



DHARMA TEACHER ORDER

NEWSLETTER VOLUME 7 EDITION 12



SEPTEMBER 2021

I HOPE EVERY-ONE IS ENJOY-ING THE IN-VIGORATING NIP IN THE AIR. AUTUMN, THE SEASON OF NEW BE-GINNINGS FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN, IS ALSO A TIME OF NEW BE-GINNINGS FOR THE DTO. IN THIS ISSUE WE HAVE UP-DATES FROM ALL OF OUR SANGHAS.

I HOPE YOU ENJOY READ-ING ABOUT OUR SANGHAS AND THEIR NSPIRING WORK.

J. REALE

National DTO Fundraiser

As you know, we recently completed an initiative to raise funds to aid the suffering people of India and Vietnam during these trying times. DTO members, their friends and their families donated \$5000 online and by check to support this effort. We thank you all for your compassionate and generous hearts.

We have mailed a check for \$2500 to the General Consulate of India for distribution to the relief effort in India. We were delighted to be able to deliver a check for \$2500 in person at the General Consulate of Vietnam.

Thay and I traveled to the Consulate on Friday, September 10, 2021. We were warmly greeted by members of the staff, and we presented our check to the Vice Consul of Vietnam. He was extremely gracious, and he assured us that our donation would go directly to Vietnam to support the relief efforts there.

We made an incense offering at the altar, and then were offered tea and cakes back in the reception area. The Vice Consul and the rest of the staff hosted us for nearly an hour. This was a new and wonderful experience for me, and I was honored to represent all of you. The Vietnamese community at Pháp Nguyen Buddhist Congregation continues to raise funds for the suffering people of Vietnam. If you missed out on our fundraiser, you can still contribute by mailing your check to the temple.



Namo Avolakiteshvara Bodhisattva

Submitted by Sister Pháp Lan

News from Brother Noble Silence in Miami

How are you dear friends and brothers of Dharma Teacher Order? We do not really stop our classes in the summer months, but we continue with our practices of both Qi-Gong Taichi and the Dharma course in Spanish, only that we do the expositions of our books in Spanish only once or twice a month. to give our members time to prepare their presentations because, as you know, we are all very busy with our activities. As for the measures that we take in our place of practice, it is common to that of other places, we use masks although it is not mandatory but we leave their use to the conscience of each member and the prudent distance between members. Our group is not very big, we only have four members but very committed to the practice. Thank you: Noble Silence Sakya

More from Pearland, Texas Sangha

**“From
Miami to
Texas”**

Texas Sangha 2021-22 plans:

The Texas Sangha is ready for a new year of practicing, learning, and serving together. We are gearing up to begin our Year 3 classes on September 11, 2021. We will have up to 15 people in class including Dharma Teachers and audit students. Our classes will once again be held remotely via Zoom. We invite all DTO students to join us any time. We would love to see you.

Due to the pandemic, we have not been able to visit our local prisons for quite some time. We are hoping that we will be able to resume that ministry soon. Although we cannot serve the prisoners in person, I am happy to report that all DTO students in our group are now active mentors in the Buddhist Correspondence Course. While the Prison Program is our primary focus, we also support and raise funds to benefit Buddhist Global Relief during the fall campaign.

We continue to hold our weekly meditation service on Wednesday evenings. The services will be offered on Zoom for the foreseeable future, and again, everyone is welcome to join us.

Om Mani Padme Hum

Sister Pháp Lan

The Year Ahead - News from the National Sangha

In March of 2020 no one had any idea of what was to come our way. Life was much more uncertain than we were used to, and we could not have our DTO year end retreat as we had done in past years. The world was afraid, frail, and in pain and us with it. To soothe the anguish, we began to meet via Zoom in sessions that included all the Sanghas associated with the DTO, wherever they were. It now appears like everything is going back to "normal," meeting in-person with our local Sanghas and engaging in active social participation however, our DTO National will continue to be open to everyone, once a month, on Saturday from 10 AM to 12 Noon, ET.

