

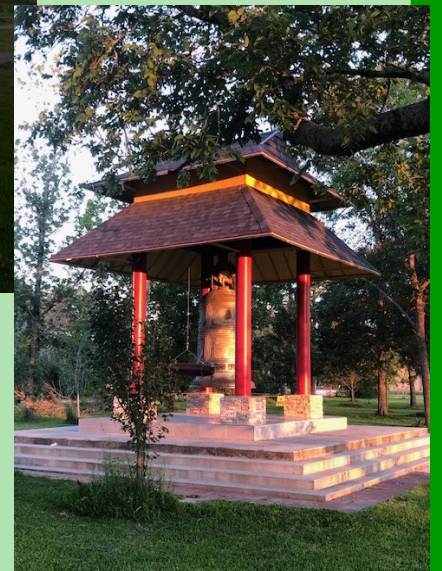
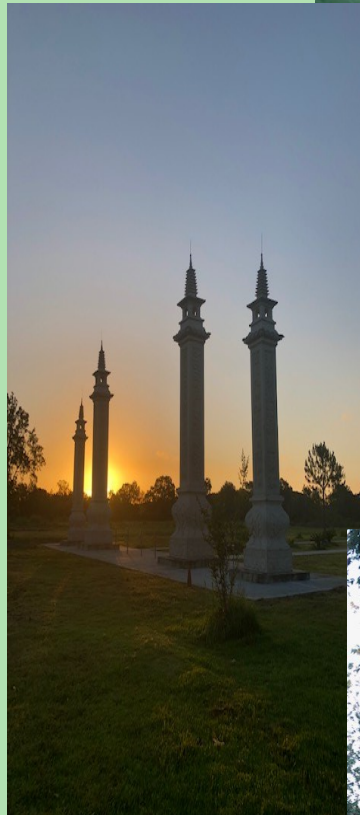
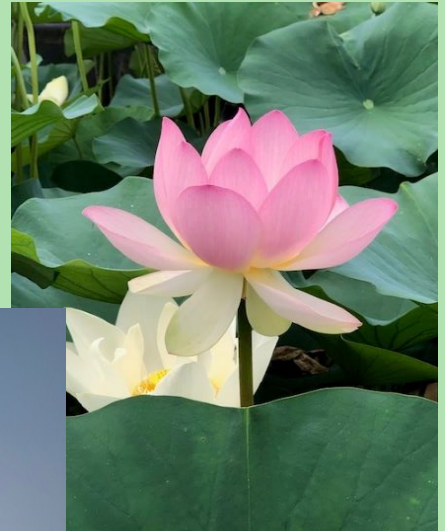


DHARMA TEACHER ORDER

PHÁP NGUYỄN BUDDHIST CONGREGATION



**Photos
Submitted
By
Thay**



National Sangha Practice on July 11, 2020

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 \(8:37\)](#)

[Dharma Festival Beginning Through Ruth \(21:33\)](#)

[Dharma Festival Dave \(20:03\)](#)

[Dharma Festival - Peter Through Festival End \(18:05\)](#)

[No Coming No Going Meditation \(2:11\)](#)

[Meditation \(16:21\)](#)

[Sharing The Merits Through End \(14:12\)](#)

Notes and links from our last practice

This is an incomplete list of resources mentioned in the talks. Check the videos for context and more.

Dave -

Recommended a passage from '[Teachings From Ancient Vietnamese Zen Masters](#)' on questioning and the direct experience of the present moment. The passage was #31 Zen, on page 74

In the discussion, Elena mentioned the [Brahmajāla Sutta](#) as an interesting sutra that discusses, among other things, views and the dangers of clinging to them

Compared the Buddhist practice of transforming our views to the work of the Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget. Piaget, among other things, described people's adaptation (adjustment) to the world as a process of assimilation (using our existing way of thinking to understand a new thing) and, when something doesn't fit, employing a strategy of accommodation to create new ways of understanding.

[See [McLeod, S. A. \(2018, June 06\). Jean piaget's theory of cognitive development. Simply Psychology.](#) for more]

Dave

talked about 'Questioning with the entire body' (described by Wuman Huikai, who compiled and commented the ko-an collection the Gateless Gate). This is the subject of Dharma talks by Stephen and Martine Batchelor, some of which are compiled into a 2018 book What is this; ancient questions for modern minds. This is a [link to a chapter](#) that talks about turning our 'attention away from mystical truths back to the brute simplicity of where we are in our bodies, in this moment, right now'

Peter

Referred to sutras regarding self-confidence and self-reliance

- [Maha-parinibbana Sutta](#) "Therefore, Ananda, be islands unto yourselves, refuges unto yourselves, seeking no external refuge; with the Dhamma as your island, the Dhamma as your refuge, seeking no other refuge."

- [Attadiipaa Sutta](#) "Monks, be islands unto yourselves, be your own refuge, having no other; let the Dhamma be an island and a refuge to you, having no other. Those who are islands unto themselves... should investigate to the very heart of things: 'What is the source of sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair? How do they arise?'"

Because we had been talking about compassion and giving, Sondra shared this short video about apathy vs. empathy and "being" with the suffering.

