



December 2020 Greetings & News

Dear Friends,

Here at Kevala Retreat we wish you all the best during this Holy-day season in a year of deep practice. Tonight, at the end of Solstice week - and on the first biting chilly night of the winter here in the Midwest - we're bundled against the cold and reflecting on what has been, as well as what lies ahead. Words for this time in human existence seem inadequate, but we hold closely the truths we know: full hearted practice in Dhamma has never been so present, or so urgent. The Three Characteristics - suffering, impermanence and emptiness - reveal themselves vividly in this human unfolding... as do faith, joy, and liberation. May you and all your loved ones be held in the steady gaze of what is, and the peace that underlies it, as we continue our human path.

The year at Kevala has brought its share of peace and joy, for which we have much gratitude. Though guest numbers have of course been diminished, for much of the year we continued to enjoy the presence of one or two serious practitioners at a time, keeping the energy of practice rolling through the valley. We continue to be able to host up to three retreatants safely in separate accommodations. We welcome retreat inquiries, as safe travel allows.

Santi continues most of his teaching in an on-line format. The generosity of students and others has carried us through the year financially, and for that we are very grateful. Santi missed seeing students in person, but the steady time at Kevala allowed many outdoor projects to be completed, and allowed him to dive more deeply into editing and translating work.

New Translation of Ajahn Buddhadasa

Santi is currently in the home stretch, as supervising editor, of a major translation to be published by Shambhala. Ajahn Buddhadasa's *Little Dhamma Book* of twelve lectures explores the life of meditation. In it he uses Theravada teachings and his own profound grounding to describe and analyze life dedicated to spiritual cultivation. He stretches our understanding of "meditation" and introduces a powerful array of Dhamma perspectives. Look for it later this year.

2021 On-Line Courses

On-line retreats continue and are scheduled through the first few months 2021. [Please see the schedule and descriptions here.](#) The first takes place January 27-31, a "Depths of

Winter Retreat, with Refuges and Resources." This is an entirely dana based retreat, and all dana will be shared with Cloud Mountain Retreat Center. We hope to see some of you there.

Community Cat TNR Project

Thanks to the support of many, we were able to tackle a much needed community service project, caring for a local colony of outdoor cats that were in need of help. To see our progress thus far, and to see adoptable kitties [please check the website here](#). Thank you again to all who offered support for this much needed work.

Retreat Centers in Jeopardy

Small centers like Kevala have been able to weather this year in better shape than middle and large size Dhamma centers that rely on a steady stream of large gatherings to maintain the facilities and staff. Our precious retreat centers have been the life blood of Buddha-Dhamma teachings in the United States, and at this time they are facing a real existential crisis. We encourage you to generously support the retreat center of your choice to help ensure they will still be here when we can gather again. ***If you are not sure where to help, we urge you to consider one of our favorites: Cloud Mountain Retreat Center in Washington State.*** Cloud Mountain exemplifies the best to be found of Theravada ethics, generosity, service to awakening, and faithfulness in the transmission of teachings. We hope to have them around for a long time to come. [Learn more about Cloud Mountain here](#) and follow the donations tab to help.

Until we can meet in person again,
In Dhamma and with Metta,
Jo Marie and Santikaro