

Tuyết Sơn Thiên Tự  
Mt Adams Zen Buddhist Temple

雪山禪寺

June 2014 Newsletter



Dear Dharma Family,

All the attendees are starting to prepare for our retreat in Southern California in July. Books to read, practices to hone up on, sutras to study - it is all a joyful process.

On 31 May we attended a memorial service for Rick Hulett - husband, father, musician, madman, laughing man, and life live-er extraordinaire! Good Bye dear one, we will miss you. You can see Rick and hear his music on youtube.

I will be traveling from June 15 - 30. Thay Kobai will be at the temple and performing services.

I will be on retreat July 6 - 13 with other monks and lay people.

Thay Kobai will soon receive his ordination as a monk, having completed his novitiate period of 2 years. The ceremony will take place during the retreat in July. Ven. Miles has completed 7 months and Ven Jeff Miles has completed 1 year as novices in the Vietnamese Zen (Thien) tradition - congratulations! Both Ven. Miles and Ven. Jeff are ordained in a Chinese Zen Buddhist order and are undergoing additional training to learn the Vietnamese Zen school's forms and practices.

May we all find peace. Thay Minh Tinh

**Our Labyrinth project is postponed until July.**

We have run into time and technical issues. We will put the Labyrinth in place starting July 19 - 20.

**Lotus Flower Mandala**

We are making a mandala in the temple. Per <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandala>, a:

*Mandala (Sanskrit: Maṇḍala, 'circle') is a spiritual and ritual symbol in Hinduism and Buddhism, representing the Universe. The basic form of most mandalas is a square with four gates containing a circle with a center point. Each gate is in the general shape of a T. Mandalas often exhibit radial balance.*

*The term is of Hindu origin. It appears in the Rig Veda as the name of the sections of the work, but is also used in other Indian religions, particularly Buddhism.*

*In various spiritual traditions, mandalas may be employed for focusing attention of aspirants and adepts, as a spiritual teaching tool, for establishing a sacred space, and as an aid to meditation and trance induction.*

*In common use, mandala has become a generic term for any plan, chart or geometric pattern that represents the cosmos metaphysically or symbolically; a microcosm of the universe.*



Thay Kozen and Debby Nelson work on the first part of the mandala. In this case we are making a lotus flower - Om Mani Padme hum - celebrating the jewel in the lotus - Avalokiteshvara. The mandala will be worked on daily for the next 1 week and then will be destroyed upon completion. All are welcome to join in and add to our lotus flower.

## Temple Services Schedule

### Morning Meditation at 6:30 am

Wednesday - Saturday

### Morning Service at 9:00 am

Wednesday - Saturday

### Tuesday Morning at 9:00 am

Tai Chi at the temple

### Evening Meditation at 6:30 pm

Tuesday - Saturday

Sunday evenings at Trinity Natural Medicine in Hood River we have meditation at 6 pm.

(1808 Belmont Ave, Hood River, OR 97031 tel. 541.386.2025)

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

**Master Wan Xing's book is now available**

**New**

**Services & Meditation**

**Morning Meditation 6:30AM**

Tuesday - Saturday

**Morning Service**

9 AM

Tuesday - Saturday

**Evening Meditation**

6:30 PM

Thursday - Saturday

Evening Meditation in Hood  
River

Sunday at 6:00pm

**Calendar**

**JUNE**

1-5 Master Wu Qigong

6-8 Self as Source

16-30 Thay Kozen travels;  
Thay Kobai will be here to do  
services.

27-30 Meridith Holcomb retreat

**JULY**

6-13 California monk's retreat  
Retreat

19-20 Labyrinth work

Is your group part of the Northwest  
Dharma Association?

If not, it is time to join! If you are a  
solitary practitioner or without a  
sangha you can still donate dana  
(money). They are a clearing house  
for Buddhist Activity in the  
Northwest and need our support.



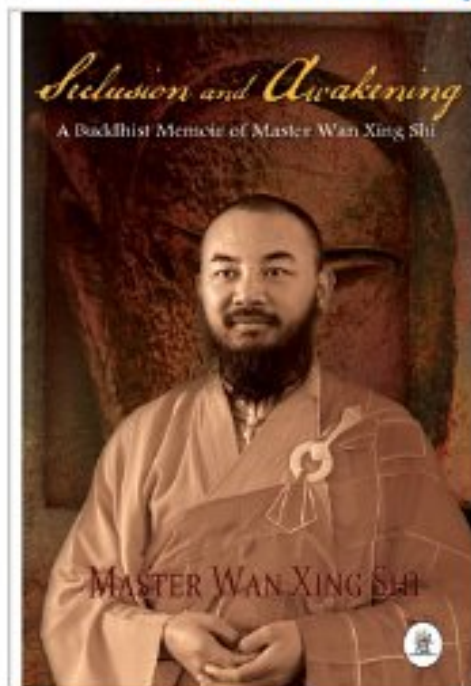
Northwest  
Dharma  
Association

read more about the NWDA at  
<http://www.northwestdharma.org/>

**New Sculpture**

Thank you to CJ Rench for  
donating the beautiful sculpture  
of a Chinese character meaning  
peace. CJ is a prominent local  
artist with sculpture in many  
public locations.

