

# Dharma Stream



MOUNTAIN STREAM MEDITATION CENTER

## PRACTICING AT THE RELIC TOUR

by Mountain Stream Teacher Heather Sundberg

It was a tremendous honor for Mountain Stream and Sierra Friends of Tibet to co-sponsor the Maitreya Loving Kindness Relics Tour in Grass Valley over Memorial Day weekend.

When entering St. Joseph's Cultural Center, you entered another world. The first thing you noticed was the soft music and the sense of, "there is something special going on here." People were not silent. They were connecting with each other—and yet there was the feeling of silence and stillness everywhere.

The main altar dominated the room—beautiful and compelling—with space to circumambulate, pour water over the "baby Buddha" and make wishes, view the Relics, ring bells, turn prayer wheels, and receive blessings. People of all ages waited quietly in line for up to 30 minutes, the children and the elders, representing many nationalities and languages, even a young

woman with a rabbit in a cage! Over 800 people must have visited the Relics over the course of the weekend, including two busloads of people traveling from Daly City in the Bay Area. The place felt welcoming and timeless, like "everyone was there" and all beings were somehow represented.

Mountain Stream was also very lucky to have the Relics visit the

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*"I had no idea what the relics were, yet I knew I wanted to attend. The skeptical tone in my body kept saying, 'Really? Come on!' But I realized that it doesn't matter what the relics are. It is the presence with such attention to and intention for loving-kindness that makes the space sacred and beautiful. What a blessing to experience this gift!"*

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— Amy, Relics Tour Attendee

SEP 2014 - FEB 2015

*This edition of Dharma Stream is devoted to the theme of "Blessings."*

Zion Street Dharma Center in Nevada City for a special blessing. When you come to the Center these days, enjoy our new altar in the meditation hall, above the old fireplace mantle, where the gift of a crystal stupa which sat on the Relics' altar throughout Memorial Day Weekend now spreads its blessings over our meditation and on the land.

So much appreciation goes to the Relics Tour attendants, Amanda and Amanda, for holding the entire event as a place for deep practice and for the gift of the crystal stupa. So much appreciation goes to our volunteers, whose time and love made the event possible—you know who you are! ❁



## FOCUSED INTENTION - THE POWER TO TRANSFORM

### Personal impressions from working with the Relics Tour

by *Steve Solinsky*

Having a ringside seat to the whole spectacle of the Loving Kindness Tour, and the exhibition of the Buddhas' relics—I am most impressed by the centrality of intention to all which transpired around me. It was divine pageantry, highly ritualized. For example, each morning the young women relic managers brought out the relics in a solemn ceremonial procession, the objects resting on the crowns of their heads. As if something extraordinary were entering the space.

My mind goes to occasions at the start of group meditation, when the teacher may give instruction on setting our intention. And, as in all things, we may hear this and casually give it a mental nod. But sometimes the importance of an element in the teaching slips by, either because it is not fully understood, or its critical nature in the process is not acknowledged. Intention is one of those slippery elements. If the teachings are a vehicle to our awakening, then intention is the nitro fuel for that vehicle.

Here we see intention played out on both sides of the relics phenomena. How, in the first place, did these extraordinary pearl-like crystals form from the cremation of ordinary human tissue and bone? Ancient Tibetan lore tells us they form as a result of an alchemy of the perfected wisdom and compassion of these fully enlightened beings—plus unwavering intention.

When people come to view these mysterious objects, often they're extraordinarily moved by an unmistakable presence of Loving Kindness. This could be a crowd phenomena inspired by the ceremony and ritual devotion attributed to the holy objects by the relics staff and many devoted onlookers. Those present may be induced into a sort of hypnotic state of feeling and belief that somehow opens a door to non-ordinary events or states of mind. Call it a sort of mass placebo effect which results in healing in all manner of ways. Of course, this doesn't minimize the miraculous effect these objects have to powerfully influence the consciousness of those present.

