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**Tuyết Sơn Thiền Tự**  
**Mt Adams Zen Buddhist Temple**  
雪山禅寺

January & February 2016 Newsletter



May we all have a happy and peaceful New Year



Mt Adams Zen Buddhist Temple is now on Facebook. Want to become a friend?

We are a small Thien (Zen) Buddhist Temple practicing "laughing farmer zen" - living our practice, sitting meditation, being here - right now!

**Midnight Meditation on Thursday Dec 31st to Friday January 1st  
was cancelled due to snow**

All scheduled 1 day retreats (except private ones) have been cancelled for January and February due to the weather - snow.



We have over 3 feet of snow on the ground right now - great fun. Above you can see the snow hats on the shrines and the snow covered boardwalk. Norwegians have a saying that "there's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing." I am so very happy about my warm clothes and boots.

Dear Dharma Friends

The new year is here. May we all find peace in our lives and the lives of our loved ones. It reminds me of Jack Kornfield's teaching: "Each morning we are born again. What we do today is what matters most." May our actions today lead us into peace.

We are still working on raising money to build a temple. We need another \$10,000 to put in a septic system, plumbing, and foundation. You can donate to the temple or on line at [www.gofund.me/ywdqkc](http://www.gofund.me/ywdqkc)

May the infinite light of wisdom and compassion so shine within us that the errors and vanities of self will be dispelled; so shall we come to understand the changing nature of existence and awaken into spiritual peace.

May 2016 be filled with health, happiness, love, and prosperity for us all. May all beings find peace, Ven. Kozen

### Winter Schedule - January - March 2015

Monday - Friday Meditation at 6:30 am

Saturday Morning Service 9:00 am

The temple is always open - please come by and have a look about.

### Meditation Intensives

Throughout 2016 we will have a full day of meditation or a multi-day retreat every month except January and February. During these times we'll have sitting, walking, and guided meditation along with a vegetarian lunch (or meals for the longer retreats). These intensives are a good way to focus on our personal meditation practice and to join with others who are also seeking peace. "*Meditation is a solitary practice done well with others*". For more information please see our website: [www.mtadamszen.org](http://www.mtadamszen.org). after February. We ask for a \$30.00 donation for the 1-day meditation intensives, but we'd rather have you than your money, so don't let financial concerns stop you from attending. The longer retreats are live-in and vary in costs; please see our website.

A big thank you to Jefferson James who has been our webmaster for MtAdamsZen.org the last 13 years.

### Sadi Minh Thien's Column January 2016



It is 2016 and another Holiday period for so many people has come and gone. One of the common phrases heard during this Holiday period is ..."**Peace on Earth and Good Will Towards Men**"... and my wish for all is that this statement somehow rang true for you and yours. When you ask people during other times of the year what would be their deepest desire and wish, many would respond that they just want to be happy. And if you were to drill down a little more, many of the answers might be for personal things like health, wealth, love and relief from their own suffering.

I find it interesting that the Holiday wish for Peace is wished for the whole world and all of mankind. On the other hand, the answers for what might provide Happiness most times come down to those things that affect us personally. Another thing I find interesting is that those things that we wish for that might provide personal happiness won't necessarily provide peace. Take for example the wish for love. It may provide initial happiness but the divorce rate in the USA certainly demonstrates that peace isn't necessarily a by-product of what was initially something that made us happy. So what is it that we really want - Happiness or Peace? I think I would put my efforts toward Peace. I know that through this Zen practice, peace is available even when my life, my attachments and my failings in living mindfully don't seem to be providing much happiness.

Buddhist teachings tell us that hatred and aversion, like their opposites of desire and greed, all spring from a fundamental ignorance. That ignorance is our mistaken notion of our own permanent, independent existence. In ignorance, we see ourselves as separate beings, unconnected with others. Blinded to our true state of interdependence and interconnectedness, it is this basic ignorance that keeps us divided. Only through a practice that leads to overcoming such ignorance will there be help to free us from the prisons we make for ourselves and others. I think you might agree that those prisons most times keep us from both happiness and peace.

I think that the Holiday Season no longer resonates as strongly for me because of the commercialism that seems to obstruct the true meaning of ..."**Peace on Earth and Good Will Towards Men**"... I do appreciate that for some people, and for a brief period of time, our perspective turns towards the true spirit of giving and a broader concern for our planet and all of humanity. But when the holiday decorations come down, it seems the world returns to personal pursuits of happiness and again becomes ignorant to the broader perspective of our interconnectedness until the Holiday period rolls around again.

