

# Meditating in Auschwitz

Posted On jan 31, Posted by [Dorle Lommatzsch](#) Kategorie [Engaged Buddhism](#)

## MEDITATING IN AUSCHWITZ

Translated from the German by Judith N. Levi

January 2014

### Meditating in Auschwitz

Five days of meditating in Auschwitz. I believed that I was going to the most terrible place on earth, but what I found was a sacred place. A place of luminosity, intensity, a place of pure silence. A place of prayer and mourning. Here a part of me that until then had been wandering around restlessly, seeking and sighing, came to rest and came home. I felt thankful and still feel that thankfulness. Something in me can finally heal.

### The Zen Peacemakers

One doesn't cope with a retreat in Auschwitz by oneself. I felt myself supported by many others who were

The team of Zen Peacemakers ([www.zenpeacemakers.com](http://www.zenpeacemakers.com)) that conducted this retreat accompanied u

### Three Tenets

- The first is Not-knowing. This means: I am ready to let go of my concepts, my assumptions, and m
- The second tenet is bearing witness. To be a witness to the suffering and the joy in life. Not to turn
- The third tenet is loving action. When I am ready to meet my experiences with an attitude of open

These three tenets touched my heart deeply. They were effective tools, which helped me during those fi

### The Retreat

Auschwitz today is composed of two parts: concentration camp 1 with a museum on the Holocaust, and

Every morning around 10 a.m. our group came together to the ramp to meditate. We were around 100 p

The first part of the morning, we sat in silence. I don't think I've ever meditated so simply and easily. The

In the second and third meditation periods, the names of people murdered in Auschwitz were read out lo

At noon each day we conducted a ritual in a barn (the Jewish prayer for the dead) was recited there, most

## The last day's ritual

I needed to perform a totally personal ritual. Although I don't personally carry any guilt, I have felt the gu

For this reason, I went to Crematorium V on Friday. At the edge of the crematorium, I erected a small alt

I conducted a Buddhist ritual, at which I was able to mourn and to weep. It did me good. I understood the

## Gratitude

Since I have come back to the Netherlands, I sense that a lot still needs to be worked through and to fin

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The German version of the original essay (also available in Dutch) is from Dorle Lommatzsch's website, at: <http://www.openbewustzijn.nl/de/mindfulness-en-oorlogstrauma/mediteren-in-auschwitz.html> . It describes her participation in a Zen Peacemakers Bearing Witness Retreat in Auschwitz (Poland) in 2011.

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