Smile to the light in you
“Together on the path of love, we can try to make a small difference in someone’s life. What else is there to do?”

*Sister Chan Khong*, *Learning True Love: Practicing Buddhism in a Time of War*

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Summer 2023

Dear Beloved Community,

For more than two years, the global pandemic kept us apart from the people and places that support our practice. Our monasteries were closed. In-person retreats and days of mindfulness were canceled. Local Sanghas began meeting online only. Then, in January 2022, our beloved Thay passed away.

Being unable to gather in the flesh to mourn, remember, and hug one another only magnified our collective feeling of loss. “Where do we go from here?” many asked. As Thay writes in his poem, Call Me By My True Names:

My pain is like a river of tears, so vast it fills the four oceans.

We were carried through that difficult time by a steady stream of online offerings from our monastic and lay Dharma teachers, Thay’s books, the Plum Village App, The Way Out Is In podcast, your local Sanghas, and the smile, sweet singing, and stability of dear Sister Chan Khong.

Because of Thay’s teachings, we know that mud produces lotuses, and that every winter gives way eventually to spring. And what a spring 2022 was for the International Plum Village Community! As the pandemic eased, the energy of our dear monastic community burst forth like a field of wildflowers, like a river swelling with winter snowmelt. We reopened practice centers, resumed teaching tours, and set into motion plans for sharing the Dharma in fresh, innovative ways in 2023.

Groundwork was laid in 2022 for the Zen and the Art of Saving the Planet online learning journey, for The Way Out Is In musical meditation tour, and for “pop up” practice opportunities like Deer Park Monastery’s Make Black Friday Brown event last November. Coordinated by the Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation, our community worked closely with the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health to help support the launch this April of the university’s new Thich Nhat Hanh Center for Mindfulness in Public Health.

My joy is like Spring, so warm it makes flowers bloom all over the Earth.

All of this beautiful, creative, and joyful energy is one of the clearest signs that Thay continues, along with his aspiration to transform Buddhism and the suffering of all living beings. None of it could be realized without the committed and generous support of our donors.

Dana, the Sanskrit word for generosity, is a practice dating back to the beginning of Buddhism some 2600 years ago. It includes not only the sharing of material resources but also the gifts of the Dharma, and freedom from fear: cultivating the courage to meet the difficulties of life with a calm and peaceful heart. Through the practice of dana, we are able to rest in our shared generosity.

In our garden we cannot continue to pick the fruits, flowers, and vegetables without tending to the roots. In our beloved community, Thay’s teachings and monastics are the very roots of our mahasangha, our global Sangha. And like all living things, they require our care and support—now more than ever.

Several of our practice centers have urgent and critical needs for building repairs and new construction. Our monastics need sound and fertile soil to continue bearing beautiful fruit, a place where they can rest and renew themselves, prepare to offer nourishing retreats, and train young monastics as future Dharma teachers. So in this report, and in the coming months, you’ll learn about many opportunities to offer dana in various forms to our dear monks and nuns.

With your help, Thay’s monastics will be able to carry forward our teacher’s lamp of transmission for many years to come.

In deep gratitude,

Denise Nguyen
Executive Director
The Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation
• $3,763,791 in 2022 donations through the Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation
• $1,547,129 in 2022 donations through Plum Village

• Monasteries Worldwide: 11
• Monastics: 592
• Newly Ordained Novices: 16
• In-Person Retreats: 230
• Days of Mindfulness (online & in-person): 536
• Event Registrants (online & in-person): 35,786

• Social Media Followers: 4,834,000
• PV app: 320,000 active users in past year
• The Raft: 150,000 subscribers
• The Way Out Is In: No. 2 on Buddhism Podcast Charts

• Sanghas Worldwide: 1,227
• Sanghas in Europe: 650
• Sanghas in N. America: 451
• Sanghas in Asia: 49
• Sanghas in Oceania: 38
• Sanghas in S. America: 16
• Sanghas in the Middle East: 10
• Sanghas in C. America: 11
• Sanghas in Africa: 2
Dear Beloved Community:

We still remember the moments when you supported us during the COVID-19 pandemic by sending us letters of concern and delivering lovingly prepared food by car. Even now, we are touched and our hearts are filled with gratitude. We know that living together in happiness and steady practice can be your refuge, and Blue Cliff has been and will continue to become a hometown for everyone to go back to ourselves. We know you are there and we are very happy. Thank you for your wonderful work.

Sister Hoa Nghiem (Sister Flower), fourth from the left in the center row, who lives at Blue Cliff Monastery in New York.

