PURE LAND IN SIGHT

To Reverend Ji-Shin Diane Dunn
whose Great Compassion encourages me.

Due to protracted illness I have not had
the energy to collate these spontaneous
seventeeners in appropriate order, or
situate them with background notes.
This is simply the way they came to me,
day by day, moment by moment, during
a month in Spain, deprived of internet.
Diane will be big-hearted enough to ignore
their many shortcomings.

“Work out your salvation
with diligence.” Those were
the Buddha's last words.

“Take possession of my body,
mind, heart and soul this morning,
Master.”

“What is it leading to,
this life of ups and downs?”
“Birth in the Pure Land.”

Everyone I meet in this life
is taken with me
to the Pure Land.

As long as I say
Namo Amida Butsu
nothing can go wrong.

All my efforts
to write haiku end in
Namo Amida Butsu.

Flat on my back.
Amida reassures me
everything is all right.

Thought dissolves into
empty-mindedness.
Speech turns into nembutsu.

I gaze out the window
at the calm blue sea
and just say nembutsu.
(reading Eiken Kobai)
“Gladly hearing the Name”,
“rejoicing in Faith” -
two moods to learn about.

“It's a relief to know
that perfection in this life
is not required.”

Happiness doesn't mean
that everything has to be
hunky-dory.

Diane might like this one.
Not just “I hope to get
to the Pure Land”, but
“the Pure Land is in sight.”

The misery of waking up
bears no resemblance
to what follows.

I'm not as bad
as Shinran makes out.
Practice has rounded the edges.

Psychiatry, my wife
and other “good friends”
reduce my blind passions.

Conscious of Amida's love
I pace the floor
murmuring nembutsu.

Fear is the enemy of happiness.
Only love can conquer it.

I take the Great Masters
at their word and simply
recite nembutsu.

Namo Amida Butsu -
smiles on the faces
of Spanish fishwives.

Namo Amida Butsu -
I long to be born
in the Land of Bliss.

While Maria shops
in the sales, I say
Namo Amida Butsu,
ignoring the undoubted
physical beauty of
one young salesgirl.

Amida must have walked
in these shoes in the course of
a thousand lives.

The vegetarian salad
at Bodhi-Green
was the best ever.

Watching doves fighting
for crumbs on the Paseo.
No peace anywhere.

It was a worthwhile day.
We were together.
Some Buddhas were sighted.

I can clearly see
my bedroom Buddha on his altar
back in Bruges.

Manna to the soul -
those moments of meditation
in Alicante.

Old age is a hill
you needn't climb by yourself -
Amida will help.
(for Amida read Maria)

Now we settle down
to the horrific world news
and a hot footbath.

Let go and let God.
Namo Amida Butsu.
Complete abandon.

Try to imagine
what enlightenment is
and strive to attain it.

“Please stop propagating
conceptual thoughts
and find peace in your heart.”

Regular practice
of nembutsu will lead
to enlightenment.
Neptune is the most spiritual planet and represents Amida.

24 February. Sun in Pisces.
My daughter is fifty.

All I can hear is
the waves beating on the shore,
breath of night and day.

Enlightenment must always
take others
into consideration.

Gratitude counts more
than anything else
in cultivating the soul.

A degree of enlightenment
may appear
on the nembutsu path -

Namo Amida Butsu
Namo Amida Butsu -
but is not
by any means the real thing,
which comes after birth
in the Pure Land.

Beware of minor
irritations and setbacks.
Life is a struggle!

Flexibility
is a desirable gift
which can save some scrapes.

Think you have shinjin?
Wait till you're hungry, angry,
lonely and/or tired …

Grateful for this
El Campello sunrise -
“Namo Amida Butsu”.

Gratitude is the great solvent.
It puts paid to dissatisfaction.

“I write to instruct.
That's one of my major goals.
A teacher at heart.”
Maria on couch.
   Her modest serenity
   is most impressive.

Last meal in El Campello.
   Martine and Michel
   have come to collect us.

Namo Amida Butsu.
   I'm glad to be alive
   and in good health.

The best, in fact
   the only thing to do,
   is to utter nembutsu.

Enlightenment has
   a lot to do with
   relaxing and letting go...

a confident attitude
   to events that lie ahead
   \textit{here and now}.

We spend the last few days
   a long way further south
   in hotter sunshine.

Namo Amida Butsu -
   my soul united
   with Tathagata.

I'm utterly free to be
   myself, and to think
   what I want to think.

Namo Amida Butsu,
   I cannot do
   anything wrong today.

Michel is giving us lunch
   at the sea.
   Namo Amida Butsu.

At every New Moon -
   love and gratitude
   to my father and mother.

Closer to Amida,
   I settle down
   for a Spanish siesta.
Namo Amida Butsu -
let everything happen
the way it wants.

Listen to the advice
Amida transmits
through the Sun, Moon and stars.

“It's in the Pure Land
that we are able to save
sentient beings.”

I can’t help feeling
my belovèd Shitoku
is helping me now.

“You're on the right track,
Markitos. Simply avoid
conceptual thought.”

_after reading a few more
_pages of Eiken Kobai:_
“I think Shitoku
is capable of saving me
as he wishes.”

I surrender
to his benevolence.
“Namo Amida Butsu.”

“Good health is the first condition
for esoteric training.”
- _Rudolf Steiner_

“Rest your eyes, Marcus,
on that woodland scene.
The Pure Land is also green.”

