

figure out what this book actually says.” And that’s the strength of studying together. “I know what I think, I’m tired of what I think; I want to hear what all of you, as fellow students, have encountered when you read the text.”

In one of his letters, William Q. Judge talks about the “mental groove” of the inner railroad track of the personal mind. He asks, “How do we get off our track and develop in ourselves the ability to understand the track that everyone else is running on?” We do that in a study class, as we hear the response, the tone, the thinking of fellow students. Any study class worth its salt will develop in us a depth of understanding of what our fellow students are, where they are coming from.

How do we learn by opening up our hearts to the skandhas of each of our fellow students as we go on our spiritual journey? How do we develop a class that fosters the togetherness of all of us and the ability of each of us to learn to listen and then to care? If we really hear our fellow students, then compassion and caring is automatic. The gift of being human is that we can suddenly understand the pain, the joy, and the path of our fellow humans. And when we look at what we call aberration in humanity, however we label it, in whatever culture, that’s when we cannot see the pain in the other and when we have gone away from the great gift of humanness in us all.

This radical nature of theo-sophia often attracts radical thinkers. And, it may happen that the children of these iconoclasts themselves need to rebel by turning to many paths and byways. If you have been raised in Theosophy, what does that mean? It means you are dragged to classes you don’t understand; it means you have to hear things over and over again; it means you see a lot of old people. And you do what every young person worth their salt has to do: you go out into the world and seek your fortune, just as in all the fairy tales in all the countries of the world. You have to go away. And when you go away, you find all sorts of extraordinary things. You find all sorts of teachings, all sorts of people, but if you are incredibly lucky, you never forget the tone you heard as a child. It can’t be described, but like all true tones, once it is heard it never is forgotten.

And when, having done everything and studied everything, when all external markers and duties have ended, you say, “Somewhere there still may be people who also heard that original tone, and are studying the way I