Recently, I've been influenced in my views about this by research findings of a brilliant scientist who has actually studied the Relics phenomena: Dr. William Tiller, Professor Emeritus of Material Physics from Stanford University. He's conducted conclusive experiments on the power of human intention and its influence upon physical space, which results in changes to both living and inanimate matter. These experiments gathered a small cadre of Tibetan monks to meditate with the intention of altering the physical characteristics of objects in a distant space. Consistent correlations have been established between their focused intentions and the robust changes observed. If we hold science dear, then we're faced with this dilemma:

our current Newtonian science presupposes no relationship between consciousness and matter. How then are we to explain phenomena like this, and many others? Additionally, there's been plenty in the news lately that neuroscientists have established the fact of neuroplasticity and the brain's ability to rewire itself with new synaptic connections and pathways. Thought, in this case, clearly affects the design and growth of our own biological matter. More and more evidence seems to suggest that science as we know it is, at best, incomplete. It may be partially correct in modeling the functioning of the cosmos, but only within very constrained domains. The hubris of thinking we clearly understand the details of universal mechanics is quickly becoming a relic of the past.

I'll add another piece: the multitude of impressive quantum physics sources which seem to support the idea of a sentient universe—all parts connected non-locally by the intelligent stuff of space itself—sort of a conscious liquid-crystal ether. Here we begin to step into a divine interpretation of how cosmos works. Certainly this assertion appears to be true in specific cases. According to Professor Tiller's theory, there are conditions when the divine and material realms become "coupled," and conscious intention does, indeed, affect lowly physical matter. He actually has created devices to measure and control the intensity of these effects.

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# THE MAITREYA LOVING KINDNESS TOUR - GRASS VALLEY

by Susan Solinsky

The event starts quietly after an opening ceremony with several welcoming talks and invocations. Waves of people enter, stop, cluster then open up spaces around the long tables revealing the small glass stupas with relics inside. Some fragments are like sand, some like pearls, some like crystals, and sit in front of an image of a master. Pulled deeper into each relic, I begin to feel almost permeable, as if the teachings fill the whole space and are passing into my cells.

Hundreds of people arrive from the Bay Area on buses and mingle in the heat with the local folks filling the huge old hall. Everyone slowly circumambulates the Plexiglas cases, flowers perfume the air, and the framed images glow. Some

people lean in closely or kneel, most move on bare feet, bow, prostrate, faces lit by candles, incense. Some murmur in other languages, take pictures, chant, receive dog or a rabbit blessing. Children bathe the small gold Buddha while shafts of sunlight fill the high-domed chapel dancing with dust motes.

I expect to go only one day, to deliver the flowers from our Center, but instead stand breathlessly watching the two young attendants unpack and press each relic to their forehead and set up the display. Hugging the bouquet of peonies, I listen to the chanting over the speakers keeping pace with the women's steps and bows to the huge golden Maitreya Buddha.

The next day I went again, and the next. I added to the food for the helpers, ate quietly with the staff. Mostly I just sat and watched the procession of people as the light shifted and silently blessed our local Ani-la nun as she blessed people. I helped greet the Chinese nun from Daly City who blessed her two busloads of people one day. And when the two Theravada nuns came from Placerville, I was overflowing. The nuns stood chanting in Pali with sweet, clear voices at the closing ceremony, lifting my heart to the rafters.

Some people came everyday, like me to sit in the stillness, to let it soak in, and be soft. Really, where else was there to go? 🌸

*Maitreya Relic Tour*  
Photo by Susan Solinsky





## UPDATE FROM LADAKH, JULY 2014

*by Cindy Shaw*

Ladakh is just as magical as John Travis describes, and the villagers are extremely warm, friendly, and hospitable. “Jullay” is the greeting you get from all who pass by. Tea is offered frequently, the Ladakhis love to sit over tea and talk, sharing many wonderful stories here “at the top of the world.”

I have been in Ladakh nearly a month, and have decided to leave for Dharmasala for the next two months. I was here for the 10 days of Kalachakra teaching with His Holiness and many wonders transpired. The Dalai Lama gave ten days of teaching on world peace. 150,000 people from around the world attended.

Locals are mostly Tibetan and Ladakhi, and I have been fortunate to meet a group of dharma friends here in Ladakh who live in Dharamsala. I am leaving to rent a room there for the next two months. I also had the good fortune to meet an inspiring and learned Rinpoche. I look forward to taking his class as well as to classes at the library.

