

Dear Friends,



The year 2005 passed like a blink of my eye. How strange to say this since it was also so completely full of experiences that many do not have the opportunity to have in a lifetime. I spent 3 months in Peru May to July and 3 months in India, September to December. I cannot imagine why I have had this privilege and blessing; I can only pray that I use what I have learned this past year to benefit others in some way.

### *The Hopi River is Flowing*

*“Wisdom tells me I am Nothing.*

*Love tells me I am Everything.*

*Between the two my life flows.”*

Nisargadatta

I know that I, along with many of us, have definitely entered into the “River” the Hopi Elders spoke of in 2000 (a message that I offered in my 2005 Newsletter, still on my website if you haven’t read it and wish to.) Water offers a very different experience of reality than the steady ground of the shore of any known, habitual reality. Surrender to not knowing what is going to happen next is essential. Water is the element of soul, the source through which creation - sacred, divine and eternal mystery - is born. Only a breakthrough of love, a heart awakening to its fullness, allows us the release the fear of not knowing what will happen next. I know from so much experience now that if I can imagine and affirm that my life is a mystery to be experienced, not a disease to be healed, I am ever being born to a place beyond my habitual

experience of time and space. So many of us seem to be experiencing something like this now. I am aware that both deepening and expanding my awareness enough to choose this over and over is “a master work”. A poet named e.e. cummings wrote:

*“We can never be born enough...*

*birth is a supremely welcome mystery,*

*the mystery of growing:*

*the mystery that happens only*

*and whenever we are faithful to ourselves...*

*Life, for eternal us, is now.”*

So perhaps it is this: a sense of the eternal ‘now’ that has carried me along this year. A ‘river’ of life experience seems a beautifully clear metaphor for this.

So where has the river taken me this year? What have I learned?

### *A Journey into “Right Relation”*

According to the Mayan Calendar (that I also wrote about last year), 2005 was a time whose theme was ‘A New Foundation in Human Relations’. It cannot seem amazing (but it does) that this past year my life seemed dedicated to discovering more about the mysteries of ‘Right Relation’. The stories I am going to share are about this.

In Peru last year, May and June, two adventurous groups of people joined us, linking our hearts to carry back with us the unitive spirit of the Andes into life in North America, a preciousness not taxable at customs but holding the value of ancient gold.

When we were not guiding, my partner, Jim, our housemate, Terence, and I, lived in the small village of Písaq, the community of our friends, an ally (pronounced ‘I-you’) or family group called ‘Wiñay Taki.’ Their name means “forever singing” and their intention is to reclaim and live, through music and ceremony, the spirit of an ancient Inka tradition of ‘right relation’, ‘an ethic of reciprocity’ between all humans, all creatures, and the world around. Their

gods/goddesses are elements of the natural world: Mother Earth (Pachamama), Father Sky (Wiracocha or 'lake of stars'), the Mountain Spirits (Apus), Mother Water (Mamacocha), Mother Moon (Mama Quilla), and Father Sun (Tayta Inti). These are the energies of life within and without that weave existence together; each with their own intelligence and teachings. Right relationship to them is crucial to keeping the world in balance.

"Right relation" is a process of exploration, not a perfectly prescribed way of being. It is mysterious, full of endless discovery: insights, guidance, and wisdom arising through a clear and abiding respect for the 'other' whatever or whoever that 'other' is. "Relationship" is a miraculous grace of life on Earth as this natural love is the mother, father and child of true, authentic relationship. The Inkas were a remarkable people; they created a world out of such 'right relation'. This power to respect and relate to the 'other' of the land (Pachamama) resulted in an organization that built beauty in a way of being and in works designed to take care of its people - no one went hungry, each person was respected and had value to the whole of life.

This is not simply some "ideal of perfection." Rather the Inkas seem to have developed a way to deal with life and its demands, opportunities and struggles from a place of love, not fear.