Asking myself
“what I can do right?”
the answer comes: _Say nembutsu._

Our second last day.
Namo Amida Butsu
is all I can say.

A quarter to four.
I doubt if Diane is up.
Her chickens unfed.
Every single moment
is an opportunity
for feeling good.

In every situation
Namo Amida Butsu
matters most.

Thousands of bodhisattvas
attend the bombu
who says nembutsu.

Known as angels in the West

This Chinese bazar
is full of plastic Buddhas
waving happily.

Honen believes
that constant recital
of nembutsu is the best.

Slackness of practice
in saying nembutsu
leads to doubts about the Vow.

Nembutsu practice
is a lifelong commitment.
It's just like a marriage vow.

“Perhaps Shitoku
is advising me to keep
my feet on the ground.”

This is the last day
of our holiday in Spain.
Pluto on my Moon.

“I am entirely at your disposal.
I am ready for anything.”

“How could I not hear you,
Marcus?” Amida asks.
“I am inside you!”

Sitting outside here
in harmony with the stars
nothing bothers me.

Namo Amida Butsu.
Namo Amida Butsu
is my secret.
“When we are born
in the Pure Land and become Buddhas
we save others.”
I should study the teachings more often.

“I'm not more important
than anyone else.
A benighted bombu.”

Reciting nembutsu
is the only sure mind
of Great Compassion.
- Shinran in Tannisho

Namo Amida Butsu,
gazing at the forest
of neat green trees.

Based on Einstein:
Mercury gets me from A to Z.
Neptune takes me to the Pure Land.

From the side window
a glimpse of the morning sun
we leave behind us.

All I have to say
in the airport is
    Namo Amida Butsu.
'random-checked'. no hassle.

We are in the air
and flying back to Brussels.
    Thank you, Amida.

Our Spanish outing
is now approaching its end.
    We're nearly in Bruges.

All I can say is
“Namo Amida Butsu,
thank you very much.”
Maria is also very grateful.

“Reciting nembutsu
is all I know how to do
with assurance.”
First sober reflection
upon return to Belgium.
Never say you are bored.  
There are always more nembutsus to recite.

Reciting nembutsu  
will help you to stay awake -  
if that's what you want.

Constant gratitude  
creates an attitude of love  
towards our friends.

Sit down and say nembutsu  
instead of flittering round  
like a bat.

Deep breathing combined  
with nembutsu will certainly  
promote good health.

I sit in the shed.  
A feather lands on the hedge.  
I breathe. Nembutsu.

“You don't have to prove yourself.  
Keep saying Namo Amida Butsu.”

Namo Amida Butsu  
is given to me.  
It's not my own work.

Kuan Yin's right hand  
fell off and broke when I stretched out 
to pick up the phone.

Consider time as your friend,  
not your enemy -  
things will go better.

As long as I have  
Namo Amida Butsu to say  
I'll be oké.

Ten to seven.  
Our blackbird is chirping  
Namo Amida Butsu.

“I did it my way!”  
And look what a disaster  
it turned out to be.
Namo Amida Butsu
is the solution
to all my problems.

The pain in my toes goes away
when I say
Namo Amida Butsu.

“Come just as you are.
You have never done anything wrong
in my sight.”

Friends! It would be terrible
if I didn't see them
in the Pure Land.

My work for today
is only to say
Namo Amida Butsu.

The flu pinned me down.

Every single nembutsu I say
is a step towards the Pure Land.

There on our return
to greet us with cold white love -
heavenly snowdrops.

Signs of birdlife in garden.
“Keep saying my Name.”

All I am capable of is
saying Namo Amida Butsu.

I RESPECT the tiredness
of body and mind
which has gripped me this week.

In the flower of life
nembutsu is good.
Approaching death, better.

If you had a thousand days to live,
how would you think of spending them?

When your time comes
to leave this cheating world,
will anything hold you back?
Getting through the day
  without going bananas -
  second flu attack.

Basho's 'death-haiku',
a modern interpretation
“Where warriors with deep wounds
  once slaughtered one another -
  wind-blown grass”

SPECULATION.
  It hits the best of us
  at unexpected moments.

The only answer is
  Namo Amida Butsu
  a hundred times.

Chuck out the ballast
  in your feverish brain.
  Have compassion with yourself.

On the bridge again:
I turn, face the sun
  and say a dozen
  Namo Amida Butsu’s.
And here comes my printer.

The blackbird came
  hopping along the path
  so I quickly filled his bath.

Don't forget -
  your Guardian Angel
  is always with you
  and can take
  any form he wants.

84,000 bodhisattvas
  protect
  the nembutsu person.

More helpful, less demanding -
  one way to bring myself
  into balance.

One night for Diane.
  Amida has given me
  more than a million.
Don't let your karmic condition interfere with saying nembutsu.

While Marcus moans about his flu, twenty million others are starving.

Namo Amida Butsu, enjoy this moment in a sunny street.

Unexpected moments like this are gifts of heaven and must be seized.

I think Amida wanted to keep it simple for us poor bombus.

Nothing could be easier than saying the Name. It's a shining sun.

Namo Amida Butsu - the light is everywhere in town today.

What the catholics call "the power of love" I draw from each nembutsu.

I am a blind old man in black glasses. Nembutsu is my guide-dog.

Amida is not only in Sukhavati - He is everywhere.

The true meaning of Namo Amida Butsu is 'hearing the call'.

Guidance is necessary. Where on earth would I be without my friends?

ZUISHIN MARCUS CUMBERLEGE
Alicante – Bruges, February - March '17