

# Khánh Anh

July 2025 Bulletin · No. 145

## Complete English Translation



Translation of all 40 pages of the original bulletin, including its photographs. The layout has been reset for easier reading, so page numbers differ from those of the scan. Page references within articles refer to the original bulletin. Where the same announcement appears in Vietnamese and French on one page, one complete version is provided in the target language. Donors' names and amounts are reproduced unchanged.

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# Biography of the late Venerable Thích Minh Giác

Original p. 1



Venerable Thích Minh Giác — secular name Nguyễn Quang Chánh — passed away on 4 June 2025 (the 9th day of the 5th lunar month of the Ất Tỵ year), aged 69 by traditional reckoning. Abbot of Vạn Hạnh Pagoda, Netherlands.

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## Family background

Venerable Thích Minh Giác, whose secular name was Nguyễn Quang Chánh and religious name Chơn Hương, belonged to the 44th generation of the Lâm Tế lineage. He was born on 15 August 1957, in the Đinh Dậu year, in Saigon, Gia Định Province. His father was Nguyễn Văn Trọng, Buddhist name Chơn Thanh; his mother was Phạm Thị Kiều, Buddhist name Thanh Đức. He was the fourth of the family's ten children.

## Entering monastic life and studying the Dharma

Blessed with favourable conditions, he was born into a family that had maintained deep faith in the Three Jewels for generations. Its members were devout Buddhists with right faith. Thus the seed of awakening continued to grow, and he showed an early conviction and aspiration to leave household life.

In 1972, when the conditions came together, Venerable Thích Thiện Huệ, abbot of Đại Giác Pagoda in Saigon's Phú Nhuận District, shaved his head and admitted him to monastic life. He studied at Đại Giác from 1972 to 1984. From his early training through his śrāmaṇera ordination, he diligently followed the pagoda's morning practice schedule and studied the fundamental monastic texts. He memorized the two practice collections and the four books Tỳ Ni, Sa Di, Oai Nghi, and Cảnh Sách. His humility and exemplary conduct, whether

walking, standing, lying down, or sitting, led his master to permit him to receive full bhikkhu ordination in 1980 at the Thiện Hòa ordination ceremony.

The ceremony was named after the eminent twentieth-century Vietnamese Buddhist dignitary who served as Deputy Supreme Patriarch of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam and director of the South Vietnam Buddhist Institute at Ấn Quang Pagoda. It took place at Ấn Quang Monastery on Sư Vạn Hạnh Street in Saigon's 10th District. It was also the last major ordination ceremony of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam.

After receiving full ordination, he continued his studies at Đại Giác. During this period, he studied the Vinaya and monastic observances with Venerable Thích Trí Minh, abbot of Mai Sơn Pagoda in Bà Hom, Saigon, who bestowed upon him the religious name Chơn Hương.

## **Leaving as a refugee**

The Venerable reached adulthood during a difficult turning point in Vietnam's history. The country faced hardships in every sphere. Young monks also encountered great difficulties in pursuing their studies, as Buddhist institutes and classes had ceased operating. With the sole wish of continuing his education, he joined the refugees leaving the country by sea, parting from Vietnam, the motherland where he had been born, in the hope that a ray of light would welcome his future.

One fine day, he and his fellow boat refugees landed in Thailand. After two years in a Thai refugee camp, he was accepted for resettlement in the Netherlands in August 1986. This peaceful, prosperous, civilized, and compassionate country opened its arms to welcome him and save his life. It marked a new stage in the young monk's journey: a new country, language, and way of life; everything was unfamiliar. Yet, with his burning aspiration to seek the Dharma, he overcame the difficulties of his new life and adapted to a new environment and atmosphere full of vitality.

## **Serving the Dharma abroad**

When he settled in the Netherlands, the Vietnamese Buddhist Association was already established there. Founded on 25 February 1984, it officially began operating on 3 April 1985 under the Dutch name "Stichting Vietnamese Boeddhistische Samenwerking in Nederland." This name, meaning Vietnamese Buddhist Association in the Netherlands, gave it legal recognition with the Dutch authorities.

Even before the association adopted this name, it benefited from the guidance of Venerable Thích Minh Tâm, abbot of Khánh Anh in Paris, France. Venerable Minh Tâm regularly attended its annual Vesak and Vu Lan celebrations, as did Venerable Thích Thiện Huệ, who served as its spiritual leader at that time.

To establish his new life and continue his mission as a messenger of the Tathāgata in the Netherlands, he and the association's lay Buddhists founded the Hoorn Buddha-recitation centre in August 1986. Thus began a period of Dharma practice and activities with the association and its devotees.

In January 1991, the association welcomed another senior monk: Venerable Thích Thông Trí arrived from a refugee camp in the Philippines to settle in the Netherlands. The two teachers lived together at the recitation centre, giving Venerable Thích Minh Giác further

support in his Dharma work. The devotees' faith in the true Dharma continued to grow, while the centre's limited space greatly restricted its activities. The two Venerables and the association's members therefore decided to expand the practice premises.

Thus a farm in Nederhorst den Berg became Vạn Hạnh Pagoda in 1993. Over more than twenty years of study and practice (1993–2015), this place endured, as the bulletin puts it, summer heat trapped beneath corrugated metal and winter winds blowing through the snow. Yet the strength of their practice and dedication to spreading the Dharma perhaps brought some comfort to the two Venerables. They hoped to express gratitude to the country that had sheltered them by leading a peaceful life. It was with this purpose that Vạn Hạnh Pagoda... [continued on the next page]

# Biography continued and tribute to Venerable Thích Minh Giác

Original p. 2

[Continued from page 1] Vạn Hạnh Pagoda in Nederhorst once again sought a better location. On 12 December 2012, the Venerable, together with Venerable Thích Thông Trí and the Vietnamese Buddhists of the Netherlands, laid the first foundation stone. The new Vạn Hạnh Pagoda, whose architecture reflects the Vietnamese pagodas of Asia, was built at its present location on Sumatraweg in Almere. The ceremony was witnessed by Venerable Thích Minh Tâm, President of the Executive Council of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam in Europe, and Venerable Thích Tánh Thiệt, its First Vice-President. An icy wind and driving rain accompanied the ceremony. After three years of construction, on 7 June 2015, during the grand Vesak celebration of Buddhist year 2559, a solemn and reverent ceremony consecrated the Buddha statues. The new pagoda then officially began its activities, which continue to this day.

Alongside his mission as a messenger of the Tathāgata in the Netherlands, the Venerable was a member of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam in Europe, serving as Director-General of Monastic Affairs. Despite his chronic illness, he contributed to the Church's activities with all the energy available to him. He also served as a witnessing master at many European ordination ceremonies; many monks and nuns ordained or trained overseas remain deeply grateful to him:

- Seventh witnessing master, Liễu Quán ordination ceremony, Thiện Minh Pagoda, Lyon, France, 1990.
- Seventh witnessing master, Hoàn Nguyễn ordination ceremony, Viên Giác Monastery, Hanover, Germany, 1993.
- Fourth witnessing master, Pháp Chuyên ordination ceremony, Viên Giác Monastery, Hanover, Germany, 2008.
- Sixth witnessing master, Quảng Đức ordination ceremony, Thiện Minh Pagoda, Lyon, France, 2011.
- Fourth witnessing master and Vinaya proclamation master, Quán Thông ordination ceremony, Viên Giác Monastery, Hanover, Germany, 2019.
- Vinaya proclamation master, Minh Tâm ordination ceremony, Khánh Anh Pagoda, Évry-Courcouronnes, France, 2023.

The Venerable had lived with his chronic illness and led a peaceful life amid the turbulence of the world. But illness did not release its hold, and in the end he could no longer overcome it. He departed this life in the middle of a spring night in the cold Netherlands. The doctor at the university hospital could not intervene in time. The Venerable breathed his last in hospital at 00:07 on Wednesday, 4 June 2025, the 9th day of the 5th month of the Ất Ty year. He lived 69 years by traditional reckoning, spending 53 years in monastic life and Dharma study and 45 years as a bhikkhu, a disciple of the Buddha on the path of liberation.

His departure leaves the devotees of Vạn Hạnh with profound grief in the Netherlands, a country famed for its brilliant tulips. He has gone while so many aspirations remained unfulfilled.

Homage to the awakened spirit of the Venerable, of the 44th Lâm Tế generation, abbot of Vạn Hạnh, named Minh Giác, religious name Chơn Hương.  
Compiled by the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam in Europe and his disciples, with their authorization.

## **Tribute to Venerable Thích Minh Giác**

Address by the representative of the Vietnamese Buddhist Association in the Netherlands at the memorial ceremony on Monday, 9 June 2025.

Namo Amitābha Buddha.

Revered senior monks, teachers, monks, and nuns,

Dear bereaved family and Buddhist devotees present,

On behalf of the Vietnamese Buddhist Association in the Netherlands, we wish to pay tribute to our beloved Venerable Thích Minh Giác.

“Distinguished in life, immortal after departure.”

At dawn on Wednesday, 4 June 2025, the 9th day of the 5th month of the Ất Ty year, telephones rang continuously throughout the Netherlands. Everywhere, Vietnamese Buddhists called one another to share the important and sorrowful news: “Master Minh Giác has passed away.” This unexpected news shook the entire Vietnamese community in the Netherlands. All the devotees were stunned and deeply moved by our teacher’s sudden and swift departure. The Dutch sky seemed clothed in mourning, and our tears would not stop flowing.

Venerable Thích Minh Giác, abbot of Vạn Hạnh in Almere, was the spiritual leader of Vietnamese Buddhists in the Netherlands. He successfully established Buddhist activities in this country and founded Vạn Hạnh, the first Vietnamese pagoda in the Netherlands, becoming its first abbot.

Master Thích Minh Giác came to the Netherlands in 1986 at the association’s invitation, with responsibility for spiritually guiding all the country’s Vietnamese Buddhists. From the beginning, he turned his house in Hoorn into a Buddha-recitation centre, from which Buddhism in the Netherlands could take root and grow. In 1993, the association bought a farm in Nederhorst-den-Berg and converted it into Vạn Hạnh Pagoda. In 2011, it bought land in Almere to build a new pagoda. Construction began on 12 December 2012 at 12:12, and the Almere pagoda was completed at the end of 2014. From the moment of his arrival, the master undertook his mission to the Vietnamese devotees. He never ceased working to spread the Dharma and build a Vietnamese pagoda for the whole community.

With all his ability and health, he devoted himself wholeheartedly to the Dharma and to every devotee. We shall always remember his immense kindness, his determination to build the pagoda, and his perseverance in overcoming every obstacle. His benevolence and generosity will forever remain a great lesson for us all.

His sudden departure leaves us disoriented and opens a void within us that is hard to fill. From now on, coming to the pagoda without seeing him will be like returning to a home without a father or mother. We shall no longer see his radiant, compassionate smile, hear his deep voice, or listen to his chanting resound in the main shrine. We shall no longer hear his warm inquiries or receive his cakes and fruit, simple gifts full of sincere affection. At

each Tết, we shall no longer hear his teachings and New Year wishes, nor receive the red envelopes containing a New Year blessing and Dharma objects he prepared with his own hands. With his departure, we lose a virtuous monk and our beloved abbot of Vạn Hạnh.

Yet his words still echo in our ears: “May the Buddhas bestow their blessings on you and your families, so that body and mind may always be at peace.” Master, we vow to follow your virtuous example and true teaching, and always to practise diligently. Your aspiration—Vạn Hạnh Pagoda—has been realized. We, the Vietnamese devotees of the Netherlands, vow to preserve that aspiration and carry it forward.

Revered master,

The old saying “Heroic in life, unyielding in death” is inscribed on monuments to heroes who sacrificed themselves for their homeland. We, your disciples, choose the words “Distinguished in life, immortal after departure” in memory of Thích Minh Giác and in recognition of your merits and your wholehearted devotion to the Dharma and to Vietnamese Buddhists in the Netherlands.

May our master be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss.

Namo Amitābha Buddha, the guide who welcomes beings.

Quảng Phúc.

# The late-night bell: remembering a Venerable

Original p. 3



Procession accompanying the body of the late Venerable Thích Minh Giác to Vạn Hạnh Pagoda. The original caption gives 6 May 2025, which precedes the 4 June death date stated in the text.

Yesterday, Wednesday, 4 June 2025, the 9th day of the 5th month of the Ất Tỵ year, before the chanting of the *Sūraṅgama Sūtra*, we received this sorrowful news from the Most Venerable Thích Như Điển, First Vice-President of the Executive Council of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam in Europe: “Venerable Thích Minh Giác has entered nirvāṇa.” We were deeply moved and stunned before the open text of the morning service.

Although summer had begun, the weather had turned cold, with stormy days. These outward changes seemed to touch the human heart at the moment of farewell. In the stillness of the Buddha hall, the bell of the service resounded, awakening in us beautiful memories of the Venerable who had just passed away. His departure has left regret not only among monks, nuns, and thousands of devotees throughout Europe; it has also deeply touched everyone who loved and respected him.

We had been fortunate to meet him long before, in 2003, at the old Vạn Hạnh Buddha-recitation centre in the Netherlands. Venerable Minh Giác, Director-General of Monastic Affairs, devoted his whole life to the Dharma and humanity, with extraordinary resolve and clear wisdom. He was not only a spiritual leader but also a teacher, a respected elder, and an example for several generations of overseas monastics and lay Buddhists. With compassion and patience, he enhanced the presence of Vietnamese Buddhism in European life, awakening in everyone faith in life, goodness, and kindness.

Together with the association of Vietnamese refugee Buddhists in the Netherlands, he built a magnificent, spacious new pagoda in Almere, with extensive grounds, and installed nineteen statues of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. Vạn Hạnh became a well-known place,

attracting thousands of Vietnamese devotees and visitors from all backgrounds to its major celebrations.

We recall the precious and rare occasions when we shared the rains retreat with him at Linh Thú Pagoda in Berlin, Germany. We shall never forget the depth and simplicity of his teachings. When fulfilling his monastic duties and addressing the assembly, he almost always recalled the patriarchs' admonitions so that monastics and lay devotees would discipline body and mind and cultivate virtue:

“Phật tiên chế luật khởi sáng phát minh. Quĩ tắc oai nghi tịnh như băng tuyết. Chỉ trì tác phạm thúc liễm sơ tâm. Tỳ ni pháp tịch tăng vị thao bồi, liễu nghĩa thượng thừa khởi năng chân biệt, khả tích hành sanh không quá, hậu hồi nan truy. Giáo lý vị thường thổ hoài, huyền đạo vô nhân kế ngộ.”

That is: “The Buddha first established the precepts to illuminate the mind's obscurities. The rules of conduct and deportment are as pure as ice and snow. Knowing what must be avoided and what must be done restrains our first impulses. The Vinaya teaches subtle principles. If you have never attended places where discipline and doctrine are explained, how can you understand the ultimate meaning of the Great Vehicle? Alas, a life may pass in vain; it will then be too late for regret, even if one beats one's breast. If the teaching has never been taken to heart, how can the profound path be realized?”

Each of his words was a precious gem, containing knowledge and wisdom and guiding us on the search for truth. His compassionate eyes and gentle smile became a powerful source of encouragement, helping us overcome the difficulties and trials of serving the Dharma in a foreign land.

His departure was like a passing breeze: silent and unannounced, yet enough to remind us of the impermanence of human life. At that moment our hearts became empty, as though they had lost a sacred support. Yet amid profound grief, we recognize that the values he left behind will live forever in everyone fortunate enough to have known him. His counsel was stern but filled with love, quietly reminding monastics and devotees to be diligent in study and practice and to continue along the path he had walked.

Life is a journey, and the Venerable Director-General of Monastic Affairs walked it steadily, sowing love and spreading the light of wisdom. He often encouraged us with the patriarchs' words:

“Vô thường lão bệnh bất dĩ nhơn kỳ. Triều tồn tịch vong, sát na dị thể. Thí như xuân sương, hiểu lộ, thúc hốt tức vô; ngạn thọ tỉnh đằng, khởi năng trường cửu! Niệm niệm tấn tốc, nhất sát-na gian, chuyển tức thị lai sanh. Hà nãi yển nhiên không quá?”

That is: “Impermanence, old age, and illness wait for no one. Alive in the morning, dead by evening: a single instant can take us to another world. Like spring frost and morning dew, we suddenly disappear. Like a tree on a precipice or a vine hanging by a well, how can we endure? Thoughts hurry past; in a single instant, at the next breath, another life may begin. Why then pass the days and months idly?”

He has now returned to the Buddha's realm. Yet his image remains with every step we take, through the deeds, affection, and kindness of his disciples. He will live forever in the hearts of those honoured to be his students, monastic disciples, or lay disciples. For us, the pagoda bell continues to ring. It expresses our remembrance and reminds us how precious life is.

Monks, nuns, and devotees will strive to live worthily according to his teachings, so that each day is meaningful and imbued with a noble spirit. Let us always move forward, carrying the Venerable's image in our hearts like a lamp illuminating this fragile human life.

May the Venerable's awakened spirit attain a high station in the Buddha's Land and soon return to this Sahā world to liberate beings.

Namo Amitābha Buddha, the guide who welcomes beings.

With deep gratitude, we join our palms and bow respectfully.

Thích Như Trí.

# A moment between arising and passing away

Original p. 4

Where do we come from, where do we go?  
The unborn Dharma is wondrous.  
Coming is not birth; leaving is not extinction.  
Where can one seek the traces of arrival and departure?

In the middle of the night during the first week of June 2025, while everyone in Europe was fast asleep, Viber, WhatsApp, Zalo, and other messaging services suddenly rang on the phones of the dignitaries of the Executive Council of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam in Europe. The message was brief: “Venerable Minh Giác has entered nirvāṇa.” So few words, yet they struck their recipients like an earthquake, amid the instantaneous arising and passing of life. Heaven and earth seemed to spin and suddenly stop. It was a message, a voice, an announcement of death from Europe’s monastic and lay Buddhist community, yet no one could believe it. As Zen master Vạn Hạnh of the Lý period (938–1018) wrote: “Thân như điện ảnh hữu hoàn vô”—the body is like a flash of lightning, appearing and then vanishing.

It was the night from Tuesday into Wednesday, 4 June 2025, the 9th day of the 5th month of the Ất Tỵ year. At 00:07, Venerable Thích Minh Giác, abbot of Vạn Hạnh in Almere near Amsterdam, Netherlands, and Director-General of Monastic Affairs of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam in Europe, suddenly died of a heart condition. No one had time to save him.

The sad news gradually spread beyond clouds, mountains, and oceans, throughout Europe, America, Australia, and Vietnam. Everyone who had been fortunate enough to meet him or enjoy a close relationship with him was stunned, overwhelmed, and unable to believe it. Each felt they had only just seen him in recent days or heard his warm, gentle voice on the phone. His clear voice still seemed fresh in everyone’s heart.

At 7 a.m. on Wednesday, 4 June, a Viber telephone conversation brought together Venerables Tánh Thiệt, Thông Trí, Hoàng Khải, and Nguyễn Lộc, and nun Diệu Trạm. Venerable Như Điển was expected to participate, but they learned he was already on the road: he, Hạnh Bình, and Long Thế had left Viên Giác Monastery in Hanover, Germany, to travel to Vạn Hạnh in the Netherlands. During the conversation, Venerable Tánh Thiệt proposed that Như Điển chair the funeral committee, with Thông Trí as its executive vice-chair. He also invited members of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam in Europe to take on various responsibilities. An initial funeral organizing committee was thus formed.

Venerable Thông Trí said he would take a flight to Amsterdam at around 11 a.m. that Wednesday. He also suggested that some monastics go to Vạn Hạnh that very day to prepare the funeral shrine. The first to arrive was Thích Thiện Toàn from the great Khánh Anh Pagoda in Évry, near Paris. He drove alone, bringing items needed to decorate the shrine. Thích Tâm Nhất came from Bern, Switzerland.

On the afternoon of Wednesday, 4 June, a meeting at Vạn Hạnh brought together Venerables Như Điển and Thông Trí and the association’s devotees. It determined the dates and times of the nirvāṇa rites and completed the funeral committee. Two days were chosen:

- Reception of the body and placement in the coffin: Thursday, 5 June 2025, at 3 p.m., the 10th day of the 5th month of the Ất Tỵ year.
- Funeral ceremony and cremation: Tuesday, 10 June 2025, at 10 a.m., the 15th day of the 5th month of the Ất Tỵ year.

On Thursday, 5 June, the 10th day of the 5th lunar month, the following arrived: Venerable Tánh Thiệt from Lyon; Quảng Thuận from Bordeaux; Pháp Ứng from France; Nguyễn Tuệ from Toulouse; Venerable Tâm Huệ from Malmö, Sweden; Venerable Hoàng Khải and Hạnh Tấn from Dresden, Germany; Hạnh Hòa from Nuremberg, Germany; and nuns Huệ Châu, Huệ Đăng, Huệ Thanh, and Huệ Viên from Berlin.

At noon that Thursday, the late Venerable Thích Minh Giác's body was brought from the hospital to the pagoda. At 3 p.m., the body was placed in the coffin, which was installed in Vạn Hạnh's Dharma hall. Four Venerables presided over the rites: Thích Tánh Thiệt, abbot of Thiện Minh and First Vice-President of the Church's European Executive Council; Thích Như Điển, deputy abbot of Viên Giác Monastery and Second Vice-President of the European Executive Council; Thích Bồn Đạt, abbot of Phổ Đà and Phổ Đà Sơn in Ottawa, Canada, and President of the Executive Council of the Overseas Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam in Canada; and Thích Tâm Huệ, abbot of Trúc Lâm in Malmö and Director-General of Education of the Church in Europe, who led the liturgy. After the coffin ceremony came the opening chanting before the Buddha, offerings to the deceased, and the distribution of mourning clothes.

After this first major ceremony of the nirvāṇa rites, Venerable Bồn Đạt, on behalf of the dignitaries of the Church's Executive Council in Canada, respectfully asked permission to pay tribute to the deceased. He recalled an unforgettable memory: while he was still living in the Pulau Bidong refugee camp in Malaysia, Venerable Minh Giác, already settled in the Netherlands, regularly sent donations to support monks and nuns remaining in the camps. Perhaps this connection enabled him to see the deceased's body one last time: invited to Switzerland by the Thiện Trí Buddhist Family to lead a study course, he had just finished when he learned of Minh Giác's passing.

The coffin remained in the funeral shrine from Thursday, 5 June, to Tuesday, 10 June. Each day, morning meditation and the Śūraṅgama Mantra were held in the main shrine at 5:45 a.m.; a meal offering to the deceased at 7 a.m.; chanting at 9 a.m.; offerings to the Buddha and prayers for the deceased at 10:30 a.m.; chanting at 2:30 p.m.; and the final service of the day at 8 p.m. Between services, delegations and representatives of other religions brought wreaths and paid their respects before the coffin.

Venerable Thích Nguyễn Lộc and the decoration team worked hard to design two flower-covered vehicles: one carried a Buddha statue and the other the late Venerable's portrait and memorial tablet. As it was the Vesak season of Buddhist year 2569–2025, some monasteries were still holding their celebrations on Saturday, 7 June, and Sunday, 8 June. Most monastics could therefore arrive only after the weekend. On Monday, 9 June, the 14th day of the 5th lunar month, a considerable number of European Venerables, teachers, monks, and nuns were present.

At 10 a.m. on Monday, 9 June, the European monasteries jointly held a respectful tribute before the coffin. Thirty-seven establishments were represented:

1. Thiện Minh Pagoda — Lyon, France.
  2. Vạn Hạnh Pagoda — Nantes, France.
  3. Phổ Hiền Pagoda — Strasbourg, France.
  4. Great Khánh Anh Pagoda — Évry-Paris, France.
  5. Khánh Anh Monastery — Bagneux-Paris, France.
- [List continued on the next page.]

