

TEARS OF AMIDA'S COMPASSION



by

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ALMOST WASTED

Throughout life Amida called,
Sent messengers to beckon
Teachers to open heart and mind
So mired in seas of ignorance
Like a recalcitrant child
Who takes wicked delight in confusion.
Suffering becomes ego
Ego is suffering.
To have called The Name
And been embraced by Light -
The mind opens and comprehends
The dark useless dross that
This life has been.
So grateful for Amida's compassion
To never give up.
This spirit now soars
With gratitude and purpose
This life not wasted.
Namo Amida Butsu,
Namo Amida Butsu,
Namo Amida Butsu

I AM SPIRIT

I am spirit

I am the breath

That touches you

On a summer's day

I am the peace

You find

After your heart has been broken.

I am the calm

That embraces

When all else has crumbled.

I am the energy

Of years of goodness

Gone before your heart began beating.

I am the rain

That soaks the parched earth.

I am the sun that

Warms your soul

When you say my name.

I am the arms

That lift you up and guide you

To the other shore.

Just say my name

And my spirit is yours.

Just say my name

And darkness is no longer.

I call, I beckon,

Just say my name.

Namu Amida Butsu

THE HOMECOMING

The wondrous power that embraces my being,
Truth is everywhere,
The water I drink, the air I breathe,
A great love descends and there is peace.
The gentle power with the strength of steel becomes
A bridge over treacherous chasms,
A fragrant garden, inviting one to quietude,
A warm and brilliant light guiding one home.
How many times have I travelled between birth and death?
How many wounds suffered, tears shed,
Before finally arriving here
Where your name was heard
And the soothing power in your voice called.
Awakening profound compassion... always there,
But buried beneath the rubble of the world.
Tears of sorrow now become tears of joy,
A wandering heart, can finally rest.
Namu Amida Butsu

THE BODHICHITTA MIND

Call not 'just is' adversity
But lessons for our gain
So I may feel for one and all
The presence of their pain
That we may feel the world over
The power of Your love
And carry on with heartfelt thanks
The things You taught us of
For when I find their pain is mine,
Their joy and laughter too,
I'll know my heart is on the path
Of treasures great and new
And so, sorrow, yes hardship,
Come visit me at will
So I may be a warrior
My life be Your's until
A great awakening of heart and mind
Will sweep this world of pain
And all will see the Other side,
A Pure Land with Dharma Rain.
Call not 'just is' a sorrow
For through it I will find
A way to touch my inner place,
My Bodhichitta Mind.

WHY NOW

A life lived of happiness, sorrow, love and partings,

But always with a seeking heart.

Waiting, waiting, the time will be right

Teachers, places, abilities

Swirl into a vortex

Lifting, caring, guiding.

This moment in time

Birthered by circumstance, but

Acted upon by a recognition

Far beyond a cellular level.

Feet matching footprints

Made many years ago

Walking to the beat of a drum

That plays so resoundingly--

A heartbeat felt underwater

Muffled, steady, in time becoming

The only thing you can hear.

Your very existence wraps around

This universal pulse

For there is no other recourse

The karma has been lived

The players are assembled

The cause has been given,

Why now? Now is the moment.

BE STILL, BE QUIET

Be still, be quiet,
Seek with a pure heart
And you will be guided
Hard questions simply asked
Allows the Dharma Wheel
To spin with clarity
Above all else, endeavour.
As we live in a dream
There is nothing here.
Feelings to pass through -
Nothing more.
Stumbling blocks are just that -
Shapes we invent in our mind
That can be dismantled
And made into stairs
To climb to loftier heights.
Be still, be quiet
You are surrounded!
Endeavour, you will be guided
This is the time -
All else before has led you here
Open your heart and allow your self
To become one.
We await.

TURN OFF THE NOISE

Turn off the noise and listen
To the Dharma rain.
Hear that strong but quiet voice
Which will nullify the pain.
Give thanks to all enlightened teachers
Who have shown the way
And shone the light upon the path
With all they had to say.
Shake hands with your sorrow,
Become its closest friend,
For then you will be able
To truly understand.
Turn off the noise and listen -
If you do the voice is there,
You only have to call The Name
And your karma He will bear.
I have heard His voice so clearly
So long ago, so plain.
Yet it took a lifetime to turn down the noise
And hear the Dharma rain.

NEVER ALONE (A SONG OF JOY)

In beauty I am surrounded by softness, gentleness
Merged into one with infinite grace and wisdom.
Loneliness like a shadow, following throughout many lifetimes
Is dispelled by light, for how can one be lonely,
When one is never alone.

This truth, this dharma of infinite love becomes experiential
For seekers true of heart, heeding a call of untold eons,
It unfolds gently.

In shinjin lay compassionate humility
That slips in quietly, finding a home within truth and sincerity.
Those karmic seeds, planted untold ages ago
Now come alive with a vibrancy that rocks my being
What amazing blessings have been received -
To understand!

This dharma voice now yearns to sing in gentle harmony
A chorus of morning song to awaken, awaken the sister souls
Directing toward the path of moonlit love, again to walk
In troubled times the darkness found before the dawn.
But never alone ... never alone.