Wiñay Taki with our May Peru group

The most life-changing experience I carried back from living in Peru (1987-1991) was a clear

sense that the ancestors of Wiñay Taki had attained a 'unity', a level of balance, connectedness and relatedness, rarely found in this world in such a grand scale. The remnants of this way of being still flow in the blood of the indigenous people living there today. This way hasn't been so much a conscious 'philosophy or religion', rather just a beautiful spirit that can be found still moving in the ways they seem to respond to the most challenging circumstances. After traveling to India as well later in the year, I am even more in awe, not only of what the Inkas were able to accomplish before the Conquest, but also, the preciousness of the Wiñay Taki Allyu's chosen work. I feel there is so much to learn from them that they are still growing an awareness of as well.

Although we have been visiting and learning from Wiñay Taki Allyu for 3 years now, this year was the first extended contact with them. There were many difficult times as we learned more about the context in which they are doing this work. Because their vision is outside of the post-Conquest life, a context in which the Catholic Church is still a dominating force in the lives of the community, their way is a contrast to a reality that was born many centuries ago and has become the accepted reality of life. The destructive use of alcohol is common now, especially during fiestas. And brutal realities, such as forced sterilizations of indigenous women, have happen and continue to happen. Prejudice continues to exist against the indigenous worldview. All this creates challenges for Wiñay Taki in discovering 'right relation' to those often-painful facts. As well, they are a large family and have very practical and human needs as do we all for schooling their children, feeding and housing themselves. How do they hold the integrity of what they are in that context?

This is what we focused on this year. This dilemma. The lure of the philosophical righteousness, a political solution is one defense that humans have fallen back on to cope with such dilemmas. Is this the way? Is this right relation? Can one cultivate and hold a 'point of view' without having to be 'right'? I learned this summer that

“Right Relation” is not a political stance but an experience and expression of beauty, something that melts the heart, not terrorizes it.

When I lived in Peru many years ago, as I described in my book Sacred Memory, Holy Yearning, I worked with a mestizo shaman named Juan Victor Nuñez del Prado. He said that shamans from the remote highland Q’eros people, who maintained many of the lost ceremonies of the Inkas, are looking for what they called a “5<sup>th</sup> Degree Altomisayoc” or 5<sup>th</sup> degree Earth Shaman. The Q’eros hold that, before the Conquest, the Inkas collectively had attained the power of the 4<sup>th</sup> Degree, which is a power to embrace all points of view without contradiction. This heart-oriented standpoint arose through communion with the Earth Mother, generating a natural love and respect for the ‘other.’ I wrote about the expansion of the Inka world in the 100 years before the Conquest that arose from this impulse for an ever growing deeper communion with life. The Conquest of the New World by Spain was the result of an impulse for expansion as well, but with very different intentions, arising from a culture that had grown out of other evolutionary choices. The Inkas, as strong as they were, were no match for the darkness, disconnection, and greed of the Conquistadores.

It is for this reason that the Q’ero await a 5<sup>th</sup> Degree Altomisayoc who would have a power to heal others without their participation. Such a breakthrough would be the only way to heal the Conquest, its causes and effects, which continue to generate so much destructive and painful human behavior. The Q’ero hold that this human disconnectedness that we now so often assume is ‘normal reality,’ is a sickness that people do not know that they have. A 5<sup>th</sup> Degree Altomisayoc “would be able to heal this in some way, bringing about an awakening from this profound darkness. Perhaps this is a healing that cannot be chosen, only given.”

With this in mind, I would like to share a story of something that happened with the father of the Winay Taki clan. His name is Toribo. He was born 16 April 1934, so he will soon be 72. His family is

quite a united group of loving souls so I know Toribo’s much-beloved nature had a lot to do with this. At my 61<sup>st</sup> birthday last June, Toribo danced myself and a number of other ladies, younger than me, to our knees. He has a huge spirit, full of joy and life.

About a week before we were to leave Peru, last July, Toribio was pruning the apple tree in the family compound. His ladder slipped and he fell on his head onto the concrete of the patio ground; a very serious, life-threatening head injury resulted. Fortunately someone was around and saw what happened. An ambulance was called and he was rushed to Cuzco, an hour or so away.



