you would rather not deal.

We look outside of ourselves  
for what cannot be found there.

There is no right partner  
until you have the right partnership with yourself.

Third noble truth: don't run away. It can be healed.

All of our small anxieties are covering up the big fear of death.

There is a sense of shallowness and separation  
when you don't go deeply into all experiences.

When you don't live in the truth,  
things go wrong.

You experience shallowness and isolation.  
This comes from the deception of partial understanding  
and sustains our insecurity.

I am the experience of the universe.  
Consciousness creates the experience, not "I".

Life is on - the - job training.  
The longest distance between two points  
is between the word and the action.

Oh, what joy, to have discovered  
there is no lasting happiness  
in this life.

Can I let go of the desire to be certain?  
It is not our problems that cause us to suffer,  
but our misunderstanding of them.

You do not have a problem.  
The problem has you!

The busy world is necessary.  
Do not scorn it; simply learn to reduce the stress.  
Be less affected by what the world brings you.

We cannot change the world,  
but we can change our own attitude.

Life is not outside of you,  
but is within your senses and consciousness.

Deep quiet opens the intuition,  
which reveals the truth of our lives.



Small moments of understanding  
contribute to our awakening.

At the moment of enlightenment you are neither gender.

“Dispel the darkness.”

We are born with concentration  
but we misuse this power.

We sometimes realize profound truths during rituals.

Always acknowledge beginnings and endings.

We are living in the results.  
The wise one knows the causes.

Intellectualism cannot bring about wisdom in a genuine way.  
The answers to existential questions  
are directly discovered  
in and through ourselves.

Ignorance cannot accept wisdom.  
Wisdom can accept ignorance.

You are just the host for life.

We are the flow of natural laws.

The elements within ourselves  
like to meet the ones outside in nature.

Be like the sun that shines,  
whether anyone appreciates it or not.

Interrupt the doing with non-doing.  
Non-doing does not strive in any direction.  
Contentment is part of the enlightened mind.  
Equanimity is a mark of enlightenment,  
living in deep harmony.  
You are void of expectation  
when you are in a state of wonderment.  
Bring about in yourself  
what you would like to see in others.  
We long to be free  
but don't know how to achieve it.  
Our original nature is always present,  
we just have to uncover it.  
The solution lies in our own hearts,  
not in changing conditions.  
Only change in attitude  
brings about change in our lives.  
We are endowed with everything we need  
to help ourselves.  
Our happiness or unhappiness  
is the result of our actions.  
Actions have consequences.  
Prior to action is intention.

If we had been born enlightened,  
we would not have needed to be born.  
Since we were born,  
we have a job to do.

It is a great privilege  
to have been born a human being.

There is no goal,  
just a process of awakening.

*Let wisdom be your constant companion.*

















◀ Midnight Cereus  
cactus opening to  
bloom for 24 hours!