The infinite light that lights the heavens, allows no shadows
Needs no augmentation - all is revealed at the end of the path
And with need for nothing, my dharma voice will sing
A quiet song of love.

THE SURPRISE SYMPHONY

Our past, oh such power is given unto it
Each memory chronicled and examined
Daily, sometimes hourly
Endowing it with the power to draw us back
Each time a new chapter needs to be written,
Or re-written....
It stays with us, like a shadow
Dogging your every move
We cannot erase it, cannot change it,
But it can change itself to become the rich
Counterpoint within our symphony.
Its own rhythm still resounds,
But rather than dominate,
It gives harmonic richness to the composition of life
Allowing the resolution from minor to major
And providing the depth that allows
Our current masterpiece to reach new heights
Of engaging brilliance....
For the past is just thus -
Were we but a single melody line without challenge
Of tempo, or minor or diminished chords,
Or a canvass, capable of holding beautiful images
Of color and depth but being painted only
With white, no contrasting darkness or tone
Our breath of joy, our very life,
Would be lost in a sea of safe monotony.

Beautiful child, who has survived the trials -
Terrible injustices that now impel you to swim
Pushing harder, ever harder toward the
Surface of light and compassion.

You are embraced

As this beautiful creature you have become,
With a past which has been transposed
To join with your consciousness
Providing wonderful richness and depth
Which becomes *your* harmony
Your many colored, many hued work of art
That enables you
With great understanding and compassion
To recognize other works of art -

Hidden, sometimes buried

Within their own beautiful, edgy, and complex symphony.

We are defined by our past: Our inner conductor
With great skill, takes all individual notes and story lines
Blending ALL into this great intricate thing of beauty

We call ourselves - and as we learn to accept

The universal love and compassion

That embraces our every breath,

We realize we truly are the music of life

And surrounded by those cosmic forces

Of acceptance, appreciation and harmony,

Sing our gratitude.

Namu Amida Butsu

THANK YOU FOR REMINDING ME

Thank you for reminding me
That I am nothing,
May I always be humble.

Thank you for showing me
The sorrows of the world,
May I always be compassionate

Thank you for sending,
Your beautiful Dharma,
May I always endeavour.

Thank you for sending
Your voice to our hearts
May I always listen intently.

In gratitude we praise your name
In love you guide us.
Namu Amida Butsu

TO MY WONDERFUL FRIEND

What a blessing it is when two souls collide,
So many lives gone before,
My mother, sister, daughter, I see you again
Parallel karma providing parallel blessings
How good it is to know you.
Before this heart began to beat,
You had touched me in ways
Impossible to know, but clearly
With loving significance.
How grateful am I for past efforts
That gained good merit to put me here,
Surrounded by love and never alone.

THE MOMENT

No petition or prayer, it is what it is.

On this level, we must endure.

We are but brief candles, whose light is lit

When fair winds blow

Our glow so fragile, so dependent

On external forces

To not snuff out.

But in the moment, our light is fair and warm

Knowing an ill wind could suddenly blow.

We glow now

And one light in darkness shines.

GENTLE GUIDANCE

Snow gently falling
Warm candlelight dances
Around the sweet comfort
Of offered incense.
With intense gratitude
I bow my head
Once again
Humbled by the Light
Of Love's Compassion
And Treasures realized.
To the Buddha,
Namu Amida Butsu
To the Dharma,
Namu Amida Butsu
To the Sangha
Namu Amida Butsu
All is well.

A LIFE SPENT THUS

Humbly born with a yearning for truth
And translucent eyes to see
A foreign dharma
You journeyed afar to lead
People to salvation.
With gifts of clarity and penmanship,
Throughout the world you became
One of Amida's shining rays.
Revered by many and looked up to by all
It is with gratitude
That we acknowledge your teaching.
And as you look back on a life well lived
Within the cradle of Infinite Love and Compassion
Your expounding of the wisdom of the scriptures
Helping so many to see the Path,
Becomes a legacy more precious than gold.
Having never met in this life, still your wisdom touched
And as you look to your next home
Within that seven-jeweled lotus flower,
Forces throughout the ten worlds will rejoice with one voice
At a life spent thus.

(In Honour of Dr. Alfred Bloom)

ALWAYS

When I am gone
Look for me in the flower
That turns its head toward the sun,
In the morning song of the birds
Rejoicing in the dawn of a new day,
And, in the rhythmic crashing of the waves
You will hear the steady beat of my heart.
The love felt and surrounding all
Becomes the essence of continued journey.
As the tree does not long stand alone,
But is nurtured by many
So there is no existence of self
But self is held in the façade of 'existence'
Tied in place by illusion of independence.
We are the friends we love,
The air we breathe, the food we eat.
The truth of no birth or death
Evident as The Way replenishes all
And by being all, we never part.

