

# The SnowFlower Sun

## July and August 2007

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*SnowFlower Sangha member Cheri Maples was recently asked by Thich Nhat Hanh to become a Dharma Teacher. Here are some of Cheri's thoughts on what lies ahead for her and the sangha.*

SnowFlower Sun: What is most appealing to you about becoming a dharma teacher?

Cheri Maples: A couple of things. One, I think that Thây chose me to do this because of my connection with the criminal justice system and my ability to translate the language of the dharma and his teachings into a language and vocabulary that criminal justice professionals understand. So that will be a big focus of mine.

The other thing that motivates me is the opportunity to strengthen my practice, because I really believe that just the possibility of being a dharma teacher is something that has started to work on me as I work on it. So since I was told that Thây intended to transmit the lamp to me this winter, I have been continually looking for ways to strengthen my practice, including my weekly days of mindfulness, my daily practices, and paying closer attention to my relationships with others. Of course, the intention is always to be more present with myself and others.

SS: What seems most challenging about becoming a dharma teacher?

CM: The most challenging thing will just be discovering what it means as the whole process unfolds and living up to what I believe a dharma teacher should represent. One thing that I will be pursuing is trying to get either a center for the Midwest that is staffed with monastics or some more help from the monastics in making sure that the dharma is more available to people that live in the Midwest.

SS: What role do you see yourself playing in SnowFlower Sangha?

CM: I see myself playing the same role that I am playing right now, no more or no less. The sangha is composed of many people who have put tireless energy into it and care about it as much as I do. I believe one of the most positive things about our sangha is that it is non-hierarchical and that leadership on any given Tuesday or Friday night changes. I believe that it should remain that way and that my being a dharma teacher won't affect the non-hierarchical structure of sangha in any manner. One thing I will probably take on is mentoring people that want to become members of the Order of Interbeing so that they don't have to travel all the way to Jack Lawlor's house for meetings with him.

SS: What do you hope to learn by becoming a dharma teacher?

CM: The most important thing I hope to learn is to consciously set up my life so that each day is really a day of mindfulness, not just the one day I set aside, but that going through the rhythm of each day is an opportunity to live and conduct my relationships in a mindful way in the present moment. It's a tremendous honor for me to be able to structure my life and integrate my work with my spirituality in a manner that far surpasses anything I could have dreamed of before. I've always done that in my work, but this offers a unique opportunity...and that is an incredible privilege.

*Editor's Note: For more on Cheri's dharma path, come to her dharma talk, "Reflections on the Dharma Highway," on Friday, July 6.*

With the exceptions of the first Tuesdays of the month, Tuesday night sanghas for July and August will center around Thây’s books and recordings and the special meanings they have for that night’s sangha leader.

**JULY CALENDAR**

Tuesday (7:00 – 8:30 PM)	Friday (7:00 – 9:00 PM)
7/3 Practice Basics Led by David Haskin	7/6 Reflections on the Dharma Highway Led by Cheri Maples
Monday, 7/9 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. <b>Annual Sangha Business Meeting</b> Friends Meeting House, 1704 Roberts Court	
7/10 Buddha Mind, Buddha Body Led by Maureen Brady	7/13 Experience at Mind and Life Institute Led by Diane Lauver
Saturday, 7/14 9:30 – 12:30 Half-Day of Mindfulness at Ed Celnicker’s River House Bring a bag lunch for afterward; call Ed at 831-8152 for directions.	
7/17 Peace Is Every Step Led by Ed Celnicker	7/20 The Heart Sutra Led by Heather Mann
7/24 The Sun My Heart Led by Larry Mandt	7/27 “You Mean I’m Responsible for My Emotions Too!” Led by Ed Celnicker
7/31 The Plum Village Chanting Book Led by Susan O’Leary	

**FALL RETREAT**

SnowFlower’s annual retreat will take place October 12-14 at Bethel Horizons in Dodgeville. Registration details will be announced later this summer.

**MEETING TIMES & LOCATIONS**

We meet Tuesdays (7–8:30pm) in the Wesley Room of the Trinity United Methodist Church, 1123 Vilas Ave. (2 blocks west of Park St.). Enter through parking lot door on right (West) side of building. Go up the stairs, following the arrows to the Wesley Room. Note: a Greeter will be available until 7:15 p.m., after which time the doors will be locked per church policy.

We also meet Fridays (7–9 pm) in the Sanctuary of the Friends Meetinghouse, 1704 Roberts Court, near Camp Randall Stadium. Please leave shoes in the hall. For both meetings, please try to arrive at 6:55pm (earlier if you can help set up) so that we can begin our sits in quiet.

**SANGHA WEB SITE, E-MAIL LIST & NEWSLETTER**

The SnowFlower Sangha web site is <http://SnowFlower.org>. You can subscribe to the SnowFlower listserv on the web or by sending an email to [SnowFlower-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:SnowFlower-subscribe@yahoogroups.com). Contact David Haskin with any questions (608-924-3060 or [questions@SnowFlower.org](mailto:questions@SnowFlower.org)). Mike Winckler maintains the web site. He can be reached at [mwinckler@charter.net](mailto:mwinckler@charter.net) and [mwinckler@matcmadison.edu](mailto:mwinckler@matcmadison.edu). The SnowFlower Sun is published bimonthly and is edited by Erin Hanusa. Email Erin at [erinhanusa@gmail.com](mailto:erinhanusa@gmail.com) if you have announcements, articles, or other writing for the newsletter.