**Look inside** ↓



kindle edition

It is available in electronic or paperback from  
Amazon.com <http://www.amazon.com/>  
or Barnes and Noble <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/>

**PCT (Pacific Crest Trail) hikers made a documentary of their journey up the trail.** They stayed at Trout Lake Abbey and put in a lovely bit about learning meditation. Take a look at their documentary at:

<http://www.asithappens.tv/new-page/>



The Trout Lake Abbey part starts at 1:05 - it is worth watching, especially the part on the day after where they start meditating while they walk.





## Dogen Zenji -

Japan's great Zen Master

This wonderful movie is available on youtube. We also have a copy at the temple if you wish to borrow it. It is the story of Japan's Soto Zen's great teacher.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8s5Uz8XSc-Y>

## Eco Update

Here's the entire list of the Dirty Dozen, the 12 conventionally grown fruits and vegetables found to have the highest pesticide load.

Apples, Strawberries, Grapes, Celery, Peaches, Spinach, Sweet bell peppers, Nectarines (imported), Cucumbers, Cherry tomatoes, Snap peas (imported), Potatoes.

Some scientists advise you to eat only organic versions of the above fruits and veggies.

## Community Resources

### Free Trade coffee that goes for a good cause:

The Presbyterian Coffee Project provides free trade, sustainable, worker friendly coffee. In the greater Trout Lake area you can purchase it from The Farm Store at Trout Lake Abbey. Proceeds are shared between the Trout Lake Presbyterian church and the Mt. Adams Zen Buddhist Temple.

## Clouds

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDC97j6lfyc>)

**is a most special song with a heart-warming story** - Zach's mother has taken their family's journey of grief and loss and made it into a wonderful guide for us all.

From the Huffington Post

*Laura Sobiech's son Zach died of cancer last year. At 14, Zach, was diagnosed with osteosarcoma, a rare bone cancer, and he died on May 20, just days after his 18th birthday. During the final year of his life, Zach wrote the song, "Clouds," which became a huge international hit, rising to the top of the Billboard Top 100 list the week after his death, and racking up more than 12 million views on YouTube.*

*Laura has written a memoir about how God used her son's battle with cancer to touch the lives of millions. [Fly a Little Higher: How God Answered a Mom's Small Prayer in a Big Way](#), will be released by Nelson Books this week.*

*God has given me a unique story to tell. It is one of agony and joy, of struggle and resolution, of turmoil and of peace. It is a story of God's extraordinary grace being revealed in miraculous and wondrous ways that I could have never imagined. And it is a story of grief and suffering.*

*Over the course of our four-year struggle with Zach's illness, I was enlightened to realize how much he was teaching me about how life ought to be lived. Here I give you the seven lessons I learned through Zach's life and death. They're lessons that can be applied in our lives today and everyday, and with practice, have the potential to change who we are. This is who Zach was.*

*1. Be empathetic. Zach had an enormous capacity for empathy; the ability to put himself in another's shoes. He took the time to pause and understand those he met, no matter how brief that time was; and his ability to connect with people in this way helped him to think outside of himself while battling cancer, often times freeing him from the temptation to despair.*

*2. Be present. We live in this very small space in time called "the present." Don't squander the joy that can be found in the moment by worrying about a future that doesn't exist yet. Tomorrow will come, but not today.*

*3. Find joy. Joy and happiness are different. Happiness depends on things outside of ourselves and is fleeting; joy comes from within despite our circumstances. Look for joy every day and nurture it. With every moment of joy comes a choice to allow it or to stifle it with resentment, anger and bitterness. Hard days are full of beautiful moments; look for them and embrace them. It is in the deepest suffering that the sweetest joy can be found.*

*4. Know you'll suffer. Suffering can be a channel of grace into the world, if you let it. Suffering gives us the platform of a story that people will listen to. Offering the story of our suffering for God to use is a powerful way of unleashing grace into the world. Unbelievable things can happen when we unite our suffering with God's grace.*

5. *Share yourself. Don't let fear or circumstances stop you from becoming what you were meant to be. Zach didn't start writing songs or singing until the last year of his life. He was willing to share himself and work through a time when many would have closed themselves up. As a result he was able to achieve some amazing things in the last months before he died.*

6. *Be kind. Use what you have to make the world better. At Zach's visitation I had several teenagers tell me that he changed their day by simply acknowledging them. Zach was passionate about making life better for those around him. A simple smile at someone who is hurting can turn their day completely around. A word of encouragement or sympathy can give someone the strength they need to move forward. Never pass up an opportunity to make life better for someone else.*

7. *Be open. Open yourself to the twists and turns that life throws at you. Life won't always go the way you plan and that's okay. Roll with it and be open to the lessons to be learned and growth to be gained. And prepare to be surprised by the grace that you will be given and where you end up.*

### **Metta - 4 Sentences that can change our life**

First: Take a deep breath, shift your body into a gently aligned state with your spine straight.