MINDFULNESS PRACTICE CENTERS

Our monasteries reopened in 2022 with great joy after the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic, and our beloved nuns and monks once again welcomed guests in person. As Thay said, “With the support of friends in the practice, peace has a chance.” Here are just a few of the ways your financial support helped our monasteries continue to serve as oases of peace last year, and how practitioners are paying that peace forward in the world.

NAVIGATING GRIEF

Magnolia Grove Monastery in Mississippi held a special retreat, “How to Live When a Loved One Dies,” to provide caretakers and survivors with practices to help them make space for grief and work toward healing when they return home.

UN BUDA NO ES SUFICIENTE

Deer Park Monastery in California held its first-ever retreat all in Spanish, which included the Ceremony to Receive the Five Mindfulness Trainings and a Dharma talk honoring Día de los Muertos (The Day of the Dead), an important holiday for people in Mexico and of Mexican heritage.

BUILDING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Plum Village Monastery in France welcomed 10 young Palestinians to a special Wake Up retreat, where they found space to rest, connect, meditate, and share deeply from their hearts. Several of the participants planned to start their own Sanghas in Jerusalem and other cities as an antidote to the conflict there and to sustain their own practice in community. “With mindfulness, I learned how to accept every part of myself so that I don’t inflict suffering on others,” one participant, Thea, said.
Plums are also a poignant symbol in our community. Thay and his early followers planted plum trees throughout Plum Village Monastery in France. One of our elder monastic sisters tells this story: “Many of the Vietnamese children who came for the summer retreat bought plum trees to donate as a way of showing their gratitude. By 1984, we had planted 1,250 plum trees. Thay used to say that the 1,250 plum trees are like 1,250 Buddha’s disciples!”

We, too, are the Buddha’s disciples. From Zen Masters Lieu Quan to Thich Nhat Hanh, we are a continuation of a long line of practitioners committed to transforming ourselves, our communities, and the world. Through their monthly donations, our Plum Blossom Society members support that continuation.

THE GIVING TREES

Plum Blossom Society

“I feel that the community established by Thay offers the best way for survival of planet Earth.”

Michael Donenfeld

MICHAEL DONENFELD (True Summer Lake)

• Cedar Society and Plum Blossom Society Member
• Practices with Mindfulness Community of Victoria in British Columbia (Canada) and Pacific Online Sangha.

What led you to this community of practice?
I've been meditating pretty much my entire adult life. But when I encountered Thay’s teachings, I just felt that there was a direct path, or maybe that the path was illuminated, offering the most simple, direct ways to progress.

How has this practice benefited you?
I've enjoyed Thay's teachings on mindful speech and deep listening. By learning not to become attached to my view, I can open up to others’ realities and be a better friend—more flexible, more free, and more happy.

What inspires you to be a Plum Blossom/Cedar Society member?
I feel that the community established by Thay offers the best way for survival of planet Earth. It provides lay practitioners with a place of refuge, a place where they can learn how to walk on Earth and be better stewards of the planet.

“I experience great joy in offering support to the Plum Village community and the monastics who generously offer their teachings. I am learning to be still, to enjoy each moment more fully, and to stop running. As I move from a mindset of doing to one of being, I experience more and more peace, joy, and contentment. Then I want to share that joy with others and help create the conditions for them to also come to peace within themselves. This community inspires me and guides me on that path.”

MARGE WURGEL (True Crane Garden), a Cedar Society and Plum Blossom Society Member. Lives in San Diego, Calif. (USA), and practices with Open Heart Sangha.
As a young Dharma teacher in Vietnam, Thay formed a group of 13 students whom he trained to become “like strong cedars to help support the Buddha’s teachings.”

These students helped Thay revitalize Buddhism, to meet the needs of people suffering in difficult times. Thay called this core group the Thirteen Cedars. This group was fundamental to keeping Thay’s teachings alive and thriving during and after the war. Many of them are still with us today and continue to play an important role in helping Thay’s teachings take root in the West. Without them, we may not have the teachings of Thay today. We are here because they were there.

Through the foundation’s Cedar Society, other practitioners can join the original 13 Cedars to offer stable and long-term support through legacy gifts.

Legacy giving is done by leaving a gift to the foundation (Plum Village Community of Engaged Buddhism) in your will or estate plan.

“The Giving Trees”

**The Cedar Society**

“Each meditation, each mindful step, each mindful breath, every mindful practice is an honor to Thay.”

