

SnowFlower Coming Home to Sangha Retreat
April 22, 2017
Holy Wisdom Monastery

Banner Gatha:

Breathing in, I see that I am part of a Sangha, and I am protected by my Sangha.
Breathing out, I feel joy. (Thich Nhat Hanh in *Friends on the Path: Living Spiritual Communities*)

Posted Quotes from Thay:

Two thousand six hundred years ago, Shakyamuni Buddha proclaimed that the next Buddha will be named Maitreya, the “Buddha of Love.” I think Maitreya Buddha may be a community, and not just an individual. A good community is needed to help us resist the unwholesome ways of our time. Mindful living protects us and helps us go in the direction of peace. With the support of friends in the practice, peace has a chance.

Allow yourself to be supported, to be held by the Sangha. When you allow yourself to be in a Sangha the way a drop of water allows itself to be in a river, the energy of the Sangha can penetrate you, and transformation and healing will become possible. (*Friends on the Path*)

And what is the Sangha? The Sangha is a community of people who agree with each other that if we do not practice right mindfulness, we will lose all of the beautiful things in our soul and all around us. People standing near us, practicing with us, support us so that we are not pulled away from the present moment. Whenever we find ourselves in a difficult situation, two or three friends in the Sangha who are there for us, understanding and helping us, will get us through it. Even in our silent practice we help each other. (*Friends on the Path*)

When we say, “I take refuge in the Sangha,” it is not a statement, it is a practice. (*Friends on the Path*)

The Sangha is there to make the training easy. When we are surrounded by brothers and sisters doing exactly the same thing, it is easy to flow in the stream of the Sangha. (*Friends on the Path*)

All of us have the duty to bring the Buddha into being, not only for our sake, but for the sake of our children and the planet Earth. This is not wishful thinking, this is a real determination. (*Friends on the Path*)

If we take one step mindfully, freely, happily touching the earth, we are doing it for all our ancestors and all future generations.

There is no enlightenment outside of daily life.

Seeing you smile, I know immediately that you are dwelling in awareness. Keep this smile blooming, the half smile of a Buddha.

If in our daily life we can smile, if we can be peaceful and happy, not only we, but everyone will profit from it. This is the most basic kind of peace work.

Because of your smile, you make life more beautiful.

Smile, breathe, and go slowly.

We are here to awaken from the illusion of our separateness.

Peace in ourselves, peace in the world.

There is no distinction between the one who gives, the one who receives, and the *gift* itself.

When we come into contact with the other person, our thoughts and actions should express our mind of compassion, even if that person says and does things that are not easy to accept. We practice in this way until we see clearly that our love is not contingent upon the other person being lovable.

Deep listening and loving speech are wonderful instruments to help us arrive at the kind of understanding we all need as a basis for appropriate action. You listen deeply for only one purpose—to allow the other person to empty his or her heart. This is already an act of relieving suffering.