LIGHT BEYOND WORDS

Neither created nor uncreated, Creator nor Judge
But cosmic force of love and compassion
Enveloping me in light
That infuses this earthly body
Beyond a cellular level.
For me - not one, but all
You gave Your vow
I am You, You are me
And we all are one.
Namu Amida Butsu
Life lived in ignorance
With limited understanding
I'm touched, and surrender
Wholeheartedly with trust
For here and now I see your land
Within, without
Overshadowing all illusion and despair.
Your voice and compassion
Carry me through the void
To this point where
I see Your light.
Namu Amida Butsu

GASSHO

Amida Buddha,
We come before you
With hearts full of gratitude.
May all that enters our minds
Be pure,
May all that exits our mouths
Be True
And may our hearts
Remain filled with love
Unsullied by the sorrows of this world,
To become a conduit
For your vow.
May we truly understand
NO ONE
And live as brothers and sisters
Helping each other to climb
When the journey becomes difficult.
We stand before you
Exposed in our ignorance
And illusions of self-sufficiency
Knowing our only recourse
Is to bow before your Name
Our hearts becoming one.
Namu Amida Butsu

THE SOUND OF SILENCE

Sometimes I think of the virtues
Of vows of silence.
My mouth impedes
The transmission of my heart
And what I hear is
Foolishness laced with arrogance
The little I know
Only serves to illuminate
All that I know not, and my mouth
Which rushes headlong
Smothering everything in its path
Once again shows
The impossibility of enlightenment
Without the saving compassion
Of Amida's Love.
In silence, I feel as One
And my heart transmits clearly
Without interference
The joy and gratitude felt
Singing in a chorus of harmonies
With all beings of the ten directions
And seeing clearly with Your Infinite Light.
Namu Amida Butsu

I HAVE NOT COME

I have not come, I have always been
Like gentle rippling waves
Lapping at the armour of your ignorance
Asking you to lay it down
And allow my warmth to embrace.
The worlds are watching....
This human life, so fleeting and frail
To put to use, to learn,
To come before Me
With entrusting heart and child like faith
The longing for goodness,
Allows you to hear
The path of enlightenment and bliss
Through infinite compassion,
Allow Me to show you
The beauty that can only be comprehended
By becoming One.
I have waited throughout eons
For you to learn, to seek
Your innermost desires
To find purpose in form,
Many more eons I may wait,
But each time you come
And say My Name,
The worlds rejoice
And one human life shines.

I AM THE WIND

The wind blows gently, bringing the breath
Of billions to my soul.
I breathe deeply, inhaling the sweet fragrance
Of flowers freshly opened by
The newly found warmth of the sun
And become one with all
Whose breath just became mine.
I drink the water and quench my thirst...
This water of the Ganges, the Nile, the Thames, the Amazon
Which perhaps fell on the plains of Tibet or,
The slums of Calcutta .
My hunger is satisfied by food
Grown throughout the world -
All sustained by the same
Gentle rains and warmth of the sun
Enjoyed here,
In this microscopic corner of the universe.
Allowing love to touch, we are forever bound
Like Indra's net - each reflecting the other
Your heart, your breath become mine
My love, my breath, float gently on the winds
And become yours.
With infinite love and wisdom to guide us all
Together we travel toward enlightenment.

CALL ME YOU

My feet walk in footsteps made on a path
Countless years before.
As the vibration of ancient harmonies
Resound within my being
The power and forces of unseen worlds
Pull me forward
For uncountable heartaches, wandering
Seeking to find purpose in worlds with none
But now, like a prodigal child,
My heart and mind fuse with compassion and purpose
Guiding me toward home where all yearning ceases.
Call me monk, bodhisattva, arhat, layperson –
Names in words only, ultimately meaningless.
The mind truly focused on the goal
Needs no label, empowerment and recognition
Coming from the happiness and joy in knowing
That the long journey is almost at an end
And whatever light that may be cast
From that happiness joins with cosmic love
Making the path just a little more clear.
The closer I get to the light at the end
Unseen friends and hidden protectors cheer me on
In an inverse world of cosmic proportion
The dawn breaks in the west and I am home.

BEAUTIFUL ENTITIES MOVING

Beautiful entities moving
About the universe through
Untold eons
Sometimes, with good karma
Achieve this human form
And touch each other -
Softly
Like two bubbles colliding
And briefly exchanging
Part of their essence
Until gently bouncing off,
To continue their journey.
In that fleeting exchange
Hearts and minds experience,
With joyous reunion and compassion
Primordial recognition --
Lives forever enriched.

WHEN YOU LEFT

When you left and went on ahead of me
The sorrow of attachment crushed my being –
A fierce and unremitting pain.

With great compassion, from the other side
You enabled me to know about the six levels
Which helped me to carry on.

Forty years I spent looking for the answers,
Then finally, the angst within my core
Stilled enough to listen to the call of the Vow.

All now is clear, serene

But I realize that without your great compassion

Which gave me a glimpse of the truth,
My journey would have stopped short, and I,
Whose sole purpose is to seek the truth
Would have been left empty

Doomed to return to this samsaric existence.

My tears of joy and gratitude now flow

On a wave of love and compassion.

May all sentient beings hear these words,

Seek the truth,

And sorrow no more.

INNER CHILD

My mind must analyze
What my heart can simply accept
And then, like an ego-driven child
Demands recognition for its achievement.
In so doing, it creates a cloud –
A miasma of pollution
That surrounds the heart's best intentions
Creating murkiness amidst
Pristine clarity.
As stillness speaks, the mind
Gently, gently begins to concede
No longer screaming fraudulent foolishness
Again, I am once more brought
Into the ocean of wisdom
And briefly, accept in unity
The fragility of my existence.

