

DALLAS MEDITATION CENTER

FEBRUARY 2016 – “CELEBRATE!”

One Dharma / Awakening Heart @ CSLDallas (A Center for Spiritual Living)

SUNDAYS 5:00-7:00 PM

Awakening Heart (*Community of Mindful Living*)
Interfaith Buddhist Spirituality (*Thich Nhat Hanh*)
Zen, Mindfulness, Holistic Meditation (*Brother ChiSing*)
* Childcare and Children's Class available every Sunday *



Feb 7: “Celebrate Peace”
Speaker: **Brother ChiSing** or
Sangha Community Leader

Feb 14: **Special time (this week only): 6:30-8:00pm**
“Celebrate Love”
Facilitators: **Bobbie Perkins** and **Julie Ryan**

Feb 21: **LUNAR NEW YEAR Celebration**
“Celebrate Joy” - Meditation, Music, Movement, Messages & More
Vegetarian Potluck Dinner follows. Bring friends. Bring food to share. All are welcome!
Speaker: **Brother ChiSing**

Feb 28: “Celebrate Wisdom” – **Brother ChiSing** or **Special Guest Speaker**

Mondays

12:00p **ZEN-To-Go** (silent meditation) – *trained members facilitating*
6:00p TAI CHI – *Janna Whitton*
7:30p **MINDFUL Mondays** – *Cornell Kinderknecht*

Tuesdays

12:00p **ZEN-To-Go** (silent meditation) – *trained members facilitating*
7:00p **YES (Young Enlightened Souls)**
Meditation/Social Community – *Young Adults (20's & 30's)*

Wednesdays

9:00a TAI CHI – *Janna Whitton*
10:30a QIGONG – *Janna Whitton*
7:30p **INTERBEING Sangha** – *Bobbie Perkins*
(Five Mindfulness Trainings on First Wednesdays – *Feb 3, Mar 2, April 6*)

Saturday (once-a-month)

2:00p **Monthly BEGINNERS MEDITATION Workshop** (Register Online)
Next scheduled: February 20 & March 19, *check website for other dates*

Feb 21: 2:00 – 3:30p Om Awakening – *Dr. Paula Joyce @ CSL Dallas (Register Online)*

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BROTHER CHISING'S TEN "SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS"

(1) Just by our very existence, we exert a positive force around us wherever we are. Remember that, when you gather together in Sangha meditation, for you intensify that positive force. And remember that next time you are in a waiting room or a hospital or anywhere, for you are invisibly helping those in that place, even just by simply being there. You are the Light of the world, just by your very existence! And if you do any prayer or meditation or service or spiritual practices, you simply intensify that positive force that you already emanate.

(2) I was reflecting on 4 types of spirituality, 3 of which seem unhealthy, and only 1 which is healthy –

- 1) Religious Fundamentalism
- 2) Materialistic Atheism
- 3) Pseudo-Spirituality
- 4) Genuine Spirituality

Many people start off with religious fundamentalism, but when that becomes unsatisfactory, they may react oppositely and turn to materialistic atheism, for example. But the spiritual void is still there, so they begin to search for a spirituality that is not fundamentalist. Hopefully, they will find and practice a genuine spirituality that is healthy, balanced and mature. But unfortunately, sometimes in their stumbling search, they may get naively seduced into a pseudo-spirituality that may be cult-like or superficial or egoistic. But I trust that, eventually, in this life or after, everyone will find their true home in a genuine spirituality. One example of a genuine spiritual path is that of a "holistic mindful zen," which Thich Nhat Hanh practices. There are many good paths, but not all paths are the same. Please be discerning.

(3) RELIGION, INCLUDING BUDDHISM, IS MORE POETRY THAN PROSE, MORE METAPHORICAL THAN LITERAL, MORE ART THAN SCIENCE. So please don't turn Buddhism or any religion into fundamentalism, which creates an "orthodoxy" which is actually heresy. Truth cannot be boxed. But guidelines do exist to be used lightly. Use the Dharma raft as "upaya" (skillful means), but once you are on the other shore, let go of the raft, as Buddha taught.