Toribio in front of the Wiñay Taki compound.



Toribio dancing with me on my 61<sup>st</sup> Birthday

Those of us who stayed behind gathered together, not only to hear reports of how things were going, but also to do a ceremony to send him energy for healing. Isn’t this a natural thing we do

these days with people we love? Our love often motivates our strongest and deepest prayers. As we went into this meditation, from my “deeper sight”, I saw all of us gathered, lifting our spirits to go to Toribio and offer him our love and energy so that he would be well and returned to us. I ‘saw’ his spirit rising into the sky and I ‘saw’ all of us following him, calling him to stay. He appeared to be dancing in the air in huge circular motion, quite joyous. We pursued him and suddenly, his spirit took a dive and he landed right back in his body in the hospital in Cuzco. As we followed his descent, we started sending him our love as light. Then I heard Turibio say quite clearly to us: “This light you offer is infinite, so send it as well to the people around me. Then, send it to the people of Cuzco. Then, send it to the whole region!”

At that moment I understood that this was why Turibio fell out of the tree. His spirit wanted to teach his family how to use their collective energy to serve people around them in a simple, less confrontive, yet profound manner. He knew that the strength of their love for him would reveal a new way to share and to awaken a needed resource out of their unconsciousness.

I was very moved by what I saw next. I witnessed a ‘rain shower of light’ descending over the whole region in an ever-widening circle, propelled by our collective spirits. Awe and beauty filled me. I ‘saw’ that when anyone felt and received these raindrops of light, for a moment, their world expanded naturally in some way. It just happened. Someone pondering a problem suddenly discovered a solution or gains some needed insight. A person, addicted to alcohol, suddenly not reaching for that next drink. Someone about to be violent, suddenly losing the will or energy to do so. Someone lonely being moved and finding connection in a smile on a stranger’s face. These small moments of expansion were so simple, so beautiful, and yet strangely powerful. I reflected about how much of my own life has been guided by such ‘moments’ perhaps offered by who knows what angels out there sending love and light in my direction, creating an opening that was just simply

my next step. There is no philosophy, nor politics being served here...just an expression of respect and love that gave others the light or energy just to take a humble next step in this mystery of an existence we all share. We all yearn for the best but who is wise enough to know or understand what that is?

When I reported my experiences to those around me, Carlos, one of Turibio’s younger sons, laughed and said, “That is just how our father is... since we were children, he always had us think of others and be willing to give to others in our community.” At that moment I had the thought that this may be what a 5<sup>th</sup> Degree Altomisayoc would do. This degree of consciousness may not reside in an individual but rather in the power of a collective heart field conscious enough of itself that it would know to gather in ceremony simply to send out the light that can be generated from love to others. I realized how many of us are already involved in such acts through global prayer meditations as well as prayer groups to help heal the sick. Humility is necessary to get out of the way of what we think we would like to happen, to release expectations and political agendas born out of the wounds of a disconnected reality. Become the connectedness, become the light, trusting that light will show us all something we could never have imagined, a truly new way of being, arising step by humble human step. What a blessed teaching about “Right Relation”!

If it was a fall out of the mythical garden of Eden that separated us, Turibio’s fall was one that may serve what Paul Tillich called “the reunion of the separated”.

### *Journey to India*

Now, I want to share some stories from our India journey that again explore the “Right Relation”. By the way, we have a travel website through which we share stories and photos of our trips if you want more of all the gory details:

[www.heartoftheworld.blogspot.com](http://www.heartoftheworld.blogspot.com)