MOON RADIANT LOVE (A SONG)

For all who Journey in the dark of night
Who seek the way on a perilous road
I know a path that's lit with light
The way of the Moon Radiant Love.
Come open our hearts to the journey's end
Let your minds see the way to the dawn
The beasts of darkness are vanquished away
The way of the Moon Radiant Love
The light itself wraps our bodies in warmth
The tremors of fear are calmed
Like a father carrying his child home,
The way of the Moon Radiant Love
My being breathes joy and thankfulness
For this gift that is given so free
May I carry your light to help others along
The way of the Moon Radiant Love
This light that heals your tortuous wounds
And fuses the fissures in your hearts
No cloud can cover its luminous moon
The way of the Moon Radiant Love
So focus your minds and still your hearts
Embrace the light on the path
Look over your shoulder and sorrow is gone
The way of the Moon Radiant Love

(based on page 134 of the *Collected Works of Shinran*)

ONE AT THE END

We go around, muddling our way through
In this bittersweet world of joy and pain.
Old friends come, and go, and come again
Loves are lost
Children fill our hearts with joy
To then go to live their own lives
Creating abundance of unneeded caring.
Throughout this, the steadiness
The enduring love of the Three Treasures
Give balance, clarity and sustenance
The Buddha: that still voice within each one
That calls us all to harmony and understanding
The Dharma: messages of guidance
A clearly lit path that once committed to
Carries all travelers to a place of light
The Sangha: the body of caring that embraces –
Healing the ragged edges of isolation
Fellow travelers on a well-travelled road
Carrying one along when the road becomes rough.
As the cosmic seed within us all begins to grow
Turning its head toward the light of understanding
We cry out in gratitude
To all universal forces of love and compassion,
Realizing we are ALL ONE
Coming from, and eventually returning to
The same place of light and unity.

There is no you, or me, or them...
And in loving Ourselves, we love All in turn
In thinking of our neighbour with hurtfulness and anger
We then cause hurt and anguish unto ourselves.
So in moments of understanding...
Little rest stops on our journey
We see that there is no separation, no parting -
Only unified energy that when, with caring and intent,
Is swung back around to the light
Will be carried by all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas
Back to our beginning, a place of brilliance and purity
With no duality of joy and sorrow, death and re-birth
Only harmony, love and understanding with all.
Namu Amida Butsu
May the light and compassion of Amida Buddha
Shine upon us all.

BEYOND FRIEND

With each beat of my heart
A sonic wave of love transcends time and space
And crashes gently
Upon the shore of your soul.
Each breath becomes arms
Encircling your being with tenderness.
Each sigh a thought
Of things already gone, and yet to come
In this dance upon this earth.
To find one who shares the same music
Is a symphony of harmony
Filled with crescendos and decrescendos,
Pauses and rests,
Beautiful to the end
Sometimes soloist, sometimes back-up singer
Sometimes adagio, sometimes vivace.
The dance adapts to the changing time
But is always held on course.
For years before, and years to come,
By the steady heart-beat of love.

A SANGHA FOR ALL

Around me stand warriors with Dharma drums and sword
Joining multitudes of angels and devas hovering in our midst.

In hours of darkest need Avalokitesvara gently consoles

We are lifted up as our voices rise in heartfelt praise

NAMU AMIDA BUTSU

This is the sangha for one and all

Seekers who come with aspirations

Welcomed, nurtured, given shelter from the stormy sea.

Encircled by invisible arms, each beat of our hearts declaring

With neither beginning or end, love of recognition and caring

Created by the joy of our union, and the power and compassion

Of Amida Buddha

How hard it is to obtain human life

How difficult to encounter fellow travelers

Whose passion is harmoniously united

And not one, but many voices rise up -

Namu Amida Butsu

Namu Amida Butsu

Namu Amida Butsu

AWAKENING

We are only here
For such a brief time...
What can be accomplished
And why?
Anger overtakes our hearts
Lives mired in delusions of importance,
And lost
To the endless karmic cycle
Of birth and death.
Then out of great darkness
We are lifted into
Infinite Light
And all becomes One
Anger turns to understanding
Illusions seen as thus
Hearts entrusting, Desiring
Arriving
Namu Amida Butsu

EARLY MORNING

Early morning, quietly lying
Nurturing raindrops gently falling
My being is filled with joy
As my thoughts become one
Namuamidabutsunamuamidabutsunamuamidabutsu
Contentment met with glimpses of clarity
Unique to this experience
Gratitude
Inexpressible in bonbu terms
How my nature cries out
In perfect unison with multitudes
Of those gone before, and yet,
To come again
My song, not new,
But so perfectly complete
Namu Amida Butsu

WORDS

Expressions of heart

A marvelous tool

Poisonous things

In the hands of a fool

We utter our words.

Sometimes without thought

Thoughtless words such as these

Create wars we have fought

So choose your words carefully.

Put thought before one

For once they are given

Cannot be undone.

But words also have power

To heal and to lift

Our spirits to heights.