["Brené Brown on Empathy" - An RSA short on YouTube](#)

'What is the best way to ease someone's pain and suffering? In this beautifully animated RSA Short, Dr Brené Brown reminds us that we can only create a genuine empathic connection if we are brave enough to really get in touch with our own fragilities.

What comes next?

Last Saturday was our last practice of this experimental national online practice. We're going to take a short break and restart on **Saturday, September 19**. More details will be forthcoming.

In the meantime, if people have suggestions for how to improve our virtual practices, please let us know. We also would like to compile, as much as is known, the schedules of the DTO related activities the local sanghas are holding for the upcoming year. This would serve two purposes, to allow planning national activities so that they don't conflict with local ones, and so that, where appropriate, people from one sangha might join in another sangha's activity. Feel free to let [Elena](#) or [Craig](#) your suggestions or your sangha's plans - Thanks!

Wednesday Evening Meditation Sessions from Pearland, Texas

<https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21APfcPBQ%5FqWJ9ibY&cid=AD0F5B11340B4243&id=AD0F5B11340B4243%21116941&parId=AD0F5B11340B4243%21116754&o=OneUp>
(Peace/Alex Quiros)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1u65AJ6I2FsXgANPc1c-06baERspD27sk/view> (This is Our Time/Alex Quiros)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EvvdXXNug-zwEZkF7cuf_DzgSl-q61hJ/view?usp=sharing
(Compassion Fatigue/Alex Quiros)

An interesting article in Tricycle:

https://tricycle.org/magazine/buddhism-in-womens-prisons/?utm_source=Tricycle&utm_campaign=c846567c75-Daily_Dharma_2020_07_06_Subs&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1641abe55e-c846567c75-307251525

Editor's Note:
*You can participate in these Wednesday evening meditations anytime it is convenient for you. Hear the inspiring dharma talks! More links published in next newsletter.
Just click on the link!*



A Reflection on “The Contemplation of no Coming and No Going” by Elena-Hoang Lien-Bravocruz

A bunch of years ago a dear friend of mine was going through very difficult times. He had recently lost his wife and two children in a fire that devastated many families. I had lost my first husband to cancer only a few months before so, I too, was going through the pain of losing a loved one.

Not really knowing how to help my friend, a man of the Muslim Faith, I thought a walk on the beach would do us both good. I drove us to the beach, found a rock and we both sat there in silent tears. Watching the vast ocean waters moved by the wind I contemplated the waves that just came and went, completely indifferent to our pain and sorrow. I saw the seagulls flying high and low and, at times, searching for food on the sand. Watching the movement of nature so harmonious and yet, so oblivious to its single elements without a master to guide the harmony, filled my heart with peace and understanding. I said to my friend: “look at the ocean so big and powerful, it could smother us in one single blink of an eye, but it doesn’t. Not because we do not want it to, in fact the way we feel right now, being smother by the ocean would be a blessing but, it doesn’t because there is a certain order that we cannot control and in that orderliness, this is not the time for us to go. What is an even much greater blessing is that all this life is happening around us, despite us, and with us and we **do not have to control it. It controls itself.** And just like that, life comes, and life goes as it wills.”

Accepting that life is a natural process of waning and waxing is easy to do at an intellectual level when you are only a witness to the pain others suffer when they lose a loved-one however, it is not so when you are the one who lost the one. When our loved-one dies, we grieve the loss of the person, the value they bestowed upon our lives; we grieve the love and attention we are not going to receive from them anymore; we grieve for fear of loneliness. We grieve for selfish reasons, for whom we lost or for altruistic motivation, for a lost wisdom and light to the world. Regardless of how we grieve or who or what we grieve for, we suffer for lack of understanding of the natural processes involved in waning and waxing; we cannot see impermanence as part of the human life cycle.

On occasion of the loss of yet another loved-one, a loving-kind friend shared with me “The Contemplation of No Coming and No Going,” a poem written by Thich Nhat Hanh where he expresses the ungraspable wonders of starting points without beginnings and ends without a final acts. “Birth and death are a game of hide and go seek” he says, and yet “I have never been born, and I have never died.” To the one seeking to come to terms with loss and grief so palpable as we are experiencing now, these lines are a healing balm that soothes the suffering Mind and nurtures a faith in the process of waning and waxing, of “no coming and no going.” These lines help us see there is only transformation.

Contemplating this Poem one can choose to grieve with sorrow or choose to grieve with joy, or maybe a combination of both, or maybe even grieve with neither sorrow nor joy. Just grieve with an equanimous Mind. After all, my life and yours, and theirs’ is without boundaries, not limited by a body since, what is a body but a temporary vessel for a luminous Mind seeking to find its true home. Still, there is deep gratitude for this body that made it possible to for us to experience a love that helped us overcome hate; feel pleasure to ease pain; be hungry and thirsty to learn satiation; get hurt to learn compassion; be needy to become generous. This insight is only possible when we see our loved ones go but realize that “we meet each other in all forms of life.”

What a wonderful body; what a brilliant Mind; how marvelous it is we take hold of them if only for a moment in time. Like the waves of the ocean come to the beach to relinquish their form and die only to rejoin their nature of being just water, our bodies are put to rest so we can rejoin our true nature of forever changing life. Click on hyperlink below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2IxPDrUkkA&list=PL2SfGcx9tSNgXPNeF8szXffYSZPpMGei2&index=6&t=0s>