Our "Journey to India" Sanga

We traveled in India with our own Allyu or "Sanga", as we called ourselves there. Duncan and Rosalyn Grady joined Terence, Jim, and I. We are all from Nelson. Less than a year before, we had the inspiration to do this trip together. All of us had traveled to Peru together in the spring of 2004. In India, we nurtured the birth a "New Foundation in Human Relations" by traveling together with a fully conscious intention to facilitate and support the truth of experience that would arise in each of us in this wild land. Only Terence was familiar with traveling in India. And, as we journeyed, each of us experienced life in India differently, from our unique worlds. It was very powerful practice to keep opening to each other, welcoming the mystery of the range of our particular points of view rather than trying to decide whose reality was the right one. Our respect for each other is profound as each one of us is a well-seasoned explorer into the mysteries of existence out of which has grown clear generative actions. I know I began to feel that I had expanded into a creature with five pairs of eyes and many arms, not unlike so many of the Hindu gods and goddesses we encountered along the roads and in the temples of India. This was a great blessing and brought us so many riches as each of us were called to be fully present with what we were experiencing and share with each other so we could go deeper into a new spiritual practice called India.

For me, India is a heart wrenching paradox of the sorrow of unfathomable poverty alongside the wonder of an ecstatic, abiding devotion to that land and her gods and goddesses. One writer, V.S. Naipaul, called India "a wounded civilization." India is a much-ravaged land as hordes of invaders have plundered her lands and peoples for centuries. Everything in the range of life exists there to be experienced in a chaotic fashion with seemingly no rules. We found the best strategy for survival was to abandon any expectations, all hope, and all attempts of the mind to grasp what is there. That was not always easy to do as we were commanded into a direct experience of the often-stark realities of moment, as no other place has demanded before. It seemed that all one can carry away is the power and intense immediacy of the experiences of the many moments and the heart-stimulating challenge to learn the difference between 'reaction and response'. A big challenge I find myself still in.

Hinduism is the dominant tradition but the influence of the Muslims and Buddhism were also very present for us as the Hindus have a facility to accept all ways. Shiva, Brahma, and Vishnu, the destroyer, the creator, and the preserver gods showed up everywhere we traveled. Ganesha, the elephant headed protector and remover of obstacles was ever present as we faced high mountain landslides and other roadblocks. Ma Kali, a goddess of a fierce, uncompromising countenance helped all of us hold our own with relentless vendors and beggars and she supported Rosalyn and I to face and deal with what we saw as a deeply repressed and much abused feminine in that world. (See the recently released movie 'Water' for a stark but beautifully told story of the life of widows in India). We met the gentle Lakshmi, goddess of wealth, abundance, & generosity as we traveled into Rajasthan. Hanuman, the monkey god who played a heroic role in one of Hinduism's major sagas – the Ramayana – must have inhabited the monkey who almost got away with stealing Terence's money and passport in a high temple in Hampi. Saraswati, the goddess of music and dance, graced us in performances in temples of Khajurajo and palaces

of Udaipur. The blue faced, dancing Krishna we met in the form of many babas and saddhus who loved to play with our hearts and minds. So many deities seemed to reveal themselves to us and arose in us as we traveled that land.

Yet, in retrospect, still finding myself shell shocked from the direct experience of so much pollution, over-population, poverty and human degradation, I still wonder about whether these gods are not just like the movie stars of some great (actually vast) soap opera that have kept people of India entranced for millennia distracting them from facing the seeming impossible healing of the trauma of their lives or, very real divine energies that have helped people survive the rape by other greed-filled humans, of the land that Mother India and her people have endured over and over for all those millennia. Jim says that it is a wonder in the human spirit that all this has and continues to happen and people there not only stay alive in horrific circumstances but, many times, still smile and laugh. It's the flowers and trees, the colors and patterns of the saris, the sunrises and sunsets, and the hearts of our friends that also help.

Of the many Hindu gods and goddesses we met in various forms, Ma Ganga - who is the Ganges River, born in the heavens but flowing out of Shiva's hair from many sources in the Himalayas - impressed me the most. During the first leg of our journey, we traveled to Rishikesh, then Gangotri, one of the sources of the Ganges, and to Devprayag where the Bhagirathi and Alaknanda Rivers come together to then be named the Ganges.



