

SECTION ONE: Meeting the Kamakura Buddha (or Seeking Still Mind, Open Heart, Wisdom)

We start our travels by going to see the famous Kamakura Buddha, purported to be the largest Buddha in the world, and metaphorically to find the peace of the Buddha—to still the mind; to feel the compassion of an open heart represented by the heart Buddhas and to gain wisdom to guide us on our journey

SECTION TWO: THE TRAIN

The train is both literal and metaphoric. Literally, it explains how you move from one place to another—i.e. to return from Kamakura via the train station at Shinjuku (purported to be the busiest in the world). Metaphorically, it suggests a certain way of being in society that is regimented, automated, crowded, and impersonal, a visual representation of the “rat race.” No eye contact. This is the very opposite of the “I-Thou” connections we are seeking.

After riding the trains, we wonder whether we can find a way into society that allows us to share our unique gifts, whatever they may be, without feeling dehumanized, depersonalized, merely a cog in the societal machine.

SECTION THREE: PROTESTS:

The protest helps us realize you cannot simply separate from the material world and its inequities and injustices. War and exploitive treaties are realities and cause suffering. Around this time, Woodstock took place in the U.S., with its music of freedom and its exhortations to head East to learn from its ancient wisdom. , Yet the week we arrived in Tokyo, we heard news that nine students, who were unarmed and peacefully protesting the Vietnam war, had been shot by the National Guard. In Tokyo, after visiting the Kamakura Buddha, we encounter Japanese student groups and others protesting the Vietnam War anti-imperialism in general) and t the US/Japanese security treaty (called ANPO) which allowed the United States to maintain military bases on Japanese soil, especially on Okinawa. Protesters shout the chant throughout ANPO HANTAI (We oppose ANPO). Although the protest begins peacefully with a lighthearted spirit and the police are initially polite, eventually there is forceful confrontation. When there is a lack of peace in the external world, we ask ourselves, how can we ignore widespread social injustice?

SECTION FOUR: RE-SEEKING STILLNESS: NEXT STEPS ON THE JOURNEY

The final section is introduced by the guardian warrior statues that symbolize our desire for protection on an inner and outer quest that seems fraught with risk. The warrior statues are intended to guard the purity, the peace, the sacredness of the temple. But what happens when the temple is attacked? Do they use their weapons or respond nonviolently? We think of Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr who used nonviolent means to protest injustice. But we also think of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German minister who was involved in an attempt to assassinate Hitler; and Nelson Mandela, the first president of South Africa, who at various times endorsed both violent and nonviolent strategies for dismantling apartheid. We begin to wonder further, “How

do we protect our inner temple? How do we keep our inner self still, open hearted and compassionate while also addressing the outer violence and injustice?"

A Japanese friend we met takes us to a monastery in Tokyo. Returning to the tranquility of the monastery reflects our confusion about action in the world and a renewed desire to find inner peace and stillness. We share we are planning to go to Daitoku-ji Monastery in Kyoto to deepen our meditative practice. She tells us about a community (commune) of likeminded individuals dedicated to a simple life on the island of Sewanose, where we will eventually travel.

ENDING QUESTIONS

As the film ends, we continue to ask ourselves, is seeking inner peace really just hiding from the harsh realities of daily life? Is it possible to keep one's inner temple pure, uncontaminated by the evil in the world, without running away? How can we create a safe space within to replenish, restore and cultivate a calm core? We realize that being in the world, whether in a monastery or on the protest lines, requires compassion and kindness, but also a certain toughness and fierceness to guard the gates internally and externally. How can we develop the steely discipline of Zen while also respecting Gandhi's injunction that we are all brothers and sisters? How can we stand against injustice gently, kindly, forcefully, firmly yet nonviolently?

The journey continues, without camera; to still our minds, open our hearts, and search for the next steps in finding our gifts and how they might contribute to peace in the world....