We receive as a gift

A guide from the ancients

To our hearts it does speak

Not just to the strong

But also to the weak.

In the beginning was Word

And the Word became light.

To guide foolish beings

Through the darkness of night

The Word it does beckon

To me and to you

Just follow your heart

And say nembutsu.

HEART OF THE WORD

Wandering in paths of worldly treasures

Our eyes cloud to the gently persistent

Truth of the Way

Shown to us by the light of the Dharma.

Softly twinkling in the stormy seas

Like a lighthouse warning of hidden danger

And guiding us home to safe harbour.

In my heart I cry out to the Light

To burn away the clouds and witness the ocean

Of all as one.

Within solitude, no being will find

The touch of compassion and love

But through Amida's way of the ultimate

We take refuge

And our tears of sorrow are washed away

By the tears of Amida's compassion.

In gratitude I bow my head

Amazed by the blessings of the love

Of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha

And I am led to a place of infinite beauty

A place of no beginning, and therefore endless.

Cradled in the embrace of a power

That lies beyond mortal conception and thought

Recognizing past works of long ago

Thankful that my long sleep ended-

Awakening to the place of origin

The heart of the Word.

Namu Amida Butsu

AMIDA

I am pulled inexorably toward a destination beyond my comprehension

My trust is a trust established ages ago, lost in layers of illusion

Revived, re-discovered, with gratitude

Ancient truths awakened within my being

Freely given with wisdom and compassion

Take but little effort, sincere mind and heart only

To fully experience the very depths of understanding

The Buddha's call to us, directing us toward

The Universal Infinite Light and Wisdom, Life itself,

Dive into the Dharma, you yourself will see the path

Upon searching your depths for that quiet voice.

It is all within you, guidance will be given

Reach in and become one with the Wisdom of the worlds.

Namu Amida Butsu,

All Buddhas Praise the Name

Namu Amida Butsu,

To be grasped and never let go

Namu Amida Butsu,

I am.

A BODHI MOMENT

In saying nembutsu, I open my heart and allow
The ocean of infinite compassion
To absorb this drop of existence.
Breaking the samsaric bonds of separateness
I am shown the way to freedom
As long as the thought of 'I' remains
So shall 'I' continue to travel within this realm.
Extinguishing 'I' and becoming one
With Infinite Wisdom and Compassion
Freedom is found.

The Pure Land is such, as long as 'I', 'myself' remains
This self, skirts about like a moth attracted to the Light
Battering incessantly against unseen barriers
Separated always from its goal.
In opening your mind to merge with all
You are surrounded and protected from all Maras
And, free from doubt enter the Pure Land of Bliss.
Sakyamuni Buddha, through Amida,
Taught us how to let go of those iron bonds
That tie us to reliance upon illusion
Namu Amida Butsu is the key,
Unlock the door and enter the light.

FAITH

I am only as strong as my faith

As true as my faith

As honest as my faith.

For without faith

I am just more noise

In a world of cacophony –

Without faith, I am lost.

In gratitude my faith becomes expression

And I am allowed to breathe.

Namu Amida Butsu

A SIMPLE HEART

Oh Such richness within life!
Days filled with songs of golden melodies
That are but reverberations of songs
From the Pure Land itself
With sure footedness in an uncertain plane
I look over my shoulder and see no one there
But am surrounded by voices
Guiding, encouraging, urging ever on
Fulfilling destinies long ago decided upon.
In love I cast my life
Into the waters of the ocean
Content to be carried.
No destination.....
Simply carried on the currents
Of pure compassion
With no end, and no beginning,
Simply returning
This simple heart rejoicing,
Having found the way back home.
Namu Amida Butsu

PHOENIX RISING

Your pain, palpably sits upon your soul
Eclipsing the brightness within
Searching, ever searching for partners in misery.
Your youth allows forgiveness that will soon fade
As friendly ears,
Running marathons of empathic listening
Move on to different movies.

Wonderful companions who never talk back
Chemically altering your personal reality
Only serve to numb, not change the rawness
Of anguish and heartache.

You are a special child of the universe
But keep company with legions of people
Whose brightness was numbed to extinction
And in the darkness, decisions are made
That allows forces to truly infiltrate
And perpetuate a misery that sees no end.

Be brave and leave the crutches
That 'help' to negotiate the day, for
Ultimately they will only cause stumbling
Over every little bump in the road.
With a mind freed from muffled silence
In clarity and brightness, other paths can open
To a life of understanding and joy.

There is no hope in self-medication,
Drifting through life in an insulated haze
Separates one from beautiful moments, that happen
Freely given, a thousand times a day.

Your pain
Sprung from sensitivity and a heart too caring
To survive in this world without being battered
Will also enable you to feel the light.

For it is those who feel the deepest,
Who once freed from
The bondages of so many forms of escape,
Will love completely
Will live completely
Will soar.