Me and Ma Ganga became One at Devprayag

Ma Ganga's compelling and sacred force touched us profoundly as it does the lives of so many Indians. Devotion to her power and beneficence has not ceased for thousands of years. On the banks of the Ganges in Varanasi (also called Benares), famous as a city to die in if you want the boon of instant liberation, are the famous 'Burning Ghats', dedicated totally to cremation of those lucky enough to have died there. The ashes of the many who are cremated each day are ceremoniously and continuously deposited into the Ganges day and night. Not everyone is cremated however. Ma Ganga also receives the bodies of many dead animals and those considered 'close to God' when they die. Their bodies are not cremated. These are pregnant women, children, sadhus or holy men, lepers, and small pox victims (yes - leprosy and small pox, we were told, are gods). Besides ashes and bodies of the dead, Ma Ganga is also polluted with fresh sewage constantly pouring into her body.

All along her shores are other ghats dedicated to many other different purposes. (Ghats are places on the river bank where long stretches of stairways have been built that go down and into the river). So, every day as well, on the many ghats of this same river, people of this city are washing their clothes, drinking, bathing themselves and brushing their teeth, making offerings of small leaf boats with marigolds and candles, singing chants and prayers as they do all these things. How is it possible that this city isn't in a state of constant plague, which in our world, we would expect to be the natural result of such an off-the-charts fecal-pollution count? Shamans, natural holders of great spiritual energies, are said to have the power to transmute poison into well being. I'm sure it isn't easy but Ma Ganga has got to be one powerful shamanic force. Or perhaps, in the relationship of devotion people of India have with her, as Dr. Emoto has shown, pouring millions of prayers into her waters daily has created the beautiful and healing effects claimed by those who live with her no matter what physical evidence to the contrary might show. Another example perhaps,

of the mystery of “Right Relation” creating something beautiful.

### *The Dharma Yatra*

#### The Bodhisattva's Vow

For as long as space endures  
For as long as sentient beings remain  
May I too abide  
To dispel the misery of the world

Padmasambhava, a great Tibetal Buddhist

Even though the Buddha was born and became enlightened in India, Buddhism didn't really take hold in that land but rather migrated north to Tibet and east to many other Asian countries. Now of course, Buddhism is growing in influence all over the western world. The Dalai Lama has said that one of the most valuable experiences one can do in one's lifetime is a pilgrimage in India called the Dharma Yatra. To do this pilgrimage would be a blessing for one's own life and lives of many. We had all decided that the one thing we wanted to do in India was the Dharma Yatra. So thus we traveled to the four major sites in the Buddha's life: Lumbini (now in Nepal), where he was born; Bodhgaya, where he was enlightened; Sarnath, where the Buddha offered his first teaching after enlightenment to five friends, the first sanga, and lastly, Kushinagar, where the Buddha died. The last three locations are in the poorest, most populated, most polluted provinces of India. This pilgrimage became for me, a deep meditation on what motivated the Buddha toward Enlightenment – a very direct experience of some of the worst of human suffering.

What motivated the Buddha in his world and time couldn't carry a microsecond of the suffering and poverty here and now. When we were leaving Bodhgaya, we were taken to the Mughal Surai train station. Our hotel had told us to go to Platform 2 for our train, but on this platform, we were told to go to Platform 4. Train stations here are full of garbage and hundreds of people who live in them. Moving through a station is always a challenge. In the lobby are many families, old and young people camped

out on the floor. This continues on the platforms. Old women, children, and lepers beg for any meager means to survive. Terence bought some bananas for one old woman and the light of joy that dawned in her eyes when we handed them to her ...how could I describe that feeling? What gratitude such as this is possible in our world?

It is hard to spend much time in the station without being overwhelmed by the insistent outstretched hands of so many children. This has got to be agonizing for anyone's heart, yet on our way to Platform 4, we faced something more. We wheeled our bags right next to a very old, very gaunt man laid flat out on the narrow concrete path who was obviously in the last stages of dying. I reacted with shock as no one was with him and yet everyone was with him, just passing by, ignoring what was happening to him. Feelings of horror were mixed with an intense desire to stop and hold this man in his final moments on Earth and then scream my pain and rage at the indignity of such a passing. Yet, we kept moving, all of us in some state about this event. When we stopped, all I could think to do was simply send a prayer that he would pass rapidly. However, his form kept haunting us as the five of us pondered for days about what other responses we could have made.

