

## The Value of Emptiness, by Nitya Chaitanya Yati

I am sitting here with a hot cup of tea in my left hand. I cannot drink it. It is hot, so I have to wait. Before me is a loaf of banana bread with a knife and a spoon on it. We are waiting for friends to come, so it is not cut. On my right side is a wicker basket beautifully made by some Chinese people. It is empty. The origin of the basket from China and the emphasis on the value of emptiness in the Taoist philosophy make the basket a double dose to move me away from the tea and bread into the first emptiness that is continuing to be in the process of being filled even though cycles of universes have come and gone.

I have in my lap my eyeglasses. They are of no use to me now, because I am sitting with my eyes closed. It's a paradox that things which are present do not interest me and what is not present has become the major interest of this moment. My friend who is taking down this dictation now tore off the sheet in hasty abruptness so that he could reach onto the next sheet before the coming of the word that was not yet articulated. Our preparation for what is yet to be seems more real than experiencing what is already given.

In fact, the whole theme of spiritual search is this reaching forward from the filled cup to the possibility of the empty basket. What is taught is to be forgotten to find room for what is to be learned. Reaching forward in great enthusiasm, hugging half maddened by the excitement of holding on to what is not yet fully known, is followed by a passive forgetfulness which makes it easy to leave behind what is sought after with so much zest, and it is so wonderful that the mind is again filled with the same zest and zeal to stand in waiting for the advent of the unknown.

You and I are only expressions which are not as eloquent as this wicker basket, which has been filled and emptied many times before and is again empty to give us the lesson of the ever-fresh and ever-meaningful emptiness, the emptiness that gives birth to fullness.

May you be born of emptiness. May you grow into fullness,  
and may you be the emptiness that everyone seeks for fulfillment.