



:) Tentatively offered and to be read only as my sharing my personal spot right now, perhaps answering a few of Bruce's questions put forth in emails and also giving me a chance to spotlight my own questionings ...

When I stepped away from the workshop in March, I was majorly squeezed for time, one, and also my feeling was that with only a few of us really looking into our daily lives and writing reports, the sessions themselves didn't have quite the momentum and cohesiveness that they wanted to. I was benefited tremendously by our keeping the workshop going, and the attention that Gaya, Dao, Zen, Mitsu, myself and others put into the topics, meeting not just on Thursdays but for smaller practice discussions often in voice, is something I appreciated enormously. It was time 'dear' to me. In the earliest days of the workshop, it would be no exaggeration to say that it became my central practice, and remained that way for quite a while.

However, when a handful are doing reports, and the session is open, then an inclusive discussion rightfully reflects the pull of the larger group. It is easier to discuss general topics in a general way rather than to be personal. I continued to find the way of discussion in WoK, rather terrific... always something that I read twice or stop with to consider. But, what I find that I *\*require\** in my life at this moment, is to make room for practice to get as direct and personal as it can get, moreso than discussion, so I'm hesitant.

If there is anything in the world I'm interested in, it is whether a group/session can be focused and cohesive without being 'driven'. I remember a dear friend telling me once that when he stayed with a group of monks, there was a sense that *the way* the group practiced ... and in this I took to mean almost a way of blending of selves and dropping of ego as way within relationship, itself reflected everyone's personal devotion and practice. I'm at a rather sensitive time in my life so not really interested in being driven or driving, but in learning to be at the service of what some call 'the magic in the middle'. I'm also not sure how to facilitate such a thing but I'll be attentive to seeing what direction everyone goes in. All very interesting.

On the topic of metaphor, not much to add to Bruce's wonderful examples. The I-Ching discussion of the difference between koans and metaphor, I found to be very helpful. If we know all metaphors fall short, then there isn't a need to be too picky perhaps. I love that Bruce shared Pema's email to the PaB group also, as APAPB really is/can be one of those direct practices, as Agatha said recently, *studying our own environment and place it it*.

**The Master said, “There actually was no merit and virtue. Do not doubt the words of a sage. Emperor Wu of Liang’s mind was wrong; he did not know the right Dharma. Building temples and giving sanction to the Sangha, practicing giving and arranging vegetarian feasts is called ‘seeking blessings’. Do not mistake blessings for merit and virtue. Merit and virtue are in the Dharma body, not in the cultivation of blessings.”**

**The Master said further, “Seeing your own nature is merit, and equanimity is virtue. To be unobstructed in every thought, constantly seeing the true, real, wonderful function of your original nature is called merit and virtue.”**