



The Breakfast Table

By Kodiak Atwood | June 27, 2011

The breakfast table was rather small again today since almost everyone from the Jampa Ling Buddhist center is in Dublin to see the Dalai Lama. Breakfast consisted of porridge, as it always does here at the center. Even if there had been everyone at the table, I doubt I would be much for conversation because I had to constantly attend to my nose. Since I've arrived in Ireland I've had a nasty bout with some sort of hay fever. It's been really annoying when your nose demands your constant attention, attention that you would much rather devote to the task at hand. Looking at the whole thing optimistically, however, one does learn to appreciate the ability to breathe when one cannot. Anyway, today is Wednesday, meaning it's the community gardening day. I started off with some weeding, but as it has had a tendency of doing lately, the weather drove me out of the gardens and into the tool shed for shelter on several occasions. The sudden downpours wouldn't be quite so bad if the Irish winds didn't come along with them. They say that Ireland is the windiest country and recently I haven't doubted it.

Due to the weather no doubt, the turnout was low for the community gardening, just Ashling (the head gardener who comes in once a week to garden and once a week to cook), a French woman named Sylvie, and myself. We planted some pumpkin and some other seeds, and then transplanted cucumber and some lettuce. I made tea for everyone and we had a nice tea break around noon. After that I went into the main house and chatted with Kiron, one of the guests currently staying at the center, until lunch time. Vishnu, a man from Mauritius Africa who cooks and mans the fires, made dhal and paneer for lunch and it was excellent. Once I finished drying and putting away the dishes, I returned to the garden and returned to that lovely monotonous weeding that has occupied all my time for the last several days.

Everyone showed up around 4:00 or so having returned from Dublin to see the Dalai Lama and were eager to tell stories and talk about the whole experience. Rimpoche was apparently mistaken with the Dalai Lama almost everywhere he went, including the hotel staff, which worked out to his favor several times.



They do look quite a bit alike, not to mention the same red and orange robes and the shaved heads. Hannah, a Polish woman living in Dublin also came by today to stay at Tara house, a kind of hostel for guests, for several days. She is quite nice and interesting to talk to and reminds me of the movie Avalon we watched in my Tokyo Cyberpunk class, but probably just because she is Polish and has a similar fashion sense. I read more of The Secret History of the Mongol Queens which is one of the books I am to read for the English credits I am working towards. The book has been a great read so far and I am looking forward to finishing it. I then did a quick workout and took a quick shower over in Tara house before the fun was to begin.

At about 10:00, the real action of the day took place. I donned my trusty headlamp, my gardening gloves, and a small empty bucket and off to the greenhouse I went. Yes, today marks my first day of slug patrol. The nasty little guys have been eating away at all our seedlings and have devoured almost all of lettuce and quite a bit of the spinach. Since they feed at night, the best time to hunt for them is that time. At first, I checked under all of the potted plants, which is where they like to hide during the day, but only managed to find two of them. I was kind of surprised and disappointed. That is, until I shined my light on the plants. Sure enough, they were crawling all over the spinach and some of the other vegetables, and I mean all over. Everywhere you looked there were slugs. Oh the joys of organic gardening. I probably collected thirty or so of varying sizes and released them as far from the garden as I was willing to go. I will continue checking for them in the mornings from now on and will continue my nightly slug patrol for a week or however necessary. Despite being slimy and being the most prevalent and formidable pest in our gardens, the slugs proved to be much more entertaining than the monotonous weeding of the past few days.