

Dear Thay, Dear Sisters and Brothers

Thank you for the beautiful meditation and chanting this morning. The sounds of the monastery are deeply moving and grounding.

I thought back to the first retreat at Blue Cliff. Perhaps in 2004? I set up my small tent on the hill behind the main building. There were not so many of us and the other camping areas were not needed. As it happened, my tent was next to the cabin where Thay stayed that year. I remember the periodic deliveries of wheelbarrows full of books to be signed by Thay late in the evening. And how they were picked up early in the morning. I saw how hard he was working for all of us.

It was this retreat when I took the Five Mindfulness Trainings and began to see where the path begins. Intention. The process of aspiration was deep and the ceremony so moving. I treasure all of this and I feel Thay's hand when I see my dharma name. But the moment that moved me most was on Sunday, as I left my tent for breakfast. I saw a small collection of Vietnamese people on the little porch outside of Thay's cabin. He came out to greet them and I realized they all had plates of food and were going to enjoy breakfast together, their small community amidst the larger one. There was true "home" in this gathering. I felt privileged to see it and thought what a comfort it must be to all of them, sharing their history, sharing language. I felt such gratitude that Thay was able to have a personal moment after the days of long hours of teaching, giving so much of himself to all of us.

Dear Thay... may you be happy, peaceful and light. May you be safe from injury. May you be free.

A deep bow with tears of joy
Susan Goldman Boundless Sky of the Heart
Woodstock, NY your Catskill Mountain Sangha