Some may wonder why, so here is why: many of us discovered that our virtual gatherings were valuable as we got to become more familiar with each other, we supported one another, and together, we built a sort national DTO identity that nurtured us. We also discovered meaning by sharing the Dharma and honed our Dharma Teachers' and deep listeners' skills. I was particularly grateful for the opportunity to have our Thay Tri Hong frequently share the Dharma, speak to us as an old friend, and lighten up the somber with his timely humor. For these and many more reasons, the DTO National Sangha will continue to gather, via Zoom.

This year we will begin on October 16, and once a month, thereafter. Together, we will delve into deepening our understanding of the Buddhist vows, precepts, and ethics: their value in our spiritual development and their manifestation in our everyday life. No reading will be required but we will be sharing selected readings from TNH: *For a Future to Be Possible*; Suzuki Roshi: *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, and other readings; Shantideva: *The Way of the Bodhisattva*; and Ven. Hammalawa Sadhatissa: *Buddhist Ethics*.

We will continue to count on you, to support this effort by generously sharing the Dharma with your kind talks and invite you to share this forum with others who might be interested. Please, refer new attendees' names and email address to me, or to Craig Hannah for inclusion in future mailings. Looking forward to seeing you on October 16.

Sadhu-Sadhu-Sadhu

Elena-Hoàng Liên-Bravocruz

Bravodharma4u@gmail.com

Craig Hannah Reporting on the CT Sangha

2021-2022 Teacher Training, Buddhist Practice & Study Program

For the academic year 2021-2022 Connecticut will run a virtual program on teacher training, Buddhist practice and Buddhist study. Our formal practices will be once a month, on a Saturday morning from 9 to 11:30 AM ET. We are inviting all members of all DTO sanghas to join us in all aspects of this program.

The three focuses of the program are to:

- Identify and practice the skills needed to give a 'Good' Dharma talk
- Explore the contents of this year's Dharma topic - The Noble Eightfold Path
- Practice our skills in leading a practice

CT SANGHA, CONTINUED:

The first focus is a little different from our norm. We are going to make a concerted effort to find or create resources that people can use to help understand how to think about a talk, assess an audience, create and deliver a talk, and how to learn how to improve.

We're currently developing a multi-faceted approach on how to do this. One of the tools we'll use is to request audience feedback after the practice. Those reviews and suggestions will be summarized within a few days by an expert panel and then used in a meeting between the panel, the presenter, and other interested parties. The point being:

- To give and get constructive feedback on the talk.
- To discuss what worked, what didn't, and how the teaching method could be improved.
- To determine how to transmit what we've learned for future teachers.

We'll kick off the year at our September 25th practice where we'll go over the upcoming year and have an expert panel discuss with us all things Dharma Talk!

Our schedule:

- 09/25/21- Program overview and panel discussion
- 10/23/21 – An element of the Wisdom group
- 11/20/21 – A different element of the Wisdom group
- 12/18/21 – An element of the Morality group
- 01/29/22 – A different element of the Morality group
- 02/26/22 – An element of the Meditation group
- 03/26/22 – A different element of the Meditation group
- 04/30/22 – Review/supplement/summarize elements

More information will be forthcoming. If you have any questions, or want to make sure you're included in any communication on this subject, please email us at: ct-secretary@dharmateacherorder.org

With gratitude,
Craig Hannah

Support Group for Teachers-in-Training, Teachers, Lay Priests

The intention of this group has been and will continue to be, to provide a container in which to offer each other support in our aspirations to practice, sharing Dharma, and supporting all beings.

Although I have been asked to facilitate this group, the group is peer-led as we learn from each other's perspectives and experience.

In order to meet a multitude of different schedules, the once monthly group will be scheduled at various times.

There will be times when I offer a particular topic or questions to consider reflecting on. Other times we will just share what's alive for us in the present.