*Elizabeth Anderson*

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**Elizabeth Anderson (True Belonging of the Source)**

- Cedar Society and Plum Blossom Society Member
- Practices with several online Sanghas from her home in Arlington, Va. (USA)

**How has this practice benefited you?**

Thay’s teachings on mindfulness are having an undeniable influence on me. He distills this critical practice to its essence, making a profound concept accessible and relatable. Every teaching tells me that I had everything I needed within to find the present moment in all circumstances and to turn myself away from ill-being, when needed.

**Since Thay’s passing, where have you experienced his continuation most noticeably?**

After the immediate shock of his physical death, I realized that Thay had taught his students how to process what could be viewed as loss and move forward... Each meditation, each mindful step, each mindful breath, every mindful practice is an honor to Thay.

**What inspires you to be a Plum Blossom/Cedar Society member?**

Feeling at home because of Thay, I wanted to honor him by supporting his life’s work and by doing my small part to help ensure that the Plum Village Community continues to thrive for future generations.

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**Bruce Campbell (True Land of Faith)**

- Cedar Society and Plum Blossom Society Member; member of Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation Board
- Practices with Peaceful Heart Sangha, Fort Collins, Colo. (USA)

**Can you describe a transformative moment with your practice, or share how the practice has shaped your life?**

I cried when I first heard the 14 Mindfulness Trainings at a transmission ceremony. My heart knew at that moment that it had found a home. A home in which it would be challenged to grow but at peace in a deep knowing of right path.

**What has been the most impactful Plum Village/Thich Nhat Hanh teaching for you?**

The teaching on Interbeing. I learned how to love from that teaching.

**What inspired you to become a Plum Blossom/Cedar Society member and to support the International Plum Village Community?**

I’ve learned more about how to live a good life from Thay and the Plum Village Community than from anyone else in my life.
More than a year since his passing in January 2022, Thich Nhat Hanh’s enormous contributions to Buddhism, peacemaking, and the arts continue to be heralded.

But Thay made it clear long before his death that people shouldn’t spend their time bowing to his ashes. Instead, he said his followers could best honor his memory by walking, speaking, and living mindfully.

So after a season of grieving, our monastic community returned its full attention to carrying Thay’s vision forward.

Supporting that work is a foundation laid 2600 years ago by the Buddha and shaped by the Mahayana tradition and Linji lineage from which Thay and Engaged Buddhism emerged.
The community also has drawn strength from its senior monastics, in particular Sister Chan Khong. A beloved Dharma teacher known for her gentle smile and a voice like balm, she is also a brilliant scientist, gifted mediator, and tireless advocate for those who are suffering.

For decades, she also led fundraising efforts on behalf of the entire International Plum Village Community, developing long and fruitful friendships with donors all over the world to ensure that the monasteries and monastics were adequately taken care of.

Having suffered a great deal during the Vietnam War, Thay and Sister Chan Khong both teach that peace, freedom, and joy are possible only if you take care of the roots of suffering, and by caring for one another.

“If you want the tree to grow, it won’t help to water the leaves,” Thay told a man who questioned why he was speaking in the United States and not in war-torn Vietnam. “You have to water the roots.”

“In December 2022, Sister Chan Khong (right) received an honorary doctorate of philosophy in social work from Mahachulalalongkornrajavidyalaya University in Thailand. The Ph.D. recognized her advocacy for peace and social justice over many decades.
Because of its commitment to engaged Buddhism, our community continues exploring new, innovative ways to share the Three Jewels—the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha—with the world, in-person and online for those unable to visit a monastery. Here are just some examples.

ONLINE RETREATS, COURSES, AND EVENTS
With more tools now available to connect online, our monastics are able to reach practitioners worldwide, even if they are never able to visit a monastery in person.

TECHNOLOGY IN YOUR POCKET
Listeners from around the globe download the Plum Village App and tune in to podcasts. In fact, *The Way Out Is In*, hosted by Brother Phap Huu and Jo Confino, is ranked one of the world’s top Buddhism podcasts across several platforms. The monastics also offer *Listen* from Plum Village Monastery and *Dharmacast* from Deer Park Monastery, which present the audio of Dharma talks for practitioners to enjoy.

Our monastics also appear as guests on other podcasts; last year Sister True Dedication was a guest on Dan Harris’ popular podcast, *Ten Percent Happier*, in which she presented “Six Buddhist Strategies for Getting Along Better with Everyone.”

On “Black Friday,” the busiest shopping day of the year, Deer Park Monastery hosted “Make Black Friday Brown,” offering meditation, music, and Dharma sharing with hundreds of online attendees as an antidote to consumerism.

Thanks to donor support, development began in 2022 for *Zen and the Art of Saving the Planet*, an online learning journey based on Thay’s book of the same name and a manifestation of his dream to develop an online monastery.

