

Discussing Buddhism

Hi Friend,

I just watched the movie Kundun (about the early life of the Dalai Lama) and am a little emotional, but I do want to respond to your email. Small world keeps getting smaller. As a Buddhist who has taken the Bodhisattva vow, I do have something to say to "Not that I would even consider discussing Buddhism with you - I know very little.". Knowing you know very little about something is actually knowing a lot. Even if I did not know you I would do my utmost to answer any question you had about Buddhism. Buddhists don't proselytize, but we share when asked. So seeing you are a dear friend of 40 years now, I would happily discuss anything about Buddhism you are interested in. I am no lama, but I am a keen student.

The name is Zollinger, Fred Zollinger. He and Ray Nitta rebuilt the broken shrines in Lawai. It was an awesome task. I follow in their footsteps. I would like to know about Shikoku. I plan to visit someday not too far in the future. Something that could inspire Issei immigrants to carve a path in a Lawai hillside and build 88 replica shrines makes me want to experience the real thing,

My prayers are with you and your auntie as you help her pass peacefully to her next life. You say you know little of Buddhism, but the caring and compassion you show in wanting to be with your auntie in her final days, and for your sister's pain in this - that is the essence of Buddhism. Having empathy for the suffering of others, having compassion. That is the heart of the Buddhist path. You think you know little, but you may be already quite far along the path.

Take care, be well. Visit the shrines again if you can - there are orchids planted everywhere, the shrines are cared for, and sometime in the next year a new temple will be built over the remains of the old one. Old becomes new, a sacred site reawakens.