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

July 2013 Newsletter



Dear Dharma friends,

The 4th of July is upon us - A time of celebrating our nation's freedom from a foreign power. I am so grateful to have been born an American. Our country has been so very blessed in so many ways.

I am also reminded of Buddha's teaching about freedom. "Just as there is only one taste in the ocean, the taste of salt, so in the Dharma there is only one taste; the taste of Freedom".

In Buddhism, Dharma is a discipline that leads to Freedom. Many of us think that discipline and freedom are opposite things. But they're not; It takes more discipline to live free than to simply follow. Freedom also requires courage. Many many famous folks have talked about freedom.

Some of my favorites are:

Gandhiji said, "Freedom doesn't mean the absence of restrictions. It means possessing unshakable conviction in your choices in the face of an obstacle".

"I know but one freedom and that is the freedom of the mind". Antoine de Saint-Exupery

"For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others". Nelson Mandela

"We must be willing to pay a price for freedom." H. L. Mencken

"Real freedom is having nothing. I was freer when I didn't have a cent." Mike Tyson

We have cancelled all 1 day meditation retreats through September. We will resume the retreats in October.

Another Buddha joins The Cloister



Russ is smiling next to the Buddha he donated for The Cloister. Our goal is to have 1,000 Budhas in the cloister area

I am humbly grateful and thankful for our country and the freedoms we have. May all peoples live in a country where they elect the government, basic human dignity is respected, religion is free, and personal freedoms are the norm verses being reserved for the elite. May all beings find peace. Kozen



Well wishing to so many loved ones: Dave Jr. Happy first fourth of July. Myrna - may you have a speedy recovery. Laura - may you have a speedy recovery. Lastly to planet earth - may we all stop mistreating you and make a sustainable home for us and our descendants.

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

Services & Meditation

Morning Service
6:30AM
every morning

Temple Service
9:00 AM
every morning

His Holiness Pope Francis

On June 5, Francis lambasted a "culture of waste" in which consumerism trumps compassion, people become just another disposable object, and little care is given to those who need help.

"This culture of waste has made us insensitive even to the waste and disposal of food, which is even more despicable when all over the world many individuals and families are suffering from hunger and malnutrition. "

Pope Francis said. "We should all remember, however, that throwing food away is like stealing from the tables of the poor, the hungry.

Pope Francis seems to be living a bodhisattva journey. His compassion and thoughtfulness is a refreshing breath of crisp air. Any large group tends to become ego-centric. Pope Francis seems to have broken that mold and teaches life-centric compassion and mercy.

Being a nun by Abby Layton, Ven.Thich Minh Tanh

"Every action of a Buddha shows the Truth of the vision. Every action of a monk who will become a master must show the Truth of that vision. One cannot do this out of deliberate thought or with willful intent; it is something that one simply does, spontaneously, because one knows the Unborn. I have often

Evening Service
6:30 PM
every evening

Calendar

JULY

3-7 Sufi Retreat
8 Kozen to CRCC
9 Anti-coal meeting Hermiston, Oregon
9-13 Cascade Mountain School retreat
13 July - Ullambana (Obon) remembrance & Feast for our ancestors
14 - 18 NCNM Retreat
20 July - Asala
Dharma Day
- The anniversary of the start of Buddha's teaching - his first sermon, "The Wheel of Truth", after his enlightenment.
24 - 29 Eight Winds Retreat

AUGUST

12 Kozen to CRCC
22-26 ISSCA Retreat
24 celebrating our temple's 4th anniversary.

SEPTEMBER

9 Kozen to CRCC
12 - 16 Mama bear project

Words of Wisdom by Gandi-ji

This is our 3rd and last month of quotes by Gandhiji. He has so much to offer the world it has been difficult to limit his teachings to a short column each month.

"It is easy enough to be friendly to one's friends. But to befriend the one who regards himself as your enemy is the quintessence of true religion. The other is mere business."

"Whenever you are confronted with an opponent. Conquer him with love."

"Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will."

"I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent."

"You can chain me, you can torture me, you can even destroy this body, but you will never imprison my mind."

"You may never know what results come of your actions, but if you do nothing, there will be no results."

"You don't know who is important to you until you actually lose them."

*said it is enough for me to know the Unborn, to recognize It, and (as it were) to salute It at every moment. If you would truly train, there is much more to training than just sitting meditation in the morning, doing morning service, sitting in the evening, and doing one's daily work. There is the making of every movement into the movement of a Buddha". **Reverend Master Jiyu Kennet***

I have wanted to be a nun since when I can ever remember. And for all that time, I longed to be the sort of nun where sun beams shine from above, and birds sing, and solitude and God reign.

But being a nun is not this fortress of solitude where one is in direct transmission of the the love of God. It is, however, a way to both learn about ourselves and forget about ourselves in order to help ourselves and all beings awaken.