“Mindfulness practice is not an evasion or an escape. It means entering vigorously into life—with the strength generated by the energy of mindfulness.”

*Thich Nhat Hanh, You Are Here*
FOCUSED CARE
Thay and his monastics have long recognized the benefit of focused retreats for people with shared life experiences, challenges, and professions, from our beloved BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities, to healthcare workers and first responders, educators, and scientists.

Deer Park Monastery in California hosts a popular Teen Camp to give our precious young people a chance to practice mindfulness in nature, surrounded by friends like themselves who want to grow in understanding and love.

Deer Park and Plum Village monasteries held retreats that explored the relationship between Buddhism and science, where practitioners learned how to train their minds using Buddhist psychology.

NEW HORIZONS
In fall 2022, monastics attended a kickoff dinner in Boston ahead of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health’s announcement this spring of the new Thich Nhat Hanh Center for Mindfulness in Public Health. The center will pursue evidence-based approaches to improving health and well-being through mindfulness and promote mindfulness practices that support mental and physical health in conjunction with other healthy habits.

A retreat for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color at Magnolia Grove Monastery in Mississippi provides a safe and nourishing space for the BIPOC members of our spiritual family to grow in their practice. The ARISE (Awakening through Race, Intersectionality, and Social Equity) Sangha provides further nourishment to this community throughout the years, gathering members to heal the wounds of racial injustice and social inequity through the use of mindfulness practices.
Our nuns and monks take joy in welcoming practitioners to each of the 11 practice centers worldwide. For those attending a retreat, the monastery becomes home for a few days: an anchor, a refuge.

After the retreat, practitioners carry a piece of the monastery with them in their hearts. For our monks and nuns, however, the monastery is their home. Between retreats, teaching tours, and other activities to support the global Sangha, it’s where they rest, play, study, and train aspirants to become monastics, and monastics to become Dharma teachers (a process that can take more than a dozen years).
“If monks and nuns do not cherish their time of practice, they will have nothing to offer the world.”

Thich Nhat Hanh

Our practice centers are the soil where the Dharma takes root, draws nourishment and, in time, blooms in beautiful ways. If you enjoy reading a book by a monastic, or listen to a podcast, or watch a Dharma talk online, you are benefiting from the fruit of this garden.

Your dana, your support, in the form of your practice and your financial gifts, are the sunshine and water that enable our monasteries to flourish.

We’re so very grateful for your generosity.

On behalf of the monastics of Plum Village, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all individuals who have supported us with their presence, practice and generous contributions. As we reopened our monasteries around the world, we were reminded of the importance of community, togetherness and the Sangha body. The Plum Village spiritual practice is upheld and maintained not only by the monastic practitioners, but through the collective support of the entire multi-fold community. Thank you for opening your hearts and continuously supporting our way of life, so that we may be stewards of a land that cultivates peace, love, understanding, and hope.

Brother Nhat An
PARALLAX PRESS

Supporting 37 Years of Independent Publishing on the Art of Mindful Living and Engaged Buddhism

"Peace in oneself, peace in the world." Since Thich Nhat Hanh co-founded Parallax Press in 1986, the press has brought his message of peace to readers worldwide. In 2022, with the passing of our founder and teacher, Parallax Press saw an outpouring of demand for his books, with How to Love and new book How to Focus entering the bestseller lists in many areas.

In this new era, Parallax Press continued to work with the Plum Village Editorial Team to bring out new books for our global community of readers. Books published by Parallax Press transmit the teachings of the Plum Village tradition wherever books are sold, from local neighborhood bookstores to online retailers, as well as on its own website, parallax.org.

We supply books to the online Plum Village Shop and related monastery bookshops. Parallax also donates books to schools and nonprofit organizations, as well as to individuals in prisons in almost every state in the United States.

• **511,893 books sold** in 2022 (up from 383,623 in 2021)
• Reaching readers in more than **200 countries**
• **348 titles** published to date
The Mindfulness Bell is the official journal on the art of mindful living in the Plum Village tradition.

Each issue features:
- Teachings from Thich Nhat Hanh and Plum Village Dharma teachers
- Sharings of personal practice from monastics and lay friends
- Updates from Plum Village initiatives and practice centers
- Art, poetry, recipes, and photos

Two larger, newly designed print issues were released in 2022: issue 89 (a memorial issue for Thay) and issue 90. In July, The Mindfulness Bell launched a new website that merged it with the Parallax Press website. It features digitally published new articles weekly, including expanded content and access to 33 years of archives.

