



Ahimsa Trust

Mindfulness * Community * Education
Initiatives



The 'Brahma Kamal' (Lotus), a flower that blooms rarely.

"I am a continuation like the rain is the continuation of the cloud."

-Thich Nhat Hanh

22nd January, 2022

Dear Sangha Siblings,

Thay passed away peacefully at our root temple in Hue, Vietnam last night.

Thay is free as the Buddha was many centuries ago. There are not many who are able to transcend the constraints and concepts of birth and death. Thay has shown us the path of awakening as a human being, of being the white cloud in the blue sky, and he always carried the confidence in us, his students, that we have that potential too.

With great compassion, he taught us moment by moment for decades and built a global sangha. Thay dearly loved India, the home of his own teacher, the Buddha, and many of us were blessed by his presence and practice when he visited India in 1988, 1997 and 2008.

This morning, my heart is deeply pained with grief and yet I know that Thay is continuing to teach me. I feel him in every conscious breath and step and I see him in many forms. Another day has dawned and as I hear the rain outside in Noida, I am reminded again of Thay himself saying, 'I am a continuation, like the rain is the continuation of the cloud.'

With a prostrations of gratitude and deep respect to our beloved teacher,

Shantum/ Satya Marg (Ordination name)
Ahimsa Trust

Message from Plum Village

Plum Village, France
10:30 pm 21st January, 2022

Dear Beloved Community,

With a deep mindful breath, we announce the passing of our beloved teacher, Thay Nhat Hanh, at 00:00 hrs on January 22, 2022 at Từ Hiếu Temple in Huế, Vietnam, at the age of 95.

Thay has been the most extraordinary teacher, whose peace, tender compassion, and bright wisdom has touched the lives of millions. Whether we have encountered him on retreats, at public talks, or through his books and online teachings—or simply through the story of his incredible life—we can see that Thay has been a true bodhisattva, an immense force for peace and healing in the world. Thay has been a revolutionary, a renewer of Buddhism, never diluting and always digging deep into the roots of Buddhism to bring out its authentic radiance.

Thay has opened up a beautiful path of Engaged and Applied Buddhism for all of us: the path of the Five Mindfulness Trainings and the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings of the Order of Interbeing. As Thay would say, “Because we have seen the path, we have nothing more to fear.” We know our direction in life, we know what to do, and what not to do to relieve suffering in ourselves, in others, and in the world; and we know the art of stopping, looking deeply, and generating true joy and happiness.

Now is a moment to come back to our mindful breathing and walking, to generate the energy of peace, compassion, and gratitude to offer our beloved Teacher. It is a moment to take refuge in our spiritual friends, our local sanghas and community, and each other.

We invite you to join our global community online, as we commemorate Thay’s life and legacy with five days of practice and ceremonies broadcast LIVE from Hue, Vietnam and Plum Village, France, starting on Saturday January 22nd. Please see our website for more details coming shortly: www.plumvillage.org/memorial

Let us each resolve to do our best over the coming days to generate the energy of mindfulness, peace, and compassion, to send to our beloved Teacher.

Over the coming hours on the Plum Village website, we will publish some inspirational chants, texts, and mindfulness practice resources, to support you to come together with your local sangha to generate a collective energy of mindfulness and compassion, and create your own ceremony or session in tribute to our Teacher. As Thay has always taught, nothing is more important than brotherhood and sisterhood, and we all know the power of collective energy.

We invite you to share your messages of gratitude or personal transformation and healing on our website: plumvillage.org/gratitude-for-thich-nhat-hanh

With love, trust, and togetherness,
The Monks and Nuns of Plum Village, France

Biography of Thay



Lovingly referred to as Thay ("teacher" in Vietnamese), Thich Nhat Hanh was a global spiritual leader, poet, and peace activist, revered throughout the world for his powerful teachings and bestselling writings on mindfulness and peace. Thich Nhat Hanh, a gentle, humble monk – the man Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called “an Apostle of peace and nonviolence”. In the media he has also been called “The Father of Mindfulness,” “The Other Dalai Lama” and “The Zen Master Who Fills Stadiums.”

Born in central Vietnam in 1926, Thich Nhat Hanh was ordained a Buddhist monk in 1942, at the age of sixteen. Just eight years later, he co-founded what was to become the foremost centre of Buddhist studies in South Vietnam, the An Quang Buddhist Institute.

In 1961, Nhat Hanh came to the United States to study and teach comparative religion at Columbia and Princeton Universities. However, in 1963, his monk-colleagues in Vietnam asked him to come home to join them in their work to stop the American-Vietnam war. After returning to Vietnam, he helped lead one of the great nonviolent resistance movements of the century, based entirely on Gandhian principles.