I have gratitude that through our Zen practice and by incorporating the Three Jewels of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, we are continually reminded of our interconnectedness to all things. And though the inevitable nature of change of all things may alter our personal conditional happiness, we can, at all times through mindfulness and intention, experience the joy of peace and ..."**Peace on Earth and Good Will Towards Men**"...can become the norm and not the exception.

**Namo tassa bhagavato arahato samma sambuddhassa**

This may be the only prayer you may ever need according to Oprah

**Thank you!**  
**Thank You!**  
**Thank You!**

By living in gratitude we re-frame our mindset into a new perspective or lens to understand things through.

Alia Crum, assistant professor of psychology at Stanford University defines mindset as the "lenses through which information is perceived, organized and interpreted." Mindsets serve as an overarching framework for our everyday experiences - and they can profoundly influence how we react in a variety of situations.

Crum's work has shown that mindsets significantly influence both our physical and mental health in areas as diverse as [exercise](#), [stress](#) and [diet](#). For example, according to Crum's research, individuals can hold the mindset that stress is either debilitating (bad for your health and performance) or enhancing (motivating and performance-boosting). The truth is that stress is both; it can cause athletes to crumble under pressure and lead CEOs to have heart attacks, but it can also sharpen focus and critical thinking, giving athletes, CEOs and the rest of us the attention and adrenaline to succeed in high-pressure situations. According to Crum's work, instead of the mere presence of stress, it is our mindset about stress - whether or not we perceive it as a help or a hindrance - that contributes most to health, performance and psychological outcomes.

Buddhist practices fit well into modern science. "What we think we become", Buddha

## Gratitude Can Transform Your Life

(from the Huffington Post [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/gratitude-practice-happiness\\_5655ec57e4b079b28189eab0?utm\\_hp\\_ref=religion](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/gratitude-practice-happiness_5655ec57e4b079b28189eab0?utm_hp_ref=religion))

*This article was in January 2015's newsletter. We re republishing it - it is so very true.*

There are moments in life when gratitude sneaks up on us. You step out of the freezing winter cold and into a warm cafe. Your phone buzzes, and you see a text from your daughter saying her plane has landed and she can't wait to see you.

These pockets of joy and relief fill us up in the moment and then typically pass. And we could be doing much more to reap their benefits throughout our day and throughout our lives.

According to researchers, the full experience of gratitude is more than a passing emotion. It's a state of mind that we can cultivate daily -- even regardless of our life circumstances. Robin Stern, associate director of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, and Robert Emmons, psychology professor at University of California, Davis, discuss the benefits of giving thanks in their book *Gratitude as a Psychotherapeutic Intervention*.

Gratitude, they write, is akin to a radio channel, and "you can choose at any time to tune in." It behooves us to do so. According to Stern and Emmons, grateful people experience more joy, love and enthusiasm, and they feel less anxiety, greed and bitterness. Gratitude takes us outside of ourselves to recognize all the many ways other people and external conditions bless our lives, Emmons wrote in an article for the UC Berkeley Greater Good Science Center.

Practicing gratitude has been show to:

Improve the immune system and lowers blood pressure.

Help us sleep longer and deeper.

Make us more resilient for recovery from traumatic events and post-traumatic stress.

Improve relationships, and decrease feelings of loneliness.

Promote altruism.

So how do we start a gratitude practice? First, Emmons says we must make giving thanks part of our daily routine, like meditation, yoga or praying. Here are nine, science-backed exercises to help us start a daily gratitude practice. Try them out and let us know which ones resonate with you most:

Pay attention. Start noticing things you might typically take for granted that make your life better and more enjoyable. Consider the ways in which even the difficult experiences can be moments for learning and can interrupt feelings of victimhood.

Express. Demonstrating your gratitude in a tangible way "completes the feeling of connection," write Stern and Emmons. Write a letter to someone you're grateful for, or try expressing your feelings through art, prayer or ritual.

Try the "Three Good Things" Exercise. Every day, write down three things that went well that day, however large or small. Write exactly what happened, and describe your feelings surrounding each event.