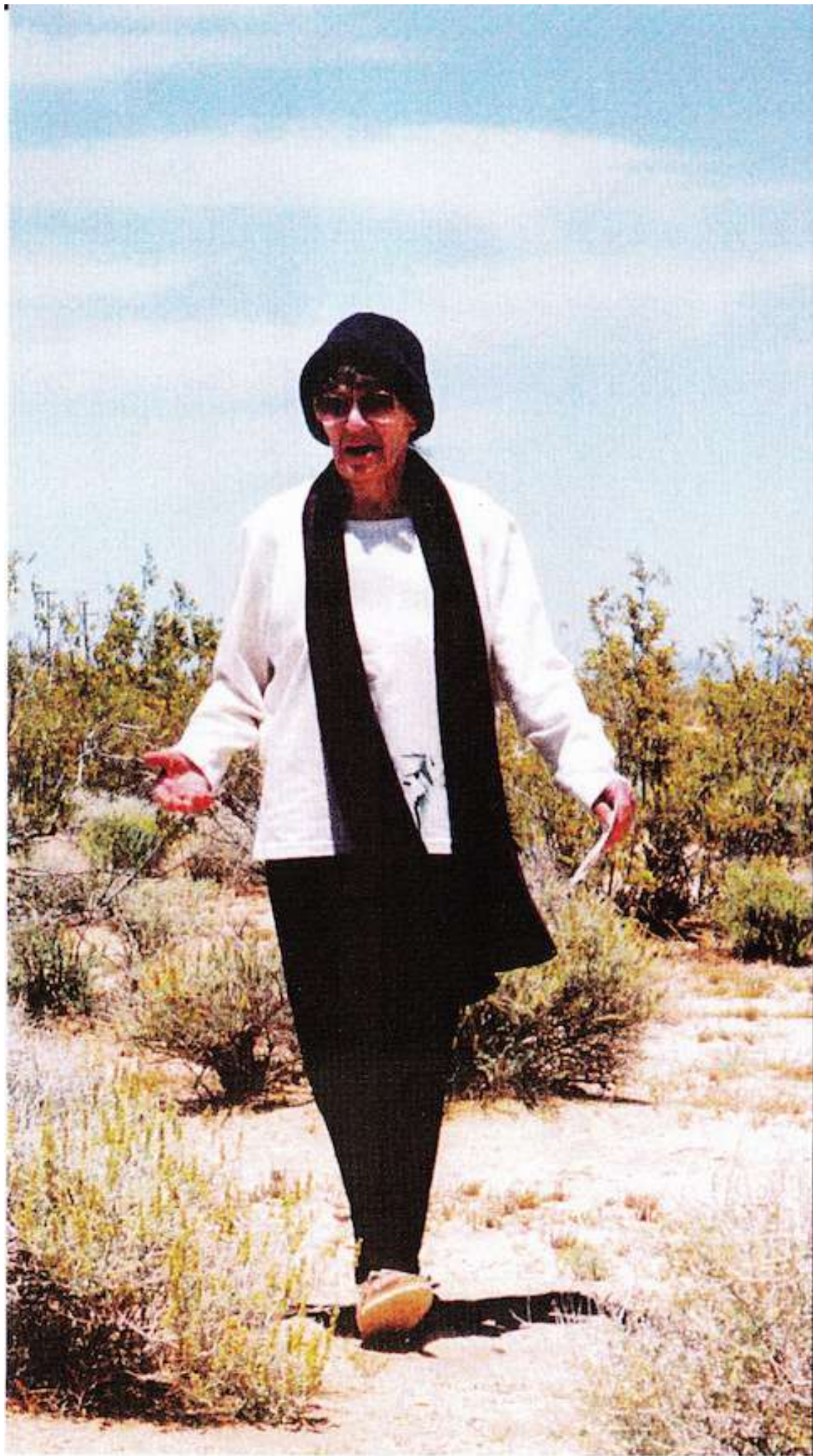
My own cultivation  
after 10 years! May 02  
▼













*Gate, Gate*  
Go/go/go

*Para Gate*  
Go with more attention

*Para Samgate*  
Go Go more precisely

*Bodhi Swaha*  
To create the foundation  
of your enlightenment

**KUANYIN**







All beings and the Lord of Death  
May they receive the Blessings of my practice.



Time and again students will share their discovery of how this mindfulness has changed or enriched or added to their lives...sometimes even saved their lives. Experiencing those changes nourishes my own practice and at same time it strengthens my dedication and commitment to offer the Buddha's teachings (as far as I am able) to those who come, as well as my promise to constantly refine its method that can offer so many insights daily.





*Congratulations!*

*You have survived to embrace another day.*

*See that you use it wisely!*

RUTH DENISON

Ruth is the founder and resident teacher of Dhamma Dena Desert Vipassana Center in Joshua Tree, California. She is the first generation of women teachers of Vipassana in the West, and has been teaching at Insight Meditation Society in Barre, MA. since its inception in 1976.

Born in Prussia in 1922, she was a schoolteacher who had to evacuate her homeland during World War II. Later she came to the U.S. where she met and married her husband Henry, with whom during the 1960's, she traveled extensively in Asia studying meditation. Among others, Ruth trained with Yasutani Roshi in Japan.

In Burma she practiced at Mahasi Sayadaw's monastery, and went on to study with U Bha Khin, who became her teacher. He "ordained" four or five students and Ruth was the only woman.

Upon return to the States, the Denison household in Hollywood CA. served as a center for spiritual investigation, hosting such luminaries as Alan Watts, Fritz Perls, and Lama Govinda.

In the early 1970's Ruth began teaching in Switzerland, France, England, Germany, Spain, Norway and Sweden, establishing Vipassana in Europe. In 1977, she purchased a cabin on five acres outside of Joshua Tree, California, to use as a personal retreat; her students followed her there, it began to grow, and evolved into a retreat center, which now serves as Ruth's home.

Ruth Denison has a unique and provocative teaching style, unparalleled by any other. As did the Buddha, Ruth asks us to wake up, be mindful, aware, and clearly comprehend life as it is, with an open heart and a clear mind.