When war came to Vietnam, monks and nuns were confronted with the question of whether to adhere to the contemplative life and stay meditating in the monasteries, or to help those around them suffering under the bombings and turmoil of war. Thich Nhat Hanh was one of those who chose to do both, and in doing so founded the Engaged Buddhism movement, coining the term in his book *Vietnam: Lotus in a Sea of Fire*. His life has since been dedicated to the work of inner transformation for the benefit of individuals and society.

On May 1st, 1966 at Tu Hieu Temple, Thich Nhat Hanh received the 'lamp transmission' from Master Chan That. A few months later he travelled once more to the U.S. and Europe to make the case for peace and to call for an end to hostilities in Vietnam. It was during this 1966 trip that he first met Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1967. As a result of this mission both North and South Vietnam denied him the right to return to Vietnam, and he began a long exile of 39 years.

Thich Nhat Hanh continued to travel widely, spreading the message of peace and brotherhood, lobbying Western leaders to end the Vietnam War, and leading the Buddhist delegation to the Paris Peace Talks in 1969. He also continued to teach, lecture and write on the art of mindfulness and 'living peace,' and in the early 1970s was a lecturer and researcher in Buddhism at the University of Sorbonne, Paris. In 1975 he established the Sweet Potato community near Paris, and in 1982, moved to a much larger site in the south west of France, soon to be known as "Plum Village." Under Thich Nhat Hanh's spiritual leadership Plum Village has grown from a small rural farmstead to what is now the West's largest and most active Buddhist monastery, with over 200 resident monastics and over 10,000 visitors every year, who come from around the world to learn "the art of mindful living."

Across the world today, there are eleven official mindfulness practice centres in the International Plum Village tradition. In these centres, we do most of the same things we do at home – walking, sitting, working, eating, etc. – except we learn to do them with mindfulness, with an awareness that we are doing them. We practice mindfulness throughout every moment of the day – not just in the meditation hall but also in the kitchen, the restroom, the office, in our rooms, and when walking from one place to another. In practicing together as a community, our mindfulness becomes more joyful, relaxed, and steady.

Thich Nhat Hanh attracted national attention during his historic visit to India in 2008 as he encouraged efforts to re-establish Buddhism and bring mindfulness into the mainstream. The Indian Government recognised Thich Nhat Hanh as a global peace icon, author, poet, and international statesman and invited him as a guest of the State, to deliver the Gandhi Memorial Lecture and to address Parliamentarians. The theme of his address was 'How to lead with courage and compassion'. He had met with Shri K R Narayanan at an earlier visit in 1997 and motivated him in the setting up of the Ethics Committee of Parliamentarians.

Inspired by Thich Nhat Hanh, Ahimsa Trust was set up in 1996 to represent him and his community in India. It has been involved in bringing Mindfulness and Applied Ethics to many facets of society, be it educators, children and parents, scholars, the police including the CRPF, politicians, business leaders, doctors, the media, dalits, women, Shakyas, Government officials and so on. Thich Nhat Hanh's message of peace, happiness and mindfulness is being spread by Dharmacharya Shantum Seth and the Ahimsa community in India.

To further this work, Ahimsa Trust is setting up Jamun Village, a Mindfulness Practice Centre, in the village of Rajpur near Dehradun in Uttarakhand. The land has been donated and is being developed as an educational, spiritual and socio-ecological centre; a place of refuge, training and compassionate

action. The land was blessed by Thich Nhat Hanh on his last visit to India and he called it 'Plum Village, India'.

Thich Nhat Hanh published over 100 titles in English, ranging from classic manuals on meditation, mindfulness and Engaged Buddhism, to poems, children's stories, and commentaries on ancient Buddhist texts. These books capture the Zen Master's lifetime of teaching, scholarship, creativity and spiritual discovery. Ahimsa Trust has been instrumental in translating and publishing some of his works into Hindi, Marathi, Malayalam, Tamil and Bengali.

Thay passed away on 22nd January, 2022 at Từ Hiếu Temple in Huế, Vietnam, where he first ordained as a novice monk close to 80 years ago. Following a major stroke in November 2014, Thay had been on a long journey of recovery. Unfortunately, he had been unable to speak, and had paralysis on the right side of his body. Despite this, he remained sharp and perceptive, and commanded a powerful presence of peace and concentration, joining his community for walking meditations, mindful meals, ceremonies and festivals.



Ahimsa is a volunteer non-profit organisation representing Thich Nhat Hanh and his community in India; working towards bringing peace and mindfulness to various facets of society including working in education, culture, social and ecological development and responsible tourism. To continue your support to Ahimsa Trust please visit www.ahimsatrust.org or click on the link: <http://www.ahimsatrust.org/contribute%20to%20ahimsa.html>

Copyright © Ahimsa Trust, All rights reserved