Write a gratitude letter. Sit down and compose a letter to someone who has shown kindness to you or helped you learn an important lesson in life. Tell that person what their actions meant to you, even if the act of kindness happened long ago.

Keep a gratitude journal. Every day, record three to five things you're grateful for and describe your feelings surrounding each item. Make a habit of it. Keep the journal by your bed so you can jot down your thoughts before bed.

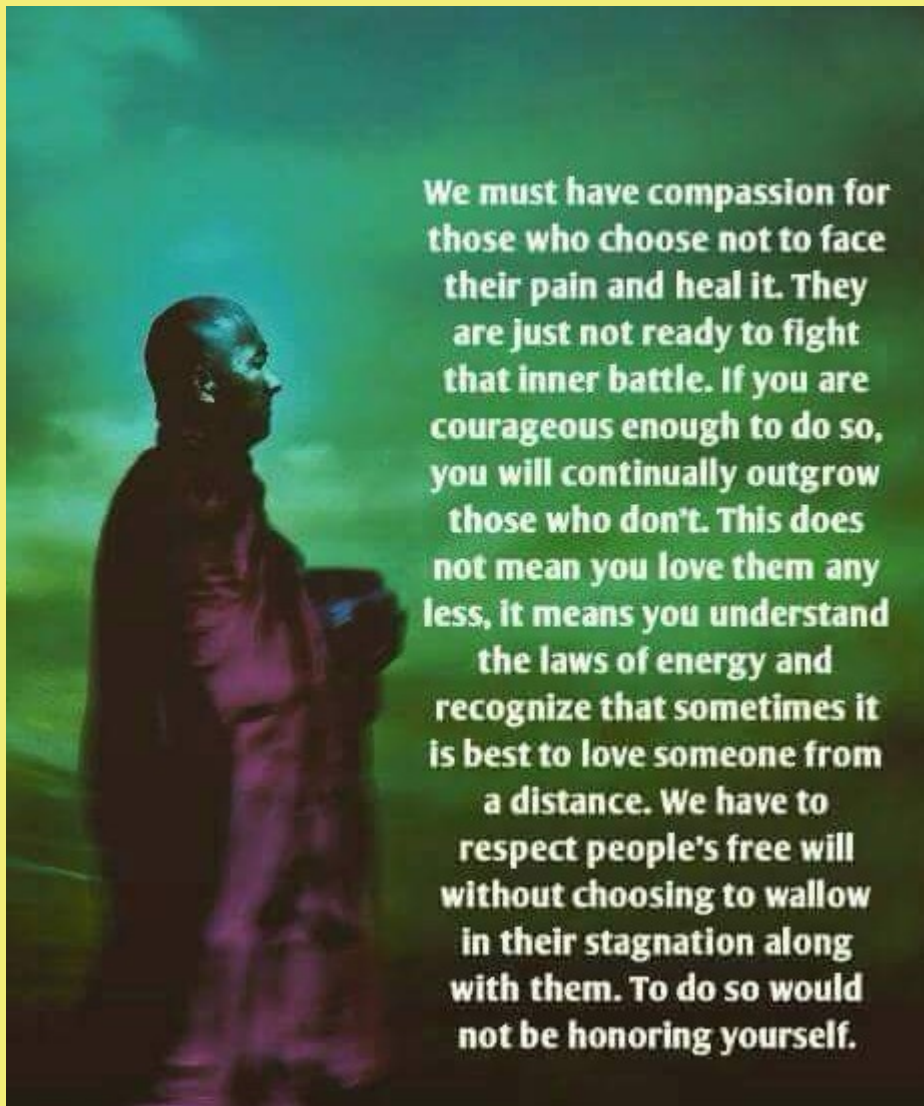
Do a "mental subtraction of relationships." Think of a meaningful relationship in your life. Write down the circumstances of how you met that person and the things that led you to having this person in your life. Consider all the ways your life could have taken a different turn such that you would not have met this person, and consider what your life would be like without them. Now think back to how you met this person and feel the gratitude of having them in your life.

Take a walk. Set aside some time on a regular basis to go outside for a walk. On your way, take note of all the positive things you encounter. The smell of blooming flowers; the birdsong erupting from trees; a couple's embrace across the street. Let the acknowledgement of each of these positive things sink in.