There is a high lama in the group—a reincarnation of a Great Master who meditated in a cave for 50 years in his past life, I am told. All I know is that I have not met such an individual before, and I have gained a lot from the private teachings he gave us in conjunction with Kalachakra.



*Chenrezig at Ladakh Monastery*

There is an Italian nun here who is the teacher of the Dalai Lama's family.

I hope to spend time each day also teaching English to the new Tibetan refugees, as I understand there is a great need.

My friends will help find me a place to live near them for the next two months to continue to study and meditate.

After the Dalai Lama gave the Heart Sutra teaching, a circular rainbow appeared directly over this golden Buddha, Maitreyas head. My camera did not do it justice, but part of the rainbow can be seen here.

Love to all friends at Mountain Stream! ❁

# PHOTOS OF THE KALACHAKRA IN LADAKH, INDIA

*by Cindy Shaw*



*Front of the altar with monks at the Kalachakra in Ladakh*

*Monks at the Kalachakra in Ladakh*





**PHOTOS OF THE KALACHAKRA IN LADAKH, INDIA**

*by Cindy Shaw*



*Golden Maitreya Buddha*



*Two Ladakhis*



*Cindy Shaw with family in Ladakh*

# DAYLONGS AND RETREATS

September 2014 through February 2015

For the most up-to-date information, visit [www.mtstream.org](http://www.mtstream.org).

## OCTOBER 22-29

Wednesday-Wednesday  
John Travis  
Oakwood Retreat Center  
at Rainbow Farm  
Selma, IN  
**INFO:** 513-542-5258 Barb

## OCTOBER 18, SATURDAY

*Develop Meditation Like the Earth*  
Heather Sundberg  
Zion Street Dharma Center  
Nevada City, CA  
**INFO:** [ann@mtstream.org](mailto:ann@mtstream.org)

## OCTOBER 25, SATURDAY

*Five Spiritual Faculties*  
Heather Sundberg  
Sky Creek Dharma Center  
Chico, CA  
**INFO:** [www.skycreekdharma.org](http://www.skycreekdharma.org)

## OCTOBER 26, SUNDAY

*Wise Attitude of Mind*  
Heather Sundberg  
Lotus, CA  
**INFO:** [mike@mtstream.org](mailto:mike@mtstream.org)

## NOVEMBER 4-11 "A FEW SPACES LEFT"

Tuesday-Tuesday  
*Hawaii Retreat*  
John Travis, Heather Sundberg  
**INFO:** [mtstream.hawaii.retreat@gmail.com](mailto:mtstream.hawaii.retreat@gmail.com), 530-723.2301

## NOVEMBER 8, SATURDAY

*Jhana Practice and Instruction*  
Leigh Brasington  
Zion Street Dharma Center  
Nevada City, CA  
**INFO:** [maryhelen@mtstream.org](mailto:maryhelen@mtstream.org)  
(530) 887-9400

## NOVEMBER 9, SUNDAY

*Dependent Origination*  
Leigh Brasington  
Zion Street Dharma Center  
Nevada City, CA  
**INFO:** [maryhelen@mtstream.org](mailto:maryhelen@mtstream.org)  
(530) 887-9400

## DECEMBER 2-5 4 EVENINGS

Tuesday-Friday  
*Householder Non-Residential Retreat*  
John Travis  
Zion Street Dharma Center  
Nevada City, CA  
No registration required

## DECEMBER 6, SATURDAY

John Travis  
Zion Street Dharma Center  
Nevada City, CA  
**INFO:** [barbara@mtstream.org](mailto:barbara@mtstream.org)

## JANUARY 24, 2015, SATURDAY

*Joyous Expression – A Day of  
Meditation and Writing Practice*  
Patricia Dove Miller  
Zion Street Dharma Center  
Nevada City, CA  
**INFO:** [www.mtstream.org](http://www.mtstream.org)

