

## **Peace Offering to the Land Ancestors**

*Nov. 23rd, 2023 Oak Grove Sanctuary, Deer Park Monastery*

Dear Land Ancestors,

We, the monastic and lay practitioners of Deer Park Monastery, on this day of remembrance and gratitude, respectfully gather to make an offering of the heart to you and to all the elements that make it possible for us to be present here. In this solemn moment, we remember you, the Luiseño people of the Kumeyaay Nation, and all the indigenous people who had lived here before them. We also remember with gratitude all the plants, animals, and minerals that have long inhabited this sacred region. We send our sincere greetings and gratitude to all our relations - *míyu*.

We are aware that without your support, care and energy, it would not be possible for us to live and practice here today. We aspire to live like you did for countless generations—respectfully and harmoniously with the land and with all the natural elements that you considered to be your kindred spirits. You truly lived with the wisdom of interbeing—just as we aspire to do now.

We also take a silent moment to remember that some of you, the indigenous people of this land, had to endure the horrific suffering of genocide and cultural eradication. We know that you tried your best to live in peace and harmony with each other and with others who came to this sacred land. Because of discrimination, hatred, and greed, you had to endure great violence and injustice, mass oppression and exploitation. As witnesses to the collective memory of this land, we solemnly acknowledge this tragedy.

With this awareness, we vow to continue your work of transforming this suffering to open the way of peace, understanding, and inclusiveness for future generations. We are determined to live harmoniously with each other as one human family of many origins with different histories, and to care for Mother Nature so we can help heal the land, the air, and the oceans.

We know that the peace and harmony cultivated by our practice of stopping, deep listening, loving speech, and compassionate action directly affect the land we live on. When we cultivate harmony within ourselves and practice to reconcile with others, we know we are also in harmony with all of you, our land ancestors. You inhabit not only our past and memories but are still alive in us right here and right now. We will continue to offer our practices of how to build peace and reconciliation, of how to take care of suffering, and of how to generate moments of peace and happiness to all people who come up this mountain. We know this is your deepest wish for all of us.

We are fortunate to call such a sacred mountain and fragrant valley our spiritual home. We vow to cherish and protect this land for future generations by choosing to live simply and in community, and by reducing our overall consumption and our energy footprint. We will respect and allow nature to be as it is - wild - with minimal human intervention and will not take and enjoy only but also give back and revitalize this beautiful environment we call home.

We also aspire to develop this community in such a way that contributes to the regeneration of this beautiful land, offering the energy of freshness, peace, and happiness to all who come here. We want to sow the seeds of understanding and love, of solidarity and humanity in this land and in the hearts of people. We feel grateful and honored to have the great conditions to be able to tend this sacred land as a refuge for so many people and living beings.

With great respect, we ask you, our land ancestors, to please protect us and nourish us with your wisdom and compassion. Trees have their roots and water has its sources. We know that you, our ancestors, are also our roots; we are your continuation. We ask for your guidance and understanding to show us how to proceed on the path of awakening.

As children of this land, we also ask for your great compassion and understanding so that we may begin anew for all the harm that we have done to one another and to Mother Earth. Due to our dualistic way of seeing the world as us and others, separating our humanity with you, Mother Earth and with the natural ecosystem, we have been carried away by our arrogance, greed and pride instead of recognizing that all beings and the entire planet is us and we are the planet. Whatever harm is done to you, it is to our own selves. You have been more than patient with us for eons, please have trust in us as a human family as we find guidance and our way back to our true nature.

With humble hearts and caring hands, we come before you to offer our sincere intention and commitment to practice, heal, and transform ourselves so that this hidden mountain, Deer Park Monastery, will continue to be a refreshing refuge for all living beings. We know that our spiritual freedom and happiness as a community are our deepest gifts to you.

Dear Land Ancestors, thank you for always being here for us, and for holding and accepting us with all our strengths and weaknesses. We vow to practice wholeheartedly so we can be worthy of your trust and love.

Please accept these token offerings of incense, sage, acorns, nuts, fruits, and tea, with all our love and sincerity.