

Christmas 2010

Dear Family and Friends,

Jack and I divide our shared tasks into two general categories. His are mainly outside and mine inside. The task of decorating our Christmas tree and writing our Christmas letters is my pleasure--and challenge. This year I'm finding it more difficult to keep up with the demands of our fast-paced, technological life. I'm always behind. I don't think it's just my age. We all are victims of the current acceleration of time that seems as if it's rapidly approaching warp speed.

This morning, when I vowed to make a swift start on composing this year's Christmas letter I remembered that somewhere in Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind, the collection of talks given over 40 years ago by my Zen master, Shunryu Suzuki, he'd discussed the relationship between God and Creativity. I wondered if it had a message appropriate to this year's holiday season. It does. I'd like to share it with you.

"According to Christianity, every existence in nature is something which was created for or given to us by God. That is the perfect idea of giving. But if you think that God created man, and that you are somehow separate from God, you are liable to think you have the ability to create something not given by Him. For instance, we create airplanes and highways. And when we repeat, 'I create, I create, I create,' soon we forget about God. This is the danger of human culture." This is good time to give thanks to this Great Mystery who answers heartfelt calls from all faiths.

May 2011 be a banner year for you,

Marian

OVER

Dear David,

I hope you are enjoying your life. As Jack and I grow older we really begin to appreciate it in all its manifestations. Our relationship to each other is our biggest challenge but also our most enlightening opportunity. We feel blessed to have time to devote to our creative passions—his art work and my writing.

Jack's bronze bonsai trees are becoming more beautiful each year as he explores new & improved techniques.

Small tin is progressing at its ploddy pace. I have 12 of the 16 chapters finished and sense it is becoming more closely connected with Roshio ju ment, the gunner mind. I also feel indebted to your masterful work: Crooked Cucumber. You made a great contribution to the world of Zen.

Take good care of yourself—

Manan