# Venerable Minh Giác's funeral: participating temples and memorial vigil

Original p. 5



The portrait and memorial tablet of the late Venerable Thích Minh Giác are ceremonially carried around the shrine for homage to the Buddha and patriarchs. The original caption gives 10 May 2025, preceding the 4 June death date stated in the account.

## Participating establishments — list continued

6. Liên Hoa Pagoda — Bordeaux, France.
7. Quảng Đức Pagoda — Toulouse, France.
8. Viên Giác Monastery — Hanover, Germany.
9. Phổ Bảo Pagoda — Munich, Germany.
10. Viên Lạc Pagoda — Varel, Germany.
11. Linh Thử Pagoda — Berlin, Germany.
12. Từ Ân Pagoda — Berlin, Germany.
13. Bảo Quang Pagoda — Hamburg, Germany.
14. Viên Thông Pagoda — Selb, Germany.
15. Viên Đức Pagoda — Ravensburg, Germany.
16. Phật Huệ Pagoda — Frankfurt, Germany.
17. Đại Bi Pagoda — Frankfurt, Germany.
18. Bảo Thành Pagoda — Koblenz, Germany.
19. Vô Lượng Thọ Monastery — Dresden, Germany.
20. Viên Quang Pagoda — Tübingen, Germany.
21. Bảo Đức Pagoda — Oberhausen, Germany.
22. Tâm Giác Pagoda — Munich, Germany.
23. Phương Quảng Pagoda — Laer, Germany.
24. Phật Quang Pagoda — Gothenburg, Sweden.

25. Trúc Lâm Pagoda — Malmö, Sweden.
26. Viên Dung Pagoda — Gävle, Sweden.
27. Liên Hoa Practice Centre — Oslo, Norway.
28. Đôn Hậu Pagoda — Trondheim, Norway.
29. Pháp Vũ Pagoda — Bergen, Norway.
30. Tam Bảo Pagoda — Moss, Norway.
31. Quang Minh Pagoda — Esbjerg, Denmark.
32. Quán Thế Âm Pagoda — Odense, Denmark.
33. Thảo Đường Pagoda — Moscow, Russia.
34. Trí Thủ Pagoda — Bern, Switzerland.
35. Viên Minh Pagoda — Nebikon, Switzerland.
36. Từ Đàm Pagoda — Birmingham, United Kingdom.
37. Liên Tâm Pagoda — Turku, Finland.

At 2:30 p.m. that day, a ceremony invited the late Venerable's portrait and memorial tablet into the main shrine to bow before the Three Jewels and the patriarchs of all generations. Before the ceremony began, Venerables Thích Hạnh Thông, first proclamation master, and Thích Đồng Văn, second proclamation master, sounded three sequences of bell and gong to open the ritual invitation. Venerable Thích Tâm Huệ presided over the bows to the Buddha and patriarchs, accompanied by dignitaries, monks, nuns, and lay devotees. The ceremony was solemn and deeply moving: this was the late Venerable's final appearance paying homage to the Buddha and patriarchs in the main shrine, newly inaugurated in 2023, which he had founded and built through so many years, from 2012 to 2023, and whose roots reached even further back to his arrival in the Netherlands in 1986. For nearly forty springs, summers, autumns, and winters, his life had been bound to this country. Until shortly before his death, he was still tending every plant and flower in Vạn Hạnh's garden.

At 6 p.m. that day, the Executive Council of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam in Europe, together with the entire European monastic community, held its tribute ceremony. It was filled with boundless emotion and the fraternal affection of disciples of the same teacher. Venerable Thích Tánh Thiệt, First Vice-President of the European Executive Council, spoke on the Church's behalf, offering condolences, solidarity, and words of farewell to the disciples of Vạn Hạnh. Venerable Thích Thông Trí, representing the disciples and the pagoda community, received the tribute and expressed gratitude for the Church's profound support. He spoke movingly of the fraternal bond through which, since 1990, they had shared their lives and Dharma activities under Vạn Hạnh's roof in this country famous for its tulips.

A special ceremony, full of emotion shared by monastics and devotees, took place from 7:30 to 10 p.m. on Monday, 9 June 2025: a night of remembrance and heartfelt reflection before the spirit of the late Venerable Thích Minh Giác. Thích Hạnh Giới, Deputy Secretary-General of the Church's Executive Council, opened and hosted the evening:

"Returning to the West, his body rests on foreign soil.

The golden crane has flown toward the horizon.

We were together in this earthly world;

Now he has gone, and our hearts are heavy."

— Revered master,

— Dear friends,

In the middle of the night, the sudden announcement of an immense bereavement, carried by the spring wind across Europe, told us: “Venerable Minh Giác has entered nirvāṇa.” No one dared believe this fleeting report. We knew that life is impermanent, yet the sad news arrived so abruptly that, with our ordinary consciousness, none of us could believe it! Then what must come did come: confirmation reached us that our Venerable Minh Giác had indeed passed away. A sudden heart condition had struck, and the doctor had declared that he could no longer be saved. What immense sorrow for Europe’s monks, nuns, and lay Buddhists! Vạn Hạnh is now without this gentle teacher who had supported Vietnamese Buddhists in the Netherlands for thirty-nine years; the Church’s European Executive Council has lost one of its leaders, the Director-General of Monastic Affairs; and Europe’s Vietnamese monastics and devotees have lost a revered teacher.

# The vigil: impermanence and tearful farewells

Original p. 6

[Address continued] Tomorrow, with sorrowful hearts, we shall have to accompany the coffin and the late Venerable's body to the crematorium for cremation. Now the senior Venerables witnessing the rites, teachers, nuns, all monastics, lay Buddhists, and monastic and lay disciples are gathered in the funeral shrine to recall their bonds of gratitude with the Venerable during his life. We ask the dignitaries kindly to bear compassionate witness. All devotees and disciples are united in remembering their teacher.

Namo to the Bodhisattva Teacher who welcomes beings, supreme witness of this assembly.

After the teacher's sacred name had been recited three times, speeches and heartfelt reflections followed. The three Venerables on the funeral's presiding council spoke first, each expressing emotion in a different and meaningful way. Venerable Thích Tánh Thiết recalled the merits of the deceased, who had built Vạn Hạnh's home for the Three Jewels in both its material and spiritual dimensions. Now he had suddenly completed his earthly life, leaving sorrow over aspirations still unfulfilled. The Church had lost a dignitary, and its already limited number of religious leaders had diminished further.

Venerable Thích Trí Minh recalled the late Venerable's manner and laughter, which still seemed to echo close by. His emotion inspired this farewell poem, entitled "Impermanence":

Only yesterday, we spoke into the night;  
 Today, you rest beneath the flowers.  
 The earth wears the white of mourning;  
 Your disciples stand in rows, their eyes in tears.  
 The Lotus softly sobs;  
 The King of Emptiness remembers the crane returning West.  
 We recall your founding merits:  
 Vạn Hạnh's roof bears all your labour.  
 For the Dharma, for our people,  
 You spread the teaching and cultivated the Way each spring.  
 Morning and evening chanting seeped deep within;  
 Your pure heart devoted your whole life to beings.  
 You accepted solitude,  
 Unfearing of bitter winter and thick snow.  
 But suddenly the star falls, the clouds fly away;  
 Leaves fall upon a land full of affection.  
 We know that life is impermanent,  
 Yet who can escape this life's net of delusion?  
 A hundred years of life end in a single day;  
 Vạn Hạnh too reveals form and emptiness.  
 The sun has set in serenity;  
 In our affection, we offer these lines and our tears.

Ất Tỵ year, midsummer, 2569–2025.

Śramaṇa Trí Minh.

### **Too overcome to speak: farewell, master**

Venerable Thích Như Điển recalled one of the deceased's fine qualities: at every Lunar New Year, he would telephone to offer New Year blessings and congratulations on another year of monastic life. Over decades, he had never missed a year. He also recalled that Vạn Hạnh Pagoda bore the name of the Zen master who served as royal adviser under the Lý dynasty, and cited his famous admonitory verse:

“Thân như điện ảnh hữu hoàn vô,

Vạn mộc xuân vinh thu hựu khô.

Nhậm vận thịnh suy vô bố úy,

Thịnh suy như lộ thảo đầu phô.”

He then recited the late Venerable Thích Mật Thế's translation:

“The body is a flash of lightning at dusk;

Spring's flourishing plants wither in autumn.

Fearlessly accept life's rise and fall:

They are dew upon the tips of grass.”

Venerable Thích Quảng Hiền, a Dharma brother of the same standing as the deceased, had received the titles of senior teacher and Venerable at the same times as he had. They had known one another in Vietnam and understood each other very well: the same circumstances, the same period of life as young monks, and the same ardour for the ideal of serving as messengers of the Tathāgata. This exceptional Dharma bond perhaps explains his haste: he had gone to the United States on religious business and had arrived only a few days before learning of the sudden death. He was due to remain for two more weeks, but immediately took a flight back to Europe to bid farewell to his dear Dharma brother and honour their lifelong bond. Although not usually inclined to speak about his feelings, that evening he spoke with immense sincerity, his voice choked with tears. He recalled their meetings in Vietnam and their continuing Dharma work together in Europe: a rare and precious bond between companions in the spiritual tradition of Vulture Peak.

Venerable Thích Thông Trí was ordinarily cheerful and viewed the events of this world lightly and serenely. But faced with this separation of life and death, he could not contain his emotion. His voice caught with tears as he recounted their actual experiences together, beginning with the deceased's arrival in the Netherlands. These brothers had shared more than thirty years of joy and sorrow, harmony as well as disagreement.

Nun Diệu Tràm was the last monastic representative to speak. She had received both novice precepts and full ordination under the late Venerable's guidance. In 1987, at her novice ordination, he had served as sixth witnessing master at the Khánh Anh ceremony in Bagneux, France. Thích Quảng Đạo had also received novice precepts at that ceremony. In 1990, when she received full ordination at the Liễu Quán ceremony at Thiện Minh in Lyon, the deceased had served as second ritual instructor. Those ordained at that ceremony who were present at the funeral included Thích Phước Huệ, abbot of Từ Đàm in Birmingham, United Kingdom, and Thích Quảng Đạo, abbot of the great Khánh Anh Pagoda in Évry,

France. On behalf of everyone who had received their precepts in Europe, Diệu Trăm expressed immense gratitude and profound respect for their teacher of the Way.

Many other monastics surely had much more to express about the teacher they had met, worked with, loved, and shared bonds with in this life. But the time allotted to this final vigil was too limited for everyone to voice their feelings. The dignitaries therefore kept their deep emotion within their hearts, in silent communion with the deceased's spirit.

The Chánh Tín Buddhist Family was deeply touching: its members fulfilled the role of the Buddhist youth organization before the spirit of the teacher who, during his life, had been their spiritual adviser from the group's founding to its maturity over three decades. They projected images of their activities with him and recalled his teachings. They offered these memories to the spirit of their revered teacher and adviser. A beautiful and happy image...  
[continued on the next page]

## Final tributes and departure for cremation

Original p. 7



The final farewell rite before the cremation of the late Venerable Thích Minh Giác. The original caption gives 10 May 2025; the account dates the ceremony to 10 June 2025.

[Continued from page 6] The most beautiful and happy of these memories was from the preceding weekend: the Chánh Tín Buddhist Family had shared a meal with the deceased, never imagining it would be the last in their lives together. This moving image will remain forever in every member's heart. Representatives of the committee supporting the Three Jewels and of the Vietnamese Buddhist Association in the Netherlands then offered heartfelt reflections expressing their grief and affection for Venerable Thích Minh Giác.

Before the memorial vigil ended, two women devotees who had been deeply devoted to Vạn Hạnh, from its old premises to its present location, spoke. Their efforts, time, and energy had played a vital role in sustaining Vạn Hạnh's home for the Three Jewels. They were filled with immense pain at losing the founding teacher they loved so much. Yet they wiped away their tears, allowing their grief to flow inward, and vowed to express their gratitude to him: they would continue supporting Vạn Hạnh until their last breath. They asked the Church to appoint Venerable Thông Trí to continue leading the pagoda. The vigil ended in acceptance and serenity, but also in profound sorrow at losing a Church dignitary, its Director-General of Monastic Affairs in Europe.

Tuesday, 10 June 2025, the full moon of the 5th month of the Ất Tỵ year, was the day of communal purification and confession for the messengers of the Tathāgata. At 5:30 a.m., the dignitaries therefore recited the morning service: the Śūraṅgama, the Great Compassion Mantra, and the Heart Sūtra dedication. This was followed by the ten major and forty-eight minor Bodhisattva Precepts, clearly proclaimed by Venerable Thích Như Điển.

At 8:30 a.m., the farewell ceremony to the coffin and departure for cremation began. The programme had two parts:

The first was the final-offering ritual, presided over by Venerable Trí Huệ, together with the Venerables and teachers of the liturgical assembly.

The second was the official programme, as follows:

1. Reading of the biography of the late Venerable Thích Minh Giác, founding abbot of Vạn Hạnh, by Venerable Thích Hoằng Khải.
2. Reading of the funeral oration honouring his merits by the Most Venerable Thích Như Điển, Second Vice-President of the Church's European Executive Council.
3. Address by the Most Venerable Thích Tánh Thiết, First Vice-President of the European Executive Council.
4. Thanks from the funeral organizing committee, read by Venerable Thích Thông Trí.
5. The Most Venerable Thích Trí Huệ, presiding over the rites, raised the ritual staff and delivered the Dharma words accompanying the deceased's body.

"I have heard:

The enlightened nature, perfectly luminous, has always been still.

Without deluded notions of self and other, where could true or false birth and death exist?

Yet:

When the first deluded thought arises,

Arising and passing appear within illusion.

Nevertheless:

Passing without passing: Venerable Bodhidharma returns West;

Being born without birth: Śākyamuni enters the East.

Respectful homage to the departed Venerable's awakened spirit!

Where do birth and death come from, and where do they go?

From a single original thought,

The cycle of birth and death began to turn.

Yet:

If now, in one thought, the light turns back to its source,

Where can birth or death remain?

The Venerable's awakened spirit has heard and understood.

Once again, I respectfully bid you farewell!

Respectful farewell!

Khứ lai tự tại!—Free and serene in coming and going!"

After the ritual staff ceremony and Dharma words delivered by the presiding Venerable, the first ritual master intoned the verse of welcome into the Pure Land:

"The Venerable has followed conditions and serenely completed his departure.

Now the assembly observes the funeral rite.

He has left

This Sahā world, a sea of suffering,

For the Buddha's land, peaceful and free.

We ask the assembly

To invoke the sacred name with one heart,

So that his awakened spirit may be reborn

And rest peacefully in the West!"

Invocation:

Namo Amitābha Buddha, the welcoming guide of the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss, realm of Great Loving-Kindness and Great Compassion.

At the same time, the leaders of the Chánh Tín Buddhist Family carried the coffin around the pagoda's left side—as seen from the street—through the main shrine, and back around the right. The ritual procession preceded it in this order: proclamation master, offering tray, two lamp bearers, two flower bearers, banners and flags (five pairs), parasols, offering cups, long-handled ceremonial canopy, ritual musicians, witnessing Venerables, the two proclamation masters, liturgical assembly, and presiding ritual Venerable. These were followed by the incense burner, memorial tablet, portrait, coffin, disciples, relatives, dignitaries, monks, nuns, and lay devotees. The leaders and young members stood in two rows as an honour guard on either side.

As the coffin was moved, the sun shone brightly, and the sky seemed to shed tears too, accompanying a virtuous monk, a disciple of the Buddha, as he left this world. This monastic had truly lived with a spirit detached from worldly concerns, following this aspiration: “To transcend the ordinary mind and vulgar ways, continue the sacred task, reverse decline, overcome Māra's armies, and thus repay the four great kindnesses and rescue beings in the three paths.” Yet there, in the Western sky, a golden lotus blooms...  
[continued on the next page]

# Funeral of Venerable Thích Minh Giác — continued

Original p. 8

[Continued from the preceding page] In the highest rank of the lotus, we respectfully welcome the departed Venerable's spirit and invite him to take his seat. From monks and nuns to lay devotees, everyone is deeply moved. Tears mingle with the rain on the faces of those left behind. Particularly pitiable are the devotees who had followed him for decades, sobbing so hard they cannot speak: "Master! You have gone, leaving your disciples without support in this life full of dust, turmoil, and afflictions." Their cries mingle with the assembly's chanting: "Namo Amitābha, the Master who welcomes and guides the departed."

Alas! Once his footsteps travelled the world;  
Now he lies still, his hands surrendered to the earth.  
For a thousand autumns his face is absent;  
The Master closes his compassionate eyes forever.  
But what can we do now?  
We can only pray:  
May you reach the Western realm, the nirvāṇa without remainder,  
And soon attain the stage of non-retrogression.

The funeral procession then sets off beneath rain that alternates between heavy and light, like sobs that catch and then resume. The vehicles proceed in this order:

- Flower vehicle bearing the Buddha who welcomes the departed;
- Vehicle of the senior Venerable Masters witnessing the ceremony;
- Vehicle of the two Venerables directing the rites;
- Vehicle of the Venerable leading the Sám Chủ chanting and the liturgical council;
- Vehicle bearing the portrait, memorial tablet, incense burner, robe, and bowl;
- Hearse;
- Vehicles of the disciples and family;
- Vehicles of monks, nuns, and lay devotees.

As the crematorium could not accommodate everyone, some masters and devotees remained at the pagoda to prepare the premises and set up the ritual space for the meal offering to the Saṅgha and thanksgiving after completion of the funeral rites.

Long ago, when the Buddha entered parinirvāṇa,  
His golden body was offered to the flames.  
Today the Venerable follows in the Buddha's footsteps,  
Entering the fire, free and without attachment.  
Beyond birth and death, true nature is revealed;  
Like an arrow, his noble spirit flies West.  
In the Buddha's land, as the lotus first opens,  
Incense and flowers are offered to you forever, Master!

When the coffin had been placed on the platform and moved into the furnace, the crematorium employee pressed the ignition button, but the mechanism did not operate.

Even the staff were surprised. This phenomenon seemed to suggest that the departed Venerable's spirit was still lingering, wishing to prolong his farewell to the dignitaries and Dharma friends with whom he had worked for Buddhism for decades, and to share the sorrow of those remaining in this world. Only when the Venerable leading the chanting reached the lines "Bodhi is everywhere adorned with flowers; wherever he dwells, may he always know peace and joy" did the ignition button work. The flames rose: a human lifetime clothed in mourning had ended. For the departed Venerable, this life's vows are fulfilled; he returns to the true nature beyond birth and extinction, preparing for a new journey on the bodhisattva path and a return to continue his work in this Sahā world.

"The one nature is clear and still; the myriad conditions are empty and silent. Recognize that the five aggregates have no inherent existence; understand that the four great elements are originally empty. Following the world's impermanence, return peacefully to the realm of the Real."

Respectfully we pray:

Without forgetting the power of your vows,

Appear again like the udumbara blossom;

In your compassionate boat, cross the waves of the ocean of suffering.

May the departed awakened spirit bear witness.

Around noon, the portrait, memorial tablet, incense burner, banner, bowl, and prayer beads were brought back to Vạn Hạnh Pagoda. His body, however, had become ashes. Venerable Thích Tâm Huệ and the liturgical council performed the rite of installing the departed Venerable's portrait on the precious seat beneath the golden statue of Vạn Hạnh's founding master, in the shrine of the lineage masters.

The human world is a fleeting shadow,

The realm of the sages, peaceful and serene!

We know well:

Form is precisely emptiness.

Yet I still wonder:

What birth, what death?

Your bodily form has gone;

Who could soothe this grieving heart?

How fortunate! Your face remains,

A portrait recalling the one who has departed.

Take your place upon the precious seat;

Soon our respectful tributes will follow,

Flowers and incense renewed again,

As when you were still among us!

— The disciples present the meal offering;

— Together they offer tea;

— The disciples bow and pay homage to the Master's spirit:

Six offerings, fragrant rice,

A jade vase, sweet-dew water;

With all these flavours,

Your disciples respectfully wish to make their offering.

Namo Bodhisattva of Dharma joy and meditative nourishment.

With sincere hearts, we present our offerings;  
 In form, they provide sustenance.  
 With all our devotion,  
 We bow our heads and offer our wishes:  
 Venerable, may you  
 Reach the land of the Tathāgata,  
 Free and unobstructed,  
 Enter the home of the Compassionate Father,  
 And rest there peacefully.

After the portrait-installation rite, the disciples of Vạn Hạnh organized a meal offering to the Saṅgha in thanksgiving for completion of the funeral rites, under the guidance of Venerable Thích Thông Trí.

— Namō to the abiding Saṅgha of the ten directions, bearing witness for the great assembly.

— Most respectfully, to the Venerable monks and nuns:

“These past seven days have been the most painful days our Vạn Hạnh Pagoda has known. Seven days of sorrow, seven days of anguish, seven days beyond what anyone could have imagined. The departure of our Venerable abbot was so sudden. Fortunately, the Venerable monks and nuns of the Buddhist Church in Europe set aside all their work at their home temples, making light even of their fragile health. You came to us, taught us, and helped in many ways, enabling our abbot’s funeral rites to be brought to perfect completion. Today, the ceremony of offering to the body of our departed Venerable abbot is over. With profound respect, our monastery presents its offering and expresses gratitude for the immeasurable kindness of the Saṅgha and the Three Jewels. May the Venerable monks and nuns compassionately accept our offering. Namō to the great bodhisattva who joyfully accepts offerings to the Saṅgha. Namō to the great bodhisattva of universal offering. In your compassion, you have graciously accepted. We, the disciples of Vạn Hạnh, prostrate before you and thank you for your boundless kindness.”

After the midday meal, most of the monks and nuns left Vạn Hạnh to return to their own temples and continue their local Buddhist work. Once all the monks, nuns, and devotees had gone, those remaining walked through the empty premises, whose sadness seemed deeper still. As these lines say:

A cold mist hangs in the abbot’s room;  
 Incense in the hall rises in indistinct clouds.  
 Since your departure, the Master has not returned;  
 The pagoda is lonely and silent once more.

Namō to the forty-fourth generation of the Lâm Tế lineage, member of the general assembly of the monastic department of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam, founder and abbot of Vạn Hạnh Pagoda in the Netherlands, Venerable Minh Giác, Dharma name Chơn Hương. We respectfully announce the repose of his spirit.

For the Funeral Organizing Committee.

This account records what took place throughout the funeral. Should there be errors or omissions, we ask the Venerables and everyone else kindly to forgive us.

# Funeral tribute to the Dharma work of Venerable Thích Minh Giác

Original p. 9



Venerables Quảng Đạo and Hạnh Tấn, representing the Vietnamese Buddhist Church in Europe, distribute relief aid on 26 May 2025 at a Catholic school in Mandalay, Myanmar. The four-storey building collapsed with its floors stacked upon one another; the site is now being cleared.

## Funeral tribute by the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam in Europe, honouring the work of the late Venerable Thích Minh Giác

Most respectfully, to the awakened spirit of Venerable Minh Giác!

We are your companions in the Dharma,

Who journeyed with you for almost forty years

In the boat of the Dharma and our Church in Europe.

How many trials and storms,

Vicissitudes, joy, and peace!

United by the spiritual kinship of Vulture Peak,

A bond surely forged through so many lives,

With the ideal of spreading the teaching,

Seeking awakening above, transforming beings below.

Sowing the Buddha's seeds in a foreign land,

In the modern West,

Like a lotus planted amid snow,

A blossom remembering Vulture Peak of old!