## FEBRUARY, 2015

*Mountain Stream Daylong*

Details coming soon

**INFO:** [www.mtstream.org](http://www.mtstream.org)

## MARCH 14, SATURDAY

*The Seven Factors of Enlightenment*

Maeve Hassett and

Mary Helen Fein

Mercy Center

Auburn, CA

**INFO:** [maryhelen@mtstream.org](mailto:maryhelen@mtstream.org)

(530) 887-9400



### LISTEN TO

#### DHARMA TALKS ONLINE

Talks by John Travis and  
Heather Sundberg can be found at:

- [www.mtstream.org](http://www.mtstream.org)
- [www.dharmaseed.org](http://www.dharmaseed.org)



### ADD YOUR VOICE

The online *Dharma Stream*  
newsletter is published twice  
a year. Your contributions are  
warmly welcomed. Please submit  
to [submissions@mtstream.org](mailto:submissions@mtstream.org)  
your articles, poems, photos, and  
artwork by:

- February 1, 2015 for the  
Spring edition
- August 1, 2015 for the  
Fall Edition

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE CENTER

*Ongoing classes and groups at the Zion Street Dharma Center, Nevada City*

### **MONDAY NIGHT SITTING GROUP**

7:00PM to 8:30PM

Includes silent meditation and dharma talk by local or visiting teacher

### **2ND & 4TH WEDNESDAY NIGHT SITTING GROUP**

7:30PM to 9:00PM

Meditation with guidance, teachings, community dialog, simple rituals, chanting, and more

### **1ST WEDNESDAY VIDEO GROUP**

6:00PM

Come watch a video together and discuss it afterwards

### **MONTHLY BOARD MEETING**

5pm Sundays

All are welcome to attend and learn more about Mountain Stream

Info: [marcia@mtstream.org](mailto:marcia@mtstream.org)  
530-265-6111

**FOR DETAILS, PLEASE VISIT [WWW.MTSTREAM.ORG](http://WWW.MTSTREAM.ORG)**

## SIT WITH OUR EXTENDED SANGHA

*Connect with community in your local area*

### **AUBURN**

Canyon Spirit Yoga Center  
538 Auburn Ravine Road  
Thursdays, 7:30–9:00PM  
Mary Helen 530-887-9400  
[maryhelen@mtstream.org](mailto:maryhelen@mtstream.org)

### **CARSON CITY, NV**

*Dharma Zephyr Sangha*  
213 N. Minnesota  
Mondays, 7:00–8:30PM  
[www.dharmazephyr.org](http://www.dharmazephyr.org)

### *Beginner's Mind Sangha*

213 N. Minnesota  
Mondays, 5:30–6:30PM  
[www.dharmazephyr.org](http://www.dharmazephyr.org)

### *West Wind Sangha*

213 N. Minnesota  
Wednesdays, 6:30–8:30PM  
[www.dharmazephyr.org](http://www.dharmazephyr.org)

### **CHICO**

*Heart of the Lotus Sangha*  
Sky Creek Dharma Center  
Tuesdays, 6:30–8:15PM  
Joanne 530-895-1579  
[www.skycreekdharmacenter.org](http://www.skycreekdharmacenter.org)

### **DAVIS**

*Davis Insight Group*  
UU Church of Davis  
27074 Patwin Road  
Wednesdays, 7:00–8:30PM  
[www.davisinsightgroup.org](http://www.davisinsightgroup.org)

Monday, 7:00–9:00PM  
2nd Saturday of Month, 9:00–12:30PM  
Tony & Toni Bernhard 530-758-2904

### **DIAMOND SPRINGS**

*Metta Meditation Group*  
Baha'i Center  
484 Main Street, Suite 6  
Will Lister 530-306-7264  
[mettaphoto@mac.com](mailto:mettaphoto@mac.com)

### **MINDEN/GARDNERVILLE, NV**

O2 Yoga and Wellness  
1557 Zerolene Place  
Thursdays, 6:00–7:00PM  
Karen 775-267-2424

### **NORTH SAN JUAN RIDGE**

*Your Place Too*  
Tuesday evenings  
Bruce 530-277-3470  
[bruce\\_pardoe@yahoo.com](mailto:bruce_pardoe@yahoo.com)

### **PLACERVILLE**

*Sierra Insight Sangha*  
Boeger Winery  
1709 Carson Road  
Wednesdays, 6:30–8:00PM  
[sue@boegerwinery.com](mailto:sue@boegerwinery.com)