**AUGUST CALENDAR**

Tuesday (7:00 – 8:30 PM)	Friday (7:00 – 9:00 PM)
	8/3 The Five Mindfulness Trainings Led by Sherry Wachholz and Robert Chapman
8/7 Practice Basics Led by Celeste Robins	8/10 Sutra on the Five Ways to Put an End to Anger Led by Mary Michal and David Haskin
Saturday, 8/11 Empathy Poker 7 – 9 p.m. Learn to connect in a heartfelt way with your own and others' feelings and needs. Linda Jordan's house, 2811 Ridge Rd., 233-7500	
8/14 The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching Led by Lisa Glueck	8/17 Tea Ceremony Led by Heather Mann and Don Katz
Saturday, 8/18 3:00 – 5:45 p.m. Half-Day of Mindfulness at Savitri's house, 548 Gately Terrace A simple potluck will follow from 5:45 – 6:30 p.m. Rice and dahl will be provided; bring a salad or fruit only.	
8/21 Plum Village Meditations (CD) Led by Mary Gallagher	8/24 The Movies In Our Heads Led by Mary Michal
8/28 TBA Led by Zohreh Ghavamshahidi	8/31 Discourse on the Dharma Seal Led by Susan O'Leary

**EMPATHY POKER NIGHT**

**Linda Jordan**

Several members of Snowflower Sangha have attended workshops on Nonviolent Communication as developed by Marshall Rosenberg. A book describing the NVC model is Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life by Marshall Rosenberg. As described on the NVC website (<http://www.cnvc.org/>), "Nonviolent communication is sometimes referred to as compassionate communication. Its purpose is to strengthen our ability to inspire compassion from others and to respond compassionately to others and to ourselves. NVC guides us to reframe how we express ourselves and hear others by focusing our consciousness on what we are observing, feeling, needing, and requesting."

One of the "tools" developed by the NVC organization is a game called empathy poker. This game is played with decks of feelings and needs cards and can easily be played by those who have not studied NVC. Empathy poker is designed for facilitating understanding, listening, connection, and fun!

In order to share this tool with members of sangha, I am hosting an "empathy poker" evening for sangha members on Saturday, August 11, from 7:00-10:00 p.m. at 2811 Ridge Rd. We will have multiple decks of cards and multiple spaces to play, so all are most welcome to attend. Cushions would be best used in one of the game places, so if you would like to bring yours, please do so.

We will begin with a brief sit at 7:10. If you have any questions, please call 233-7500 or email [thisislinda@sbcglobal.net](mailto:thisislinda@sbcglobal.net).

## **SANGHA BUSINESS MEETING**

This edition of the newsletter is coming out a week early in order to remind everyone of the July 9 Business Meeting (6:30 p.m. at the Friends Meetinghouse). It is hoped that most sangha members will be able to attend and participate in reaching agreement on important sangha issues.

The agenda will consist (not necessarily in the order given) of presentation, clarification, and discussion of the following:

- Structure and decision-making proposal. Reach agreement on new sangha policy.
- Love and Understanding Project proposal. Reach agreement on sangha's participation.
- Opportunities to volunteer for committees and projects. Update Roles and Responsibilities for coming year.

Prior to the July 9 meeting, the above proposals and the 2006 version of Roles and Responsibilities will be sent out by email so members have time to reflect on them before the meeting. This will help us to stay within the agreed-upon meeting time on the 9<sup>th</sup>. (In past years we agreed to aim for two hours, but go no more than two and a half hours.)

If you have questions about any of the agenda items, please contact:

- Cheri Maples regarding sangha structure and decision-making.
- Steve Spiro regarding Love and Understanding.
- Edward Celnicker or Karuna Namenwirth for Roles & Responsibilities (or refer to 2006 list on website).
- Susan O'Leary regarding meeting agenda.

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## **ONLY WHEN I AM QUIET FOR A LONG TIME**

Only when I am quiet for a long time  
and do not speak  
do the objects of my life draw near.

Shy, the scissors and spoons, the blue mug.  
Hesitant even the towels,  
for all their intimate knowledge and scent of fresh bleach.

How steady their regard as they ponder,  
dreaming and waking,  
the entrancement of my daily wanderings and tasks.  
"Drunk on the honey of feelings, the honey of purpose,"  
they seem to be thinking,  
a quiet judgment that glistens between the glass doorknobs.

Yet theirs is not the false reserve  
of a scarcely concealed ill will,  
nor that other, active shying: of pelted rocks.

No, not that. For I hear the sigh of happiness  
each object gives off  
if I glimpse for even an instant the actual instant—

As if they believed it possible  
I might join  
their circle of simple, passionate thusness,  
their hidden rituals of luck and solitude,  
the joyous gap in them where appears in us the pronoun "I."

--Jane Hirshfield