Worldly affairs were turbulent,

The road ahead uncertain,

The way behind obscure.

You followed the wave of refugees.

Then, from that time,  
You began a new life  
In the Netherlands.  
Together with the devotees,  
You built a home for the Three Jewels,  
Giving it the name Vạn Hạnh,  
A Vietnamese Zen master  
Who understood the truth of impermanence.  
His verses still resound,  
Awakening the traveller  
In the long, silent night:  
"The body is like lightning: it appears, then is gone.  
Trees flourish in spring and shed their leaves in autumn.  
Through flourishing and decline, fear nothing:  
See the dewdrop on the tip of the grass."

O Master,  
You acted in accordance with the words  
And reflected upon their meaning.  
Despite the myriad circumstances of the world,  
Everything followed conditions,  
Without being entangled in disputes.  
The human heart is difficult to satisfy;  
Because your only wish was to liberate beings,  
You accepted matters with harmony,  
Inspiring everyone's confidence  
In the Three Jewels: Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha.  
Thus,  
Throughout the decades,  
How many travellers  
Found a refuge again  
In the wondrous Dharma!  
In spring and autumn, you travelled to teach;  
In summer and winter, you meditated and practised.  
You undertook and supported the Buddha's work;  
You shared and eased the burdens of life.  
The devotees of the Netherlands revered you.  
You were the sheltering tree  
When the sun scorched and the rain fell,  
The pillar to lean upon  
When storms were cruel.  
How many meritorious deeds!  
How much gratitude in people's hearts!  
A whole life walking the dusty road,  
An entire existence devoted to religious work.  
The body wears away;  
Who knows the heart's vastness?

Who can distinguish the ordinary from the holy?  
 Most respectfully, to the Venerable's awakened spirit!  
 We thought  
 Your aspirations and responsibilities  
 Were still ever in your thoughts.  
 So many tasks still lay ahead  
 At Vạn Hạnh, your place of practice,  
 Which you hoped would become ever more dignified and beautiful,  
 So that the devotees  
 Might rely upon it and cultivate wholesome merit.

But alas!  
 The wind of impermanence arrived,  
 Sweeping away the clouds of past karma.  
 What, then, has happened?  
 You have passed away, Master!  
 One breath ceases;  
 Farewell for a thousand autumns.  
 Thus,  
 The transmitted flame at Vạn Hạnh is quenched by the wind;  
 In the Netherlands, a star fades into the mist.  
 From now on,  
 The Church lacks the presence of a compassionate monk;  
 Monks, nuns, and devotees  
 Have lost a respected teacher.  
 We remember the days when, as brothers,  
 We discussed the Way over a cup of tea,  
 Sharing our experiences  
 Of spreading the Dharma in Europe.  
 Your words of instruction still resound  
 After the Śūraṅgama and mantra recitations,  
 Before the assembly of monks, nuns, and devotees,  
 At the Church's summer retreats  
 And in your two communities in the Netherlands.  
 Alas!  
 Now, before your memorial altar, we stand bewildered;  
 Your kindly presence appears to us as in a dream.  
 Your image still hovers;  
 Where have you gone? We see you no more.  
 Filled with questions and uncertainty,  
 Tomorrow we shall accompany you,  
 Your body to be entrusted to the fire.  
 The executive council  
 Of the Church in Europe  
 Offers you these words of farewell,  
 Sincerely honouring  
 Your immense merits,

Your dedication to the Way and to life,  
And your wholehearted self-sacrifice.  
We respectfully wish you, Venerable,  
Freedom in coming and going;  
Without forgetting your great vows,  
May you return to the Sahā world  
To guide and liberate beings.

Namo to the Venerable of the forty-fourth generation of the Lâm Tế lineage, founder and abbot of Vạn Hạnh, Minh Giác, Dharma name Chơn Hương. We respectfully announce the repose of his spirit.

Tribute from the executive council of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam in Europe.

# Biography of His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Original p. 10

Born on 6 July 1935 as Lhamo Dhondup in the village of Taktser in northeastern Tibet, he was recognized at the age of two as the fourteenth reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism and Tibet's traditional temporal authority. He was enthroned in 1940 and assumed his political duties in 1950, following the invasion of Tibet by the People's Republic of China. He held this role until 2011.

In 1959, following the popular uprising in Lhasa that was severely suppressed by the Chinese authorities, he took refuge in India, where he established a Tibetan government in exile in Dharamsala. Since then, he has been both the voice of the Tibetan people and a leading figure in international spiritual dialogue. In 1989, he received the Nobel Peace Prize for his commitment to nonviolence and human rights.

Among his major commitments, His Holiness seeks to promote harmony among religious traditions, affirming that, despite their philosophical and spiritual differences, all major religions have the same potential to awaken humanity to compassion and kindness. In this regard, he recalls that the idea that "there is only one truth and one religion" may be valid for an individual, but in a plural human society, we must recognize the multiplicity of religions and of lived truths. Although he is the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, His Holiness stresses mutual respect among all religions. He regularly participates in interfaith meetings with Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, and other representatives, highlighting the richness of the world's spiritual diversity.

As spiritual guide and representative of the Tibetan people in exile, his second commitment concerns preserving Tibetan culture—linked to Buddhism, nonviolence, and spiritual education—the Tibetan language, and the fragile ecosystem of the Tibetan plateau, which he considers a global ecological priority. From exile, the Dalai Lama expresses hope for a peaceful solution to the Tibetan question by advocating the "Middle Way": genuine cultural, spiritual, and linguistic autonomy within the People's Republic of China.

His Holiness also stresses the importance of seeking lasting happiness. In his view, this lies neither in material wealth nor in power, but in peace of mind. He emphasizes the central role of compassion, individual responsibility, and mastery of emotions in attaining this essential balance. He is convinced that, whatever their religion or absence of belief, human beings need to develop universal values such as compassion, forgiveness, tolerance, kindness, responsibility, and inner peace. He calls this a "universal secular ethics" that should be promoted through education.

Finally, His Holiness highlights the philosophical heritage of ancient India, especially the concepts of ahimsa (nonviolence) and karuna (compassion), which he regards as the pillars of a humanistic ethics. In this spirit, he also seeks to revive young Indians' awareness of the value of this ancestral wisdom. Convinced of the continuing relevance of the Indian understanding of how the mind works, he considers India, with its long tradition of logic and reasoning, ideally placed to integrate ancient knowledge and modern education harmoniously within a secular, academic framework. In his view, India can therefore play an essential role in promoting a more ethical and principled way of life in contemporary society.

## 24th Festival of Tibetan and Himalayan Peoples' Cultures in Paris

Original p. 11



26 May 2025: Venerables Quảng Đạo and Hạnh Tấn distribute relief aid at Quan Âm Pagoda in disaster-stricken Mandalay, Myanmar.

### Paris's 24th Festival of Tibetan and Himalayan Peoples' Cultures highlights the call to preserve the Tibetan language

Most respectfully, to the Venerable monks and nuns.

Paris, 23 June 2025: the 24th Festival of Tibetan and Himalayan Peoples' Cultures, also celebrating His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday, concluded after a lively and thought-provoking weekend in Paris. It brought together artists, scholars, and visitors from across Europe and the Himalayan diaspora. Held from 20 to 22 June 2025 under the theme "Preserving the Tibetan Language," the festival provided a strong platform for cultural exchange and solidarity.

The festival opened on Saturday 21 June with a traditional procession. Members of the Saṅgha carried a portrait of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, accompanied by his representative Genkhang Rigzin; Venerable Thích Quảng Đạo and the Khánh Anh Pagoda delegation; Emmanuelle Pierre-Marie, mayor of Paris's 12th arrondissement; Jean-Luc Romero-Michel, deputy mayor of Paris; Geneviève Garrigos, Paris councillor; Thupten Gyatso, member of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile; coordinator Thupten Tsering; and representatives of Tibetan associations. After His Holiness's portrait was placed on the throne, the guests offered him prayer scarves (khatag), sang long-life prayers, and performed an incense offering (sang-sol) to purify the site.

Representative Genkhang then said: "With profound respect and great joy, I welcome you to the 24th Festival of Tibetan and Himalayan Peoples' Cultures. This year, our gathering has special significance as we celebrate the 90th birthday of the 14th Dalai Lama, leader of the

Tibetan people and a messenger of peace, wisdom, and compassion for the world.” He continued: “As we celebrate our shared cultural heritage, we also honour His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s lifelong commitment to nonviolence, tolerance, dialogue, harmony among religious traditions, and the preservation of Tibet’s spiritual and cultural identity.” In this spirit, Representative Genkhang urged his Tibetan compatriots to keep His Holiness’s words in their hearts and, more importantly, to turn them into action in daily life.

Mayor Emmanuelle Pierre-Marie, Deputy Mayor Jean-Luc Romero-Michel, and Councillor Garrigos all expressed their happiness at attending this special festival celebrating His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s 90th birthday. They paid him respectful tribute and explicitly acknowledged his invaluable contribution to world peace.

Venerable Thích Quảng Đạo recalled His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s words of compassion and peace, and wished him a long life.

Thupten Gyatso, member of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile, highlighted His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s four principal commitments.

This solemn moment marked the beginning of the cultural festival, demonstrating the City of Paris’s commitment to cultural diversity and Tibet’s struggle.

Despite the intense summer heat, with temperatures exceeding 37°C, large numbers gathered each day beside the beautiful Lake Daumesnil, where the festival took place in outdoor tents. The weather did not dampen the enthusiasm of the artists and audience; many described the event as one of the year’s most eagerly awaited.

The Tibetan language, threatened with disappearance, was the focus of this year’s edition. It was reflected in every part of the festival, from proverb competitions and folk storytelling to educational debates and calligraphy workshops. A highlight was the conference on the Tibetan language chaired by Professor Nicolas Tournadre, followed by a round table entitled “Power, Language, and Identity: Challenges and Possibilities for Tibetan Resilience in the Age of Artificial Intelligence.” Speakers included Bruno Philip, former journalist at *Le Monde*, Dr Boquel, psychologist, and Venerable Geshe Monlam as a religious teacher. Representative Rigzin Genkhang also took part.

On the lakeside stage, visitors enjoyed traditional Tibetan performances: theatre, dance, and songs from Tibet’s three main regions, Ü-Tsang, Kham, and Amdo. One of the most memorable moments came when a group of children stepped onto the stage. Wearing colourful traditional costumes, they stood in close rows, some barely tall enough to see over the microphones. When the music began, their delightful dancing immediately touched the audience’s hearts. Other cultural activities included the creation of a sand mandala, a tradition more than a thousand years old symbolizing life’s impermanence.

Stalls run by individual businesses, associations, Buddhist centres, and independent artists warmly welcomed visitors. Among the colourful stalls, aromas of freshly prepared Tibetan specialities filled the air, attracting curious visitors and food lovers. Other stalls offered goods from Tibet and the Himalayas, including spices. Music shaped the festival’s atmosphere: dance performances on stage by community troupes, associations, and Tibetan schools further enriched its cultural dimension.

Yoga workshops and presentations of stories and poetry, open to all ages and levels, made the atmosphere even more lively.

Under the supervision of Representative Genkhang, Thupten Tsering, coordinator of the Office of Tibet in Paris, had... [continued on the following page]

## Tibet Festival: conclusion and French-language version of the report

Original p. 12

[Continued from the Vietnamese report on page 11] ...directed the festival with help from Dhundup Gyalpo, Tibetan liaison officer; Tenzin Nordhen, accountant; and Tenzin Phuntsok, chargé d'affaires to the European Union, assigned from the Office of Tibet in Brussels. At sunset on the final day, the festival reaffirmed its mission: not only to preserve but also to strengthen the cultures of Tibet and the Himalayas through art, language, and global solidarity.

More than 5,000 visitors attended the festival. Ultimately, it succeeded in giving them an authentic immersion in Tibetan culture. Its organization depends largely on the dedication of hundreds of volunteers who come to help and work tirelessly every year. At the closing ceremony, coordinator Thupten Tsering acknowledged their efforts and expressed his gratitude.

After the thanks and the announcement of ticket sales for the traditional raffle, the audience was invited to participate in celebrating the richness of Tibetan culture.

Report sent by the Office of Tibet, Brussels.

### **The 24th Festival of Tibetan and Himalayan Peoples' Cultures in Paris highlights the call to preserve the Tibetan language — French-language version published in the bulletin**

Dear Venerable Monks and Nuns, members of the Saṅgha,  
Paris, 23 June 2025: the 24th Festival of Tibetan and Himalayan Peoples' Cultures, dedicated to His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday, concluded on a vibrant and stimulating note in Paris last weekend, bringing together artists, academics, and visitors from across Europe and the Himalayan diaspora. Held from 20 to 22 June 2025 under the theme "Preserving the Tibetan Language," the festival provided an outstanding platform for cultural exchange and support.

The festival was inaugurated on Saturday 21 June with the traditional procession of Saṅgha members carrying a portrait of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, accompanied by His Holiness's Representative Rigzin Genkhang, Venerable monk Thich Quang Dao and the Khánh Anh Pagoda delegation, Emmanuelle Pierre-Marie, mayor of Paris's 12th arrondissement, Jean-Luc Romero-Michel, deputy mayor of Paris, Geneviève Garrigos, Paris councillor, Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile member Thupten Gyatso, coordinator Thupten Tsering, and representatives of Tibetan associations. After His Holiness the Dalai Lama's portrait was placed on the throne, the guests offered prayer scarves (khatag), chanted prayers for His Holiness's long life, and made an incense offering (sang-sol) to purify the site.

Representative Genkhang then declared: "It is with immeasurable respect and immense joy that I welcome you to the 24th Festival of Tibetan and Himalayan Peoples' Cultures. This year, our gathering has greater significance because we are celebrating the 90th birthday of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, leader of the Tibetan people and messenger of peace, wisdom, and compassion for the world."

"As we celebrate our shared cultural heritage, we also honour His Holiness's lifelong commitment to nonviolence, tolerance, dialogue, harmony among religious traditions, and the

preservation of Tibet's spiritual and cultural identity," Representative Genkhang continued. In this spirit, she also called on her Tibetan compatriots to carry His Holiness's message in their hearts and, above all, to put it into practice in their daily actions.

Mayor Emmanuelle Pierre-Marie, Deputy Mayor Jean-Luc Romero-Michel, and Councillor Garrigos all expressed their joy at being present at this special edition of the festival dedicated to His Holiness's 90th birthday. They expressed their deep respect for His Holiness and unequivocally acknowledged his invaluable contribution to world peace. Venerable monk Thich Quang Dao recalled His Holiness's message of compassion and peace and wished him longevity.

Thupten Gyatso, Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile member, highlighted His Holiness's four principal commitments.

This solemn moment marked the festival's launch, demonstrating the City of Paris's commitment to cultural diversity and the Tibetan cause.

Despite the summer heat, with temperatures exceeding 37°C, a large crowd gathered each day beside picturesque Lake Daumesnil, where the festival took place in outdoor tents. The weather in no way deterred the enthusiasm of the artists and audience, most of whom described the event as one of the year's most eagerly awaited.

This year's focus on the endangered Tibetan language was reflected in every aspect of the festival: from poetry recitals and traditional tales to educational talks and calligraphy workshops. One highlight was a conference on the Tibetan language led by Professor Nicolas Tournadre, followed by a round table on "Power, Language, and Identity: Challenges and Tibetan Resilience in the Age of Artificial Intelligence," with distinguished speakers such as Bruno Philip, former Le Monde journalist, Dr Boquel, psychologist, and Venerable Geshe Monlam. Representative Rigzin Genkhang also participated.

On the lakeside stage, visitors saw traditional Tibetan cultural performances, including operas, dances, and songs from Tibet's three principal provinces: U-Tsang, Kham, and Amdo. One of the most touching moments was the arrival on stage of a group of young children. Dressed in colourful traditional costumes, they stood in close rows, some barely tall enough to see over the microphones. As soon as the music began, their adorable dance instantly thrilled the audience, melting the spectators' hearts.

Other cultural demonstrations also took place, including the creation of sand mandalas, a thousand-year-old tradition symbolizing life's impermanence.

Stalls run by individual businesses, various associations, Buddhist centres, and artists welcomed the public. Among the colourful stalls, the aroma of freshly prepared Tibetan specialities filled the air, attracting curious visitors and food lovers. Other stalls offered a mixture of Tibetan and Himalayan objects, including spices. The festive atmosphere created by background music and stage dance performances by Tibetan community troupes, various Tibetan associations, and a Tibetan school added to the cultural richness.

The atmosphere was enhanced by yoga workshops and presentations of stories and poetry for all ages and levels.

Under the supervision of Representative Genkhang, Thupten Tsering, coordinator of the Office of Tibet in Paris, directed the festival with help from Dhundup Gyalpo, Tibetan liaison officer; Tenzin Nordhen, accountant; and Tenzin Phuntsok, chargé d'affaires to the EU, seconded from the Office of Tibet in Brussels.

At sunset on the final day, the festival affirmed its mission: to ensure not only the preservation... [continued on page 13]

## Tibet Festival: French conclusion and English-language version

Original p. 13



26 May 2025: visit to Hung Thiện Pagoda in Mandalay, an old pagoda devastated by the earthquake.

[Continued from the French-language version, page 12] ...of Tibetan and Himalayan cultures, but also their flourishing through art, language, and international solidarity. More than 5,000 visitors attended the festival. Ultimately, the Festival of Tibetan and Himalayan Peoples' Cultures was a success, offering visitors an authentic immersion in Tibetan culture. The festival is made possible largely through the contribution of hundreds of dedicated volunteers who come together every year. At the closing ceremony, coordinator Thupten Tsering acknowledged their hard work and expressed his gratitude. The thanks and announcements were followed by a traditional circle dance, which the audience joined to celebrate the richness of Tibetan culture.

Report filed by the Office of Tibet, Brussels.

### **24th Cultural Festival of Tibet and the People of the Himalayas in Paris Highlights Call to Preserve Tibetan Language — English-language version published in the bulletin**

Members of the Sangha leading prayers.

Paris, 23 June 2025: The 24th edition of the Cultural Festival of Tibet and the People of the Himalayas dedicated to the 90th birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama concluded on a vibrant and thought-provoking note in Paris this past weekend, bringing together artists, scholars, and visitors from across Europe and the Himalayan diaspora. Held from 20–22 June 2025 under the theme “Preserving Tibetan Language,” the festival served as a powerful platform for cultural exchange and advocacy.

The festival was inaugurated on Saturday, 21 June, with the traditional procession with Members of the Sangha carrying the portrait of His Holiness the Dalai Lama accompanied by the Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Rigzin Genkhang, Venerable Superior Thich Quang Dao and delegation, Khanh Anh pagoda, Emmanuelle Pierre-Marie, Mayor of Paris 12th, Jean-Luc Romero-Michel, Deputy Mayor of Paris, Geneviève Garrigos, Counsellor to the Paris City hall, Member of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile Thupten Gyatso, Coordinator Thupten Tsering and representatives of Tibetan Associations. After installing His Holiness the Dalai Lama's portrait on the throne, guests presented khatag, chanted prayers for His Holiness' long life and performed a sang-sol to purify the venue.

Following this, Representative Genkhang remarked, "It is with profound reverence and deep joy that I welcome you to the 24th edition of the Cultural Festival of Tibet and the People of the Himalayas. This year, our gathering holds even greater significance as we dedicate it to the 90th birthday of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, a guiding light of the Tibetan people, messenger of peace, wisdom and compassion for the world."

"As we celebrate our shared cultural heritage, we also honour His Holiness's lifelong commitment to non-violence, tolerance, dialogue, harmony among dialogue religious traditions and the preservation of Tibet's spiritual and cultural identity," Representative Genkhang further continued. In this spirit, Representative Genkhang also urged fellow Tibetans to carry His Holiness's message in their hearts and more importantly to translate it into action in their daily lives.

Mayor Emmanuelle Pierre-Marie, Deputy Mayor Jean-Luc Romero-Michel and Counsellor Garrigos all expressed their delight in being present at this special edition of the festival dedicated to His Holiness' 90th birthday. They expressed deep respect for His Holiness and unequivocally acknowledged his invaluable contribution to world peace.

Venerable Superior Thich Quang Dao recalled His Holiness' message of compassion and peace and wished him a long life.

Member of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile Thupten Gyatso highlighted His Holiness' four principal commitments.

This solemn moment marked the launch of the weekend, demonstrating the City of Paris's commitment to cultural diversity and the Tibetan cause.

Despite the intense summer heat, with temperatures soaring above 37°C, large crowds gathered daily at the scenic Lac Daumesnil, where the festival took place in open-air tents. The weather did little to dampen the enthusiasm of performers and audiences alike, with many describing the event as one of the most anticipated events of the year.

This year's focus on the endangered status of the Tibetan language was reflected across all segments of the festival—from spoken word poetry and traditional storytelling to educational panels and calligraphy workshops. A highlight was a conference on Tibetan language led by Professor Nicolas Tournadre, followed by a roundtable discussion on "Power, Language and Identity: Challenges and resilience of Tibetans in the age of Artificial Intelligence" featuring several renowned speakers, including Bruno Philip, former Journalist Le Monde, Dr Boquel, Psychologist and Geshe Monlam. This also saw the participation of Representative Rigzin Genkhang.

On the lakeside podium, visitors were treated to traditional Tibetan cultural performances, including Tibetan opera, dances and songs from the three main regions of Tibet: Ü-Tsang, Kham and Amdo. One of the most heartwarming highlights came when a group of young

children took to the stage. Dressed in colourful traditional outfits, they stood in neat rows, some barely tall enough to see over the microphones. As the music started, their adorable dance moved instantly, melting the hearts of the audience.

Other cultural showcases included the creation of sand Mandala, a thousand-year-old tradition symbolising the impermanence of life.

Stands run by individual businesses, various... [the bulletin states: continued on page 33]

## The brigand's son

Original p. 14

Mr Tài stood beside a window on the first floor of Tây Phương Pagoda's library, looking down at hundreds of male and female devotees visiting the temple for the full moon of the seventh lunar month. He had not imagined there were as many Buddhists abroad as back home. He had left Vietnam almost ten years earlier. In those ten years abroad, this was the first time he had returned to a pagoda for the seventh-month full-moon observance, the day when departed souls are pardoned. For ten years he had been a criminal wanted by Vietnam. Now he was a French citizen. His name, Tài, was gradually fading from memory, replaced by Tanguy. He was pleased with his new name. In the street he no longer had to look ahead and behind, fearing the eyes of the Vietnamese authorities following him or discovering him by chance. And he knew that the government back home had not yet issued an international arrest warrant.

The fragrance of agarwood drifted from the main shrine. The bell and the sad melody of the chanting awakened his longing for his homeland and the loved ones he had lost more than ten years ago, alongside the fear of arrest he kept buried within. He still did not dare enter the shrine; he remained a little afraid of meeting someone who had known him in the past. The temple library was a place almost no one visited. Here he felt at peace, letting his mind return to former days and all the times he had accompanied his child to the pagoda to worship the Buddha.

A couple and a little boy had just entered through the gate. The woman wore a Vietnamese áo dài. The child, five or six years old, also wore a Vietnamese áo dài, patterned in pale yellow. The man wore a grey suit. His light-brown hair, tall figure, and blue eyes showed his European origins. All three walked along the small paths lined with stone novice statues beneath little green trees. They stopped at each statue. The boy stroked its shoulder as he stood admiring it. Then all three disappeared into the crowd.