### **RENO, NV**

St. John's Church  
1070 West Plumb Lane  
Mondays, 6:30–8:15PM  
[www.dharmazephyr.org](http://www.dharmazephyr.org)

### *One River Sangha*

(GLBT and Allies)  
Reno Buddhist Center  
820 Plumas Street  
Tuesdays, 6:30–8:15PM  
[www.oneriversangha.org](http://www.oneriversangha.org)

### **ROCKLIN/ROSEVILLE**

Rocklin Montessori School  
5250 Fifth Street  
Mondays, 6:30–8:00PM  
Donna 916-532-6955  
Elke 916-632-8766  
[donna@mtstream.org](mailto:donna@mtstream.org)  
[elke@mtstream.org](mailto:elke@mtstream.org)

### **SACRAMENTO**

*Sacramento Buddhist Meditation Group*  
Sundays, 7:00–8:45PM  
[www.smbg.org](http://www.smbg.org)

*Sacramento Insight Meditation*  
Thursdays, 7:00–9:15PM  
[www.sactoinsight.org](http://www.sactoinsight.org)



*For more details, contact individual sanghas or visit [www.mtstream.org](http://www.mtstream.org)*





# THE BLESSING OF RENUNCIATION

by *Cynthia Embree-Lavoie*

No doubt some of you reading this will think the title is an oxymoron, a contradiction. How could renunciation be a blessing? It sounds painful and difficult! I once felt that way, but over time and with more practice and deeper understanding, I have come to see that there are indeed great blessings in renunciation.

For a good part of my life, I associated renunciation with deprivation and pain: giving up comforts because of limited financial resources, giving up foods I wanted because I was always on a diet when I was younger, etc. But renunciation as part of our Buddhist spiritual path is not about deprivation. It is about letting go of something transient and unreliable in favor of the faith that a more long-lasting happiness is possible.

My first experience practicing renunciation as part of my Dharma practice was several years ago. I had made a series of impulse purchases that left me feeling uneasy, and I made a commitment to myself that for six months I would not buy anything for myself that wasn't absolutely necessary, such as simple food at the grocery store and gas for my car. No Starbucks coffee, no occasional lottery tickets, no art supplies, not even "wholesome" purchases like Dharma books. I decided to begin this commitment at the end of a retreat I was doing at Spirit Rock.

My first test came immediately at the end of the retreat when the "shopping table" was put out, including instructions for how to purchase copies of recordings of the retreat talks. The talks were so good, so inspirational, I really "needed" them! But I remembered the commitment I had made and reflected on why I believed I "needed" to buy the tapes. I realized that it was mostly attachment—I didn't want to let go of the retreat experience, didn't want to acknowledge impermanence and be present for the next moments of my life which might not be quite so pleasant.

Although at times it was difficult to keep this commitment, I did begin to see some blessings. It created more spaciousness in my life. (I didn't "have" to rush out the door early in order to stop at Starbucks to get a drink before a meeting.) It allowed me to experience the joy of generosity. I included gifts to others in the category of "allowable" purchases, since I had more funds available. I also learned from reflecting on the motivation underlying the urge for purchases I wanted to make. Although I eventually ended my commitment, one thing I have never done again is to buy a lottery ticket. I realized that buying lottery tickets is based in the belief that money and material resources are the source for happiness, and this belief is in total contradiction to the Dharma. When I "go for refuge" to money

and material things, even if only in fantasy, I am depriving myself of the opportunity to cultivate contentment and to meet my present experience with openness and compassion.

More recently, I have become very interested in practicing renunciation as a way to understand more deeply the second noble truth, that the source of all suffering is clinging and craving. If craving is the source of suffering, then it seems renunciation must lead to joy and freedom. A month or so ago I decided to experiment with severely limiting the amount of time I spend watching TV and playing iPad games. I also recommitted to a vegan lifestyle instead of being "90% vegan." I'm already discovering that the blessings in these commitments outweigh any sense of deprivation.