(4) BLUE HOLIDAYS - I am so grateful for the majority of us who can truly enjoy this winter season. And I also want to acknowledge and embrace the rest of us who may be experiencing sadness, illness, death, loss, fatigue, pain or loneliness during the holidays. Life is a glorious messy blend of the whole spectrum of experience. It's not what happens that matters as much as how we respond to what happens. May we all respond to life with mindfulness, love, wisdom, honesty and an open heart. Your tears are my tears. Your smiles are my smiles.

(5) From the human perspective, there is light that constantly struggles against its nemesis, the darkness. But from a more Divine perspective, the True Light is Infinite enough to hold both light and dark in unfolding revelation. So the Light shines both in the smile of a laughing baby as well as in the tears of one beside another at the hospital having a last breath. No matter how dark it may seem to get, the Light is always there. Always.

(6) I had a little aha moment just now. Why should I continue doing my spiritual practices, such as mindfulness and meditation etc, if I will die of cancer anyway? Because I can go through this living/dying process with more despair, more fear, more suffering, more isolation; or I can go through it with more love, more peace, more compassion, more gratitude, and more helpfulness to others. Spiritual practice helps me in my choice toward the latter. Even in the living/dying process. Even on my deathbed.

(7) How to practice spirituality and mindfulness when you are in a hospital bed – So, I am physically unable to do walking meditation because of dizziness, nor sitting meditation because of extreme fatigue,

nor mantra chanting practice because of coughing, etc. But I can still wake up in the morning and say a prayer of gratitude first thing, I can do silent positive affirmations during the day, I can call up my prayer partners, I can smile and thank my helpers, I can pray for the other patients, and I can listen to meditative music as a 20-minute listening meditation, and I can listen to spiritual books on audio if I cannot read a spiritual book with my one eye directly. And I can enjoy each mindful moment of breath, sunshine, air, food, and life here and now. I'm not dead yet, I am alive TODAY! ☺



(8) What is the purpose of life? I don't think it's to live without any pain, suffering, illness, loss or problems; but rather to learn how to respond with understanding and compassion whether in health or sickness and all the unexpected surprises along the way, both the ups and downs of life. I don't think it's to be constantly "happy" but to experience the whole spectrum of reality, eventually coming to peace with all of it. I don't think it's to believe in the best religion or to have the most accurate theology, but to live whatever spirituality you happen to choose to the best of your ability toward cultivating wisdom, kindness and service. I think the purpose of life is simply just to live it, not necessarily to understand it all. And I do believe that we will all understand everything eventually but only after this life is finished, after our life review, after being reunited with the Light, after the veil of temporary forgetting has been washed by the waves of eternal remembrance. Yes, there is a purpose to life; but it's probably not what we think it is. WE are the purpose of life, and we are GLORIOUS beyond all imagining! (We just have some very "creative" disguises!)

(9) This Earth school is a temporary reality (like a Star Trek holo-deck program), to give our eternal Souls opportunities for experience, recreation, spiritual growth, character cultivation, loving and being loved, service, adventure, learning and teaching, exploration, testing, and creativity.

What matters is not how long we live, how much money we make, how much fame or success we have, how comfortable our lives are, or how physically beautiful our bodies are. What matters is how we respond to life, one day at a time, how we love others and let others love us, how we learn and grow through every experience, how we serve others and give others opportunities to serve us, how we get through times of pain, loss, confusion, illness, dying and "death," and how we forgive each other's human foibles as we awaken to the remembrance that we are actually not humans but gods.

It doesn't matter if your temporary Earth costume is male or female, black or white or yellow or brown, gay or straight, rich or poor, Christian or Buddhist or Hindu or Muslim or Jewish, young or old, able or differently abled, healthy or ill, "beautiful" or "ugly" or "average," in the role of parent or child or sibling or teacher or student, etc.

What matters is how you use this impermanent costume and all your various roles mindfully, how you infuse it all with love, learning and service.