The little boy in the yellow-patterned áo dài appeared again, carrying a small cloth bag. He stopped before a novice statue at the entrance to the path. He bowed to it, took a piece of fruit from his bag, and put it on the pedestal. He continued in the same way until he reached the statue at the back, also the last in the row, which had no hands and only one leg. It seemed to have been damaged by some impact. As for another statue set at the very end of the path, it had no pedestal on which offerings could be placed; it stood bare and solitary even on this major festival day! Looking carefully, the statues in the distant, secluded paths also received few offerings from devotees of the ten directions, if any at all.

The boy took a yellow fruit, perhaps an orange, from his bag, placed it on the ground before the statue, bowed three times, and stood still for a moment with his palms joined. Then he sat down, opened his bag of fruit on the ground, and placed the yellow fruit on his thigh. He sat thinking. At last, he came out of the path. Standing before the first stone pedestal at the entrance, he saw that many offerings were still scattered there. He joined his palms, bowed to the statue three times, gathered some offerings from the ground and pedestal, held them in his cupped hands, and walked very slowly back to the statue with the damaged leg. He placed the offerings in the bag in front of it. Then he set off again: before each statue whose pedestal held many offerings, he bowed three times, took a handful in his hands, and placed

them on pedestals that had only a few. Many devotees who saw him joined their palms and recited “A Di Đà Phật” as he passed. The boy remained silent. Returning to the damaged statue, he took a paper tissue from his pocket to wipe off its dust. Then the man and woman who had accompanied him reappeared at the entrance to the path. Seeing them, the boy waved:

“Papa, Maman... Louis is here!”

The French words rose and fell. Louis bowed to the statue and went towards the parents who were searching for him. Invocations to Amitābha could be heard. There was applause for Louis. From the library window, Tanguy applauded too.

It was already past noon. The official ceremony had just ended. In two hours, the pagoda would still perform the releasing of living creatures and the food offering to wandering spirits. Mr Tanguy left the library and went downstairs to queue for a vegetarian meal, both supporting the pagoda and satisfying his hungry stomach. Tray in hand, he searched for a vacant seat. A hand rose towards him. Little Louis was pointing to a place opposite. He edged through the diners and sat down. He said “Cảm ơn,” looking straight at the boy’s face, then turned to his parents on either side. Louis replied to his two words of thanks by nodding and saying, “Chào ông.”

Louis had a gentle, kindly face, light-blond hair like his father, and a slim, high nose rising between his mother’s round black eyes. The corners of his eyes moved slightly on either side, along with the tip of his nose. His bright, sparkling eyes occasionally took on a fleeting sadness; once again, Tanguy wondered why they seemed to be a copy of his own son’s eyes. His heart tightened, remembering the son who was no longer there. How alike the two children were! He did not dare look into Louis’s eyes. To look would remind him of his son, and he would be unable to hold back tears and sobs.

The food offering to wandering spirits began. Most of the devotees had already left. He wanted to go home too, but Louis’s eyes kept him there. Louis’s family remained for the rite. He paid no attention to the ceremony, absorbed in watching Louis with his palms joined and eyes half-closed. He saw himself standing beside his son before the grandparents’ altar on Tết days or visits to the pagoda for festivals. Tears welled up.

On the way from the temple to the station, he heard a car stop behind him. He turned: Louis was calling, clinging to the window, stretching out his hand and waving. “Uncle, where do you live? Is it near or far? Get in, Papa and Maman will take you home!” He smiled:

“Uncle’s house is very far away. I have to take the RER home, and just a few more steps will bring me to the station. Thank you to your parents, and to you... See you soon!” “Uncle, what’s your name? Mine is Louis!” Louis’s eyes narrowed. Again, that little expression his own boy had once made in Saigon! His voice grew sad:

“Call me Uncle Tanguy.”

“Au revoir, Tonton Tanguy... see you soon!”

The car slowly moved off; Louis’s head was still outside the window as he looked back, waving gently.

Mr Tanguy opened his apartment door. The lamplight did not dispel the cold or loneliness filling him. The bleating of the goats made him feel sorry for himself. For ten years he had tended this herd, whose bleating usually seemed perfectly ordinary. But today it saddened him: he remembered his son, little Lý. Suddenly, a piercing whistle sounded in his ear and drew him back into the past.

Little Tài had been an orphan. He did not know who his parents were. He had been raised

in an orphanage run by Catholic nuns. The sisters told him that someone had found him lying among corpses on a road where people were fleeing fighting between the Nationalists and Communists. That person had made every effort to place him in the orphanage. Not long after his arrival, the war ended. The war was over, but hunger remained. The orphanage did not have enough food. He escaped to beg with other children from the institution. When begging could not fill their hungry bellies, he and his friends formed a gang of snatch thieves. He was chosen as “leader” because he was big and strong. Their thefts supported them as they grew up and gave them comfortable lives. The gang he commanded in the city became a dangerous criminal organization. Many victims lost their possessions and paid with their lives when they resisted. The local police investigated, but the gang had money: it enabled them to avoid arrest and obtain protection, so they could continue their profitable activities... [continued on page 15]

## Lý and Lulu the dog — story continued

Original p. 15



Visit to Miao Via Di Nunnery in Mandalay: the delegation offers a contribution toward repairs, as many parts of the nunnery have been destroyed.

... more, with greater protection, and this year the harvest is larger than in previous years, to nourish and steadily enlarge the bag that shields him.

At twenty-five he married. A year later his son Lý was born. From the time his first teeth appeared, Lý refused food containing meat or fish. He grew up eating vegetables and remained healthy, without illness. His father loved him immensely. Looking at his son's innocent, gentle face, he felt that those clear eyes contained images of the wrongs he had committed. This saddened him. Deep inside, he told himself he would remove those guilty images from his son's loving eyes. When his wife was busy, she asked him to feed Lý. If the child refused to eat, he would threaten, "If you don't eat, Daddy will eat it all!" and swallow the spoonful. After doing this many times, he developed a taste for the vegetables and fruit his son ate daily. He asked his wife to cook more so that he could share them. From then on, he gradually reduced his meals of meat and fish.

His family worshipped the Buddha. At the full moon of the seventh month in the first year of his marriage, they held the customary offering ceremony. When it was over, the invited guests fought over the food on the offering table. In those people snatching the food, he recognized himself in the days when he begged daily, even fighting and jostling to get a share. He also remembered the orphanage where he had once been raised. Compassion moved him to act: the following day he returned there, sharing what he had and expressing his gratitude.

When Lý was five, he asked his grandmother to sew him a child's Buddhist robe. From then on, every weekend he asked her to take him to the pagoda to pay homage to the Buddha and join the Buddhist youth activities. At home his father played Buddhist songs; the child

sang along and knew the words before his father did. At the pagoda, while his son attended group activities, he went up to the main shrine to listen to the Buddhists chanting sutras. Without his realizing it, the Buddha's teachings entered his heart. His mind became peaceful and light, like a gentle breeze soothing him to sleep. That breeze slipped into his head and carried away the schemes, deceit, and cruelty stored there, which he had used for his inhuman acts of robbery and killing.

One evening, while he, his wife, and Lý were eating supper at home, they suddenly heard a dog growling and the cries of the child's beloved cat. The two animals were fighting. Lý left the table and ran outside, shouting, "Mr Tu's dog Lulu is stealing my Mimú's food again!" The cat's cries were heartrending. Then he heard Lý cry out in pain: "Get out, you wicked dog!" At that cry, he rushed outside. Lý was holding Mimú close to his chest, and his hand was bleeding: Lulu had given him a slight bite. The dog bared its teeth, its tongue hanging out, and stared fiercely at Lý, ready to attack again. His father grabbed a broom and chased it away. The dog ran off. Lý held Mimú close. The cat lay quietly in his arms. Back inside, Lý sat down with her and stroked her fur: "Poor Mimú! The neighbours' dog Lulu bullies you, steals from you, and attacks you for your food. Lulu is a thief... From now on, if you see that thieving dog, keep well away... When you have food, hide it; don't let him see it. If he sees it, he'll steal it again... I hate that thieving dog... You don't like Lulu either, do you?" The bite was very slight; washing it with salt water and applying antiseptic was enough.

Early the next morning, he was drinking coffee before taking Lý to school when he heard a dog yelping. Through the window he saw Lý hurling pieces of brick at Lulu: "If you steal my Mimú's food again... I'll hit you... I'll kill you... I'll give you to the dog thieves to kill for meat... I've already saved you several times, remember?"

His son's words to Mimú the evening before, and his words to Lulu that morning, pierced his heart like a knife: "Lulu is a thief... if you steal Mimú's food again..."

The word "thief" coming from his son's mouth sounded like the curses his own victims had long hurled at him. Their imprecations rang in his ears again. His son's words, addressed to a dog, struck his heart. They sounded cruel, yet contained concern, love, forgiveness, and compassion. Society had made him a thief. Society had covered up his thefts. Had it merely wanted him to continue stealing, shielding him in the service of some higher fraud?

On his seventh birthday, Lý put a piece of birthday cake before Mimú. Lulu whined, as if asking for food. Perhaps he had smelled the cake from the neighbouring house. He watched Mimú eat, without growling or snatching her share as he had before. His eyes were fixed on Lý. The child placed a piece in front of him. Lulu stayed still, his tongue hanging out, longing for it. Lý stroked his back: "This piece is yours; eat it." Lulu ate without a sound, without growling to threaten Mimú or stealing her food as before. Lý took Mimú into his arms: "You see, Mimú, Lulu is your neighbourhood friend now. You needn't be afraid of him stealing your food anymore... I taught him; I showed him that taking someone else's food is wrong, a sin. I've been teaching him for days and days, and today he has proved that he is changing." Lý crouched down, set Mimú on Lulu's back, and hugged him: "We are friends!"

Watching his son's actions and hearing his words to the two animals, he realized that Lý was no longer the innocent little boy of earlier days but an adolescent, at the age of looking at society to distinguish love and hate, good and evil, and make choices. He loved his son and feared that society would lead him to discover that his father's past and present were those of a thief. He did not want to be a thief in his child's eyes; he wanted to be an honest,

loving father like other fathers. To be able to keep embracing his son as the child embraced Lulu with kindness, his conscience had to intervene now and forever, before his actions became a thief's actions.

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The meeting had granted his request. For the position through which he was appropriating wealth, his superiors would appoint someone else in his place. He decided to "return to the garden and enjoy country life." The farewell was very moving... [continued on the next page]

## Lý's father, exile, and Louis — story continued

Original p. 16

... moving. His younger Party comrades, who loved and respected him and were his closest confidants, did not know why he was leaving the Party either...

As soon as he got home, he heard Lý shouting outside: "Dog thieves! Dog thieves! Mr Tu, someone has taken your Lulu!" He ran to the neighbour's house. Two masked men were taking Lulu away. One drove an electric two-wheeler; the other dragged the dog by a noose around its neck. The dog struggled, its tongue hanging out. Lý stood with his arms spread in front of the vehicle. Afraid for his son, he pulled him aside and lunged at the man holding the dog. The man cut off one of his fingers. Blood flowed. The dog escaped. His son cried: "Daddy, Daddy!... your finger... they've killed my daddy!" His thumb and his son's thumb lay on the ground. The engine of the two thieves' vehicle roared just as the child ran to him... His son writhed in pain at his feet... Blood poured from the child's mouth. He dropped to his knees and held him close. He wanted his son's whole body to melt into him. He wanted to melt entirely into his embrace... but the child's arms would never open again... For the first time in his life, he knew tears. He wept for the child he loved and who loved him.

The two dog thieves were surrounded by local residents and arrested: theft and murder! The investigation revealed that the thief who had cut off his thumb had once been a junior member of his own band of robbers. He had violated Party regulations and been expelled. To escape his poverty, he had become a dog thief. To atone for the murder he had committed, he disclosed every affair he had known about in their former gang. The gang had grown powerful, secured its position, and enriched its members thanks to police protection. The security service, afraid that an investigation would lead him to reveal those protecting him at the highest levels of power, persuaded the father to flee abroad. If he stayed, he would be assassinated; he might also be imprisoned for the robberies and murders he had committed. He loved his son Lý, who had just died so unjustly. He wanted justice for his child's death. He had betrayed those who protected him, but if he were arrested, tortured, and abused, his son would suffer out of love for him. He did not want to cause him that pain. He did not want his son to learn that his father was a robber. For them, the child's case was over: justice lay in their hands.

Their flight to Russia was arranged for them. From there he would have to find his own way to another country; those who had helped would no longer be responsible. He wanted to reach England, having heard that it treated refugees generously. He found a network of smugglers. He and his wife hid in a freight lorry, where she nearly suffocated. They reached France and were waiting to cross the Channel to England when his wife began to suffocate again and had to summon help by pounding on the lorry wall. They were rescued. His wife died. He knew the grief of their child's death still weighed heavily on her heart. She had been stopped on their route of flight. Her weakened body could not withstand many days of hunger and thirst. He thought she had joined their son. She did not reproach him. She was good by nature, loved by everyone who knew her.

He was detained with people who had tried to enter England clandestinely, awaiting trial at a farm not far from the French capital. One windy, rainy night, the detainees took advantage of lax supervision to escape. During the following morning's inspection, the guards found only him, still sitting in the centre. Everyone was surprised: a man so small and quick, and he had not escaped? He remained silent, like someone deaf and mute. The guards felt sympathy for him. They did not know that, if he escaped, he would have nowhere to go. He would surely be caught, tried quickly, and sentenced to expulsion. In his homeland, life imprisonment or execution awaited him.

In the following days, the empty places in the detention centre gradually filled with other arrested migrants. The director allowed him to do cleaning work in the prison. A guard whose father owned a nearby farm felt particular sympathy for him. He assumed the man had migrated for economic reasons. Under the law, a detainee could be provisionally released for the three months before deportation; during that time, if someone guaranteed him employment for a year, properly declared and with all taxes paid, he could temporarily stay. If he left the job midway, he would be deported. After five years of work under those conditions, he would receive a yearly residence permit giving him the same rights as local people. After more than ten years, he could become a citizen. The guard asked his father to hire him as a farmworker to help him remain. Thus, after more than ten years in France, he lived quietly on the farm, tending a herd of hundreds of goats whose milk was used for cheese. He received wages and had become... a French citizen!

His son was dead. His wife was dead. For more than ten years he lived in solitude, grief, and fear. Grief because he loved his wife and son. Fear because he was a defector from his country's regime: who knew whether one day the French police might arrest and extradite him?

A gentle toll of the temple bell brought him back to the present, and he set his tea bowl on the table. The bell seemed to call him, as though from the monks' quarters, urgently beckoning him to come. He saw his son Lý, thirteen years old, and Louis walking along a path lined with fruit trees. Four eyes looked at the clusters of fruit, four round, dark-brown, sad eyes sharing the same gaze, like someone looking into a mirror at their reflection.

\*\*\*

Since that full moon of the seventh month, Mr Tanguy had gone to Tây-Phương Pagoda every weekend to pay homage to the Buddha; afterward, he had asked the abbot's permission to help with voluntary work. There was so much to do that an extra Buddhist pair of hands was welcome. He also enrolled in short retreats.

The more he studied, the more his heart grew peaceful and his mind serene. He had time to repent and confess the wrongs he had committed as a robber. After those sessions of repentance before the main shrine, he returned to the rear hall, where inwardly he lived with his wife and child. He had no photograph of his wife, no photograph of his child upon the altar; his heart trembled with tears. He always thought of Lý. And he thought of Louis as well.

A child born in his distant homeland had driven him to flee so as not to become a murderer; a child born in his adopted country had caught up with him on his flight and generously allowed him to live as an honest human being... Why did those two pairs of eyes seem to be one? A long time had passed since that full moon of the seventh month. Now the pagoda was preparing for spring and Tết. He had not seen Louis again to look into his eyes and, in

their gaze, recall the eyes and gaze of his own son. A pagoda is a place where people pass through and then leave... He did not know whether Louis and his family would return, or whether that first encounter had also been their last! He was waiting for Tết. His heart longed to see Louis again, just as he had once longed to return to his son Lý after a long journey. He hoped that this spring, despite busy lives and the distance, Buddhist families would come to the pagoda to honour the Buddha, and among them, Louis's family!

His hopes were not disappointed. At the beginning of spring, the pagoda's organizing committee assigned him to make rounds, keeping order inside and outside... And from the car park he saw them. Louis appeared in a traditional ocean-blue tunic patterned with flowers. He was taller and bigger. He carried a cloth bag; his father and mother followed. He hurried over: "Hello, sir, madam. Hello, Louis. Happy New Year, and good health to you all. Does Louis remember me?" Louis smiled, his eyes alight with joy, unable to conceal his happiness within... They were Lý's eyes, his son's eyes, whenever he came home after an absence!... "Uncle Tanguy, I remember! Happy New Year, good health, Uncle Tanguy. It's been so long!" He took Louis's hand. The boy set down his bag and embraced him. His embrace was stronger than Lý's had been long ago... In those days Lý was still small, with a slight frame and short arms. He stood motionless, feeling that warmth flow into him. He held Louis tightly, not knowing whether he was holding Lý or Louis. He... [continued on the next page]

# Tanguy and Louis — story conclusion · Remembering Master Minh Giác

Original p. 17



Visiting more than 400 families in Thịnh Ban village, Burma, who are living without shelter: bringing a little loving care to each family and contributing to the construction of four drinking-water tanks for the village.

... felt only that he was giving love to the person he held in his arms and who was embracing him. He did not hear Louis's parents wishing him health and a Happy New Year. Louis walked along the path where statues of little novices stood beneath the trees. He stopped before the first, took a piece of fruit from his bag, and set it on the stone base before the statue... then went on. Tanguy followed, carrying the bag. Louis placed another fruit before a statue and continued in this way until he reached the last little novice, the damaged one. He put all the remaining fruit on its base. A great deal of fruit. Perhaps he had deliberately saved more fruit for this last statue than for the others. Then, after a moment of silence, he took a paper tissue and cleaned the statue.

He said, "You haven't got both your hands, so you can't clean yourself; I'll do it for you." Then he turned to Tanguy: "Uncle Tanguy, do you know why this little novice hasn't got his two feet... his two hands... did somebody break them?" Tanguy shook his head: "Uncle doesn't know!" After a short silence, the child added softly: "Perhaps when he was little this novice liked mischief and fighting and broke his feet and hands, so the person who made his statue made it like that to remind children not to fight?" "Perhaps that's it!" Tanguy answered. They both smiled. Louis took his leave: "I must go up to the main shrine to honour the Buddha. Mum and Dad are letting me spend another half-hour visiting the little novices. I'll let you get on with your work, Uncle Tanguy."

In the afternoon, Louis came to say goodbye. Tanguy accompanied him to the car, where his father was waiting. He greeted the parents: "I hope to see you and Louis at the next Buddhist festivals." "We live a very long way away, more than three hundred kilometres... We only come to the pagoda for the major Buddhist festivals. Since the day he met you, Louis talks about

Uncle Tanguy constantly, every day. We have visited all the pagodas and he had never found an uncle! He talks about you as though he'd known you for years," Louis's mother said, stroking her son's head. Louis looked at him. Lý's eyes, his son's eyes. He gazed into the vast space around him to avoid those eyes, that affectionate gaze of Lý's when he said goodbye each summer to spend almost three months with his maternal grandparents. He wanted to hold Lý close to his heart...

He asked permission to take a souvenir photograph of Louis.

Louis stood in front of the car. An old habit of Lý's: he too had liked having his photograph taken in front of the car... the car used by a robber!

He raised his telephone... Louis's cries rang in his ears and pierced his heart: "Daddy, your finger... they've killed my daddy!"

The telephone fell to the ground near Louis. He hurried to pick it up. He saw his thumb and his son's thumb lying severed on the ground. Louis's parents were alarmed; the boy straightened up, bewildered. Tanguy's tears flowed, and Louis's eyes too were full of tears... He drew Louis into his arms. His parents heard him sob: "Lý, my beloved son!" Louis's ten fingers interlaced in an embrace behind his back. Then Louis's hands gently found the hand on which only three fingers remained. The witnesses looked at one another... nobody understood what had just happened!...

Nguyễn-đại-Thuật, Garges-lès-Gonesse, Île-de-France, 19 May 2025.

## Dear Dharma friends in Germany

Buddhist devotees in Germany may send charitable gifts and offerings for Khánh Anh Pagoda in Évry, France, through the following account:

CHUA KHANH ANH (Rev. Le/Nguyen)

Konto - Nr. 549.189.900

BLZ 250 700 24

Deutsche Bank - Hannover - Germany

IBAN: DE55 2507 0024 0549

[The IBAN is reproduced as printed in the bulletin; it appears incomplete.]

## Remembering Master Minh Giác

The Bùi Dương family bids farewell to Master Minh Giác, who passed away on 4 June 2025. Namo Amitābha Buddha!

That year, when I met you, I asked:

"Is Amitābha the founding Buddha, the Tathāgata?"

At first I scarcely knew who was who,

Having heard only of Śākyamuni, the founding Buddha...

You looked at me kindly and smiled:

"This is Amitābha Buddha, the welcoming guide,

Who receives us with a heart of compassion.

When we leave this world of struggle,

He is like a father awaiting his beloved child,

Extending his hand to welcome and lead us home.

The founding Buddha, who attained the Way beneath the Bodhi tree,

Is also called Śākyamuni Buddha..."

So many years have passed; I still keep those Buddha images,

Within my heart, together with your words.  
Life is impermanent, like fine mist, a cloud's shadow.  
Do not cling; follow the true Way.  
I remember: you taught tirelessly,  
Unhurried, calm, ever devoted to practice.  
Reciting the Dharma constantly, doing good, avoiding agitation,  
And useless, complicated gossip.  
Though I loved hearing your teaching and studying the Dharma,  
Over the years I feared troubling you by coming too often.

Last week, you answered my telephone call,  
Responding to my request for prayers for peace and for the departed.  
You said you were peaceful and well... I rejoiced.  
I did not know that you yourself were ill and suffering.  
Always you aided beings amid the changing course of life.  
Illusory, impermanent life: my tears fall.  
I know that now, peaceful and happy, you have joined the Buddha,  
Yet why am I so sorrowful, unable to finish my bowl of rice?  
Why am I still restless, still burdened with concerns?  
Now you have returned to your old homeland, the Land of Bliss,  
With saints and friends, beside the bodhisattvas.

Though the world mourns the setting moon, the fallen star,  
Throughout your life, Minh Giác, you rescued living beings,  
Urging them to awaken, to leave illusion's sleep,  
To know how to let go, stop, and find contentment.  
In the Netherlands, a lingering autumn melancholy.  
You taught lucid awakening, so that practice would not be blind.  
We accompany you to the shore of Suchness,  
To meet the buddhas and bodhisattvas in compassion's light.

Chân Thuần AnNaDa  
Purmerend, early June 2025.

# Message for the Buddha's Birth Celebration 2025

Original p. 18



Visiting more than 100 earthquake victims still in hospital in Burma.

## The Unified Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation in Europe — Khánh Anh Buddhist Association

Europe, 14 April 2025

MESSAGE FOR THE BUDDHA'S BIRTH: 2649, BUDDHIST ERA 2569 — 2025

Namo to Śākyamuni Buddha, our Original Teacher, manifesting his birth at Lumbinī!

Most Venerable Masters, Venerable Masters, senior nuns, monks and nuns,

Dear compatriots, women and men devoted to the Buddha,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The season commemorating the Buddha's birth, Buddhist year 2569, civil year 2025, has returned to the hearts of the Buddha's children across the five continents. This great and sacred event takes place each year beneath a bright and clear sky, amid the fresh colours of countless flowers in Europe's early spring landscape.