I have found that I don't really miss the TV and computer games. Instead, my life feels more relaxed, more spacious. I am able to be more present for my wife and other people because I don't feel so rushed. More significant to my dharma practice, I am conscious that my mind is quieter. When I'm not filling it with lots of stories and fast-paced images, it is much easier to bring it back to a simple awareness of my immediate experience.

I wanted to re-commit to a vegan lifestyle, not because I believed the non-vegan things I occasionally ate had a significant impact on animal suffering or global warming, but

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## FOCUSED INTENTION continued from page 2

What then exactly is intention, I ask myself? Is it the same thing as prayer? It appears to be made up of thoughts and feelings related to a potential outcome. The more we're able to impart meaning to a particular outcome, the more intention seems to become enhanced. The tricky part is that if this intention, this prayer, is to have real effective power, then all investment in particular outcomes must be released. Otherwise, we're fooling ourselves by our anxiety-induced grasping, and introducing the shadowy specter of self-doubt.

The result, emotionally powered doubt, will sour the fruition of any intention. A total disregard for whatever unfolds is demanded, as if there is only certainty. Or, when all fear has been dispelled, Love is all that remains. Love is really all there is. The interactive cosmos patiently awaits us to come to this, and when we finally do, it opens majestically. Synchronicities abound. Doors mysteriously open. Creativity deepens. Insights flow.

We are home. ❀

*“I felt myself creating myself to be in this ‘holy’ space. Not feeling particularly overwhelmed or open-hearted. Yet I viewed the relics with wonder, rang the bells, copied suttas with the gold pen, received a blessing, shed a tear, and floated away to a day at the river. Soon I become irritated with someone – equanimity where art thou!?”*  
– Catalina, Relics Tour Attendee

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## RENUNCIATION continued from page 9

because those “exceptions” always left me feeling hypocritical and dishonest. However, I kept making the exceptions because my desire for the food was stronger. The great blessing for me of making the connection between craving and suffering is that now I understand the choice as something I am doing for my own freedom and benefit, not “only” because it will help other beings and the earth. Every time I see something I'd like to eat that isn't vegan, it is a reminder to ask myself:

Do I really believe my happiness can come from a temporary sense experience, or do I trust that a much deeper happiness is possible through mindfulness and wisdom? Do I want to practice craving or freedom?

I hope these few examples may encourage you to experiment with letting go of some attachments and discovering where that takes you. In closing, I'd like to share some of my favorite quotes about renunciation:

“Renunciation is: ‘Just this is enough.’ Can you meet your life as it is and say ‘Just this is enough’ or are you always looking for something more? That's where the suffering comes in.” Zenke Blanche Hartman

“The more you have, the more you're occupied. The less you have, the more free you are.” Mother Theresa

“All desire is really for the end of desire – the desire for satisfaction and contentment.” Larry Yang

“Renunciation is not giving up the things of the world, but accepting that they go away.”  
Suzuki Roshi

“When you let go a little, you get a little peace. When you let go a lot, you get a lot of peace. When you let go completely, you get complete peace, and your troubles with this world will come to an end.” Ajahn Chah

“Whatever bliss in the world is found in sensual pleasures, and whatever there is of heavenly bliss, these are not worth one-sixteenth part of the bliss that comes with craving's end.”  
Udana 2.2 ❀ ❀

# STRETCHING ALL SENSES OF COMFORT

*by John Travis*

In preparation for 2014 group trek  
Lone Trekker - Markha Valley, Ladakh  
The Snow Leopard Conservatory

Climbing miles and miles—  
Following some river with its glacier torrents.  
Only to come to a crossing  
Where a steel cable and small basket for you,  
Your backpack and walking sticks.

What need is it that pulls you farther and farther?  
Some seeker looking to outpace his years,  
Thinking that somehow if he endures the struggle  
Of a homeless landscape?  
Caught in the exquisiteness of this foreign topography.  
Stepping into dark temples with its wrathful frescoes,  
touched by its mountain shamanism.  
Hoping that some purity will bubble up through this occidental consciousness.

Enduring hours and hours of uphill and downhill and again uphill.  
Climbing day after day eyes glued to path.  
Some moments taking rest in awe!  
The moonscape of the Himalayas.  
This desert, 12,000 feet above sea level.  
How is it the breathing becomes a sole-source of attention.  
Struggling with each breath each step through the 16,830-foot pass.  
Knowing that the snow and bitter cold drives you inward even deeper.

