

“Tonight I Met A Deva, An Angel Of Love” is a beautiful new book  
by Alan Clements with a foreword by H.H. 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama.

In Alan Clements’ literary gem of mystical realism, Buddhism’s essential teachings – The Four Noble Truths – unfold during an enchanted encounter, though the wisdom transcends any one religion. This precious book is a road map for a profoundly healthy way of living, spoken with a poetic voice soft enough to warmly wrap around the shoulders of a sleepy young child. While Buddhist terms dance effortlessly with contemporary rhymes on pages brimming with luminous imagery set to inspire both wonder and reflection at any age. Gone are the pages of heady academic review, instead we are encouraged to slip into the magic of our heart. We are gently reminded of the nature of things and how to swim mindfully through this space called life.

Living in Myanmar (Burma), Alan Clements immersed himself in Buddhist psychology and mindfulness meditation under the late Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw and his successor, the late Venerable Sayadaw U Pandita. He was one of the first Westerners to be ordained as a monk in that ancient culture, presently undergoing a devastating military coup d’état that has ignited a nationwide civil war against the dictatorship. Since Alan left the monastic life in 1984, he went on to create a non-sectarian community called World Dharma, which marries the wisdom from both East and West in a contemporary and dynamic way. He has been a meditation retreat leader, a journalist in areas of war and ethnic cleansing, and an educator of universal human rights and essential freedom. He is the author of numerous books (some with forwards by H.H. 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama), in addition to being a performing artist, satirical humorist, painter, public speaker, and a father. He has witnessed extreme human conflict and caringly listened to others, including Burma’s Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Aung San Suu Kyi, that brought forth the internationally acclaimed book, “The Voice of Hope,” one that examined both the philosophical and spiritual underpinnings of nonviolence, the psychology of totalitarianism, compassion-driven activism, and the essential role of women in roles of leadership.

As I read this book of Alan’s noble poems, it had me musing over how religion risks becoming a philosophical, almost academic debate. It is often a room of adults discussing how certain practices may help today’s society, the planet; how the historical texts should be translated and contemporarily interpreted. At worse, how dogma has rooted itself at the expense of true meaning and even used to hurt others. Religion has become many things that it should not have. It has become an excuse, an escape, a platform, even a trend. And today, many problems need healing, and we do require an astute, intelligent mind, but we need to do it with heart, with compassionate wisdom in action – religion at its best.

Our children (and adults) need to be inspired and empowered for themselves and for the world they inherit. A generation of greed may pass on a scorched earth and a woefully flickering torch, but it won’t go out if the magic within the heart is ignited and taught to illuminate rather than destroy, bringing warmth to our world, to the jagged nature of broken cultural constructs in which we tend to live. We require the ‘softening of wonderment,’ like the gentle pellucid water over rocks, and these poetic words of wisdom are like the rain.

The Four Noble Truths were noble over 2500 years ago yet never do they feel more relevant and imperative. As adults, we have a remarkable responsibility to our children to help them know the majesty of this precious life and precious planet. Read this compelling book for yourself and read it to your young ones, and ready yourself for the blossoming, and a true transformation.

The illustrations for this book have been generously donated by a small collection of artists at Dakini As Art, who try to live consciously within the Dharma as well as attaining to paint it.

Tilly Campbell-Allen

"Alan Clements' lovely book is pure and straight from the heart. I recommend it to every living child, to give them a true appreciation of what real life can be if the search for purity and meaning prevails."

~Helen Caldicott, pediatrician, founder of Physicians for Social Responsibility

- 1985 Nobel Peace Prize