This commemorative season reminds us of the Buddha's declaration in the Skillful Means chapter of the Lotus Sutra:

"Śāriputra! Why is it said that the buddhas, the World-Honoured Ones, appear in this world for one single great purpose? The buddhas, the World-Honoured Ones:

- appear in this world to open beings to the Buddha's knowledge and vision, enabling them to attain purity;
- appear in this world to reveal the Buddha's knowledge and vision to beings;
- appear in this world so that beings may awaken to the Buddha's knowledge and vision;
- appear in this world to lead beings into the path of the Buddha's knowledge and vision."

To strengthen sentient beings' confidence in this absolute truth inherent in them, the Buddha reaffirms it in the Bodhisattva Precepts chapter of the Brahmā's Net Sutra:

"Assembly, believe this firmly:

You are buddhas yet to become;

I am a buddha already accomplished."

This is the great purpose of the Buddha's manifestation of birth in the world: to let all beings know that each possesses a precious, priceless, imperishable jewel, so that we may cherish it, safeguard it, and bring it to light. For this reason, the Buddha used countless skillful means to teach the true Dharma, tirelessly, for forty-nine years. His general method consists of the three undefiled trainings—discipline, concentration, and wisdom—to purify oneself, and the six pāramitās to benefit all beings.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This year in Europe, the season of the Buddha's birth unfolds amid anxiety and uncertainty, as war between two countries on European soil continues with no prospect of an end. In the middle of last March, the world again suffered earthquakes, particularly in Myanmar in Southeast Asia: so many deaths left families shattered, stricken by loss and the pain of separation between the living and the dead. Temples carrying Buddhism's sacred history collapsed tragically. Early in 2025, an immense wildfire in California, United States, destroyed vast amounts of property. Natural disasters, storms, and floods spread devastation throughout the world. After the great Covid-19 pandemic, human life remains threatened by the emergence of other viruses, whether more or less severe.

As the Buddha teaches in the Sutra of the Eight Realizations of Great Beings:

"The world is impermanent; realms are fragile.

The four elements are suffering and emptiness; the five aggregates have no self.

Arising and perishing, they change, illusory and without a master.

The mind is the source of evil; the body is a vessel of faults."

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Executive Council of the Unified Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation in Europe, we call upon all monasteries, monks, nuns, and Buddhist devotees to celebrate the great commemoration of the Buddha's birth in dignity and purity, in both its form and its substance.

— In its form, let us solemnly honour the One who manifested his birth with a flowering branch, a plate of fruit, and pure offerings respectfully presented.

— In its substance, let us practise diligently through sutra recitation and meditative contemplation; love people, cherish life, follow means that benefit living beings, and offer gratitude for the four great blessings received.

May all the merit of these offerings for the Buddha's birth be dedicated to the wish that wars end as soon as possible and ideological conflicts gradually fade. May natural disasters and epidemics cease to ravage and spread. May all families be reunited in happiness; may everyone purify their deeds, speech, and mind, always live mindfully and wakefully, and develop loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity to illuminate the whole universe and all human life. Only thus will we fully honour the blessing of Śākyamuni Buddha's manifested birth.

We pray that the Three Jewels bless the monasteries so that their activities for the season of the Buddha's birth may be brought to fulfilment.

We wish the Most Venerable Masters, Venerable Masters, senior nuns, and all monks and

nuns a summer retreat adorned with discipline, merit, and wisdom.

We wish all our compatriots, Buddhist devotees, their relatives, and families peace, happiness, and auspiciousness.

Namo to Śākyamuni Buddha, our Original Teacher, manifesting his birth at Lumbinī beneath the Aśoka tree!

Executive Council of the Unified Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation in Europe

Second President: Most Venerable Thích Tánh Thiết

First Vice-President: Most Venerable Thích Như Điển

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## Grandmother, what realm are you in? · Contemplating death · Lament at the Southern Gate

Original p. 19



On 27 May 2025, the European Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation's delegation continues its visits at Trung Kiên Nunnery, Burma.

### Grandmother! What realm are you in?

Around 1981–1982, teachers' lives were extremely difficult. I decided to work as a bicycle-taxi driver to earn money to buy milk for my child. The bicycle I used daily to go and teach was fitted with a basket at the front and a padded seat behind the rear carrier, so that the passenger could sit comfortably!

Every morning at five, I stood outside alley 7 on Hoàng Diệu Street in Đà Nẵng, waiting for customers. As daylight came, I left that street, which was close to the school where I taught and where I might meet pupils, and looked for passengers on Lý Tự Trọng or Trần Cao Vân Street. Whether I found customers or not, at half past ten I had to go home to cook so I could return to class in the afternoon...

One morning, riding along Trần Cao Vân Street in front of Lầu Đèn Market, I was heading home to prepare for my classes when a very rural-looking old woman hailed me. I felt both happy and worried: happy to earn a little more, but afraid a long journey would keep me from eating and from my first lesson at half past twelve. I braked and asked, "Where are you going, grandmother?"

She answered, "To Vĩnh Trung bus station—how much?"

Since it was on my way home, I said, "Normally one and a half đồng. Get on, grandmother. Even if you have no money, I can take you part of the way; I'm going that way anyway."

She smiled with her entirely toothless mouth: "You're a bicycle-taxi man, but you speak so

kindly!"

Then she bent down to pick up her worn-out sandals. Her heels had made two holes almost as big as coins. She put the sandals in my bicycle basket and said, "When we get to the station, remind me to take them. Don't think I'm giving them to you! I'm quite likely to forget!"

I laughed and answered, "Don't worry. I don't wear strapped sandals, so I shan't take yours!"

As I pedalled, I learned that she lived in Thanh Quýt, Điện Bàn. She had visited relatives and brought her son, a dockworker, a container of rice: she had heard that his subsidized ration was not enough, and he often went to work hungry. She learned that I was a third-grade teacher and drove a bicycle taxi after hours to buy milk for my child. Once we knew one another's circumstances, we fell silent. A little later I heard her click her tongue behind me: "Why does everyone have to suffer so much?"

At Vĩnh Trung bus station, I turned around: "Sit here a moment, don't worry; I'll find your bus to Vĩnh Điện. The station is crowded; you wouldn't find it."

When I had found it, I stopped the bicycle and said, "Don't forget your sandals. I only carried you a short way; I won't take any money."

She replied, "What you say is good. I won't pay for the ride, but wait, I've something to tell you."

As she spoke, she turned out her blouse, undid the pin holding the inside pocket shut, and took out three đồng, which she handed me.

"Grandmother!" I cried. "I said I wasn't taking any money."

"I'm not paying for the ride, and I'm not giving it to you either. You have your arms and legs; you live in the big city and can earn your living. I'm entrusting my money to you to buy milk for my grandchild. You aren't to take any of it. This is my present to that grandchild. Understand? Accept it, and make me happy."

Then she slipped the money into my pocket, tucked her worn sandals under her arm, and boarded the bus.

That evening I stood alone, crying, until the last bus left Vĩnh Trung station...

Grandmother! What realm are you in?

Now I can write articles that earn fees. The child you asked me to care for has become a PhD and teaches at a prestigious university. Yet perhaps, back when I had to drive a bicycle taxi, you were still with us, grandmother...

Lê Trí

## Contemplating death... !!!

The Buddha teaches us a particular practice: frequently contemplating death.

For those who are excessively greedy, scheming, or quick-tempered: think of the day when you will die and have to leave behind everything you possess. Even this body you cherish so much, for which you calculate and scheme day and night to provide all manner of pleasures, you must finally abandon.

Not knowing where you will go, empty-handed, in darkness, unsure whether you will be reborn in a happy realm or elsewhere...

"Everyone will die; our turn will come. Let us frequently meditate on death to diminish our greed, anger, and arrogance. For at birth we become human; at death, the only capital we carry into rebirth is our karma of good or evil. Whether we have the merit to enter the world beyond depends upon what we have done while alive and where those deeds lead us. In the future, we shall reap the results of the causes we have created."

If during this life we do good works, show filial devotion to our parents, help others, and refrain from fraud for profit, in the future we shall be reborn in happy and peaceful realms. If, on the contrary, we have wealth and position but commit cruel deeds, after death we shall surely enter painful, unfortunate realms.

May all beings have faith in cause and effect: every seed sown bears fruit. May they do good and accumulate many wholesome merits for themselves. May they abandon harmful actions and words. When your contemplation of death matures, that is also the time when you truly attain peace while still alive. This peace is wondrous, beyond conception. It surpasses all the material desires of this world. And the very moment you recognize it, a happiness and serenity appear that have nothing to do with money or worldly prestige...  
Anonymous.

## Lament at the Southern Gate

Far away, mist veils the vast forest,  
At the country's borders, the heart chokes with indignation.  
Our forefathers shed their blood to safeguard the land;  
Greedy, cruel traitors strive to destroy it.  
A fragment of the country's map returns to memory,  
Its resources vanish, abruptly dwindling to nothing.  
Hatred for those who sell the homeland, those "Party remnants":  
With Nam Quan Pass lost, the Việt nation lies ruined!  
VTD

## Offering forms — July 2025

Original p. 20

OFFERING FOR THE STATUES OF ŚĀKYAMUNI BUDDHA PLACED ON BOTH SIDES OF THE GREAT SHRINE — 07/2025

Devotee's name: ..... Dharma name: .....

Current address: .....

Telephone: ..... Email: .....

I wish to make a voluntary offering of: ..... €

Or offer one statue at 250 €, with the following name inscribed beneath it: .....

I dedicate the merit of this gift to prayers for the peace and wellbeing of:

.....

Or to prayers for the following departed persons: .....

OFFERING FOR CASTING STATUES OF AVALOKITEŚVARA BODHISATTVA FOR THE QUAN ÂM TOWER — 07/2025

Devotee's name: ..... Dharma name: .....

Current address: .....

Telephone: ..... Email: .....

I wish to make a voluntary offering of: ..... €

Or offer one statue at 100 €, with the following name inscribed beneath it: .....

I dedicate the merit of this gift:

To prayers for the peace and wellbeing of: .....

Or to prayers for the following departed persons: .....

OFFERING FOR THE MONKS AND NUNS IN WINTER RETREAT, 8-17 DECEMBER 2025 — 07/2025

Devotee's name: ..... Dharma name: .....

Current address: .....

Telephone: ..... Email: .....

I wish to offer the venerable monastics, during the ten-day winter retreat at Khánh Anh Pagoda, Évry-Courcouronnes, France, the amount of: ..... €

I dedicate the merit of this gift:

To prayers for the peace and wellbeing of: .....

Or to prayers for the following departed persons: .....

OFFERING FOR THE MANDALA OF THE MEDICINE BUDDHA'S REALM, 15-21 SEPTEMBER 2025 — 07/2025

Devotee's name: ..... Dharma name: .....

Current address: .....

Telephone: ..... Email: .....

I dedicate the merit of this gift to prayers for the peace and wellbeing of:

.....

To prayers for the following departed persons: .....

# Great Festival of Filial Devotion — Ullambana 2025: form

Original p. 21

Vu Lan illustration reproduced from the bulletin.



## Great Vu Lan Festival, Year of the Snake Ất Ty 2025 — Great Festival of Filial Devotion (Ullambana)

Devotee's full name: .....

Dharma name: .....

Address: .....

Telephone: .....

On the occasion of the Vu Lan Festival of filial gratitude, at the full moon of the seventh lunar month in the year Ất Ty 2025, I wish to make an offering to the Three Jewels and dedicate its merit to prayers for the peace and wellbeing of my living parents, and for the repose of my departed ancestors, relatives, and family members.

Full name — Dharma name — Age

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

For a brief formula, you may write: "Prayers for the ancestors of the seven generations, on both the paternal and maternal sides."

Prayers for the peace and wellbeing of my living parents:

.....

Dharma name: .....

I offer for the great Ullambana Festival the sum of: ..... €

I offer to the Saṅgha for the full moon of the seventh month the sum of: ..... €

To help organize the reading of the lists, please tick the most suitable box:

☐ Saturday, 6 September 2025 (15th day of the seventh lunar month, year Ất Ty), at 10:30 a.m., at Khánh Anh Pagoda, Évry-Courcouronnes: invocation of the bodhisattvas and commemoration of the founding master; reading of the prayer lists for the departed and of those permanently commemorated at the pagoda.

☐ Sunday, 7 September 2025 (16th day of the seventh lunar month), the weekly prayer ceremony for the departed. Opening of the Vu Lan Sutra recitations at 3 p.m., with reading of the prayer lists for the departed and those permanently commemorated at the pagoda. Every day from Monday, 8 September, to Saturday, 13 September 2025, at 7:30 p.m., recitation of the Vu Lan Sutra followed by reading of the lists of the departed and prayers for ancestors of the seven generations.

☐ Sunday, 14 September 2025 (23rd day of the seventh lunar month): reading of the list of the departed during the great Vu Lan Festival and the meal offering to the Saṅgha, at 10 a.m.; reading of the list of those permanently commemorated at the pagoda. The ceremony will be presided over by Most Venerable Thích Tánh Thiệt, Second President of the Unified Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation in Europe, and the venerable monastics.

☐ Living far away or unable to attend because of work, I cannot join the ceremonies at the pagoda and ask the masters to arrange, at their convenience, the reading of my list during the period of the great Vu Lan Festival.

PLEASE NOTE — For families whose departed relatives are permanently commemorated at the pagoda and who cannot attend the ceremonies on 6, 7, and 14 September 2025, the lists will be read from Monday, 8 September, to Saturday, 13 September 2025, at 7:30 p.m., after the Vu Lan Sutra recitation. The printed French version gives “8/8” once; the Vietnamese text and the rest of the programme specify 8 September.

# Invitation to Vu Lan and the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday celebration

Original p. 22



27 May 2025: the delegation of the Unified Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation in Europe continues its relief work for Theravāda monks and nuns in Myanmar.

Unified Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation in Europe · Khánh Anh Pagoda / Buddhist Association.  
Évry-Courcouronnes, 15 July 2025.

## Vu Lan filial gratitude festival, Buddhist Era 2569-2025 · Celebration of the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday · Offering ceremony for wandering spirits

Homage to our original teacher, Śākyamuni Buddha.

To the Most Venerable and Venerable members of the Saṅgha, monks and nuns,

Dear compatriots and Buddhist devotees,

The season of Vu Lan returns once more to the hearts of Vietnamese children of the Buddha living far from their homeland in Europe.

Our hearts are moved on Vu Lan day;

We lay our loving memories in the incense smoke.

Taking refuge with wholehearted devotion,

We offer our parents boundless gratitude.

To express our gratitude to those who gave us life and raised us, Khánh Anh Pagoda will hold the Vu Lan festival, Buddhist Era 2569-2025, the celebration of the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday, and an offering ceremony for wandering spirits on Sunday, 14 September 2025, the 23rd day of the seventh lunar month of the Year of the Snake.

10:15 a.m.: devotees gather in the main Buddha hall.

10:30 a.m.: ceremonial welcome of the Venerable Saṅgha into the main hall.

10:45 a.m.: official opening of the Vu Lan festival and celebration of the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday (separate programme).

Noon: offerings to the Saṅgha and lunch for devotees.

1:30 p.m.: artistic and musical programme.

5:30 p.m.: offering ceremony for wandering spirits.

7 p.m.: conclusion.

On behalf of the great Khánh Anh Pagoda, we respectfully invite the Most Venerable elders, Venerable masters, senior nuns, Dharma teachers, and all monks and nuns to honour the Vu Lan festival with their presence and support it with their prayers so that it may be fully accomplished.

We invite all compatriots and devotees to set aside some of their precious time to return to Khánh Anh's place of practice and join the festival, praying with one heart:

First, to honour our debt to our parents;

Then, to bring relief to living beings of every kind.

On this occasion, we express our deep gratitude to the Venerable Saṅgha and all devotees who have wholeheartedly supported the great Khánh Anh Pagoda in Évry-Courcouronnes in every way, helping it carry out its Buddhist activities and work for the welfare of living beings.

We wish you all a Vu Lan season fulfilled in merit.

Homage to the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Hoan Hỷ Tạng, Treasury of Joy.

With our respectful invitation, on behalf of the pagoda,

Bhikkhu Thích Quảng Đạo.

# Building the Western Three Sages Garden of Serenity

Original p. 23



Design for the Western Three Sages Garden of Serenity and two ceremonial pillars at Vạn Hạnh Pagoda, Nantes, France.

## Construction of the Garden of Serenity: “The Western Three Sages” and two ceremonial pillars

Homage to Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, of great loving-kindness and great compassion. Most Venerable and Venerable members of the Saṅgha, dear benefactors and Buddhist devotees near and far,

After Vesak, Buddhist Era 2569, with boundless joy, we began work on the Western Three Sages Garden of Serenity and two ceremonial pillars, wishing to create a dignified, practical space suited to our activities.

On 3 June 2025, Ngân, a craftsman, came to the pagoda to begin surveying the work. Initially, we planned a retractable awning. However, after detailed calculations with the engineer and equipment supplier, they could not guarantee its safety. A risk would remain in heavy rain or sudden squalls, even if the roof were retracted. Both the engineer and supplier therefore advised against the project and declined to sell the system. Faced with this situation, Ngân—who has no engineering degree but is a skilled craftsman and has already worked for many pagodas, including ours—told me: “I am a craftsman, not an engineer, but I work with my heart and my experience. I can do this. Instead of a movable roof, we shall build a fixed concrete roof, solid, durable, beautiful, and in harmony with our pagoda’s architecture.”

I therefore agreed. A concrete roof requires more work, but provides lasting safety. I hope that the Venerable Saṅgha and devotees will receive this choice with understanding.

A month has passed. Through the combined efforts of the craftsmen and devotees, the two pillars have been completed and their concrete formwork removed; work has begun on the foundations for the Western Three Sages panel. For work and family reasons, Ngân has returned to Germany. He has promised to arrange a return visit to complete the two pillars before Vu Lan. The roof will be built afterwards, in the coming September or October. As for the Western Three Sages panel, I am currently placing an order with the artist. The expected price is USD 42,000. I have not yet signed the contract, but a design has been created for me: it is very beautiful and dignified. Though small, this work has deep meaning: it will be a place to express our hearts, a spiritual space where everyone can turn toward the Three Jewels and pray for loved ones, both living and departed.

I therefore take the liberty of addressing this letter to benefactors and devotees near and far. If you wish to offer material support or your labour, helping our pagoda become ever more dignified and welcoming, I invite you to share in the merit of this undertaking. Every contribution, small or large, expresses a heart as precious as gold. I shall receive it with respect and deep gratitude.

May the Saṅgha enjoy peace and good health, and may its Buddhist work be fully accomplished. May devotees and their families enjoy peace and happiness in body and mind, a firm aspiration to awakening, and the fulfilment of their wishes.

Respectfully,

Bhikkhu Thích Nguyên Lộc.

### **To support the project**

Bank transfer to: ACBO Pagode VAN HANH

IBAN: FR76 1027 8361 3400 0120 1930 195

BIC: CMCIFR2A

Or send your offering to: PAGODE VAN HANH, 3 rue du Souvenir Français, 44800 Saint-Herblain (France).

Telephone contact: Nguyên Lộc, +33 652 447 448.

The printed French version of this announcement continues on page 31 of the original bulletin.

# Thanks for aid to the earthquake victims in Mandalay

Original p. 24

Unified Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation in Europe · Khánh Anh Pagoda / Buddhist Association.  
Évry-Courcouronnes. The Vietnamese letter is dated 15 May 2025; its French version is dated 15 July 2025.

## Letter of thanks — Support and relief for earthquake victims in the former capital of Mandalay, Myanmar

Homage to our original teacher, Śākyamuni Buddha.

Homage to Avalokiteśvara, Bodhisattva of great loving-kindness and compassion, who hears the cries of the world and brings relief from suffering and danger.

To the Most Venerable elders, Venerable masters, senior nuns, monks and nuns,

Dear compatriots and devotees, ladies and gentlemen,

Following the earthquakes that struck Mandalay, Myanmar's former royal capital, the Social Charity Department, under the direction of the Executive Council of the Unified Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation in Europe, appealed over recent months for donations from monastics, devotees, and monasteries. A total of €64,610.80 was collected.

Venerable Thích Quảng Đạo, head of the Social Charity Department, and Venerable Thích Hạnh Tấn, head of the Dharma Teaching Department, were sent by the Congregation to Mandalay. Together with Venerable Thích Diệu Đàm and devotees of Quán Âm Pagoda in Mandalay, they distributed aid to the following people and institutions.

### 26 May 2025: €30,225.50 (130,600,000 kyats)

1. Khổng Giáo School: €6,944.44 (30,000,000 kyats).
2. Hưng Thiện Pagoda: €2,314.81 (10,000,000 kyats).
3. Quán Âm Pagoda: €2,314.81 (10,000,000 kyats).
4. Miao Wa Di Pagoda: €1,157.40 (5,000,000 kyats).
5. Thịnh Bản village: €9,398.14 (40,600,000 kyats).
6. Support for well construction: €2,314.81 (10,000,000 kyats).
7. Trauma and orthopaedic hospital: €5,787.04 (25,000,000 kyats).

### 27 May 2025: €14,027.80 (60,600,000 kyats)

1. Fourteen families in Khâm village: €1,643.51 (7,100,000 kyats).
2. Hưng Trùng Kiến Pagoda: €462.96 (2,000,000 kyats).
3. Monastic community of the institute: €7,870.37 (34,000,000 kyats).
4. Twenty-seven families in Đồng Liễu village: €1,736.11 (7,500,000 kyats).
5. Kim Đa Yến Pagoda: €2,314.81 (10,000,000 kyats).

**28 May 2025: €10,227.08 (235,380,000 kyats)**

1. Ta Đa village: €4,675.92 (20,200,000 kyats).
  2. Tam Gian Pagoda: €3,009.26 (13,000,000 kyats).
  3. Minh Thiện Monastery: €2,314.81 (10,000,000 kyats).
  4. Return transport costs: €227.79 (984,000 kyats).
- Total aid distributed over three days: €54,487.04 (235,384,000 kyats).

The amounts above are those printed in the bulletin. The totals and some kyat equivalents contain arithmetic inconsistencies; they have been retained without correction.

The Social Charity Department sincerely thanks the Most Venerable and Venerable Saṅgha, monks and nuns, monasteries, and all compatriots and devotees who generously supported this relief mission for the earthquake victims of Mandalay.

We invoke the protection of the Three Jewels and Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, who rescues beings from suffering and danger: may the people of Myanmar, after these tragedies, regain the warmth of love, adequate food and clothing, a peaceful existence, abundant harvests, protection from disasters, and a serene life.

We wish the Venerable Saṅgha success in their Buddhist work, and devotees and their families prosperity, well-being, peace, and happiness.

Homage to the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Forest of Merit.

On behalf of the Social Charity Department of the Unified Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation in Europe,

The director, Bhikkhu Thích Quảng Đạo.

8 rue François Mauriac, 91000 Évry-Courcouronnes, France.

Tel.: 01 64 93 55 56 · 07 70 07 33 99.

Email: thichquangdao@khanhanh.fr.

# Donors to the Mandalay relief appeal

Original p. 25

List of Venerable monks and nuns, monasteries, and Buddhist compatriots near and far who sent contributions to support earthquake victims in the former capital of Mandalay, Myanmar. As of 15 July 2025.

The tables are reproduced from the original to preserve the names, countries, currencies, and amounts exactly. The columns identify donors and their countries, followed by contributions in the currencies shown. The bottom of the second table gives the amounts received by 15 July 2025 and their conversion into euros.

