

May 2018

Dear friends,

It is with sadness that I am sending the news that Grahame Hugh Petchey passed away on February 21, 2018. He was almost eighty years old. He contracted sepsis after a few years' hospital environment. Although he was successfully recovered from that immediate danger after three days in ICU, he was not strong enough to continue living. He could not take painkillers due to his low blood pressure. During the last two years of his life, he was in a rotating musical chair game between care home, acute hospital, recovery hospital and long term care hospitals in Sonoma and Alameda Counties. I talked with him a week before his death when his former caregiver, Alan, was admitted to hospital for a heart attack. Grahame was alert and very much concerned about his friend's recovery. I promised to pass his message along to Alan. Then, what surprised me was he thanked me for all the things I had done for him.

His immediate family gathered for cremation services at Fernwood Cemetery in Mill Valley on March 1st. San Francisco Zen Center provided a service to see him off. Then, SFZC conducted a formal Buddhist funeral at Green Gulch Farm on April 21st. I could not be there because over a year ago I had already planned to be in England at that time. Instead, his niece Emily and I visited his hometown of Lincoln to bring his spirit back home.

After growing up in the English city of Lincoln, Grahame began a travel filled life by first moving to Italy to teach English. In this early part of his life he may also have visited other places I do not know about. He met his first wife, Pauline, in Rome and came to San Francisco after living in Paris. He studied Zen and meditation with Shinryu Suzuki Roshi before heading to Japan for further studies. At that time most westerners knew very little about Oriental religions or spirituality. He was therefore a pioneer, one of the first seeds to change the Western culture in this regard. Then he went on to immerse himself in the world of business in Japan. He founded a successful English language school in Osaka and Tokyo and moved on to work as representative of two major American corporations in Japan.

That was Grahame before I met in 1979; by that time he had already lived two or three times as much as other people do in an entire lifetime. As a result of all his contacts he had an extensive range of friends I was always so fascinated to meet.

After so many years away from the US, in 1982 Grahame decided he wanted to be closer to his children, and moved back to California. Mark was born then, and we began a life together in Muir Beach. From there we went to the Southern coast of England, to Santa Fe, NM, and then back to Mill Valley. Then after a short stay in Dobbins, CA, we settled for

good in Sonoma County. After our first ten years of restless moving around together, our lives became less mobile. When Mark was in grade school, we lived in very rural Occidental, in West Sonoma County, a well-known hippie community. We enjoyed all the people there and they became our friends. We felt free.

The watershed moment in our lives happened when Mark was sixteen and in high school, when he had a severe automobile accident which caused him to become wheelchair bound. After that our lives became completely dominated by the necessity to manage the day-to-day details, problems and costs associated with his medical care and disability accommodations. We went into survival mode. I am still juggling this ongoing situation every day. Today Mark does not have clinical problems, seldom needs to see his doctors, and take no medication for his condition. But he requires a good exercise program, which is critical to sustain his present level of function going forward. I asked him if Grahame visited him during his dreams, and he indicated "yes".

Following is a poem Mark wrote when he was in middle school:

Equality

Night is to day

As yin is to yang,

Yet, so close

And so perfect

Together in everlasting balances.

As long as there's a day

There always will be night,

Without one or the other

There is no balance,

There is no life.

Mark and I greatly appreciate you for your friendship and presence in Grahame 's life.

Hideko – contact: hideko@sonic.net Phone: (707) 481-7531

512 Norlee Street, Sebastopol CA 95472 USA