The clothes that I wear daily, the shaved head, the practice i keep, the foods I eat, when i sleep and when I arise are a constant reminder , a way to never forget all of the following:

Every experience is Dharma. There is nothing outside of Dharma. So each moment is important, I remember to be awake, open my heart, and be available. In each moment, there is an opportunity to love more, to learn more, to pay attention, and to help all beings.

Offering one's life to help us all awaken. We are all in this together. Your awakening is my awakening. We help each other awaken. As Thich Nhat Hanh says, "We are all Inter-Being." As a nun, one dedicates one's life to helping all beings, including oneself, awaken, all the time, at every moment. We live to benefit one another.

Living within the 10 precepts becomes a container for one's life. Our ethical precepts guide the nun or monk, or lay practitioner like the banks of river guide the water within. As a nun, as one recites and lives these precepts daily, one is held in ethical living at each moment. It reminds us deeply how to behave in the world with other beings and ourselves.

Impermanence: My clothing is grey. Thich Nhat Hanh teaches that a nun's clothing is grey, symbolically standing for the smoke that wafts from incense. Incense is an offering, an offering to the Buddha, to awakening Mind. We bow as we offer. Incense is also symbolic of the shortness and impermanence of our lives. Lighting the incense is birth, the burning our lives, and the end, death. It goes very fast. And the smoke, the smoke dances and spreads quickly out and up. It is porous, not solid. It reaches all realms of Being all at once. And it is constantly dissolving, it is the dance of devotion.

Letting go of self importance: our shaved heads, and the covering of the body supports a practice of humility. As I live in a community, and my needs and desires are no longer central, I have had to open to some very big waves of shock, grief, and despair. There is a specialness that is challenged in this path. For me, developmentally, this has been very important. This falling from the throne, has decentralized my way of life, and has allowed me to dissolve this sense of "Abby being the very most important all the time". I am so thankful for this path that has at least helped to start me on this loosening of the ego. Our thinking patterns and capacity of heart actually open from letting go of the treasured self.

Loving all sentient beings: As a nun, I am allowed to purely love universally in a way that I have been ashamed to most of my life. I have fortunately always loved people and animals and plants, all of nature very deeply, and in a childlike, just natural way. So I am so happy to be able to show my love in a way that is so based on loving compassion. Nuns send metta, lovingkindness, to all beings, often. I very much like this job description.

Prayer: I have always loved connecting, dissolving into the Oneness of Life. Chanting, singing and praying are modes of dropping the duality of conceptual mind, and opening to Love and Clarity. Nuns sing a lot, and pray a lot. This makes me very happy.

Working with the Mind: Our work as Buddhist practioners is to clear the cobwebs of delusional mind, clear the stories we make up about ourselves, our

"Action expresses priorities."

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). There are clearing houses for Buddhist Activity in the Northwest and need our support.

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

The Buddha has told us that if we are easily satisfied then we are closer to less suffering.

In our modern world of so many things to buy, to experience, to have - many of us somehow end up thinking that things or other people will fix our happiness.

The next time we go shopping, let's think about what we are doing - "Will this item really add to our happiness?" Minh Tinh

lives, and each other. One does this by sitting and watching the nature of Mind. To understand the Mind is to open to all that is, and then to let it be just what it is, embracing, allowing, rather than judging. Ah, in this capacity, a nun's work is never done. I have dedicated my life to this work.

Non Duality: A nun is a container, a form for non duality. We bridge the world of form, and emptiness (vastness), living in both at the same time. I have a dice that has God on every side. No matter how you roll it, it comes out God. Being a nun is living like this. We see all as the Buddha, no matter how much it seems not so, everyone, and every moment is only Buddha.

Bowing: As a nun, we do a lot of bowing. What are we bowing to? We are bowing endlessly to all that is. We are bowing to the endless Buddha. As we bow, our hearts open, and we smile.

Suffering and Pain: Our practice opens to suffering, experiencing and understanding suffering in ourselves and others, in all life. As we open, we feel deeply the conditions of life, and we cry and soften. We allow suffering to exist, and we embrace it. We open and feel the pure pain of all Beings. And thus, compassion is born. And a nun's work is again never done.

To quote dear Ven. Kozen, our Abbot, "And we get to live here!", pointing to the joy of living a life of Dharma practice, service, and supporting all Awakening into Awareness and Love. Each day, each moment, practicing the Buddha's Way. I am happy here being a nun.

I wish to thank Venerable Thay Kozen, Venerable Thay Kim, and Kelljoy Kanaley for their loving support in the process of my ordination. Thank you so much for your guidance.

TUYẾT SƠN THIÊN TỰ + MT ADAMS ZEN BUDDHIST TEMPLE + 雪山禅寺

PO Box 487, Trout Lake WA 98650 www.MtAdamsZen.org
509.395.2030 (e-mail -put in the @ sign) kozen1 at embarqmail.com