## Donor list — first part

| Tên đơn vị                              | Quốc gia | Tổng cộng | Tổng số | Tổng số | Đến từ VN | Đến từ nước ngoài | Tổng cộng |
|-----------------------------------------|----------|-----------|---------|---------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|
| Chùa Thuận Minh - HT Tánh Thiết         | Pháp     | 1 000     |         |         |           |                   |           |
| Chùa Trí Thủ - HT Quảng Hiến            | Thụy Sĩ  |           |         |         | 4 520     |                   |           |
| Chùa Quảng Đức - HT Thông Trí           | Pháp     | 1 500     |         |         |           |                   |           |
| Chùa Vạn Hạnh - DD Pháp Quang           | Đức      | 1 500     |         |         |           |                   |           |
| Chùa Tuệ Giác - HT Thông Trí            | Đức      | 1 500     |         |         |           |                   |           |
| Chùa Khánh An - NS Diệu Trâm            | Pháp     | 1 500     |         |         |           |                   |           |
| Chùa Phổ Hiền Strasbourg-NS Như Quang   | Pháp     | 1 000     |         |         |           |                   |           |
| Chùa Vạn Hạnh - Na TT Nguyễn Lộc        | Pháp     | 1 500     |         |         |           |                   |           |
| Chùa Phật Quang - Chùa Viên Dung        | Thụy Sĩ  |           | 8 300   |         |           |                   |           |
| Chùa Quang Minh - TT Chúc Thánh         | Đức      |           |         | 1 000   |           |                   |           |
| Chùa Tam Bảo - TT Viên Tĩnh             | Norvege  |           | 1 500   |         |           |                   |           |
| PT Chùa Viên Minh - TT Như Từ           | Thụy Sĩ  |           |         | 1 040   |           |                   |           |
| Thùng thuốc súng - Miền Điện            | Pháp     |           | 34      |         |           |                   |           |
| PT Roadmit Minh                         | Pháp     |           |         | 500     |           |                   |           |
| PT Norvege                              | Norvege  |           |         | 4 112   |           |                   |           |
| PT Dương văn Hùng                       | Pháp     |           |         | 30      |           |                   |           |
| PT Kỹ Hữu Long, Ng Trọng Minh-C.Vũ      | Đức      |           |         | 30      |           |                   |           |
| Khoa Giáo Lý GDPT Đức-C.Viên Giác       | Đức      |           |         | 455     |           |                   |           |
| PT Trí Thiện, Phi Ta - Chùa Viên Giác   | Đức      |           |         | 90      |           |                   |           |
| PT Nguyễn Kim Chi - Chùa Viên Giác      | Đức      |           |         | 30      |           |                   |           |
| PT Ung Minh Đức - Chùa Viên Giác        | Đức      |           |         | 20      |           |                   |           |
| PT Nguyễn thị Thanh Thảo - Diệu Ngọc    | Pháp     |           | 20      |         |           |                   |           |
| Thùng Thuốc súng cứu trợ Miền Điện      | Pháp     |           | 34      |         |           |                   |           |
| Thùng Thuốc súng cứu trợ Miền Điện      | Pháp     |           | 125     |         |           |                   |           |
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| PT An danh                              | Pháp     |           | 200     |         |           |                   |           |
| GD PT Wong Cầu, Sylvie, Sylvain         | Pháp     |           | 400     |         |           |                   |           |
| GD PT Lê Thanh Quang - Thu Hà           | Pháp     |           | 100     |         |           |                   |           |
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|                                        |        |     |  |  |     |       |
|----------------------------------------|--------|-----|--|--|-----|-------|
| PT Tuệ Linh - Chùa Vạn Hạnh ở Nantes   | Pháp   | 100 |  |  |     |       |
| PT Nguyễn thị Thanh                    | Pháp   | 200 |  |  |     |       |
| PT Fontaine Jean Martin - Hoa Ngọc     | Pháp   | 11  |  |  |     |       |
| PT Chapuis Angeline Chantal-Huyền Ngọc | Pháp   | 11  |  |  |     |       |
| PT Đỗ Công Hòa - Thủ Lĩnh              | Pháp   | 200 |  |  |     |       |
| PT Bismard the Tuyết Hoa - Diệu An     | Pháp   | 200 |  |  |     |       |
| PT Diệu Hân                            | Pháp   |     |  |  | 500 |       |
| PT Huỳnh Minh Trang                    | Pháp   | 100 |  |  |     |       |
| PT Mohamedaci thị Hương                | Pháp   | 100 |  |  |     |       |
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| Chùa Đôn Hậu - TT Viên Giác            | Norway |     |  |  |     | 1 000 |
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| Pt Nguyễn Thị Thơ                      | Norway |     |  |  |     | 1 000 |
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| Hoa Thị Trần                              | Norvaga |  |  |  |  |  | 1 000 |
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| Pt Phú Cường Lê                           | Norvaga |  |  |  |  |  | 1 010 |
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| Pt Bùi Thị Hồng Phúc                      | Norvaga |  |  |  |  |  | 1 000 |
| Pt Nguyễn Thị Thanh Thủy                  | Norvaga |  |  |  |  |  | 1 000 |
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| Pt Trần Ngọc Châu                         | Norvaga |  |  |  |  |  | 500   |

## Donor list — second part and totals

| Họ và tên                                 | Nơi ở  | Chức vụ | Đến từ | Phần 1 | Phần 2 | Đến từ 3 | Tổng cộng |
|-------------------------------------------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|----------|-----------|
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| Pt Võ Hiệp                                | Norway |         |        |        |        |          | 500       |
| Pt Trần Thị Tuyết Sương                   | Norway |         |        |        |        |          | 1.000     |
| Pt Ung Hồ Thúc An                         | Norway |         |        |        |        |          | 12.810    |
| Pt Ung Hồ Thúc An Tiến Mít                | Norway |         |        |        |        |          | 12.800    |
| Pt Trương Catherine                       | Pháp   |         |        | 100    |        |          |           |
| Pt Nguyễn                                 | Đi     |         |        | 50     |        |          |           |
| Pt Mercier Morgane-GDPT - chùa Vạn Hạnh   | Pháp   |         |        | 200    |        |          |           |
| Pt SG Lieuxaint Senart Ent.               | Pháp   |         |        | 100    |        |          |           |
| Gđ Lê Hong Kong                           | Pháp   |         |        | 500    |        |          |           |
| Congregation der Vereinigten Vietnames    | Pháp   |         |        | 100    |        |          |           |
| Pt Nguyễn Lương -An Thiện -Tv Vô L Thọ    | Đức    |         | 100    |        |        |          |           |
| Pt Ng Đình Toàn-Thiện Tâm - TV Vô L Thọ   | Đức    |         | 50     |        |        |          |           |
| Pt Toàn Văn - Tu Viện Vô Lương Thọ        | Đức    |         | 100    |        |        |          |           |
| Pt Ng c. Hồng - Hạnh-Khánh Đức - TVVL     | Đức    |         | 100    |        |        |          |           |
| Pt Đào Mạnh Cường-Tu Viện Vô Lương Thọ    | Đức    |         | 50     |        |        |          |           |
| Pt Hùng Lam - Tu Viện Vô Lương Thọ        | Đức    |         | 50     |        |        |          |           |
| Pt Thuận Văn Anh - Tu Viện Vô Lương Thọ   | Đức    |         | 100    |        |        |          |           |
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| Pt Huỳnh Dung - Tu Viện Vô Lương Thọ      | Đức    |         | 100    |        |        |          |           |
| Pt Lâm Hồng - Tu Viện Vô Lương Thọ        | Đức    |         | 100    |        |        |          |           |
| Pt Tạ Hải Hưng - Tu Viện Vô Lương Thọ     | Đức    |         | 10     |        |        |          |           |
| Pt Hải Văn - Tu Viện Vô Lương Thọ         | Đức    |         | 50     |        |        |          |           |
| Pt Ân Danh - Tu Viện Vô Lương Thọ         | Đức    |         | 500    |        |        |          |           |
| Pt Ân Danh - Tu Viện Vô Lương Thọ         | Đức    |         | 800    |        |        |          |           |
| Sư Bà TN Như Viên-Tu Viện Vô Lương Thọ    | Đức    |         | 800    |        |        |          |           |
| Pt Ng Ngọc Trung-Tu Viện Vô Lương Thọ     | Đức    |         | 100    |        |        |          |           |
| Chùa Pháp Hoa Erfurt-Tu Viện Vô Lương Thọ | Đức    |         | 50     |        |        |          |           |
| Tu Viện Vô Lương Thọ                      | Đức    |         | 1.000  |        |        |          |           |
| SC TN Thông Chu-Tu Viện Vô Lương Thọ      | Đức    |         | 100    |        |        |          |           |
| ĐD T. Thông Trạch -Tu Viện Vô Lương Thọ   | Đức    |         | 500    |        |        |          |           |
| Pt Bhante Sakharito-Tu viện Vô Lương Thọ  | Đức    |         | 1.200  |        |        |          |           |
| Pt Nhuận Tâm Hương-Tu viện Vô Lương Thọ   | Đức    |         | 200    |        |        |          |           |
| Pt Ngô Tâm Đức - Tu Viện Vô Lương Thọ     | Đức    |         | 200    |        |        |          |           |
| Pt Diệu Cảnh Erfurt -Tu Viện Vô Lương Thọ | Đức    |         | 500    |        |        |          |           |
| Pt Diệu Thiện - Tu Viện Vô Lương Thọ      | Đức    |         | 50     |        |        |          |           |
| SC T. Thông Chúc-Tu Viện Vô Lương Thọ     | Đức    |         | 100    |        |        |          |           |
| Pt Lương thị Ngọc Yến - TV Vô Lương Thọ   | Đức    |         | 200    |        |        |          |           |
| Pt Quảng Tâm - Tu Viện Vô Lương Thọ       | Đức    |         | 100    |        |        |          |           |
| Pt Diệu Hạnh - Tu Viện Vô Lương Thọ       | Đức    |         | 100    |        |        |          |           |

## Donor list — second part and totals (continued)

|                                            |             |       |  |  |  |  |     |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------|-------|--|--|--|--|-----|
| Pt Diệu Hạnh - Tu Viện Vô Lượng Thọ        | Đức         | 100   |  |  |  |  |     |
| Pt Trần Văn Vên - Tu Viện Vô Lượng Thọ     | Đức         | 200   |  |  |  |  |     |
| Pt Đồng Lễ - Tu Viện Vô Lượng Thọ          | Đức         | 300   |  |  |  |  |     |
| Pt Manfred Weinberger - TV Vô Lượng Thọ    | Đức         | 150   |  |  |  |  |     |
| Pt ở Salzburg - Tu Viện Vô Lượng Thọ       | Áo Quốc     | 100   |  |  |  |  |     |
| Pt Phạm Mỹ Châu-Tỉnh Báo-Chùa Từ Quang     | Pháp        | 300   |  |  |  |  |     |
| Pt Diệu Ich - Chùa Từ Quang - Niệm         | Pháp        | 30    |  |  |  |  |     |
| Pt Diệu Quả - Ban cổ chủ Thừa              | Pháp        | 15.4  |  |  |  |  |     |
| Pt Minh Hoa - Ban cổ chủ Thừa              | Pháp        | 30    |  |  |  |  |     |
| Pt Diệu Trang - Diệu Quang-ban cổ chủ Thừa | Pháp        | 20    |  |  |  |  |     |
| Pt Ân danh - Ban cổ chủ Thừa               | Pháp        | 20    |  |  |  |  |     |
| Pt Minh Hồng - Ban cổ chủ Thừa             | Pháp        | 30    |  |  |  |  |     |
| Pt Diệu Pháp - Ban cổ chủ Thừa             | Pháp        | 30    |  |  |  |  |     |
| Gđ Pt Trần Dũng - Kim Hằng                 | Norway      |       |  |  |  |  | 100 |
| Pt Lê thị Sinh - Ngọc Hân                  | Việt Nam    | 30    |  |  |  |  |     |
| Pt Đào thị Vĩnh                            | Pháp        | 20    |  |  |  |  |     |
| Pt Nguyễn thị Loan                         | Pháp        | 20    |  |  |  |  |     |
| Pt Phạm thị Xuân Lan                       | Pháp        | 20    |  |  |  |  |     |
| Gđ Quảng Trung                             | Pháp        | 300   |  |  |  |  |     |
| Chùa Linh Sơn Anh Quốc-DD T. Đồng Giác     | Anh Quốc    | 1.200 |  |  |  |  |     |
| Gia Đình PT Chánh Tín                      | Hoa Lan     | 1.150 |  |  |  |  |     |
| Gia Đình PT Chánh Tín 250€                 | Hoa Lan     |       |  |  |  |  |     |
| Chị Chi Pháp 50€                           | Hoa Lan     |       |  |  |  |  |     |
| Huỳnh Trương Quảng Long - Diệu An 100€     | Hoa Lan     |       |  |  |  |  |     |
| Huỳnh Trương Quảng Minh 100€               | Hoa Lan     |       |  |  |  |  |     |
| Đạo hữu Lê thị Tuyết Đông 100€             | Hoa Lan     |       |  |  |  |  |     |
| Bác Gia Trương Quảng Già 50€               | Hoa Lan     |       |  |  |  |  |     |
| Đoàn sinh Thế C, Minh Thư 100€             | Hoa Lan     |       |  |  |  |  |     |
| Đạo hữu Nguyễn thị T.T.H 300€              | Hoa Lan     |       |  |  |  |  |     |
| Huỳnh Trương Diệu Tĩnh 100€                | Hoa Lan     |       |  |  |  |  |     |
| Gia Đình PT Linh Phong                     | Thụy Sĩ     | 200   |  |  |  |  |     |
| Đại Học Oanh Vũ Ngành Đông Á               | Úc Châu     | 100   |  |  |  |  |     |
| Huỳnh Trương Nguyễn Tri GDPT Chánh Niệm    | Đức         | 150   |  |  |  |  |     |
| Gia Đình PT Thiện Trí                      | Thụy Sĩ     | 1.250 |  |  |  |  |     |
| Gia Đình PT Thiện Trí 1150€                | Thụy Sĩ     |       |  |  |  |  |     |
| Somang Guesap Fellmann 30€                 | Thụy Sĩ     |       |  |  |  |  |     |
| Bạn hữu 20€                                | Thụy Sĩ     |       |  |  |  |  |     |
| Gia Đình Stocker và Gđ chị Thiện Thế 50€   | Thụy Sĩ     |       |  |  |  |  |     |
| Gia Đình PT Giác Viên                      | Philippines | 400   |  |  |  |  |     |
| Gia Đình PT Giác Viên 200€                 | Philippines |       |  |  |  |  |     |
| Bác Gia Trương Trọng Phúc 40€              | Philippines |       |  |  |  |  |     |
| Bạn đoàn Lê thị Thanh Loan 50€             | Philippines |       |  |  |  |  |     |

## Donor list — second part and totals (continued)

|                                               |             |        |        |        |       |        |        |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------|--------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|
| Ban đoàn Vibronex Mông Thị 30€                | Philippines |        |        |        |       |        |        |
| Ban đoàn Lê Phúc Phương 100€                  | Philippines |        |        |        |       |        |        |
| Ban bảo trợ-Phụ huynh Trương Ngọc Lê 20€      | Philippines |        |        |        |       |        |        |
| Ban bảo trợ-Phụ huynh Vũ t. Thu Phương 50€    | Philippines |        |        |        |       |        |        |
| Huỳnh Trương Tâm Vân 20€                      | Philippines |        |        |        |       |        |        |
| Phụ huynh Nguyễn Ngọc Hùng 40€                | Philippines |        |        |        |       |        |        |
| Phụ huynh Võ thị Hồng 30€                     | Philippines |        |        |        |       |        |        |
| Huỳnh Trương Huệ Hoa 100€                     | Philippines |        |        |        |       |        |        |
| Gđ Nguyễn Mạnh Hùng                           | China       |        |        | -20    |       |        |        |
| Gđ Trần Kim Oanh - Diệu Phước Nhem            | Pháp        |        | 100    |        |       |        |        |
| Gđ Nguyễn thị Ngọc Bảo                        | Pháp        |        | 200    |        |       |        |        |
| Gđ Ng Trung Hưng, Dương Thanh Hương           | Pháp        |        | 200    |        |       |        |        |
| Gđ Nguyễn Thu Hồng                            | Pháp        |        | 30     |        |       |        |        |
| Gđ Nguyễn thị Ngọc Anh - Diệu Bảo             | Pháp        |        | 40     |        |       |        |        |
| Gđ Châu thị Thanh                             | Pháp        |        | 20     |        |       |        |        |
| Gđ Nguyễn Jean Francois, Ng Đức Thắng         | Pháp        |        | 20     |        |       |        |        |
| Gđ Trần Việt Khovan                           | Pháp        |        | 100    |        |       |        |        |
| Gđ Nguyễn thị Hạnh                            | Pháp        |        | 30     |        |       |        |        |
| Gđ Phạm Gia Thái                              | Pháp        |        | 150    |        |       |        |        |
| Gđ Nguyễn Ông thị Thanh Tùng                  | Pháp        |        | 100    |        |       |        |        |
| Gđ Nguyễn Evelyn                              | Pháp        |        | 30     |        |       |        |        |
| Gđ Đỗ Phương Bích Hà Daniel                   | Pháp        |        | 30     |        |       |        |        |
| Gđ Ân danh                                    | Pháp        |        | 20     |        |       |        |        |
| Gđ Maliga                                     | Pháp        |        | 20     |        |       |        |        |
| Số tiền đã nhận được đến ngày hôm nay 13/7/25 |             |        |        |        | 4 820 | 500    | 53 740 |
| Chuyển ra tiền Euros                          |             |        |        |        | 0,955 | 1,0000 | 0,8755 |
| <b>64 610,80 €</b>                            |             | 19 000 | 27 000 | 12 500 | 4 000 | 500    | 4 500  |

Total received, converted into euros: €64,610.80.

## A hurried mission to Myanmar

Original p. 26

The Blessed One's prophetic words about an age when this earth would gradually be destroyed have, over recent years, progressively come true. This year especially, natural disasters and human calamities have followed one another, deeply unsettling people. Among these events, the earthquake that struck Mandalay, Myanmar's former capital, left hundreds of thousands of people homeless, destroyed monasteries, and sent monks, nuns, and residents to hospital; some lost arms or legs, and others even lost their lives.

Faced with such a disaster, distressed and compassionate people wonder when their karma will be exhausted and what will become of their own lives. The compassion of Buddhists was thus awakened, and their spirit of solidarity—"intact leaves shelter torn leaves"—grew stronger. Many delegations from around the world brought aid to ease the suffering of Myanmar's people. The Unified Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation in Europe also promptly issued a letter calling upon Buddhists and monasteries to contribute to relief efforts. A total of €64,610.80 was collected and entrusted to Venerable Thích Quảng Đạo, director of the General Department of Social Charity, to travel to Myanmar and deliver aid.

Venerable Thích Quảng Đạo invited Venerable Thích Hạnh Tấn, director of the General Department of Dharma Teaching, to accompany him. Both had to rearrange their activities and programmes so they could fly to Yangon on 24 May 2025. Their plane landed at noon on 25 May. Venerable Thích Diệu Đàm met them at the airport and took them to his Quán Âm Pagoda, near the sacred Shwedagon site, to rest, have lunch, and pay homage to the Buddha. That same evening, the monks of the delegation left by coach at 7:30 p.m. to bring relief to the victims.

Early the following morning, Monday, 26 May 2025, the coach arrived in Mandalay at about 5 a.m. The delegation was welcomed by Venerable Diệu Ngộ, who took them to his teacher's pagoda. After breakfast, they boarded two cars displaying relief banners in Vietnamese and Burmese to visit Khổng Giáo Confucian School. The four-storey building, which had educated young generations for decades, was now nothing but level ground. The delegation arrived rather late: the ruins of the collapsed school had already been cleared away. Fortunately, only two female teachers had suffered crushed legs; they had undergone amputations and received prostheses in Taiwan with support from the school. The delegation then visited Hung Thiển and Quán Âm Pagodas and Miao Wa Di Monastery. After lunch, it visited four hundred households in Thịnh Bản village who were now living under the open sky, to offer sympathy, provide support for families, and contribute to a drinking-water reservoir for the whole village. It also visited hundreds of people hospitalized in the trauma and orthopaedic department.

On 27 May 2025, relief work continued at Trùng Kiến and Kim Đa Yển Pagodas and the monastic institute, a Theravāda pagoda whose Burmese name I cannot remember. The delegation travelled to an area with many small temples and monasteries reduced to ruins. Hundreds of monks and nuns were temporarily living there in newly built huts. It also brought aid to two small, remote mountain villages: Khâm and Đồng Liễu. On 28 May 2025, the delegation distributed aid in Ta Đa village and at the two institutions Tam Gian and Tịnh Minh Thiển Tự.

On 29 May 2025, after being accompanied by Venerable Diệu Đàm, the two Venerables left Yangon on an afternoon flight back to Europe.

Though very brief, the journey left a deep impression on the hearts of the children of the Buddha: tragic scenes of destruction, families crowded into cramped shelters, monasteries and religious institutions devastated...

The Congregation delivered €55,000 to Myanmar, helping soothe with loving warmth the wounds of so many residents and of the country's monks and nuns. May the Three Jewels bear witness to the merit and generous kindness of the devotees, so that all may enjoy healthy, peaceful lives, prosperity in their work, and success in every undertaking.

Homage to the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Forest of Merit.

The figure of €55,000 is the amount stated in this account; the financial report on page 24 gives a different total. The article's printed French version continues on page 39 of the original bulletin.

# Invitation to the Medicine Buddha mandala

Original p. 27

Unified Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation in Europe · Khánh Anh Pagoda / Buddhist Association.  
Évry-Courcouronnes, 15 July 2025.

## Invitation to take part in the mandala depicting the realm of the Medicine Buddha — 15-21 September 2025

Homage to our original teacher, Śākyamuni Buddha.

Homage to the Medicine Buddha, King of Lapis Lazuli Light, Master of the Pure Eastern Realm, whose original vows dispel calamities and prolong life.

Homage to the Buddhas and Bodhisattva Mahāsattvas of the Medicine Buddha's assembly. Most Venerable and Venerable members of the Saṅgha, dear compatriots and Buddhist devotees,

In recent years, disease has surrounded and threatened our lives through many causes and conditions, both external and internal. Yet whether these concern outward circumstances or our inner lives, nothing falls outside the law of cause and effect.

For this reason, the Buddha's followers should heed his teaching: perform wholesome and meritorious deeds. Such good causes will enrich our present and future lives and bring the favourable results we all desire. Among the best causes to cultivate is Dharma practice, especially teachings able to transform the seeds of greed, anger, and ignorance into compassion, joy, and equanimity.

Through favourable conditions and an introduction by Tenzin Penpa, a Tibetan monk in France, the great Khánh Anh Pagoda will welcome the delegation of Geshe Naranpa Penpa CHOPHEL, Geshe Naranpa Lobsang KHEDUP, Geshe Naranpa Choeny GYALTSOK, Geshe Naranpa Jampa CHOPHEL, Venerable Palden TSULTRIM, and Venerable Lobsang DAWA, from KUN PHEN LIN — TERRE DU CŒUR Monastery, together with its president, Geshe Naranpa. They will be present from 15 to 21 September 2025 to create a Medicine Buddha mandala.

This is a Vajrayāna practice, the Diamond Vehicle of Tibetan Buddhism. Its purpose is to pray for the elimination of illness, the calming of calamities and removal of obstacles, increased blessings and longevity, and above all the development of bodhicitta, the mind of awakening.

So that the Medicine Buddha mandala may be fully accomplished, its merit be boundless, and our wishes be fulfilled, we sincerely invite Venerable monks and nuns and all devotees to join joyfully and support it together through recollection, prayer, and recitation of the Buddhas' names. Together, let us vow to develop bodhicitta, dedicate the merit to living beings, and accomplish the Buddha's path.

