

Blue Cliff Monastery, 1<sup>st</sup> day of the Lunar New Year, the Year of the Ox

Our dear respected Thầy,

Today is the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the Lunar New Year, the Year of the Ox, we, the sisters of White Crane Hamlet, have gathered here in the Great Togetherness Meditation Hall to, first and foremost, pay our respect to the Three Jewels, then to offer our new year wishes to you, dear Thầy.

Dear Thầy, we are very happy to know that you are still here with us. We can feel your energy reminding and supporting us whenever we follow the Sangha's daily activities. We feel that Thầy's presence is there every time we breathe gently and peacefully or when we take mindful steps. We realize that we are very fortunate and happy to be your disciples in this lifetime. We are truly the "wealthy children" benefiting and continuing all of what Thay has arduously built and maintained for us all.

From sitting in this warm and serene meditation hall to walking outside and interacting with the beautiful wonders of nature, we can feel the loving energy of Thay, of the ancestors of this land, and of the Sangha that has embraced and protected us. While there are much anxiety and instability in the world and society, we are safe in this environment with many conditions for happiness. What more do we want?

In the past year, the COVID pandemic has given us a chance to witness the power of your vision for the future decades ago of establishing an "online monastery." We feel nourished by the joy and happiness of the lay friends who participated in the online retreats with us. Although we are only able to connect with the lay friends through the internet, we still feel the love transmitted between us and everyone who participated. Following in your steps, we vow to preserve the flame of our Bodhicitta and the heart of service so that we will always have each other on this path. We, the Sangha, are embarking on an extraordinary adventure during this COVID pandemic. We trust that Thay is happy to know that we are carrying Thay's torch and continuing the wonderful Dharma in modern society to help others relieve their pain and suffering.

We treasure this moment when we still have Thầy and each other. Remembering your reminder that "as long as we have each other, we will still have a future," we vow to live peacefully, with tolerance, joy and love, as well as nourishing our siblinghood to be worthy of being your disciples. We will practice coming back to ourselves more to

recognize and listen to the sufferings, the weaknesses, the habit energies, and the complexes within ourselves so that we can begin anew and embrace ourselves better, as well as to understand our siblings more in order to accept and embrace each other. We vow to live truthfully, beautifully, and wholesomely to be worthy of being a monastic. Thầy's vows and insights are deep and powerful. Therefore, we aspire to practice diligently so that Thầy's aspirations will develop within us ever stronger. Only with that will we be able to continue Thầy's career of helping others as Thầy has wholeheartedly entrusted us.

In the occasion of the first day of the Lunar New year, please accept our deep bow to you, Thầy. We would like to express to Thầy our sincere love, respect and infinite gratitude. We pray to the energies of the Buddhas, the Bodhisattvas and the Sanghas in the ten directions for Thầy's wellbeing, as well as receiving much good news from your disciples worldwide. Dear Thầy, we love you very much.

Your trusted disciples,

The White Crane sangha of Blue Cliff Monastery