Terence had a dream in which the phrase arose "the individual consequences of collective energy fields". This is what we faced daily in India – who or what is responsible for all this? What choices and rationalizations had the culture made that made all this horror somehow acceptable? My experience of Spirit is grounded in a clear sense of interconnectedness with all my relations, is that we are One Divine Being living through each individual thing as a cell in that sacredness. I hold a belief that “none of us are home until all of us are home”. We are working together to create the deepest reality of our existence. India is reputed to be a mecca for Spirit - I had difficult experiencing this as a reality in the pain of that train station.

Jim wrote this poem to illustrate our experience and the questions that must arise:

*Mughal Surai and the Bodhi Tree*

*Yesterday I sat on the train platform at Mughal Surai*

*Fruit rotting, flies swarming,  
People living under cardboard and plastic*

*Young men standing three feet away staring unblinkingly*

*Straight at me,  
Crippled old people,  
Beggar children touching my arms  
and kissing my feet*

*A woman with pus streaming from one eye*

*points to her eye  
And grabs me  
An erratic behaving, unpredictable,  
cut-covered young man sits  
down and grabs my shoe*

*An emaciated old man, wild-eyed, wide open-eyed,*

*Lies on the platform  
Shaking, dying*

*A river of people*

*flows around him unresponding*

*Today I sat under the Bodhi Tree*

*Pilgrims chanting, birds singing  
Monks and nuns prostrating, praying  
Incense and bells  
Purple and white orchids everywhere  
Just brought by hand from Thailand.*

*Where, I wonder, would the Buddha suggest*

*I sit to become enlightened?*

I guess I would have to respond to that: "It may not be 'either/or' but rather 'both/and'. One challenges the other to wake up. In my heart, perhaps these are the contractions and expansions of a much longed for birth of something greater. And trees are definitely sacred in India. A woman carries a sapling of a tree to her new home when she gets married and spends her life tending to it, making offerings each day. Trees such as the World Tree of the Maya and of so many other indigenous myths; the Kabbalistic Tree of Life that has inspired my life and teachings; the Christmas Tree,

celebrating the gifts we all carry to each other, as well as the Bodhi Tree that Buddha sat under and became Enlightened are all worth sitting with and contemplating as we walk out into the world as it is now with our eyes wide open and our hearts needfully engaged.



Monks chanting before the Bodhi Tree



Children as scavengers in the garbage dump outside the Bodhi Tree Garden

In Bodhgaya, on the path between our hotel and the Bodhi Tree Garden, is young boy whose legs were misshaped and totally useless. Naturally, he made his life from begging and we heard stories that some families have broken the legs of their children so that they could beg for the family. I don't know the truth of this but meeting this boy each day became a deep practice in discovering right relation.

One day, very early in the morning as Jim and I were leaving from an all night meditation under the Bodhi Tree, we passed this boy again. From my experience of meditating all night and from the culmination of my experiences in the garden the days before, I was in such a sweet state that spontaneously, as I walked by, I turned to him, not even attending to his crippled condition, but only seeing a divine heart beating in him. I bowed and clasped my hands, saying "Namaste" with my own totally filled heart. "My light honors the light within you" is what 'Namaste' means. I walked away and then heard a yell behind me: "Goodbye!" As I turned back to look, I saw him again. He was smiling and waving to me joyfully! I was shocked and delighted myself that our spirits had touched and recognized each other. His spirit overwhelmed me with its strength in that moment! How else could he endure his existence? Good 'shocks', not so good 'shocks' are all part of the mind letting go into a bigger reality.

I learned that it isn't just a case of giving money or food to beggars, which might serve for a moment but being present enough to touch something far deeper, as needed as food perhaps. "What are our true needs?" became a useful question to reflect upon. "What is real here?" How do we recognize and meet each other there? At the end of the film "Water" there is a scene in which Ghandi speaks to a crowd on a train platform. He says: "I use to think that Truth is God. Now I see that God is Truth." What is the Truth that Ghandi found, that enabled his country to take another step toward it's own liberation?