The detailed programme for the Medicine Buddha mandala will be announced later.

On Sunday, 21 September 2025, at 4:30 p.m., the Venerable Tibetan monks will conduct the mandala's dissolution ceremony and distribute its sand to devotees. At 5 p.m., a delegation of monks, nuns, and Buddhists will walk in procession from the great Khánh Anh Pagoda in Évry-Courcouronnes to the nearby Seine for a ceremony of dedication and mandala

dispersal. The sand will be scattered in the Seine as an offering to the Dragon Kings and all living beings.

With our respectful invitation, on behalf of the pagoda,  
Bhikkhu Thích Quảng Đạo.

8 rue François Mauriac, 91000 Évry-Courcouronnes, France.

Tel.: 01 64 93 55 56 · 07 70 07 33 99.

Email: [thichquangdao@khanhanh.fr](mailto:thichquangdao@khanhanh.fr).

The original calls 15 September 2025 a “Sunday.” The date is retained here; it was a Monday.

# European Heritage Days and memorial for Venerable Minh Tâm

Original p. 28

Unified Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation in Europe · Khánh Anh Pagoda / Buddhist Association.  
Évry-Courcouronnes, 15 July 2025.

## Invitation to European Heritage Days: 19, 20, and 21 September 2025

Homage to our original teacher, Śākyamuni Buddha.

Most Venerable and Venerable members of the Saṅgha, dear compatriots and Buddhist devotees,

France is one of the European countries that takes pride in its cultural heritage, ancient and modern, and holds it in high regard. Every year, throughout its territory, it organizes an event known as European Heritage Days. This celebration dates back to 1984, when Jack Lang, then Minister of Culture, opened sites usually closed to the public. The event was later expanded by the Council of Europe in 1995 to become European Heritage Days, aiming to raise awareness of heritage, encourage public participation, and promote a shared understanding of Europe's history and cultural diversity.

The great Khánh Anh Pagoda in Évry-Courcouronnes contributes to these days and wishes to present aspects of Vietnamese Buddhist culture. It will therefore open its doors to the public on 19, 20, and 21 September 2025.

### Friday, 19 September 2025

10 a.m.: European Heritage Days for schools.

8-9:30 p.m.: teaching by Venerable Thích Hạnh Tấn.

### Saturday, 20 September 2025

9-9:45 a.m.: musical and cultural performance.

10-11:30 a.m.: Buddhist ritual and teaching by Venerable Thích Hạnh Tấn, visiting from Germany.

Vegetarian food for sale on site; please support the pagoda's food stalls.

2-4 p.m.: mandala ritual and teaching by the Venerable Tibetan monks.

### Sunday, 21 September 2025

9:30 a.m.: musical and cultural performance.

11 a.m.: weekly prayers for the departed and for peace.

Vegetarian food for sale on site; please support the pagoda's food stalls.

2-3:30 p.m.: mandala ritual and teaching by the Venerable Tibetan monks.

4:30-6:30 p.m.: mandala dissolution ceremony and scattering of its sand in the Seine.

On behalf of Khánh Anh Pagoda, we respectfully invite the Most Venerable and Venerable Saṅgha, monks and nuns, and all compatriots and devotees to participate in these days and help make them richer and more meaningful for the European community. Your presence bears witness to your achievements and valuable contribution to European Heritage Days.

We wish you every good thing in life.  
With our respectful invitation, on behalf of the pagoda,  
Bhikkhu Thích Quảng Đạo.

## **Twelfth memorial anniversary of Most Venerable Thích Minh Tâm**

Homage to Amitābha Buddha.

To the Most Venerable elders, Venerable masters, monks, abbesses, Dharma teachers, nuns, and all compatriots and devotees near and far,

Time flies like a shuttle. Twelve years have already passed since our revered teacher left us and returned to the beyond (2013–2025), and the anniversary of his passing is approaching once again. We plan to hold a memorial ceremony for our teacher, the late Most Venerable Thích Minh Tâm, founder of Khánh Anh overseas in Bagneux and Évry-Courcouronnes, France, at:

10:30 a.m. on Saturday, 13 September 2025.

We respectfully invite the Venerable Saṅgha and Buddhist compatriots near and far to come to Khánh Anh Pagoda in Évry-Courcouronnes to pray and remember our teacher, who devoted himself to our education and opened the stream of Dharma transmission in the West.

We wish the Saṅgha and all devotees peace, joy, happiness, and the fulfilment of their wishes.

Homage to the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Hoan Hỷ Tạng, Treasury of Joy.

Respectfully, the head of the great Khánh Anh Pagoda in Évry-Courcouronnes,  
Bhikkhu Thích Quảng Đạo and the community.

## Tuệ Sỹ: Eyes wet with a golden age beneath the sky of old reunions

Original p. 29



On 27 May 2025, the delegation of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam in Europe continues its visit to Kim Đa Yên Pagoda, Myanmar.

Bùi Giáng, a strange and extraordinary poet, had several of his poems quoted by Master Tuệ Sỹ in his work on Su Dongpo, *Horizons of Distant Dreams*. Conversely, Bùi Giáng analysed, commented on, and appreciated the poetry of his remarkable and intimate friend, Master Tuệ Sỹ: a Bodhisattva, a great awakened being, an authentic, accomplished, and profound monk.

\*\*\* In life, how can one avoid making mistakes? Even when one knows to be cautious and conceal them, one still sometimes goes astray. Once a mistake has been made, besides a public admission and a straightforward apology, there are many ways to repent. One is to confess by recounting one's own story. Bùi Giáng told this particular story about himself again and again whenever he had the chance.

One day, Master Tuệ Sỹ read Bùi Giáng two lines of poetry he had composed in Chinese:  
 Thân đại phong phiến nghiệp ảnh tùy  
 Hiện tiền vi liễu lạc hoa phi.

Translation:

At night the wind blows, stirring the shadow of karma;  
 Before the eyes, fallen flowers blur in flight.

The Master then said that two more lines were needed to make a quatrain. Bùi Giáng teased him, suggesting they ask the Venerable Trí Hải to help. On hearing this, Master Tuệ Sỹ was embarrassed and reproved him: one should not joke in that way.

Seeing this, Bùi Giáng stopped insisting. The Master relaxed his frown and added these two lines:

Phiêu bổng tâm sự tàn tương lệ

Trì Hải đa tâm trúc loạn ty.

Translation:

The wandering heart's thoughts, its tears run dry;

Abashed before wisdom not yet fathomed:

The bamboo forest tangles like threads.

Without further words, two meals later Master Tuệ Sỹ handed Bùi Giáng another poem, in three stanzas. When he showed it to him, it had no title yet:

Eyes wet with a golden age beneath the sky of old reunions,

The blue robe will not stay blue forever on the deserted hill.

Brush away the shadow, suddenly feeling oneself superfluous;

Light the lamp, sit late, and tell of the waning moon.

From the cold summit to oceans of time immemorial,

On the stone peak, a few grains of salt remain undissolved.

Laughing with the sun, why such haste?

This winter, this summer: are you sad?

To count white hairs, a lifetime is not enough;

The road's dust, a brush of the lips, clears away.

The forest wind slips through, murmuring its wound;

The distant source runs against the water, flowing down a thousand ways.

Barely had Bùi Giáng skimmed these lines when he was overwhelmed: heart shaken, souls scattered, spirit lost, seized with dread, eyes clouded.

In alarm, he said to the Master: "Great sir, hurry and throw away all your books; then, please, stop writing poetry! If this goes on, all the young people of Vietnam will kill themselves, as in that dreadful business with Goethe."

\*\*\* Forgive my little joke at literary theory's expense. Yet no learned treatise is worth reading one poet's response to another poet's verse.

I agree with Dư Khánh: yes, beyond their hearts, critics also have heads. Those heads contain all manner of arguments; and, not content with the lips of reason, they dissect every turn of language, every entrance into a poem, leaving it open or closing it off.

Reading them, one feels that here indeed is a dissection, even a major surgical operation, whether they wish it or not. The reader unused to essays about poetry, the reader who truly feels a poem, becomes bewildered.

The reader who is the poet's friend, however, seems to use only the heart. Such a reader drifts and wanders with the poem, even leans upon it, joins with it, takes wing into the sky of dreams, unconcerned with others or ordinary concerns. Such readers savour poetry through their own subjectivity and heart.

\*\*\* Bùi Giáng read with these pauses: "Eyes wet with a golden age / beneath the sky / of old reunions."

He said that only with such phrasing could one perceive the strange solemnity of

remembrance. He asked: "Remembering what?" And answered: "Beneath the sky of old reunions."

Then he continued his questions: "Wet eyes? Whose eyes? Why wet? Because so many tears have flowed?"

After asking without receiving an answer, he turned to question the poets around him. They had extraordinarily peculiar ways: much talk and little substance; they said a great deal but saw nothing. They spoke for themselves and everyone else, of all manner of irrelevant matters, without caring whether anyone heard them properly. Their joys and sorrows had a different tone from ours. Asking them anything would send everything astray.

We imagined them arrogant. We imagined them detached. We imagined them profound. All wrong. For although their eyes seemed to look at us, they themselves had already wandered into their own dreamlands.

Let us return to the poem. Bùì Giáng continued: if a poet is not clear, it is because he wants to keep a space for contemplation—free, at ease, without outside interference. A silence for poetry. Let readers ponder and feel their way. These could be the eyes of a poet; they could be those of a beautiful woman.

Contemplation, and that silence, are deeply necessary to poetry.

\*\*\* Bùì Giáng moved to the second line: "The blue robe will not stay blue forever on the deserted hill."

Still questioning in the same manner: "What blue robe? The indigo blue worn by the mountain girl, one of the minority women who once sold ginger at the market, whom the poet met at least once while tending goats?"

Then, fearing he might mislead his readers, Bùì Giáng clarified: "What I am saying..."  
[Continued on the next page.]

## Tuệ Sỹ: commentary on “The Old Sky”

Original p. 30

[Continued from page 29.] “...is not far from the truth. Tuệ Sỹ once lived in Laos. His father lived comfortably in Upper Laos and central Vietnam. From time to time, his mother came to visit him in Saigon, bringing him a fine robe and a scarf.”

Bùi Giáng kept questioning the lines: “Brush away the shadow, suddenly feeling oneself superfluous / Light the lamp, sit late, and tell of the waning moon. I am a living Bodhisattva, wandering markets and towns; why should I suddenly, in a single moment, feel superfluous? My foot treads on the grass and the scriptures; in a dream, sitting late to tell of the waning moon?”

Then, moved, he offered his own explanation: he felt that the Master was repentant and regretful at bringing a lofty being’s loneliness into the ordinary life of the streets: “One must have seen the gentle, pure face of Tuệ Sỹ, mingled with infinite sadness, to understand these lines. His words rise with the solemnity of the heart’s depths, vast as immensity and wounded with tenderness, like distant mountains and mist lamenting in the cold night.”

\*\*\* A boundless affection stretches across the sea, without end or shore. A melancholy beauty, that of an unstained soul:

From the cold summit to oceans of time immemorial,

On the stone peak, a few grains of salt remain undissolved.

And the questions: “Has the poet ever sat enthroned upon a waning moon? Sat upon a stone peak? The moon slips silently over the slope; sleeping a thousand years in a cradle of green moonlight, touching the true sky beyond the universe?”

Then the answers: the stone peak and the grain of salt condense the wonders of mountain and sea. The lofty summit is a place where mist has never ceased falling. The salt contains the savour of the immense ocean. Such is the entranced serenity of a gentle heart taking leave of the ephemeral.

A single question, “Are you sad?”, hangs suspended, half a question, half reflection, half meditation: and already we feel choked by a wrenching grief:

Laughing with the sun, why such haste?

This winter, this summer: are you sad?

\*\*\* Barely had he mentioned The Tale of Kiều when Bùi Giáng quoted two of its lines:

The lotus fades, the chrysanthemum blooms again;

Long days grow short, winter yields to spring.

In this passage, Thúc Sinh remembers his native home. This was the memory of Kiều, and Bùi Giáng joined it to two lines in Master Tuệ Sỹ’s third stanza:

The lotus fades, the chrysanthemum blooms again;

Long days grow short, winter yields to spring.

To count white hairs, a lifetime is not enough;

The road’s dust, a brush of the lips, clears away.

Then Bùi Giáng paused, using a break within the line. Only by such phrasing does the play of meaning become perceptible: “To count white hairs / a lifetime is not enough / The road’s dust / a brush of the lips / clears away.”

Having broken the lines, Bùi Giáng questioned again. He asked the author, but without waiting for the answer, answered himself. One Bùi Giáng playing with another Bùi Giáng: he enjoys that. His poetry, therefore, is open poetry, poetry of dialogue. Unlike some poets who

prefer poetry that is withdrawn, solitary, monologic, closed.

Yes, my friends, my own practice is of that kind. But it does not mean chattering without end. Of course, in an overwhelming surge of inspiration, when one takes too much delight in it, that sometimes happens. But the Master knows when to stop: his poetry does not go on and on to please listeners with a succession of beautifully turned lines. It questions relentlessly while avoiding wandering digressions away from its subject.

That is how Bùi Giáng proceeded. He asked: "Is one lifetime not enough? Is one lifetime of youth not enough? Does one golden lifetime end too soon? One life, early from its very beginning, amid all those affections?"

The forest wind slips through, murmuring its wound;

The distant source runs against the water, flowing down a thousand ways.

\*\*\* In conclusion, Bùi Giáng wrote: "The poem stops here. The resonance of the absolute carries it farther and farther into the night, to the cricket's voice shut within four ruined walls, in prison."

Writing these words, the commentator broadened the issue, but only through hints and allusions: this image expressed the poet's feelings within the four walls of a gloomy cell.

Finally, Bùi Giáng judged: "With this poem alone, Tuệ Sỹ has at once encompassed the entire new sky of poetry, from Chinese Tang verse to Western Surrealism."

In other words, from East to West, from antiquity to the present, this one poem alone would suffice for Master Tuệ Sỹ to embrace it all.

This is, of course, Bùi Giáng's personal opinion. But it reveals how deeply their intimate friendship and spiritual affinity were sustained: they did not merely respect each other; they truly admired each other.

They loved one another deeply: affection, esteem, admiration for such towering talent, courage, and virtue—perhaps!

\*\*\* On 24 November 2023, I too wrote a tribute to Master Tuệ Sỹ upon learning of his death. Already three months have passed.

## THE OLD SKY

Eyes wet with a golden age beneath the sky of old reunions,  
The blue robe will not stay blue forever on the deserted hill.

Brush away the shadow, suddenly feeling oneself superfluous;  
Light the lamp, sit late, and tell of the waning moon.  
From the cold summit to oceans of time immemorial,  
On the stone peak, a few grains of salt remain undissolved.  
Laughing with the sun, why such haste?  
This winter, this summer: are you sad?

To count white hairs, a lifetime is not enough;  
The road's dust, a brush of the lips, clears away.  
The forest wind slips through, murmuring its wound;  
The distant source runs against the water, flowing down a thousand ways.

Since my student days, I have loved the poem The Old Sky. I loved and appreciated it without quite knowing why. Perhaps because, on reading it, I heard its gentle music; reciting it, I found it so poetic: that was how I loved it.

The Old Sky is a lyric poem: the emotions, reflections, and confidences of a meditation master.

\*\*\* Its voice is slow from the outset, calm: “Eyes wet with a golden age beneath the sky of old reunions.” Reading it, for some reason, I think of a song by Trịnh Công Sơn: one evening when I passed, silently, through that street.

That yellow of leaves, of sunset, of road dust: all make us melancholy. It is, at heart, the experience of successive days, the four seasons, the years of life passing by. Nothing can stop or hold it back.

I would add here that some versions have “khung trời hội cũ”—the frame of the sky of old reunions. Yet according to the manuscript the Master left, it is “cung”—the vault.

“Khung,” a frame, sounds confined and limited. “Cung,” a vault, by contrast seems to rise into an immense, boundless arc across the vast sky.

What, then, does “reunion” mean? How should we understand “beneath the sky of old reunions”?

There is probably no right or wrong answer. Indeed, one need not understand every word of a poem, follow every tiny detail, or grasp the writer’s exact original intention. Writing the poem belongs to the author; feeling it belongs to the reader. The author is in no way obliged to explain all the reader’s questions. This reminds me of critic Đặng Tiến’s assertion: “Poetry is a right of the imagination.”

Could “reunion” mean a meeting, a gathering? The return of friends who share an ideal? As for the author, one day he suddenly remembered. Remembered that day after day we grow distant from everything; remembered youth, the happy days of old, the time when people respected and loved one another, when they devoted themselves wholly to advancing the true Way and nurturing the source of gratitude and compassion.

Those wet eyes? Wet for what reason? The rain of early autumn? Wet because they have not yet left the world’s dust? Or wet with longing for broad rivers and immensity?

Because this life will fade and wear away, a lament follows: “The blue robe will not stay blue forever on the deserted hill.”

How could it remain so? The robe of the tree, the cloud, animals, humans, nature: nothing stays green forever. That is the law.

To know the law, to know it cannot be otherwise... yet there was a time when, at the corner of the eye, the stream... [Continued on the next page.]

## Tuệ Sỹ: conclusion · Garden of the Three Saints of the West · Entering the pagoda

Original p. 31



On 28 May 2025, the delegation of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam in Europe visits Tam Giang and Tịnh Minh pagodas.

[Continued from page 30.] ...of those tears, there was also a time when one felt like a cloud:  
“Brush away the shadow, suddenly feeling oneself superfluous.”

Then immediately to feel one’s heart grow cold and need a patch of lamplight: “Light the lamp, sit late, and tell of the waning moon.”

The golden age, the robe that will not stay blue forever, the moon that will wane:  
everything, absolutely everything, is impermanent, comes and goes, then vanishes. The law.  
From the cold summit to oceans of time immemorial,

On the stone peak, a few grains of salt remain undissolved.

Laughing with the sun, why such haste?

This winter, this summer: are you sad?

The mountain remains high, its summit frozen in cold; the sea keeps in its heart countless grains of salt that do not dissolve. They endure, persistent and strong.

Is it all illusion? Why such haste to laugh in the sunlight? And this winter, then this summer, life turning so swiftly.

After those eventful months, the author asks in bewilderment: “Are you sad?”

Is “Are you sad?” a question or a call? Both. Asking another, wondering, then asking oneself: sad, very sad. How could one not be sad, when human life is so short, barely an instant? Hardly arrived before departing; not yet grown before growing old.

To count white hairs, a lifetime is not enough;

The road’s dust, a brush of the lips, clears away.

The forest wind slips through, murmuring its wound;

The forest source runs against the water, flowing down a thousand ways.

“Counting white hairs” is a symbolic, conventional image here. Before one reaches a hundred years, the golden age is already veiled in mist. And the road’s dust stretches endlessly, barely brushed away by the lips. Around oneself, four gloomy walls.

The verbs “count, brush, slip” and the words “white, long, lips, murmur,” set beside one another, give the poem a rhythm of many variations, yet a single cadence: endless sorrow. Life is not yet enough. The work is not finished. So many plans remain incomplete, so many hopes. Then: “The distant source runs against the water, flowing down a thousand ways.” The thousand currents have gathered, waiting to flow everywhere: beneath the sky of old reunions!

\*\*\* How sad this poem is! Reading it alone is saddening; how much more analysis and explanation deepen that sadness.

It helps us understand Master Tuệ Sỹ better: a life that did not close itself within private interests, unconcerned with power or high office, still less concerned with what are called great pagodas and lofty statues. Only that old grey robe, pure and noble; only a little room, tireless writing, ceaseless reflection: how can peace be brought to the country, the homeland? How can living beings’ suffering be eased?

The Master’s life was a life of offering and giving.

I am writing these lines just after the clock has passed four this afternoon, having read a few opening lines on Trần Triết’s page: gentle verses by Vũ, speaking of departure. I then learned that Master Tuệ Sỹ had passed away.

And yet I still perceive, vaguely, somewhere, as if glimpsed: wet eyes, a golden age, beneath the sky of old reunions!

By poet Phạm Hiền Mây. Saigon, 2 March 2024.

## **Creating the serenity garden, “Landscape of the Three Saints of the West,” and two pillars — continued from page 23**

A month has passed. Thanks to the cooperation of Ngân and the volunteer devotees, the iron and concrete structure of the two pillars is complete, and work has also begun on the foundations of the Serenity Garden, “Landscape of the Three Saints of the West.” For family reasons, Ngân has now returned to Germany. He has promised to return to the pagoda and do his best to finish the two pillars before the Vu Lan Festival of Great Filial Piety, and the roofing in September or October.

As for the relief depicting the Three Saints of the West, an initial model has been presented: magnificent and solemn. The estimated cost is USD 42,000; contract negotiations are under way.

Though modest in appearance, this project has a profound meaning: it is a place of worship, a spiritual setting where everyone can return to the Three Jewels and pray for their loved ones, living or departed.

That is why I am taking the liberty of writing this letter to inform you. Thank you for your contribution and support for the project, in whatever form, whether financial or voluntary. I also acknowledge your immense merit, which enables Vạn Hạnh Pagoda to become still more solemn and welcoming!

Our wishes to you:

To the Most Venerable and Venerable members of the Sangha: health and serenity, and the fulfilment of Buddhist works;

To Buddhist friends and devotees, and to your families and loved ones: serenity of body and mind, firm bodhicitta, harmonious health, joy, and happiness.

With warm regards.

Bhikkhu Thích Nguyên Lộc.

To support us, please transfer your donation to the following account:

ACBO Pagode VAN HANH

IBAN: FR76 1027 8361 3400 0120 1930 195

BIC: CMCIFR2A

Or send your donation to: PAGODE VAN HANH, 3 rue du Souvenir Français, 44800 Saint-Herblain, France.

You may also contact us by telephone: Nguyên Lộc, +33 6 52 44 74 48.

## Entering the pagoda

Enter the pagoda to learn to love,

Enter the pagoda to find the way home.

Enter the pagoda, leave the world's dust and anger outside,

Join palms before the Buddha, suddenly see delusion cease.

To enter the pagoda is to return,

To know that mind and Buddha are not far apart.

Enter the boundless life,

You and I were both born of the same house of the Tathāgata.

Return and live amid the world's dust,

Do not let emotional karma disturb the heart.

Walk in the pagoda, live freely,

Return to troubled life, and afflictions weigh less heavily.

May peace and serenity follow us everywhere:

A Di Đà Phật—the paradise is here!

Như Nhiên — Thích Tánh Tuệ.

## Vu Lan and filial gratitude: the ceremony of pinning a rose on one's clothing

Original p. 32

Since ancient times, our Vietnamese people have had family rituals and social customs. Initially created by individuals as ways of harmonizing their lives, these were gathered by later generations: scholars and writers collected these fine habits, set them down in writing, added to them, and adapted them to their own times, making them patterns for daily living. Such customs are preserved in folk literature; proverbs and songs have become a message for building families and enriching society. They have answered people's need for a sense of spiritual life. Passed down through generations, these customs have entered people's hearts naturally, until they have become a "way." As in the verses our grandparents happily sang:

A father's care is like Mount Thái Sơn;

A mother's love, like water flowing from its spring.

With all your heart, honour your mother and respect your father:

To fulfil filial devotion is the child's way.

The essence of our culture has gradually been refined and enriched until it has become a moral teaching for future generations. It is an important part of preserving good customs, safeguarding family principles, and building a stable and orderly society, in the past as today.

When Buddhism reached Vietnam, it received a warm welcome. Already containing elements in harmony with folk culture and belief, it quickly became loved. It developed from the people's emotional foundations while adopting the beautiful aspects of customs from different civilizations around the world. In this way, it enriched our culture with impressions and emotions, receiving sacred feelings that uplift the soul and make life more beautiful.

