



# DHARMA TEACHER ORDER

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## PHÁP NGUYỄN BUDDHIST CONGREGATION

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In the Vietnamese tradition, the fifteenth day of the seventh month in the lunar calendar is called **Ancestor Day** in which living descendants pay homage to their living and deceased ancestors, and the deceased are believed to visit the living. With ancestor worship, the filial piety of descendants extends to their ancestors even after their deaths. Al-

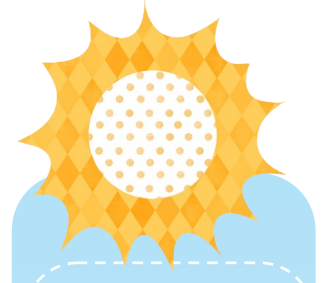
so on this day the realms of Heaven and Hell and the realm of the living are open and Buddhists would perform rituals to transmute and absolve the sufferings of all the deceased, the hungry ghosts.

To Mahayana Buddhists, the seventh lunar month is a month of joy. This is because the fifteenth day of this month is often known as the Buddha's joyful day and the day of rejoice for monastic's after summer retreat. Ullambana Festival this year we celebrate in silence and solemnity. Because the Covid 19 pandemic is still raging, we will not gather in large numbers. The temple will celebrate the Great Ceremony throughout the week from August 29 to September 6, 2020. During this time, Buddhists come individually to the pagoda at any time to pray:

- - Praying for many generations of deceased ancestors to be born in the Buddha realm.
- - Praying for living parents and grandparents for good health and happiness.
- - Praying for the United States of America and the world to be free from the pandemic, vaccine to be soon invented, and life to return to normal.
- - Praying for natural disasters, pandemics, social unrest and war will be ended.
- - Praying for safe society, peaceful world, and happy beings.

During this week, all Buddhist should make an effort to devote to the vegetarian diet, meditate on the compassion, chant the mantra “Om Mani Padme Hum”, help the needy and release the animal.

Namo Great Compassion Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva.



In this newsletter, I have included information from an email that Craig Hannah sent to all sangha members with information regarding the last national sangha practice on June 27.

Once again, in order to keep this newsletter going, we need entries from you and also suggestions as to what you would like to see in future editions.





Save the date for our next practice together which will be on **Saturday morning, July 11**. The centerpiece of this practice together will be a short Dharma Festival!

Our June 6th Dharma Festival was wonderful, but we didn't have enough time for all of our fourth year students to present. We would like to remedy this by asking other active students to share some aspect of the Dharma that has touched them deeply. The audience will then have an opportunity respond to what has been said. As before, we'd aim for the sharing and response for each student to be about 10 minutes.

Our priority will be on the recently completing 4th year students, but we may have time for others. Please email [Elena](#) and [Craig](#) as soon as you can if you would like to present.

We'll be sending out the Zoom invitation as the time gets nearer.

## National Sangha Practice on June 27, 2020

### The videos

The recording of the practice together has been split apart and posted on the [DTO YouTube channel](#). The easiest way to get to it is via this [playlist link](#).

[Opening \(9:32\)](#)

[Poem \(8:52\)](#)

[Dharma Talk \(37:42\)](#)

[Meditation \(35:05\)](#)

[Discussion \(36:26\)](#)

[Closing \(1:24\)](#)

### Notes and links from our last practice

Sources for Jeff's talk on peace

A reading from the Thich Nhat Hanh book *Creating True Peace: Ending Violence in Yourself, Your Family, Your Community, and the World* [[Amazon link](#)].

Two poems from a collection of poetry entitled *Call Me By My True Names: The Collected Poems of Thich Nhat Hanh* [[Amazon link](#)]. Both poems are also available in the [archive](#) of the Plum Village journal, [Mindfulness Bell](#)

*Defuse Me* [[MB link](#)]

*Interrelationship* [[MB link](#)]



(CONTINUED)

Elena's talk, and our subsequent seated meditation, explored a meditation technique that helps one attain the seemingly paradoxical state of "no attainment".

She presented material from two sources:

A Thich Nhat Hanh book, *Master Tang Hoi: First Zen Teacher in Vietnam and China* [[Amazon link](#)]. Quoting the publisher: "Tang Hoi was born in the region that is now Vietnam, three hundred years before the well-known Indian monk Bodhidharma went to China. His is revered by Vietnamese Buddhists as the first patriarch of the Vietnamese Meditation school.

Thomas Merton's book *Contemplative Prayer*. [[Amazon link](#)]. Merton was perhaps the most influential American Catholic author of the twentieth century. He also received the high praise from the Dali Lama as "having a more profound understanding of Buddhism than any other Christian he had known." [A relevant quote from Wikipedia](#) explains the connection:

"His theology attempted to unify existentialism with the tenets of the Roman Catholic faith. As such he was also an advocate of the non-rational meditation of contemplative prayer, which he saw as a direct confrontation of finite and irrational man with his ground of being."

During our discussion, Dave mentioned a PDF of a collection of ancient Vietnamese Zen teacher's writings. I think this is that PDF. [Teachings From Ancient Vietnamese Zen Masters](#)



Dear Mentors:

Let's plan on having quarterly ZOOM meetings to keep in touch, and to have face-to-face discussions. In between times, I encourage you to use the FB Mentors Group, as a general rule. For those of you who do not use FB, I would be happy to share your thoughts, ideas, questions, or concerns with the whole group via group email.

Save the date for our next Zoom meeting— Tuesday, August 4, 2020

10-11:00 A.M.

CDT

Metta,

Sister Pháp Lan

## Texas Sangha's Wednesday Night Meditation

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1c8omOmlpvolLXTDjRa\\_IUgovWLIAXjtK/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1c8omOmlpvolLXTDjRa_IUgovWLIAXjtK/view)

Jon gave the dharma talk on The Middle Way.

*"The Eightfold Path is the way for us to practice the Middle Way."*

*- Jon*



A favorite poem...Janet

## KINDNESS

By Naomi Shihab Nye

Before you know what kindness really is  
you must lose things,  
feel the future dissolve in a moment  
like salt in a weakened broth.  
What you held in your hand,  
what you counted and carefully saved,  
all this must go so you know  
how desolate the landscape can be  
between the regions of kindness.  
How you ride and ride  
thinking the bus will never stop,  
the passengers eating maize and chicken  
will stare out the window forever.  
Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness,  
you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho  
lies dead by the side of the road.  
You must see how this could be you,  
how he too was someone  
who journeyed through the night with plans  
and the simple breath that kept him alive.  
Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,  
you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.  
You must wake up with sorrow.  
You must speak to it till your voice  
catches the thread of all sorrows  
and you see the size of the cloth.  
Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,  
only kindness that ties your shoes  
and sends you out into the day to mail letters and purchase bread,  
only kindness that raises its head  
from the crowd of the world to say  
It is I you have been looking for,  
and then goes with you everywhere  
like a shadow or a friend.