India, with seeming great gusto, confounds the everyday mind. I can see how a spiritual vision arose that could only ask not only for liberation from the body and it's inevitable suffering but also for escape from the mind and its assumptions, ambitions, expectations, fixations on any idea of being right or having a truth. As we traveled, it became apparent to us that the moment we thought something, the opposite arose. Anything and everything goes in India. No mind, no investment in anything is a good coping strategy but I wonder: Is

it really a true spiritual practice? Certainly, all we could do was to let go and be in the moment by moment of existence. India is a huge meditation in this eternal now and I experienced that keeping my heart open and alive "in the hell of many moments",



A Buddhist temple carved out of a mountain that could only have been created in an ecstasy of devotion. One of 34 magnificent Buddhist, Hindu and Jain temples built next to each other in a place called Ellora, in the middle of India.

is the deeper practice to be realized. My perspective keeps shifting, as I keep open.

### *Blending the Worlds into a Fuller View*

Experiences in Peru over so many years have awakened and clarified a sense of a deeper potential of life on Earth, ways we can function well and nurture our own lives and the lives of others. "Right Relation" is a higher empathy, natural to the love that I believe life on Earth is meant to be (would a true mother really have it any other way?). I have learned that love is not "out there", in the spiritual heavenly dimensions. There might be joy, ecstasy, bliss 'out there', but love is a particular experience that arises only between a Self and an Other. Life on Earth is relational - if there is not Other, there is no love. On Earth, each thing, each person is unique as flowers or trees are each unique – that uniqueness is the quality of 'otherness' and makes

love possible. Our unity will grow on Earth as we deepen in a loving that is respect for our diversity.

Certainly, bliss is good, ecstasy is wonderful, and joy is expansive but love radiates out of the heart-beat of our great Mother Earth. I feel it was a resonance with her love I carried inside me to India. There I experienced the effect of a lack of respect for the feminine and the experience of embodiment. I responded like a mother would to a child, hungry, hurt, wounded, abused, and abandoned in so many ways. What I felt is “natural” and I rest in that heartfulness that yearns that all beings be well and happy - in other words just get a basic chance to fulfill their potential as a life in this great mystery of Earth existence. We not only deserve this but our truth depends upon this!

### *My Work*

I realize at the end of this lengthy newsletter, that I haven't written anything about my work with the Tarot, which is what so many of you come to experience with me. My work with the Tarot Symbols – both in doing readings and in offering workshops in The Mystery School to others is certainly my delicious, wonderful day job! It feels like “right livelihood”.

However, in the practice of ‘walking one’s talk’, the Tarot symbols and the Tree of Life, whose branches the Tarot illuminate, have very directly inspired and continue to inspire my personal life’s path and its adventure. These symbols are my map, a ground of consciousness that quickens and guides my life. I chose to dive into life in the ways I have because the symbols showed me that a greater reality of life existed. I share these stories with you as an offering of one life to another. We are each other’s teachers and students, as my partner Jim often says. I hold these stories as teachers, designed to express and inspire our ‘greater existence’ and its deeper responses.

In India, I understood more profoundly than ever before, how the Mystery School of the Tarot and Tree of Life have offered me an ever-expanding practice of Right Relationship, which is any relationship that serves to reveal life’s beauty, to

one’s Self, to Others, and to Life itself. For this I feel deeply blessed and am profoundly grateful that I can meet with others in this very useful way.

Practically, I do have schedules of travel to this work this year as well. In the spring I will travel to the Okanagan and the West Coast of British Columbia and Washington. In the fall I expect to go to Alberta and Montana and I’m hoping I have time to take a trip further east this year, later in the fall. If you are on my email list, I will always inform you if I am coming to your area.

If you have read this far, thank you for allowing me to share my heart with you.

With love and respect – may our lives continue to touch each other, Namasté, Carol



*My Essence Mandala  
Logo for The Mystery School of Life*