Tell me again why would I want to endure such hardship?  
What goes up must come down.  
Struggling to keep a steady foot from one wet rock to another.  
Knowing full well any slight slip cannot be tolerated in these mountains.  
Yes it's true— to shakeup the complacency one has to stretch— Deep into unknown territory.  
Risking everything to know that death is simply the result of life.  
Plain facts— giving each moment and breath further meaning.

Knowing full well all of this will end soon enough.  
Could I really end up in a rocking chair?  
Hashing through old stories and fond memories?

There was the great French adventurer/Dharma student/writer,  
Alexandra David Neel; climbing the Himalayas into Tibet dressed as a man at 76,  
long before my time.  
So this mystery will not end in complacency.  
No matter what happens next.  
Just another breath, another step, another mile.



*John Travis heading over a pass  
Photo by Marcia Craighead*



# BLESSING

*by Jenna McAsey*

It is such a blessing just to simply be a part of a group of people who practice toward forgiveness and mindfulness. In my 17 years or so of learning more about dharma and practicing as a meditator and as a yoga teacher, it has become so very clear that the sangha and practice is truly the gem of my whole life.

Just to sit on the cushion each day to breath and welcome whatever visitors arrive, wishing myself and others well, has become the strength and grace that sustains me in a world

that needs my calm and more neutral focus more than ever.

I feel humbled and joyful to see and receive the care and generosity of others as we watch dharma centers spring up in so many more communities. Also for these centers to be able to operate in our culture on the principle of dana is truly remarkable.

It renews my faith in humankind. I feel the wealth of being blessed or “rained” on by all lineages of

practitioners. Paying it forward and supporting the dharma through service is the cornerstone of how I’m learning the eightfold path.

Very grateful for these times when the Blessings of the teachings are accessible and available so readily. May all beings be blessed by dharma and sangha! ❁



*June Retreat at Sierra Friends Center  
with Heather Sundberg  
Photo by Michelle Reynolds*

## HAIKUS

by Randy Whitwell

*With new eyes I see  
Emptiness surrounding me  
I am splendidly blind*

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*Illumination  
A gift bestowed by the moon  
A quiet mind sees*

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*Mustang Trekkers  
Choser, outside of Lo Manthang  
in upper Mustang  
Photo by a Sherpa*






**MOUNTAIN STREAM  
MEDITATION CENTER**

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**MOUNTAIN STREAM MEDITATION** is an Insight Meditation community, serving as a resource for Buddhism in the Sierra foothills of Northern California. Our vision is simple: to inspire one another in developing an open heart, spacious mind and kindness toward oneself and others for the benefit of all beings. This is a core teaching of the Buddha.

**ZION STREET DHARMA CENTER** welcomes and invites you to explore spiritual practice in a peaceful environment. It offers the community a refuge that supports various forms of mindful practice. It is a place to connect, reflect, and study.

**FOUNDER AND GUIDING TEACHER** John Travis is dedicated to teaching the Dharma so that it remains accessible to all. He began teaching in 1986 after studying in Asia with teachers in both the Theravadan and Tibetan traditions. John is a senior teacher at Spirit Rock Meditation Center, has a private practice as a meditation counselor and was trained in Hakomi body-centered psychotherapy.

**RESIDENT TEACHER** Heather Sundberg began teaching in 1999 after completing a four-year teacher training at Spirit Rock Meditation Center under the guidance of Jack Kornfield and Joseph Goldstein. Heather teaches at the Zion Street Dharma Center and nationally in association with several other meditation centers.

**GENEROSITY** is foundational to meditation practice and sustaining the Buddhadharmā. Together we invest in future generations by sharing the gift of a generous heart. Buddhist teachings are offered freely, available to all levels of practitioners. Opportunities to contribute include financial gifts, service, time and energy.

**FOR INFORMATION**

about Mountain Stream as a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization, residential retreats, classes, daylong retreats, and ways to contribute, please visit [www.mtstream.org](http://www.mtstream.org).