LOST

We must respect the quiet urge
To seek the truth at any cost,
To answer to that quiet voice
Embrace it now or all is lost.
Within each child the seed of truth
Lies waiting for the dharma rain
To nourish toward the breaking light
And break *our* Mara's grip on pain.
Moving on we gaze around
Illusions in a murky night.
Monsters in the mind alone
You feel alone to fight the fight
Oh gently, gently wake up child
And turn your countenance toward the west.
We'll guide you through the darkest night
In the glow of compassion gently rest
Wrapped in arms of truth and light
Your journey now to start again
And see what matters most is naught.
Your troubled mind is now made whole
Gently, gently carry on
We give you love to guide your way
Your ashes gathered to our breasts
We'll meet again another day.

for an adolescent suicide.....

GOING WITH A SMILE

Joy, each moment -
A moment of perfection.
Namu Amida Butsu
Gratitude, thankful for
Patience and persistence
That opened my ears
To hear the call.
Should this human life
Cease tomorrow
I go with a smile
Reflecting back upon a life
With meaning
And being held within the arms
Of Universal Love.

GROW OLD WITH ME

Grow old with me and we'll explore the beauty of this 'plane',
Together mine the depth of soul and cosmic love attain.
Grow old with me and let us watch our children grow and learn,
Become amazing human beings helping all in turn.
Grow old with me and no great storm our home will ever wreck -
A home we built on solid base of mutual respect.
Grow old with me my ancient love, my partner at the helm,
As each are brought and lifted up beyond our human realm.
And I in turn grow old with you, my concrete solid base.
The secrets of the universe we'll learn at gentle pace
Hiking up to mountain tops, watching sunsets on the lake.
My partner for so long, your side I'll always take
And when this earthly journey's over, one of us lays down to sleep
The other will watch over love but should not ever weep.
For love as ours will carry on and future lives will see
Two souls collide and recognize not you, or me, but WE.

In honour of 25 years of a wonderful journey.

PITFALLS

There is a dark pit of arrogance and pride
That yawns seductively before me.
With each thought of my bonbu nature
Of what 'I' have accomplished
Another step is taken to the precipice.
'I' was a being stumbling blindly along
Unable to reach understanding or light
But now wrapped firmly in the grasp of Amida
In gratitude and joy I mindfully float
On the gentle ocean of happiness.

HOWEVER,

The voice of my ignorance
So mired in the very depths of my being
Keeps calling 'Look at me, look at me!'
And as the pit looms, drawing me in
The rope of Amida's vow, tightly wound around me
Draws me back to the lightness of wisdom and compassion
With ears that listen, I understand
That anything perceived as good
Comes not from me, but through me
And I become one, who with humility and deep gratitude
Avoids for now the darkness of the pitfall
And turns to the voice whence all goodness arises.

Namu Amida Butsu, Mother

Namu Amida Butsu, Father

Namu Amida Butsu, Saving love and compassion.

QUIET COMPANIONS

Surrounded by heavenly spirits and bodhisattvas
Who quietly walk among us, guiding, protecting...

I take the step, and through the Word
That is and always was

Become one with the saving grace
Of the Light of Infinite Compassion.

Overwhelmed by multitudes of tears
Falling throughout samsara

The non-duality of our 'oneness' is finally understood.

My eyes, and yours see the love
Among hearts not of different race or color

But all beating the same rhythm of life
Amida's voice transcends all language

At levels of humanity.

To not waste this life, this opportunity
Of cognizance and discernment
Is a desire worth pursuing without delay

The Name abides within all
Making no distinction and loving the most vile

Waiting for hearts to simply aspire
To know, and be received and loved.

And so my life, no longer drowning
Is lifted up and carried by

These quiet bodhisattvas

And the Light of Compassion illuminates my gratitude.

LISTEN

Do not be foolish and feel you know
For mysteries abound
Just trust in me and say my name
For I am all around.

In dreams you live and walk this land
Sometimes you realize
A tiny shred of truth
In a world full of lies.

I promised I would come for you
Help you to the other side
My vow was made for one and all
My great karma will abide.

The path of sages has come and gone
The truth's been obfuscated
Through wars and death and ego great
Through confusion I have waited.

So still your mind and listen now
End this samsaric pain.
From adversity let your heart be free
And simply say my name.

STILLNESS SPEAKS

Stillness speaks myriad messages of a long
forgotten language.

In gratitude and serenity may we listen.

ENLIGHTENMENT

Under the night sky
Wisdom waxing toward brightness
Shines upon my face.

THE GIFT

O great Buddha that walked among us –
Your task so difficult, accomplished nonetheless,
Left us words to guide the way Home.
Though maze-like, the path is there
For those who aspire with great intent
And as years have worn away
Many traces of outer directions
The way at the center remains unchanged.
With infinite love, a final great gift
For blind eyes to find the way
That in its simplicity, some
May still find most difficult.
No magic incantation or self-realized endeavors
It is our fail safe you knew
Would be needed as rescue from a dying world.
With great weariness I rest my being
And with joy at a long journey almost ended
The Nembutsu brings me Home
Namu Amida Butsu
With joy
Namu Amida Butsu
With love,
Namu Amida Butsu,
I am home.

