

THE SOLDIER'S JOURNEY FROM WAR TO PEACE

A Talk and Retreat Led by Claude AnShin Thomas

San Diego Veterans For Peace, the Hugh Thompson Memorial Chapter, is honored to bring the Venerable Claude AnShin Thomas to San Diego to speak on his experiences as a soldier in Vietnam and eventual conversion to Buddhism. Claude AnShin will also be leading a retreat for Veterans after his public talk, for healing, reflection, and sharing by and for veterans and their spouses and significant others.

The Venerable Claude AnShin Thomas speaks and leads retreats internationally on mindfulness practice, transformation, and reconciliation. He is the author of the book *At Hell's Gate A Soldier's Journey from War to Peace* and is the founder of the Zaltho Foundation, a non-profit organization whose purpose is to promote peace and nonviolence in and among individuals, families, societies, and countries.

Claude AnShin Thomas volunteered for active duty at the age of 18, when he served as a crew chief on assault helicopters in Vietnam. By the end of his tour of duty, he had been awarded numerous medals, including 27 Air Medals, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Purple Heart. He witnessed horrifying cruelty, narrowly escaped death on multiple occasions, and was responsible for the deaths of many Vietnamese.

When Thomas returned home he found, like many Vietnam veterans, that he continued to live in a state of war. For years, Thomas struggled with severe post-traumatic stress, drug and alcohol addiction, isolation, and even homelessness. Today, Thomas is a Zen Monk, an International Peace Activist, an Author and a Teacher in the United States, Europe and Asia. He shares his inspiring spiritual odyssey from the horrors of combat to discovering the Buddhist path to healing. Thomas' powerful story can serve as a road map for others who might feel trapped in cyclical patterns of response that are a fact of the trauma experience, regardless of the nature and extent of the trauma.

Public Talk: *The Soldier's Journey from War to Peace*

The talk is open to the general public and will be held on Thursday, June 14 -7:00 p.m. at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice Theatre, University of San Diego. The talk will be followed by a book-signing and reception. This event is co-sponsored by the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice, San Diego Veterans for Peace, and the School of Theology and Religious Studies.

There is no cost to attend, however donations are welcome. Space is limited so please R.S.V.P. by June 7th.

Retreat: *A Three-day Retreat to Explore the Soldier's Journey from War to Peace*

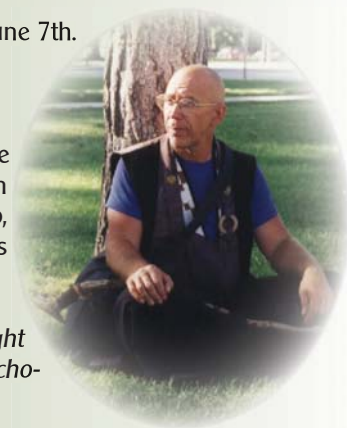
The retreat is for veterans, and their spouses or significant others, and will be held on Friday, June 15th – Sunday, June 17th at Manzanita Village, which is located near Warner Springs, in Northern San Diego County. It is the country retreat center of Ordinary Dharma, a Los Angeles-based group, which weaves together the teachings and practices of the Buddhist Traditions with the timeless themes of Peace-Making and Non-Violence, Social-Justice, Personal Integration and Creativity.

In this three-day retreat, Claude AnShin will address veterans' issues. He says: *"We who have fought in war know intimately about life and death. We who have been wounded by war – physically, psychologically and spiritually – need to come together in order to support each other."*

Many of us live with the after effects of war, known as post-traumatic stress: explosive anger, depression, and flashbacks. The attempts of traditional counseling and therapy, although valuable in our healing, often leave our spiritual wounds unaddressed. Without doing the work of healing spiritually, we only address the symptoms, and this often does not support a change in our hearts and our minds."

You are invited to attend this retreat regardless of your religious or spiritual tradition. Many different forms of meditation will be practiced. Meditation can simply be understood as the art of discovering what prevents us from living directly."

The cost to attend the retreat is \$110 per person, which covers all meals and housing at the retreat. If you require transportation, please add \$25.



Space is very limited for the retreat, so please RSVP with your check for \$110 per person (plus \$25 per person if you require transportation to the retreat), payable to SDVFP. **Please mail no later than June 7th to: San Diego Veterans for Peace, Attn: Jon Monday, P.O. Box 43, Bonsall, CA 92003.** Reservations will be on a first come, first serve basis.

The retreat begins on Friday June 15
Registration and check in 9–noon, Lunch 12–1
The retreat ends on Sunday June 17 at 5 p.m.

The retreat property is in a rural area that will be hot in the daytime and possibly cold at night. Accommodations are rustic, there are no private rooms. Men and women will be in separate rooms with bunk beds. There is only space for about 30 people in the rooms, but others can bring tents and sleeping bags. Everyone should bring bedding linen, towels, and meditation mats or cushions. All meals will be vegetarian.

If you require transportation, there will be a van leaving from after the Public Talk to take people to a hotel in Northern San Diego County, near where the retreat will be held. In the morning, the van will take everyone staying at the hotel to the retreat. After the retreat, the van will take people to San Diego and the Airport.

Hotel reservations for Thursday night can be made for \$70 per night at:

La Estancia Inn
3135 Old Highway 395
Fallbrook, CA 92028
(760) 723-2888

For more information, please visit:

Public Talk: www.peace.sandiego.edu
Retreat Location: www.manzanitavillage.org/retreats/fr_manzanita.html
San Diego Veterans For Peace: www.sdvfp.org
Zaltho Foundation: www.zaltho.org
La Estancia Inn: www.laestanciainn.com
Retreat Contact: jon@sdvfp.org

About the Venerable Claude AnShin Thomas:

Claude AnShin Thomas enlisted in the Army in 1965 and volunteered for duty in Vietnam where he served as a helicopter Crew Chief. During his service in Vietnam he was shot down on 5 separate occasions and wounded.

After being Honorably Discharged, he became very politically and socially active; working to end the war in Vietnam, for student rights and later to address the plight of many of his fellow veterans who were being socially ostracized suffering homelessness, drug addiction, unemployability, social isolation, and abnormally high rates of suicide, divorce, and imprisonment. All conditions with which he was intimately aware and personally familiar.

In 1991 he came in contact with the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh. In this process Claude AnShin became a member of the Vietnamese monastery and retreat center at Plum Village in southern France. During that time Claude AnShin became awakened to the devastating and lasting effects of war and how to make peace with this unpeacefulness.

Claude AnShin speaks and leads retreats internationally on mindfulness practice, transformation, and reconciliation. He is also founder of the ZALTHO FOUNDATION, a non-profit organization whose purpose is to promote peace and nonviolence in and among individuals, families, societies, and countries supporting all efforts to attain this goal through whatever peaceful and nonviolent means available.

Claude AnShin Thomas authored a book titled *At Hell's Gate – A Soldier Journey from War to Peace*, published in 2004 by Shambhala Publications, Inc.

RESERVATION FORM FOR PUBLIC TALK AND RETREAT

Check one or both: I will attend the Public Talk [] Retreat []

Name: _____

Branch and date of service: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

City State Zip: _____

eMail Address: _____

Total number of people: _____

Amount enclosed: \$110 per person or \$135 (with transportation) per person. Mail registration form with check to: San Diego Veterans For Peace, Attn: Jon Monday, Claude AnShin Thomas Retreat. P.O. Box 43, Bonsall, CA 92003