

Tales From Thailand #7, 2018

Dear Friends,



Uuuuh, happy springtime, from Wattle Hollow.

I have often been greeted with big loving hugs, and then, immediately:

*What are you doing here?
You haven't sent the final Tales From Thailand yet.*

True. I wake up every morning, wondering and hoping

Will this be the day I finish up the Tales?

In my last Tales From Thailand (#6), I reported on the saints I met at Inner Dimensions of Climate Change Youth Conference.

Right after that conference, I re-located to downtown commercial Bangkok for a week, to a location which I can sum up in one word:

Hell.

Hookers and their aging, pasty-white, beer-bellied customers were about 40% of the population on the street after dusk, and the next highest percentage was beggars, some of them children. Fluorescent pink dildos were displayed by vendors on every corner. Giant malls with Victoria's Secret and every fashionable Western store from around the world magnetize tourists in the day.

How wonderful! You see that my conditioned consciousness is broadcasting judgement, as my mind so loves to do. So, I watched my own mind, mostly....and tried to bless everyone. Everyone.

I was there to attend a Yin Yoga teacher-training for eight days. The course material was way over my head (memorizing the pathways of twelve sets of meridian points, as they correspond to each organ)...I nonetheless emerged from the ocean floor with some

marvelous pearls, and look forward to sharing Yin yoga with you.



During the certification ceremony, my French teachers, Sebastian and Murielle Pucelle, told me that I am an inspiration to them. This was quite a surprise, since I didn't think they would even let me graduate, given my left brain's non-penchant for factual data.

On one of the last days....I looked out the window, there on the sixth floor, and saw something that caused me to pull out my cellphone and take a photo, although phones were forbidden in the classroom.

It was wonderful to get back to S.D.S.

I returned just in time to join our community for the dispersal of Mr. Sathien's ashes at sea. Khun Sathien was Maechee Sansanee's former lover, when she was a top fashion model, before ordaining as a nun.

This man generously funded all of her earliest projects, thirty years ago: a Montessori kindergarten, the shelter for abused women and single mothers, the transfer of many ancient trees (slated to be destroyed or exported) to what was then a dusty piece of farmland.



Ajahn Passano a well-known monk from the Thai Forest tradition, is on the right, as he ponders life's ephemeral nature. Mr. Sathien is role-modeling his final stage of life, in the refrigerated box, at left.

With the help of the Thai Naval Cremation Fleet, the ashes were scattered at sea. While onboard, I took the opportunity to consider my own mortality:

*How will I choose to sculpture my (thirty at most) years of this incarnation?

*How can I be liberated from greed, anger, delusion, and **especially** this cultural privilege that hovers around me like an unpleasant cologne?



I met yet another saint at the Yin Yoga training session: a Canadian woman named Maryse. Without effort, she caused me to examine my own judgements and fears.

As we became friends, Maryse would quietly relate her previous evening or morning adventures with the people who lived on the street. She'd brought extra clothes from her home in Japan to share. When she intuited that someone was hungry, she'd buy food for them, or anonymously leave money next to someone sleeping on the curb..

One day, Maryse simply offered attention and encouragement to a slightly raving artist living under a bridge, by stopping for twenty

minutes to admire her work. Or she'd pause to play her recorder along with a young street musician.

Life is so simple, when we eliminate our stories, fears and judgements, huh? I witnessed my own deeply-laid conditioning, the desire to remain apart from this ocean of neediness, as if I would drown in it.



When we parted, I gifted Maryse with the Thai tribal apron that I wore every day.

Thank you,
Maryse.

NEVER a dull moment at S.D.S. The next day was Macha Bucha, one of the foundational holidays in Buddhism. Thousands of pilgrims arrived to weave all around the center, later holding candles with incense and a small lotus flower to represent their

quest for budding clarity.

Then my week of goodbyes began....

A last visit to my lovely kindergarten buddies...



And the International Spiritual Volunteers club, Nawng Joy's creation, wrapped up their 6-week extravaganza of earning money for my albino kids' sanctuary in Tanzania. They earned \$1300!

Here we are squeezing orange juice to sell.

I packed in as many hours as I could tolerate in the kitchen, with the bodhissatvas there. These are the true heroes behind every retreat center, working from before dawn to evening, never complaining. I cannot keep up with these angels, and always find some honorable looking excuse to depart after a few hours....



uuuh, I have to go play the flute now
But after that, I'd sneak off and take a nap.



So many of you wonderful readers have asked me,

What about little Coy? Did you find her?

Alas, I didn't even get close, my friends. Anyone who could have given me a clue was totally unavailable.

My only wisp of a lead: right before I left, I sent another photo of Coy to the nun who ran the orphanage where I last saw Coy, four years ago. Maechee Jutipak wrote me back, responding:

Only now do I know who we are talking about.

And then she asked me to come and help her teach yoga to her kids at "Meditation Boot Camp" that she leads, with kids in juvenile detention centers.

The plot thickens, a bit.



Honestly, neither Anna (my cosmic tour guide) nor I expected to find Coy this year or possibly even next year. This safari is not on a linear schedule nor subject to laws of reason.



Right before I left for the airport, Maechee Sansanee sent someone to fetch me. To my astonishment, she gifted me with another, even more elegant and delicate version of the Green Tara statue. I was shocked unto tears... I promised her I would return next year,..and I carefully carried the Tara for days through the various airports.

Green Tara now presides over the lotus fountain in my Green Tara's Rainbow Center, at Wattle Hollow.

Goodbye, dear readers. I'm sorry I left you hanging for two extra months.

Thanks for being you, and journeying with me.