SHINE ON

Sometimes soft and gentle teachers
Appear and guide without recognition,
So pure their heart, a touch like the lightest feather,
Yet leaving an imprint so profound.
Like a tethered hot air balloon caught in a storm
I am anchored by the compassionate embrace
Of Amida which so clearly flows through
Those of shinjin, who softly trumpet the dharma way –
Like a balloon, full of self-generated hot air
I am humbled by those we touch
Of true and unremitting faith.
In my brashness, and failings, and falling short,
All my efforts to 'be', but not being,
My heart is tugged by that anchoring line
And in humbleness and gassho
I bow before the Buddha of Infinite Light
Amazed that THE Compassion does extend to me,
And in the darkest hours I am cradled
In life, and even beyond into 'death'.
May we follow the path of the gentlest of souls
Expressing our thankfulness with each living breath.
A guiding light has dimmed, but will always shine
Like a radiant moon in a starless night,
Shine on you gentle bodhisattva, until we meet again.

PASSING THROUGH

Passing through he gently welcomed
All who came within his touch.
A caring gem of deep true faith –
With a smile that showed Amida's love
His quiet humility and few words
Spoke louder than a thunders roar.
Bodhisattva guarding the temple gate,
Staying long enough to see a new course set.
His passing through was done with purpose
With great intent toward the journey's end.
The Pure Land gate is opened wide
Greatly rejoicing a life well lived
Oh Lotus flower receive him thus
And send him back with care and calm
That he may pass through once again
And bring his children home.

for Yuki Tanemura

POINTING THE WAY

Sakyamuni Buddha came to this world
In Love to show us the way.
He sought to help us discover the path
Where freedom from samsara does lay.

He told of a Buddha of infinite love
Who won't rest until all become saved.
Who reaches out to one and all
From a land in white brilliance paved.

He also told of a delusional age
Where enlightenment is hard to obtain.
When words of the Dharma become dim and obscure
And our lives go in sorrow and pain.

“Amida”, He said, “Has made a Great Vow,
That ALL who call shall live.
In a Pure Land of joy where no poisons exist
His great merits to all He would give”.

So come to the Pure land – be joyous and free.
The nembutsu is all you need do
And you and Amida will be joined in one mind.
He calls expressly for you.

The wise will listen to that infinite voice
For to heed it gives joyous sweet rest.
A release from the bonds of the cycles of birth
Pure love in the land to the West.

THE EYES OF THE DAWN

Ancient mysteries swirl waiting to be revealed.

Wake up from your night of gloom.

For a darkness deeper than despair itself

Awaits those whose once noble hearts

Are hardened by the poisons of this world.

Enlightened teachers of vast compassion

Await to guide you to the light.

And this tragic illusion we call 'life', is shown

To be less than a drop in an ocean of possibilities.

A much better place

Awaits for those who aspire to bask in the light

Of infinite brilliance and compassion.

But with each passing day those opportunities slip by

And once your fleeting time passes

And becomes but a pile of white ashes

This specter of living delusion deepens.

Amida calls with gentle insistence

Providing a portal for all to see,

The peaceful harmony of the other shore.

Let loose those bands of darkness
That cause this precious life
To slip away to nothingness and waste.
And pay attention to the quiet voice ever present
That when sought becomes amplified
With a resonance that speaks
To every beat of your heart.
This human life with cognizant capability
Is yours to uncover the mysteries
Of existence itself, or to waste ...
And with waste, the enlightened ones
Bow their heads and watch.
The long cover of darkness falsely cradles
You to oblivion.
So wake up sweet child, wake up
To a dawn of awakening of ancient truth
Embracing the light of no beginning or end
And darkness reigns no more.

Namu Amida Butsu

GUIDING LIGHT

A shining beacon for the love of Amida.
What wonderful karma brought you to us.
Laughing eyes and gentle heart
Compassionate nature filled
With love for all.
With gratitude I bow to your gentle guidance
And can't help but rejoice
As your great joy is reflected back
Anchored in faith, without doubt or hesitation,
You guide us home.

EARLY MORNING LAUGHTER

Looking to yesterday
I see only dimly obscured shapes of illusion.
Looking to tomorrow
I see nothing.
Today, in this moment
There is all life has to offer.
Children dancing in cartwheels
Powered by abandoned joy
Pulled by powerful forces
On a journey, whose destination
Was decided lifetimes ago.
Heart and mind as one
Embraced by Infinite Light...
I am allowed to see the beauty of the moon
And brought to a place of overwhelming joy.
Having left behind my self
Who floundered blindly along treacherous roads
I am carried by Other Power to contentment.
Fulfillment allows my mind to rest.
In compassion I am joined
And with bowed head am deeply thankful
For all who touch and teach
For as one I am nothing, illusion only,
Joined with all I am love.
Namu Amida Butsu

SOARING

Scholars of great faith have debated for centuries.

The formula for birth –

I don't remember whether it was

One, two, ten or one hundred recitations

And further I'm quite sure it matters not.

In that one thought-moment

When heart and mind became one

A great shift occurs and Existence is no longer confined to a gilded cage ...

Given everything needed to sustain life

But never able to break through.

Now, having put faith and practice in Amida

Discarding the positive magnet of self

That attracts all negative attachments.

The cage is shattered and I soar in the sun

Surrounded by light and warmth,

Flying higher and higher, playing within currents

That lift, fall, then lift again,

Watching multiple dramas unfold below.

For those still chained to the earth

I am held aloft by the promise and protection

Of Amida's love, and having given up

My own worldly endeavors, find the

Dramas unfolding below me to be

Just shadow shows, not real to me.

