



ECOADUNA Foundation

Perspectives on Life Walking in the Middle of the Stream of Dharma-Karma-Tao

Mar'tan

An Eightfold Path of Responsive Meditation

Living is an opportunity for freedom to create and express that which is within but immeasurable, the “neti, neti” of both the Universe and the space between the eyes, the voice within, the one you see in the mirror and also each time you look into the eyes of another. Living is where one has the freedom to go beyond, to think of giving energy and power from some limitless source that we know exists within us, and not thinking of just the shadow-self that we see walking around, eating, sleeping, dressing, bantering and busying the self for its own satisfactions, but putting ourselves wholly into the stream, jumping into the river, and concentrating on what we can do for others. To spend a “life” any other way, focusing only on the shadow-self, is to cast away all of the moments, the days and years, and the eternities, for only shadow, only folly, only a mirage. Living is transcending the self and discovering, revealing, opening-up, each moment, each step forward or backward or to either side, a new experience, a new leaf, a new world that shows paths that can be chosen and followed, decisions to be made, freedoms to be enjoyed.

Loving is not about taking, possessing, controlling, but giving freely, and not to one or two or a few, but as a continuum to all, on every plane, in every spectrum. We are given challenges by which to measure how we can forget the self and focus upon the happiness and satisfaction of another and others. We are given a lifetime of opportunities and each is a special one that is tailored to the path we are walking at that given moment in our life. When we are really loving, we are receiving without seeking, without asking, and often without understanding the details of how things come about. Sometimes what is before us is not the way we are thinking, because we impose our attitudes, our wants and desires, upon others, and we miss seeing and knowing that person or those people or those creatures for what and how they are being, and what they are needing. Loving means to put aside our preconceptions and prejudices and to maintain vigilance constantly to not be pulled into the mirage and the miasma of our limited perspective from the vantage point of one self looking at all others as if they were like ourselves. We must cut through our most favored and favorite habits and put aside our wants, in order to understand the beloved and to let our beloved be free to be just how he or she or they are in this, their life. Letting go of our impositions upon others is the hardest task of all, a greater and more severe challenge than to go without food, water and sleep!

Leading is a response-ability, a commitment, a devotion, a passion, and an honor. It requires great humility, patience and prudence. To lead is to under-stand all the facets of the team, the nation, the company, the family, the project, the undertaking. It is to be the cybernaut, the steersman, but also the oarsman, every one of them, and the sailors high up on the mast. Leading is not the way it has come to be

misrepresented and imagined by people in all spectra of life, often through the pursuit of raw, unformed desire and lust for the appearances of so-called power and wealth. Truly capable leaders are very rare in any era and particularly in times of disorder, strife and confusion when the outward appearances, the shimmering shadows, are taken for being the valuables in life. A person who leads must understand and never forget what is important to the whole of the community, the organization, the project, and also to the individuals and parts that make up that whole. Leading requires being able to constantly observe and accept what is seen in all directions of space and time, including the past and the many possible futures. Leading means to be able to think and act both “outside the box” and “inside the box,” to be an innovator at all times yet grounded in the foundations of what is reasonable and possible within Nature, within the flow of Tao. Being a leader requires coordination and planning skills that always include knowing how to discern one’s limits of ability and knowledge, how to recognize when the expertise and advice of others is required for the benefit of one’s objectives, how to call upon even those who would think themselves to be one’s enemies for assistance and collaboration, how to turn adversity and enmity into collaboration, symbiosis, synergy. Leading is self-sacrifice, putting superficial satisfactions aside and transcending the pull of *maya-samsara* which is only a retreat into weakness and subservience to the lower emotions, taking up instead the challenge of being constantly vigilant, creative, willing to change, and willing to follow the best course for the benefit of those who have entrusted their works, wealths, and even lives to those who stand and walk at the head of the long march forward.

Giving begins with looking within and seeing, openly and without restraint, what it is that another or others need, and discovering how one can contribute something that builds and sustains those needs in a manner that increases the happiness and well-being of not only those others but the greater Whole. Every action of true and proper giving is about going beyond one’s original beliefs and feelings of boundary and limitation, and discovering that indeed one has more energy, power, more wealth, more ability, than one thought at first. To give is to inherently and paradoxically give more than one can afford to produce, and in so doing to realize ways by which that act of giving, whether it is an act that involves something physical or something much more complex and personal, involving the psyche, the soul, and an act of commitment and engagement, is creating more in one’s own world and more in the receiver’s world, than could have been present otherwise, without the act of giving. Indeed, it is a mistake when people think of giving something – be it a symbol of wealth such as money, or a very personal gift such as one’s time, thoughts and feelings, or anything else that happens and emerges between two persons, groups or organizations – as if it is a transfer away from one (the source) to another (the receiver). The truth is that giving something that aids others in a constructive and beneficial way is a process that increases the productivity, wealth and happiness of both sides of the equation, giver and receiver, and this is the mystery of the synergy in Nature, in Society, and in the ways by which this Universe operates and lives on all planes of existence. To give is to gain, but one must free the mind and the body of the fetters of limited and conventional thinking which scarcely ever sees the connecting threads by which a small action today will have many important consequences in days and years to come and places very far removed from where one stands at the present. Giving is ultimately how we grow and gain and find fulfillment, and each opportunity to give must be examined with a clear conscience and open mind and an asking of the question, “How can I answer to this opportunity in a way that will benefit more people and more lives than I may have ever imagined it possible for me to reach and empower?”