(10) I've been reflecting a lot on balance, middle path, emptiness and form, Dharma as best interpreted as metaphorical and not literal, and how we need to respect both emptiness and form equally because if we get too caught up in form we drown in our human drama but if we get too caught up in emptiness we might not see the value of being human in this physical realm, here and now, for there really is a valuable purpose for us being here, even though it is only a temporary reality. One way of putting it is:

We are Infinite Eternal Beings who get to do laundry and take out the garbage ... mindfully and with love (and non-attachment)!

- Brother ChiSing

A WORD FROM CORNELL



"Mindfulness is the energy that helps us recognize the conditions of happiness that are already present in our lives. You don't have to wait ten years to experience this happiness. It is present in every moment of your daily life. There are those of us who are alive but don't know it. But when you breathe in, and you are aware of your in-breath, you touch the miracle of being alive. That is why mindfulness is a source of happiness and joy." ~Thich Nhat Hanh

How often do you remember to notice the conditions of happiness in your own life? Unfortunately, most of us never take the time to even live in the present moment. We're busy worrying about the future or reliving the past. If we can just start by taking one opportunity each day to breathe in the present moment and list one thing in our life that is positive, we might find that, over time, with practice, it becomes easier to call up that feeling of happiness that is present within us. Maybe, when you sit down for lunch tomorrow, before taking the first bite, take that moment to think of one thing that is positive. It could be a moment of gratitude for being able to breathe. Maybe a nice text message from a friend popped up on your phone. Whatever it is, just breathe it in, smile, and then begin your meal. Such a beautiful practice to be aware and fully alive in the present moment.

A WORD FROM BOBBIE



Rereading Thich Nhat Hanh's book, *No Death, No Fear*, I was struck by the following paragraph:

"The Pure Land is not somewhere else; it is right here, in the present. It is in every cell of our bodies. When we run away from the present, we destroy the kingdom of God. But if we know how to free ourselves from our habit energy of running, then we will have peace and freedom and we will all walk like a Buddha in paradise."

That little phrase 'walk like a Buddha in paradise' inspired a little poem.

Mindfully walking
Like Buddha in paradise,
Each step a blessing.

Mindfully sitting
Like Buddha in paradise,
I know peace and joy.

Mindfully breathing
Like Buddha in paradise,
Each breath life giving.

I've written more verses, but I invite you to write your own. It's simple – just begin with:

Mindfully (*fill in the blank with two syllables*)
Like Buddha in paradise.
(*fill in the blank with 5 syllables*)

I'd love to hear whatever you come up with.

REMEMBERING TOM MADDEN AUGUST 28, 1948 – DECEMBER 25, 2015



We were saddened at the end of December to learn about the sudden passing of our sangha brother, Tom Madden. He died as a result of injuries he suffered when his car was hit by a drunk driver.

Tom was a dedicated member of the Interbeing sangha and had attended Awakening Heart sangha as well as several of Brother ChiSing's classes beginning in 2013. One of the many things I admired about Tom was his purposefulness. He seemed to take his time to make a decision, but having reached a decision, he went about the business of following up and doing whatever was appropriate to the situation. He really practiced Right Diligence. I imagine that trait served him well as a young man who served as a Marine in the war in Vietnam. He was a decorated veteran of that war and back home he became a member of the Veterans for Peace organization.

In pursuit of his desire to deepen his spiritual practice, Tom made a commitment to the Five Mindfulness Trainings in 2014 and had recently expressed his desire to become an aspirant in Thich Nhat Hanh's Order of Interbeing. Those of us who had the privilege of knowing Tom will remember his kindness, his sincerity and his honesty. We know that his life enriched many lives and we are very grateful for having known him.



Interfaith Buddhist
LUNAR NEW YEAR
"Year of the Mindful Monkey"

@ AWAKENING HEART
(COMMUNITY OF MINDFUL LIVING)



Facilitated by Brother ChiSing, M.Div.,
and others

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2016
5:00-7:00 PM

Meditation, music & chanting, blessing ritual, inspiring teachings.
Invite your family, children and friends! All are welcome!

Childcare available during the 5-7pm gathering.

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www.AWAKENINGHEART.org