Savor the good things in your life. Along the lines of the gratitude walk, take time to savor all the positive emotions and experiences you encounter on a daily basis. Get lost in the moment; share your good feeling with others; hone your senses to fully take in the goodness of the experience.

Consider your own mortality. This can be a difficult one, but don't be afraid of it. Being aware of our mortality, without fixating on it, can help us feel more grateful to be alive and savor every moment we have on this earth.

**"The further one travels, the less one knows". Tao Te Ching  
"What we think, we become". The Buddha**



We must have compassion for those who choose not to face their pain and heal it. They are just not ready to fight that inner battle. If you are courageous enough to do so, you will continually outgrow those who don't. This does not mean you love them any less, it means you understand the laws of energy and recognize that sometimes it is best to love someone from a distance. We have to respect people's free will without choosing to wallow in their stagnation along with them. To do so would not be honoring yourself.

## 2016 SCHEDULE - NOTE TEMPLE RETREATS ARE INDICATED BY A †

### JANUARY

15-17 Mama Bars retreat

30 Imbolc - Druid Event

### FEBRUARY

5-7 Shamanic Retreat - *Private*

6 Lunar New Year Service 9AM †

8 Lunar New Year

16-20 Thay Kozen IN Arizona Prison Ministry

19-21 NCNM Qigong Retreat - *Private*

22-27 Master Heng (City of 10,000 Buddhas), finding our true selves through Suramgama Samadhi Sutra practice - open to the public, *Please Register* †

## **MARCH**

4-6 NCNM Qigong Retreat - *Private*

12 Metta Retreat - *Please Register* †

19 Spring Equinox - Druid Event

## **APRIL**

2-3 Precepts Retreat with Buu Hung Monastery - *Please Register* †

3-11 Kozen on Retreat at Desert Zen Center, Lucern Valley California †

8-10 NCNM Qigong Retreat - *Private*

11 Buddha's Birthday - no service - Kozen on Retreat

15-17 NCNM Qigong Retreat - *Private*

22-23 NCNM Qigong Retreat - *Private*

23 Earth Day Service - 9AM †

30 Beltane - Druid Event

## **MAY**

6-8 Yoga Retreat - please register

7 Retreat - Buddha's Birthday - 7am - 4 pm Service at 9am - *Please Register for retreat* †

13-14 Laurie Vab Cott Yoga Retreat - *Private*

14 - Kozen at CRCC Retreat, Connell WA - Prison Buddha Day

20-22 NCNM Retreat Taiji - *Private*

## **JUNE**

1-July 31 Thay Vinh Minh in residence

3 Sufi Retreat

4-5 Retreat - 2 day - Metta *Please Register* †

18 Summer Solstice - Druid Event

26-30 Qigong Retreat - Pam Tindall - *Private*

## **JULY**

1-5 Zikr Dances of Universal Peace - *Private*

7-10 Druid retreat

15 Thich Minh Thien Ordination †

16-17 Precepts retreat with Buu Hung Monastery *Please Register* †

30 Lughnasadh - Druid Event

## **AUGUST**

6 Ulambana Service 9am †

20 retreat - Ksitigarbha Retreat - Death and Dying - *Please Register* †

## **SEPTEMBER**

10 Retreat - one day Meditation - please register †

24 Autumn Equinox - Druid Event

30-Oct 2 NCNM Qigong Retreat - *Private*

28 China and Taiwan Pilgrimage - *Please Register* †

## **OCTOBER** - pilgrimage to Buddhist Taiwan and China

(28 September to 18 October) †

7-9 NCNM Qigong Retreat - *Private*

14-16 NCNM Qigong Retreat - *Private*

21-23 Fall Retreat - *Please Register* †

29 Samhain - Druid Event

## NOVEMBER

18-20 Meditation Hut Retreat (live like a monk) *Please Register* +

## DECEMBER

8 Bodhi Day - meditation 12/7 at 11:30pm to 12:30am 12/8 *Please Register* +

17 Winter Solstice - Druid Event

30 Midnight Meditation - 12/30 at 11:30pm to 12:30am 1/1 *Please Register* +

### Do you support the Northwest Dharma Association?

If not, it is time to do so! If you are a solitary practitioner or part of a sangha you can offer dana (financial support). They are a clearing house for Buddhist activity in the Northwest and need our support. Read more about the NWDA at <http://www.northwestdharma.org/> **PLEASE HELP**



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