The Plum Village App is a free mindfulness tool developed by our community so that friends can practice with Thich Nhat Hanh and International Plum Village monastics. It is another meaningful step toward realizing Thay’s vision of an online monastery.

Find it at www.plumvillage.app

“The Plum Village app is now my most cherished app. It is a truly healing gift with rich resources to support health, wellness, and inner peace for all of us.”

Elizabeth Marouk

The Way Out is In podcast is aimed at helping listeners transcend their fear and anger so that they can be more engaged in the world in a way that develops love and compassion. Guests have included members of the monastic community, author and climate advocate Joanna Macy, author and mindfulness teacher Karia Jewel Lingo, and others.

The Way Out Is In is co-produced by the Plum Village App and Global Optimism, with support from donors to the Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation.
At the Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation, we value the trust and commitment you have given us to be the financial caretakers of your donations. Please know that we are mindful of every expense to ensure your funds go toward the International Plum Village Community’s greatest benefit.

During the pandemic and into much of 2022, the Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation absorbed more of the costs for fundraising, communication, and administrative expenses for the International Plum Village Community. This allowed the monasteries to direct their resources toward sharing the Dharma and meeting their basic needs, such as food and shelter.

Thank you also for the $1,547,129 you gave in 2022 through the Plum Village donation portal.
The Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation is the fundraising arm and a communications hub for our International Plum Village Community. The Plum Village tradition also inspires more than one thousand separate local Sanghas throughout the world. We encourage you to visit the various websites of the International Plum Village Community to learn more about the nourishing work our community is doing.

## INTERNATIONAL PLUM VILLAGE COMMUNITY

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## INITIATIVES

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## PUBLISHING

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Made up of dedicated practitioners, Order of Interbeing members, and lay Dharma teachers, the Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation is guided and supported by a wonderful advisory board. It includes several staff who left long and successful professional careers to devote their lives to preserving and building upon Thay’s legacy, and who are deeply committed to practicing Right Livelihood.

Many people know the foundation through our fundraising activities. We put much loving energy into cultivating dana to make sure our beloved monks and nuns have healthcare, food, and safe and welcoming practice centers where they can rest and offer retreats.

But there are many other ways the foundation, formally part of the International Plum Village Community, works throughout the year and behind the scenes to support our monastics and create peace to help end suffering in the world.

“[Often] we forget that it is the very people around us that we must live for first of all. ... If all our friends in the peace movement or of service communities of any kind do not love and help each other, whom can we love and help?”

_Thich Nhat Hanh, The Miracle of Mindfulness_
Thank You!

We are so grateful to all of our generous supporters who made it possible for our practice centers to continue bringing peace, joy, and transformation to thousands of people in 2022. You have planted the seeds for greater harmony, healing, and compassionate communication in every realm of our individual and collective lives. With your support, we can continue to care for our societies and our earth, creating the conditions for a future to be possible.

Bring Inspiration to Your Inbox
Receive our email newsletter, event announcements, and resources to support your mindfulness practice—with one simple signup! Go to www.tnhf.org/communications to sign up and receive:

- **The Raft**: a monthly email assembled by the International Plum Village Community to offer Dharma talks, guided meditations, and more to inspire, inform, and support you in the practice of mindfulness.
- **Events & Updates**: regional emails with updates about monastic tours and retreats, days of mindfulness, online classes, and volunteer opportunities.
- **Resources for Mindful Living**: occasional emails with new releases and special offers from Parallax Press, the Mindfulness Bell, the Plum Village Online Shop, and more.

DONATE
To make an online donation or learn about other ways to give, visit tnhf.org/donate.

LEAVE A LEGACY — JOIN THE CEDAR SOCIETY
Leaving a legacy gift is easy. To name the Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation in your estate plan or to learn more, please contact Christina Walker, our Global Giving Director, at 760-291-1003 ext 104 or cedars@tnhf.org.

OFFER A GIFT OF STOCK
To leave a gift of stock, please contact Bobbi Perez, our Annual Giving Manager, at bobbi@tnhf.org or (415) 322-0101.

The Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation is a division of the Plum Village Community of Engaged Buddhism, a 501(c)(3) organization.

CONTACT US
For general inquiries, please contact info@tnhf.org

For inquiries about your donation, please contact giving@tnhf.org

**Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation**
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760-291-1003 ext 104

The Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation offers a deep bow of gratitude to the many monastic and lay friends around the world whose beautiful photography and artwork was used in this publication, including Jerome Cabeen, Max Pugh, and Brother Phap Huu.
“We have a lamp inside us. The oil of that lamp is our breathing, our steps, and our peaceful smile. Our practice is to light up the lamp.”

Thich Nhat Hanh