

[View this email in your browser](#)



BUXTON SCHOOL

est. 1928



Thích Nhất Hạnh (1926-2022) described two ways of washing dishes. You can “wash the dishes in order to have clean dishes.” Or you can “wash the dishes in order to wash the dishes.” He continued:

"If while washing dishes, we think only of the cup of tea that awaits us, thus hurrying to get the dishes out of the way as if they were a nuisance, then we are not washing the dishes to wash the dishes. We are not alive during the time we are washing the dishes. If we can't wash the dishes, the chances are we won't be able to drink our tea either. While drinking the cup of tea, we will only be thinking of other things, barely aware of the cup in our hands. Thus we are sucked away into the future—and we are incapable of actually living one minute of life."



Students working on a loom for the "Worlds We Weave" Winter Study Class

Why start this letter with washing dishes, drinking tea? I think there are two reasons, one big and one smaller. The bigger reason is that Buxton is like washing dishes to wash the dishes; drinking tea to drink the tea. That is:

Buxton is about going to high school in order to go to high school. Does that sound silly, or obvious? I'm worried it isn't. For many high schools, these years are simply instrumental, never ends in themselves. High school is really about getting ready for college, college is about getting ready for your first job, your first job is about getting ready for your second job... A continuous preparation, without ever, as Hạng would say, "actually living one minute of life." But these four years of life—high school—are so, so important on their own terms. Not only as preparation for something else, but in their own right. Let's focus on them, appreciate them, enjoy them. Going to high school in order to go to high school.



Students rehearsing for *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, as a part of a Winter Study class.

The smaller reason: I think about this same idea every winter here in New England. Sometimes (especially on a sleet-filled day like today, as my

basement fills with snowmelt and thawed mud), a Berkshire winter feels like something to endure. Something to put up with in order to get to the spring, or the summer, or maybe even just the gorgeous fall. So how can we instead be in a Buxton winter in order to be in a Buxton winter? Well, something like this: in our intensive Winter Study classes, we've been weaving and dancing, inventing new board games and encountering surrealism. In our Trip Groups we've been preparing to travel to Philadelphia, to explore and study the city in our own unique way. We've been skiing, and snowboarding, and sledding. Building fires and tending stoves. Getting stuck in the middle of icy patches on our way up to the Forge for class, wondering how to move in a frictionless environment. Walking down the path and suddenly stopping to take a picture of a perfectly ice-coated branch. The winter is not always easy—but then again, neither is washing dishes. Being in the winter in order to be in the winter.

Peter, Head of School