Investing is an act of response-ability that enables a person or an organization to go beyond one’s limits and make a difference in far more than the numbers in a financial spreadsheet. The act of investing is to state, by action, consciously, that there is something of value to be achieved and accomplished, something that will benefit a socioeconomic process which may have many different faces and facets, something that

has a human aspect and also an ecological aspect, both of which are worth the time and energy and resources of making some commitment with one's resources. The investor is someone who has been given an ability to produce more by cultivating the work of others and this should never be viewed in anything other than a wholistic, synergistic and socio-environmental perspective. Financial indices and measures must be understood as temperature, humidity and wind speed in climate and as indicators of yield in agriculture; the long-term values, the true measures of wealth, must bring together in an intelligent aggregate such factors as the stability and sustainability of that which is being produced, the effects upon the environment of production and use, the consequences for other "species" and resources within the socioeconomic ecosystem, plus important non-quantitative attributes of aesthetic quality and lasting appeal and valuation of merit. Investing is not something that can be reduced to an attractive set of paragraphs and numerical projections, and in a world where no community or industry can operate in isolation or independence from all others, the investor must care attentively and conscientiously for the "big picture" with respect to not only his or her financial future but the well-being - socially, environmentally, financially – of more than the present generation of inhabitants in this world. The investor must understand the "categorical imperative" that is impressed by Nature upon human conduct and view each opportunity as one to be evaluated in terms of the greatest sustainable good for the greatest value for the greatest future world. With such a foundational philosophy, investing has the strongest footing and the best prospect for success in both the short-term and the long-term, and the financial, numerical valuations that result will surely reflect such prudence.

Communicating is both dialogue and dialectic in process and it necessarily involves more than two points of discussion, argument, dissention and agreement, whether the sphere of communication is among two or among thousands. The word itself speaks clearly – it is a bringing together into a union and unison, a joining, but not implying a loss of identity among the messages being shared. Communicating stands or falls upon good listening and absorbing what is being said by the other or others in the dialogue. First there must be the receptivity and the clarity that allows one to understand what is being said by the other, without prejudging, without presupposing, without assuming any meanings in advance. The voice, the message of the other must be understood for how it is used, in order that the meaning, the intention, the goal may be understood. This process must be simultaneous and free-flowing. People, and organizations, must be able to comprehend a totally different set of outlooks, attitudes, past experiences, and present meanings in order to begin a real dialogue that can then lead into something new that was not there before among any participant beforehand. Communicating requires constant effort to not be locked-in with one's own agenda and to accept that there can be something better coming from the dialectic process than what anyone began with in the first place. Communicating with such openness is a way to build a bridge over a chasm that perhaps before was seen as uncrossable, or that had not even been noticed. As in every aspect of interaction with others in life, including within the silent dialogues between self and self, communicating requires courage and humility, from the very beginning and through the entire process. Only then will bright new illuminations occur to all involved.

Sharing is a process of self-discovery where one takes something that one perceives to be one's own and enables it to be experienced and reshaped into something new by another, a person close and known or a stranger far away and unknown, and in so doing it is a way of realizing that everything that we call "our own" and "mine" is never limited or constrained to being just for one or just for a few, and that what we share freely is always something that in one form or way or another always comes back in greater strength, number and power after we have given it with an open hand to others. Sharing is a beautiful opportunity to create more from less and to experience the power of synergy, where the whole is greater and more powerful than the merely additive accumulation of parts. Sharing is the fundamental basis of all

economy, at all levels, and it begins with a purely natural impulse of the sort when two people are sitting on the riverbank, in the sun, and one says to the other, “Here, I have this fruit – would you like some, too?” Now when the clouds of limited thinking overtake the mind and when fear and insecurity dominate, manipulating natural desire into a small view of self and blocking out the open and limitless view of Self-that-is-All-Others, then the mind thinks of trade-off and cost and what one is giving up and what one wants to have in return. This is not sharing, nor is this healthy economics, not on the personal level nor on the scale of society and the body politic. Such limited-mind thinking and behavior always results in self-defeat and a dissipation of energy and a weakening of power. It is a challenge to overcome such behavior, but it is something upon which every person must constantly work to achieve. True sharing cultivates the relaxing of anxiety and the dissolving of fear between people and among organizations and societies, but to attain and sustain this is a lifelong constant effort and devotion.

Collaborating is a doing and working together that begins with a “coadunatio,” a coming and bringing together of people and resources that meaningfully fit and complement each other for some purpose. To collaborate is to gain but also to sacrifice, and to have at the center of thought and action always the objectives and goals of the whole, the collective unit, while not abandoning or forgetting what brought one into the group for working together in the first place. There is a time and place for teaming, for sharing the workload, for dividing the tasks and responsibilities, and this requires planning and organization. There must be leadership within any collaboration, and an understanding of the dynamics of doing the work, managing the energies required, optimizing and balancing everything that is involved from each participant. Collaborating is a process of trust-building and trust-placing as each member of the team puts trust in others to do their part and each member accepts the responsibility to follow through and accomplish what needs to be done within the constraints and bounds of the collaborative group. There are many ways in which we can be pulled aside, distracted, self-deluded, and otherwise disturbed from performing in our optimal best for the work at hand, and this demands a constant vigilance by individuals and groups to ensure that we are doing our utmost to empower and strengthen each member of the team in whatever type of work we are doing together. Collaborating is an opportunity to practice as a group what is organic, wholistic, synergistic, and in the process, an active process of loving and being open and at ease with oneself as we work hand in hand, mind in mind, with one another.

Sunday, 14.April.2013
An Áit Fás Idir an Uiscí