Start with yourself - picture yourself right now in your mind, and say:

May I be well

May I be happy

May I know love

May I know peace

Then visualize a loved one, then a stranger, then an "enemy" (or someone who has caused you pain), then everybody, and for each say:

May you be well

May you be happy

May you know love

May you know peace

Take a deep breath and hold it for a second between each of these visualizations. Lastly, return to yourself and visualize yourself and say the 4 sentences again for you.

By practicing this simple exercise daily we can start the process of re-framing our thoughts. The Buddha tells us, "What we think we become". May we all find peace.

### **Plum Mountain Buddhist Community**

June 2014 Newsletter

by Thai Kobai Scot Whitney

(kobai1221@gmail.com) 516 W. Cushing in Aberdeen

#### **Weekly Schedule:**

Daily (except Friday) 6:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Service with short recitation and half hour seated meditation

Fridays and when Thay Kobai is away from the Harbor.

Evenings - Our regular community (sangha) gathering is Tuesday evenings at Cushing St. 6:30 to 8 p.m. We do some movement and sitting meditation, with plenty of guidance for newcomers. Thay Kobai gives a short talk on Buddhist principles followed by Q&A and discussion.

#### **Events in June**

3 June: Community Meditation, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. We do some simple movement and seated meditation, followed by a short talk by Thay Kobai and a Q&A discussion. People of any or no faith are welcome.

7 June: Saturday, Thay Kobai teaching at Montesano Community School, "Meditation for Those Who Think They Can't Meditate," 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Montesano Timberland Library, basement classroom. \$5 registration fee, plus dana. Call 360.249.1770 for more information.

10 June Tuesday, Community Meditation, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. We do some simple movement and seated meditation, followed by a short talk by Thay Kobai and a Q&A discussion. People of any or no faith are welcome.

12 June Full Moon.

13 - 30 June Thay Kobai in residence at Trout Lake Abbey.

17 June: Community Meditation, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. We do some simple movement and seated meditation, followed by a short talk by senior sangha members and a Q&A discussion. People of any or no faith are welcome.

27 June: New Moon

24 June Community Meditation, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. We do some simple movement and seated meditation, followed by a short talk by senior sangha members and a Q&A discussion. People of any or no faith are welcome.

#### Some Dharma:

There is a lovely quote from Pema Chödrön about the difference between theism and the mystical traditions. Here it is: "The difference between theism and non-theism is not whether or not you believe in God ... Theism is the deep-seated belief that there's some hand to hold: if we just do the right things, someone will appreciate us and take care of us." A bit later she says, "Non-theism is relaxing with the ambiguity and uncertainty of the present moment without reaching for anything to protect ourselves." (Comfortable with Uncertainty, p.177)

I really appreciate her wisdom. And it reminded me of another quote from Rainer Marie Rilke, the German poet of the first third of the twentieth century. He is writing to an aspiring poet and he cautions against this search for certainty, the conviction that we must figure out all our problems: "Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves ... Do not ... seek the answers, which cannot be given to you because you would not be able to live them." (Letter to a Young Poet, Letter 4) Notice that he does not say the answers can't be given because you're too young to understand them, but rather amazingly he says "because you would not be able to live them." Love the questions themselves! Carl Jung, another mystically astute thinker, says something very similar, but I couldn't find the quote. I'll paraphrase: "Our real problems are never really solved. Our task is to live with them and live through them." Thus we must become, as the title of Chödrön's book suggests, comfortable with uncertainty.

The compassionate life requires that we walk around, as much as possible, with an open heart. This takes courage and that's why Tibetan Buddhism has this idea of the Shambhala warrior and why the Zen tradition always has images of both the female embodiment of compassion (with her vase of tears) and the male embodiment of wisdom (sword in hand) both presiding over the meditation halls. In a funny way, the more we walk around with an open heart, the more wisdom we generate. And the more wisdom we experience, the more we act on the imperative of compassionate action in the world.

The sixteenth century Catholic saint, John of the Cross, knew a thing or two about suffering and uncertainty. It's from him that we get the phrase, "dark night of the soul." He's another mystic who was distinguished by both his poetic brilliance and his pastoral compassion. Oddly enough, he was also a talented administrator and church politician, succeeding in reforming the Carmelite order in his native Spain.

Basically John said the same thing as the Buddha. "Stop whining about why me? and about your special brand of suffering that only you have experienced. Suffering is what is necessary for us to grow up spiritually."

Well, I've gone way beyond paraphrase, so I encourage you to read St. John's poetry yourself. And take a look at Chödrön's writings and join up with this great joyful conga-line of living compassionately and wisely with our fellow sentient beings.

TUYÉT SON THIÊN TỰ + MT ADAMS ZEN BUDDHIST TEMPLE + 雪山禪寺

PO Box 487, Trout Lake WA 98650 [www.MtAdamsZen.org](http://www.MtAdamsZen.org)

509.395.2030 (e-mail -put in the @ sign) kozen1 at embarqmail.com