In the Dharma
Tom Duva

David Ketchum (Dinh Quang Temple) from Missouri

The Missouri sangha begins Year 3 this September. Our group has become small during the pandemic, but about 6 of us have remained and are excited and grateful to deepen our studies and practices together. Additionally, this year we are glad to have the support of four DTO mentors who are available to answer questions, help plan lessons, and give feedback to our participants who are making presentations: Fernando, Richard D., Richard Z., and Ted. We meet online on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, livestreaming a chanting and meditation service via Facebook at 6 pm Central, following up with our DTO class via Google Meet at 7 pm (concluding by 8:30 pm). Finally, we are grateful for the continued support and direction of Thay Chanh and Dinh Quang Temple, which also gives us many opportunities to put our studies into practice.

With a deep bow,
David

Alex Quiros Checking in from San Antonio, Texas

About 3 years ago, I started a weekly Buddhism 101 group at a local Vietnamese temple, Phuoc Hue Buddhist Temple of San Antonio. However, our services were quickly adapted to online meetings once Covid struck. Especially challenging was the fact that I was the only one the Abbott at the temple trusted to do Dharma talks given my training through the Dharma Teacher Order. There was one other recently ordained monk, but he was already busy with other groups and tasks. In short, like many in our order, I had to plan and prepare all Dharma talks on a weekly basis. This proved to be too challenging for me as I juggled young children, husband duties, work, caring for an aging mother recently widowed, and the stress of Covid. I considered quitting, but I knew that this work is too important.

So, I compromised. Instead of meeting weekly, we started to meet only the first three Tuesdays of every month. I would plan and give the Dharma talk the first two weeks, but the third week, I recruited a dedicated member of the Sangha to select and lead a discussion on a Buddhist parable. This minimized the need to prepare for this member, the Abbott approved since I would be present to explain questions brought up by the reading of the parable, and I got about 2 Tuesdays every month where my duties were minimal to none. I had time to recharge and engage in proper self-care. Occasionally, I still feel bad because there is a voice in my head saying I should do more, but then I remember that the guitar plays most beautifully when the strings are not too tight nor too loose. I had to accept my limits otherwise it would mean me quitting altogether. Now the group is healthier. I have more energy to dedicate to the Dharma talks and the introduction of the parables provides variety while effectively teaching the Dharma through story telling.

If you're curious to see some of the work I've posted or some of the parables, feel free to join the Facebook page of the Phuoc Hue Buddhist Temple of San Antonio - Buddhism 101 group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2394096227583995>). You can also watch the same videos on the Temple's YouTube page (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCecQwoSeF3kM92LTeOusmPA>) and scroll down to the Buddhism 101 channel. While you're there, you can check out the presentations by our recently ordained monk in the Intro to Buddhist Meditation Series channel.

May any merit obtained in sharing the Dharma bring us happiness, health, safety, and peace.

Thank you, for allowing me the opportunity to share.

Peace,
Alex Quiros

DTO New York Happenings

Submitted by Maeve Eng-Wong

The New York Sangha is happy to announce that we will continue to offer classes through the Mariandale Retreat Center where we have been so warmly welcomed for the last several years. We began our 2021-2022 year with our 5th annual Buddhist-Christian Dialogue. We used the book, *St. Benedict's Dharma: Buddhists Reflect on the Rule of Saint Benedict*, to spark our discussion. The book features the reflections of four Buddhist scholars, Joseph Goldstein, Norman Fischer, Yifa, and Judith Simmer-Brown, on aspects of the Rule of St. Benedict. The offering was well attended. We continue our efforts to create opportunity for inter-religious dialogue for ourselves and others. Our next similar event will be held in the spring.

Starting in October, the NY Sangha will teach a bimonthly 1hour class entitled, *Mystics as Mentors*, at Mariandale via zoom. We will be sharing brief biographies of both conventional and unconventional Mystics and highlighting aspects of their teachings through words and practice. We will begin by featuring Rumi and David Steindl-Rast.

Finally, we supported Teo Castellenos, of the Miami Sangha, in offering a Silent Retreat at Mariandale. This was our first in-person gathering since 2019! The retreat began on Friday, September 17 and ended on Sunday, September 19. The experience was wonderfully nourishing and had moments that were profoundly moving. More to come on that topic.

**As Maeve states, there is more to come
on the topic of the Silent Retreat so
stay tuned!**

**Look for it in the October edition of
the DTO Newsletter.**