At the end of the day

As I follow the setting sun to the western sky

And watch as it sinks below the sea

The horizon fills with the fiery gold brilliance

And I am able to rest

Confident that no cage will ever again surround.

And one day, the sun will take me with it over the vanishing point.

Namu Amida Butsu

Nothing more.

INNOCENCE

I am assured by every step I take
That I am guided by loving forces –
Deeper, deeper, ever deeper into the truth
Of the Dharma of Love and Compassion.
In discovering the depth of no-self,
Through form, I find no-form.
In no-form, I find perfect peace,
A perfect land of noiseless purity
Available to all who look, who seek, who listen
With the reach of their mind, ears and dharma eyes.
Returning to an ancient place of clarity
Only words of gratitude are verbalized.
Other words, inexpressible in speech
Filled with delusion, misconceptions and duality
Never make it out of the depth of oneness-
Seek, forever seek.
Open your ears to hear the voice that calls
We cry in unison Namu Amida Butsu.

AND TIME STOOD STILL

Amida, enlightenment itself, Other Power.
Beyond any earthly understanding, beyond duality.

That brief moment of union
Transcends all earthly limitations.

Time stands still

Everything 'just is'.

In delving into this flawed package called 'myself'

I touch eternity.

I touch the universal Wisdom and Goodness

That is there for all to find.

We who must exist in the earthly plane of
Karma, the universe's self governing laws
Can reach out and touch this Other Power
Of supreme wisdom and light.

And merge ... to become one in the briefest moment.

But that is only OUR time as we know it

To merge with Other Power is timeless.

Namu Amida Butsu,

Namu Amida Butsu,

Namu Amida Butsu

ATTRACTIVE POWER

How can one be different from another
When we are the same in all essential ways,
 Made of the same elements,
 And coming from the same source?
We are all reflections of possibilities
 Equally awaiting all.
 Some, however, develop within
 A powerful force of positive self
 That like a magnet, attracts
The negative forces always seeking a home
(Self-recognition, righteousness, justification, power...)
 And this alone is what differentiates,
 But only in mind alone.
In breaking through and beyond self-attraction
 We find the power of Other forces
 And in that still point of equality
 Become one, once again.
 So look to your brother, your sister
 Knowing that any differences you feel
Come from your own slumbering centre.

Look to Amida and with strength freely given
Transcend that which ties to this realm.
In this world of duality, understand
That with Wrong View, the only other is Right,
With Right Thoughts, the only other is Wrong,
And with self-power, the only other
Is the ultimate Truth, Other Power itself.
For seekers with ears to hear
This is the One Truth taught for eons
By enlightened teachers using upayic means.
So rather than sinking in the suffering of difference
Regardless of tradition, look beyond
The self-made rules and rituals of man
To the Source, which will always bring you home
To blissful oneness.
Namu Amida Butsu

MESSAGES

Bamboo caressed by scented warmth
Without words, the message permeates –
I am embraced by perfection.

FREEDOM FOUND

In following my heart,
That primordial, pre-conceptual world of intuitive wisdom
Where the truth and compassion of all Buddha's reside
Hidden deeply under layers of karmic blackness
That exude the stench of decisions mired in ignorance
But beneath the blackness the Voice of Amida resides.
With sincerity and oneness of mind, in quiet reflection
The Voice joins briefly with my heart
Dissolving the shackles that bind one to birth-and-death
Transforming the blackness of ignorance
Into the virtue of compassionate love.
In simplicity and child like joy
The essence of 'no beginning' is recognized.
My heart singing the praises of Amida –
The blazing light of freedom illuminates the path
And I sail with fair winds into freedom.

WE LAUGH

We laugh,
Held as we are within the arms
Of a kind and loving sangha.
Bowing our heads in gratitude
For living a life filled with beauty
In a world of three poisons.

In silence,
We listen to the voice
Of Light and Life ...
The primordial spirit within
Finally able to return
To our original home.

This life,
Filled with beauty, for those with eyes to see
With love, for those with hearts to hear
Becomes in itself a light
Basking in the glow of union with the Infinite.

Ceasing to struggle
Within this world of illusion and pain
We are carried effortlessly
To the other side ...
The journey itself becoming
A thing of beauty and peace.
No longer struggling to understand
That which is baseless and forever changing
The dark clouds of illusion are lifted
And ... we laugh.

A CHILD NO LONGER

Fragments of memory
Ever elusive, yet always present
Cling to the circles of my travels.
Cold stone walls, warmed
By firelight's glow ...
Voices raised in praise
To unseen whispers.
Arrogance gives way to doubt,
Which, in turn, gives way to
Opportunity lost ...
Condemning the seeker to lifetimes
Of unfulfilled wandering
A hungry ghost: always wanting,
Always seeking, never finding.
Now with a heart of understanding and joy
The voice that cannot be described
Cuts through the mists of time
And leads me back
A wayward child no longer,
I embrace my true home.
Namu Amida Butsu

*To have loved to the depths of your soul,
To have children become respected friends
To have touched the oneness of humanity
This is to have truly, fully, lived.*

-Barb



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