On the occasion of Vu Lan, the festival of filial gratitude, let us examine the ceremony of pinning a rose on one's clothing, a distinctive rite whose origins few Buddhists know. It was a creation of young Buddhists in South Vietnam, introduced into ceremonies of "religion and belief" not so long ago when measured against religion's long history. This creation was joyfully accepted by several lay leaders of the Gia Đình Phật Tử, or Buddhist Family organization, in Saigon.

The event began in the early 1960s. Master Nhất Hạnh had gone to study in the United States, then visited Japan. On a special day called Mother's Day, he went into town with Master Thiên Ân. A female student asked permission to pin a flower to his robe. He later wrote a text entitled "A Rose Pinned to Your Robe." In it he described the Japanese custom of wearing a flower on Mother's Day and celebrated a mother's love, carrying all the meaning of a child's filial devotion.

The Master relates:

"In the West there is no Vu Lan festival, but there is Mother's Day, on the tenth day of the fifth month. I am a country person and did not know this custom. One day I accompanied Master Thiên Ân to a bookshop in the Ginza district of Tokyo. Along the way we met several Japanese students, friends of his. A female student asked him something, then took a white

carnation from her bag and pinned it to the buttonhole of my robe. I was astonished and bewildered; not knowing what she was doing, I did not dare ask. I tried to remain natural, thinking it must be a custom.

"After they had left and we entered the bookshop, Master Thiên Ân told me that it was Mother's Day, according to a Western custom. If your mother is still alive, a pink flower is pinned to your clothing, and you are proud to still have her. If you have lost her, you receive a white flower. I looked at the white flower on my robe and suddenly felt forlorn and alone. I too was an orphan who had lost his mother; we could no longer proudly wear a pink flower.

"A person who receives a white flower feels sadness and compassion and remembers their departed mother. A person who receives a pink flower rejoices in still having their mother and tries to make her happy, before one day she is gone and it is too late even to weep.

"I find this custom very beautiful and believe we could adopt it for Vu Lan, the day of filial gratitude."

(Excerpt from "A Rose Pinned to Your Robe," by Master Nhất Hạnh.)

Note: "the tenth day of the fifth month" is the date given in the text reproduced by the bulletin.

This text was sent to Saigon and warmly received by university and school students, who copied it and circulated it widely within their groups. It was first published by Lá Bối in 1964. Master Nhất Hạnh did not retain copyright, allowing the publisher to reprint and distribute it year after year.

Upon receiving it, the Saigon Buddhist Students' delegation immediately put the idea into practice: it organized the first ceremony of pinning a rose on one's clothing during Vu Lan at Xá Lợi Pagoda in Saigon. Everyone attending was invited to wear a flower: a pink rose for those whose mothers were living, a white one for those who had lost them.

Around the mid-1960s, musician Phạm Thế Mỹ drew on the Master's text to compose a song with the same title, "A Rose Pinned to Your Robe." It was welcomed by the Buddhist Families in the South and incorporated into the ceremony during Vu Lan celebrations. This first experiment achieved results beyond all hopes: adolescents and young people felt moved and proud; older people were deeply touched and comforted, as though their filial feelings had finally been recognized.

Perhaps the beauty of Master Nhất Hạnh's creation lies in his explanation: thinking of one's mother and loving her is not a "duty," but a "need," like eating or drinking...

At the beginning of the text, he writes:

"The idea of mother cannot be separated from the idea of love. Love is a sweet and peaceful substance of immense flavour. A child cannot grow without love; an adult who lacks love cannot become fully grown either. (...)

"A mother is an entire sky of tender, gentle love. For so long we have bathed and swum in it, happy without knowing it; only today, opening our eyes, do we see it. Ordinary Vietnamese people are unused to subtle images: they compare a mother to a delicious banana, to sticky rice, to sweet sugar cane. These are everyday things, yet their flavour is both simple and exactly right:

"An aged mother is like a perfectly ripe banana,

"Like fragrant sticky rice, like sweet sugar cane. (...)

"Since a mother is the source of love, the idea of mother naturally embraces that of love in religion. In Buddhism, Avalokiteśvara, Quán Thế Âm, is venerated in a mother's form. The

moment a baby opens its mouth to cry, its mother comes running to the cradle. A mother appears as a gentle protective spirit who dispels pain and anxiety. Christianity has the Mother, the Virgin Mary. Vietnamese folk belief has the holy Mother Liễu Hạnh, also in a maternal form. Merely saying one's mother's name fills the heart with love. That this loving thought should become faith and action is hardly surprising. (...)"

"Loving one's mother is not a 'duty': it is entirely natural. Like eating when hungry and drinking when thirsty. (...)

"I want to remind you of this: a mother is the banana, she is sticky rice, sugar, honey, sweetness, and love. Please remember it. Please do not forget. I beg you, do not forget. Forgetting is a mistake: 'It is not my fault either,' but it is still a loss. A loss I do not want you to suffer, because you would suffer it without even knowing. I want to tell you, younger brother, that tomorrow will be too late. Today I shall pin a pink flower to your jacket: you will rejoice in receiving this endless happiness, and on that day tomorrow when you lose your mother, you will have neither regret nor remorse nor the pain of saying that you have no mother. (...)

"This is the refrain I want to sing to you today. Sing to you? No, sing it yourself. Sing your own life; do not let it sink into forgetfulness. That pink flower—I pinned it to my robe long ago. I am happy."

(Several excerpts from the text cited above.) Continued on page 36.

# Ordinary wishes · Cultural Festival of Tibet and the People of the Himalayas

Original p. 33

## Ordinary wishes

A friend of mine was struck by a car. At first she seemed all right; a little later she became dizzy. At Chợ Rẫy Hospital, the doctor diagnosed a brain haemorrhage and she needed immediate surgery.

After the operation she was placed on the second floor. People said that this ward at Chợ Rẫy was reserved for the unlucky: many went in, few came out. When I entered the room, my first feeling was one of suffocation: two rows of beds holding patients who had just undergone surgery. Almost all were unconscious and motionless.

My friend was one of those soulless bodies: head shaved, wearing a blue hospital gown. She seemed to be nothing but skin and bone; without knowing beforehand who she was, I would never have recognized that wealthy, beautiful woman who lived in America and spent money lavishly.

I could only stand looking at her, anxious and saddened.

She remained in a coma, between life and death. The doctor said she could stay that way for days.

Five days later, she woke up. She had escaped death. A few days afterward, her husband took her to America. Two months later, on a trip to the United States, I visited her. Her hair had begun to grow back, restoring something of her former appearance. In another year she would be recovered, once again that graceful, lively woman.

She told everyone the story of her accident, repeating:

"Before that, before going onto the operating table, I thought that being alive would be enough and that I would never ask life for anything else."

The next day I accompanied her to a doctor she had been referred to for a check-up. She entered, greeted him cheerfully, and placed her medical file on the desk.

The doctor read through it and asked:

"And where is the patient who had the head operation now?"

My friend looked surprised, then laughed: "That is me!"

The doctor stared wide-eyed and could only say: "It is unimaginable. If that is you, it is a miracle."

After examining the scar and asking many questions, he declared her health entirely normal, apart from one small defect. A tendon lay exactly where the original mark had been; strangely, the blood vessel had deviated a little below it.

He smiled: "That is the only thing left for you to have treated," and gave her another appointment.

My friend went home with traces of worry on her face. I comforted her, reminding her of what she had said at first: the important thing was to be alive.

She replied:

"At that moment you really do think so. But once you are alive, you want things to be better. I think everyone is the same."

Yes, we are all like that. Yet her wish now was only to regain something she had once possessed and lost. She wanted that tendon back in its proper place, without pressing on the nerve and occasionally causing uncontrolled movements. An unforeseen accident had left her with this small consequence; yet there are also times when we lose something through our own actions and then wish to have it back as before.

There are many very ordinary wishes in life. Even a simple scratch troubles us, and all we want is for it to heal. When we possess what seems ordinary, we pay little attention to it and do not appreciate its worth; only when we lose it do we regret it and wish to recover what we had.

How many couples lose their happiness simply because they think it ought to be greater still! The wife demands more of her husband and vice versa, until they separate; then regret comes too late.

Wishing for what one does not have is normal; failing to obtain it is not so terrible. One dreams of wealth and status without even imagining what they would be like. A woman with money may seek to improve her beauty without even knowing how to be beautiful; if the dream does not come true, she accepts it. But if that woman broke a leg, her only wish would be to have a sound leg again, just as before.

I have another friend who had to enter hospital one day: his gallbladder was severely swollen, and only emergency surgery could save him. When we visited, we learned he was out of danger and could go home a few days later.

He told me:

"It is at times like this that we realize we are always on death's doorstep without knowing it. Perhaps that should give us a more realistic view of life."

He said that, but after recovering and returning to work for a while, he forgot that anything had happened; nothing had changed.

The Dalai Lama has a very beautiful and simple saying: "Many people live without thinking they will die. Only when they are about to die do they realize they have not yet lived."

The words are simple, but not everyone understands their depth. Our wishes are never ordinary.

Let us live with what we have.

(Collected text.)

## **24th Cultural Festival of Tibet and the People of the Himalayas in Paris calls for the preservation of the Tibetan language — continued from page 13**

...associations, Buddhist centers and artists catered to the public. Among the colourful stalls, the aroma of freshly prepared Tibetan delicacies filled the air drawing curious visitors and food lovers alike. While other stands sold a mix of Tibetan and Himalayan artefacts including spices. The festive ambiance created by the musical backdrop: dance performances on stage by dance troupes of the Tibetan Community, various Tibetan associations and Tibetan school added to the cultural richness.

The atmosphere was enlivened by yoga workshop sessions, and presentations of stories and poetry for all ages and levels.

Under the supervision of Representative Genkhang, Thupten Tsering, Coordinator, Bureau du Tibet Paris, led the festival with assistance from Tibetan Liaison Officer Dhundup Gyalpo, Accountant Tenzin Nordhen, and EU Advocacy Officer Tenzin Phuntsok deployed from Bureau du Tibet Brussels.

As the sun set on the final day, the festival reaffirmed its mission: to keep Tibetan and Himalayan cultures not only alive but thriving—through art, language, and global solidarity.

Over 5000 visitors attended the festival. All in all, the Cultural Festival of Tibet and the People of the Himalayas was a success offering visitors an authentic immersion in Tibetan culture. The Festival is made possible largely due to the contribution of hundreds of steadfast volunteers who show up to help every year, and during the closing ceremony Coordinator Thupten Tsering acknowledged their hard work and expressed gratitude. The acknowledgements and announcements were followed by a traditional circle dance, allowing the audience to join in and celebrate the richness of Tibetan culture. Report filed by Bureau du Tibet, Brussels.

# Future dangers · Virtue · Helping oneself

Original p. 34

## Future dangers

Bhikkhus, there are five future dangers. They have not yet arisen, but they certainly will. You should examine them, understand them clearly, and diligently work to eliminate them now.

First, in the future there will be bhikkhus who have not developed the body, moral discipline, the mind, or wisdom. When they teach others, they will be unable to train their disciples in pure discipline, meditation, and higher wisdom. They will therefore produce another generation like themselves: undeveloped in body, discipline, mind, and wisdom. As a result, the Dharma will be corrupted, and because the Dharma is corrupted, the Vinaya will be corrupted too.

This is the first future danger. You should understand it clearly and strive to eliminate it now.

Second, in the future such teachers will become guides to others. Without genuine practice themselves, they will be unable to lead others along the path of discipline, concentration, and wisdom. Under such guidance, many will follow a mistaken path, causing the Dharma and Vinaya to become increasingly corrupted.

This is the second danger. You should see it clearly and diligently eliminate it.

Third, bhikkhus undeveloped in body, discipline, mind, and wisdom will fall into wrong views when expounding the Dharma, even when discussing the Abhidharma or explaining profound meanings. They will fail to perceive the truth and will have no genuine awakening. This is a cause of corruption of the Dharma, which also brings corruption of the Vinaya.

This is the third danger. See it clearly and eliminate it now.

Fourth, in the future those who do not practise will become indifferent to the profound, subtle, supramundane discourses concerning emptiness and cessation that the Tathāgata taught. When these discourses are delivered, they will not listen, pay attention, remember them, or regard them as something to study. Instead, they will be captivated by poets' compositions and ornate literary works outside the Buddha's teaching, composed by followers of other doctrines. These they will listen to attentively, learn by heart, and regard as teachings to preserve.

This is a sign of corruption of the Dharma, which brings corruption of the Vinaya. You should see it clearly and diligently eliminate it.

Fifth, in the future, through failing to develop the body, discipline, mind, and wisdom, the leaders of communities of bhikkhus will become comfort-loving, lazy, lacking effort and diligence. They will no longer shoulder the responsibility of practice; they will live heedlessly, making no effort to realize what they have not yet realized. The disciples who follow them will imitate their way of life, acquire bad habits, and continue to decline. They too will live in abundance and heedlessness, become lazy, abandon seclusion, and cease striving to attain what they have not yet attained.

This is a decline that corrupts the Dharma and, consequently, the Vinaya. You should recognize it and strive now to eliminate its seeds.

Bhikkhus, these five dangers have not arisen today, but they certainly will arise in the future. You should see them clearly, remain vigilant, and diligently eliminate them, giving them no opportunity to take root in the monastic community.

Excerpt from the Aṅguttara Nikāya, Book of the Fives.

## **Virtue is the root of all things; with virtue, one has everything**

In Laozi's Dao De Jing, an outstanding work in the history of traditional Chinese culture whose author is regarded as the founder of Daoism, we read: "All beings in this world are born of the Dao, nourished by Virtue, formed by matter, and shaped by circumstances."

In traditional Eastern culture, virtue is regarded as the root of every blessing: wealth and status, fame, health, and talent. If someone has no good fortune, or little of it, it is because they have no virtue, or little of it. Laozi also said: "Accumulate virtue, and nothing will be impossible." This is why the ancients often reminded their descendants to "accumulate virtue" and advised them not to lose it.

### **1. Virtue in speech**

An old saying goes: "A kind word warms three winter months; a cruel word chills six spring months." Joy and misfortune arise from the mouth; therefore, the first thing to cultivate in oneself is one's speech.

When communicating, let us remember always to speak truthfully, avoid coarse language, gossip, and slander, and refrain from hurting the person before us. Before speaking, think about the consequences and put yourself in the other person's place to understand how they feel.

### **2. Virtue in giving**

The saying "The hand that gives a rose always retains its fragrance" means that someone who knows how to give, always thinks of others' good, and wishes the very best for everyone is the happiest of people, because their heart is filled with kindness.

Confucius said: "The noble person helps others accomplish what is good in them, without helping them accomplish what is evil; the petty person does the opposite." Thus, the noble person helps others in their good actions and does not encourage them to do evil.

### **3. The virtue of trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is a form of capital in life. Who would wish to form a relationship with someone who cannot be trusted? This is why trustworthiness is a person's greatest wealth. To earn everyone's confidence and esteem is a priceless treasure.

Confucius said: "Without trust, one cannot stand," meaning that an untrustworthy person has no place to stand or live in this world. He also said: "At the beginning of human life, human nature is good." These two sayings express profound truths.

### **4. The virtue of humility**

Throughout history, humility has been recognized as a noble inner quality and a virtue expressing the open-minded spirit of the noble person. Arrogance, by contrast, provokes others' dislike. The Book of Changes says: "Humility is the root of morality; humility means remaining modest within, not pushing oneself to the front, and observing propriety."

A humble person has high moral character, a heart that is not full of itself, generosity that embraces others, and an attitude of respect toward everything and everyone. This respect does not arise from fear; it comes entirely from humility and consideration.

## 5. The virtue of respect

Mencius said: "Those who love others will be loved in return; those who respect others will be respected in return."

These words emphasize the importance of respecting other people. When forming relationships, if we can understand and respect others, they too will understand and respect us more deeply. A person of good character and inner cultivation treats everyone with humility, respect, and attentiveness.

Respecting those of lower standing is a virtue; respecting strangers is a sign of awareness.

Respecting an opponent shows great magnanimity; respecting everyone shows good upbringing.

In life, taking virtue as one's root and the Dao as a guide for one's development is true wisdom.

A person who values virtue, does good, and cultivates their nature will increase in wisdom and be able to lead a fulfilled life.

Edited by Lan Hòa.

### Helping oneself

One day, a horse had the misfortune to fall into a deep well in the middle of a field. In the cold below, it struggled and cried out in despair.

Its owner, an old farmer, stood at the edge of the well with a troubled face. He racked his brains for a way to bring the horse up, but the more he thought, the more helpless he felt. At last, he gave up.

"It is old and has little strength left for work. And sooner or later, I shall have to fill in this well anyway."

With that thought, he called his neighbours to help fill the well. The shovels began to move.

Shovelfuls of earth and rubbish were thrown down.

At first, the horse screamed and struggled. Then... it fell silent.

The farmer looked down and was astonished. Every time earth fell, the horse shook itself vigorously, cast the earth aside, and stepped upward.

Shovelful after shovelful, each time it shook itself and took another step. Until, to everyone's amazement, it stepped out of the well.

Our own lives are like that too.

There are times when we fall into wells of our own: failures, wounds, prejudice, malicious words, or abandonment.

Life may throw many "shovelfuls" of adversity upon us. But if we can shake them off, free ourselves, and step upon each layer of difficulty, then what sought to bury us can become a foothold that helps us rise.

A strong person is not someone who never suffers, but someone who does not let pain bury their will to move forward.

Shake off that earth, then take another step.

For the road is still long. Keep faith, and never stop.

Anonymous.

# A peaceful mind and the precepts · The family meal

Original p. 35

## When the mind is at peace, why labour to observe the precepts?

The Sixth Patriarch said: “When the mind is at peace, why labour to observe the precepts?” This concerns those of superior capacity and penetrating intelligence: upon hearing a word of Dharma, their understanding and practice correspond, as though they had crossed a river to the other shore. They no longer even entertain thoughts of doing good; how could they entertain thoughts of evil?

People of middling or lesser capacity, however, are often shaken. The two words “peaceful mind” are easy to discuss but difficult to realize. There are eight winds: gain, loss, defamation, praise, acclaim, criticism, suffering, and pleasure. Encountering gain, practitioners become attached; encountering loss, they grieve; meeting slander, they grow angry; hearing praise, they feel delighted; receiving compliments, their minds become ceaselessly excited; meeting reproach, they feel ashamed and resentful; encountering pain, their minds fill with sorrow; encountering pleasure, they endlessly pursue their delusive thoughts. Once the mind stirs, it is immediately carried along by circumstances. Thus one is tossed by the eight winds: how can one avoid decline? One must advance step by step, recognize one’s true nature within each situation, and continually practise the ten wholesome actions whether the mind is still or active. Whether circumstances are adverse or favourable, bring them back to the root and swiftly advance toward the path of awakening.

Furthermore, Buddhism is broadly divided into ten schools, with more than forty branches. The four schools of Chan, Pure Land, Discipline, and Esoteric Buddhism accommodate an especially wide range of beings’ capacities. Good spiritual friends! Just as a capital city has great avenues, the schools each have a path. Whichever avenue one follows leads to the capital. Beings are scattered in every direction and begin from different places, but when they reach the capital’s gates, they share one realm. The Diamond Sūtra says: “This Dharma is equal, with neither higher nor lower.” But if one takes one avenue today and rushes to another tomorrow, constantly running from street to street, one ultimately arrives nowhere.

The Sixth Patriarch said: “If you leave the Way to seek the Way, you will never see it in your lifetime. Wandering throughout life without attaining it, you have only yourself to blame.” What a profound warning! We must therefore enter deeply into a single method of practice, without distraction or retreat. Like a mouse gnawing at a coffin, if it works at one place, it will eventually make a passage. If one wishes to understand every school, one must distinguish the principal from the supporting approaches. A Chan practitioner should make Chan practice the principal method and regard other schools’ teachings as friends. A Pure Land practitioner should make that school’s method principal and regard the other teachings as friends. The same applies to the Discipline and Esoteric schools: in this way each avoids Hàn Lô’s futile struggle over a patch of mud.

Excerpt from a talk at Liên Nghĩa, Guangzhou, September 27, 1947. Venerable Master Huân.

## The meal

As a child, I had always thought the family meal was something natural, an unchanging ritual. Every afternoon, around five or six, our whole family gathered around the old wooden table. The aroma of my mother's braised fish filled the kitchen. After a day's work, my father told a few funny stories. My elder sister chatted eagerly about things at school. The meal was not simply a way to fill our stomachs: it was a meeting, a pause after a long day, when everyone laid down their worries and reconnected. The fire in my mother's kitchen did more than cook food; it kept the whole family warm.

I do not know when the fracture began. Perhaps it started with the phone. First, my sister brought hers to the table. As she ate, she kept her eyes on the screen, smiling to herself at messages. Her stories about school and her class became fewer, replaced by silence and the sound of a spoon tapping absently against a bowl. Then my father too began reading the news and answering work emails during meals. The atmosphere gradually grew colder. Conversations broke into fragments. And chairs began to stand empty.

"I won't be eating at home tonight; I have extra classes."

"Dad has a client to entertain; start without me."

Reasons that sounded perfectly legitimate. Modern life keeps everyone busy. But the refusals became more frequent. The once lively table slowly emptied, not for lack of food, but for lack of people to eat it.

My mother still cooked, but she began making less. The elaborate dishes of the past were replaced by simpler ones. She said it saved her trouble, but I knew she carried a sorrow she could not put into words. The kitchen fire still burned, but seemed less warm than before. The meal, once a happy gathering, became an obligation. Even when everyone was present, it was no longer the same. My father, tired from work, grew irritable over tiny things. My sister complained that a dish was too salty or too bland; online she saw people cooking wonderful food, yet, she said, her own mother could make nothing properly. Heavy silence spread until one could hear sighs and chopsticks set against bowls. Everyone ate quickly, as though trying to escape the family meal itself.

It came to a head on my mother's birthday. That night I saw her lying awake, absorbed in thought, and did not understand what was happening.

The next day, my mother went to the market very early and prepared a table full of everyone's favourite dishes, hoping for a warm dinner like those of old. She had told no one, wanting to surprise us, so I suspected nothing. Only when I sat down did I remember her birthday. My father, my sister, and I had truly been thoughtless: none of us had remembered.

That afternoon my sister called to say she had an unexpected invitation to a friend's birthday. Soon afterwards, my father also called: an important meeting meant he would not get home in time. Only my mother and I remained, sitting before the carefully prepared table as the food grew cold. She said nothing, silently serving me rice. But when she turned away, I saw her shoulders trembling. She was crying.

She quickly wiped her tears and gave me a strained smile: "I'm not afraid of hard work; I'm

only afraid that no one will stay. In this home, has even eating one meal together become so difficult?"

Her question cut into my heart like a knife. Suddenly I realized that we had let things go too far. We had taken one another's presence and my mother's care for granted, absorbed in pursuing our own concerns.

A family does not always fall apart because of major conflicts, sarcasm, or scolding.

Sometimes it begins at the meal itself, when people no longer want to eat together. They see it as a rigid habit, an obligation, forgetting that it is a presence, a gathering, a form of love everyone needs to stay connected with their family. For declining a meal also means declining time, attention, and listening for those closest to us.

That night, I did not say much. I simply sat down, finished my meal, and told my mother that her tofu was delicious. I talked to her more, about the smallest things, something I had not done for a long time. I saw her smile more often, and I too felt happy.

Holding a family together sometimes requires nothing grand. It begins simply by putting down the phone, looking at one another, and sharing a meal. Regularly. Present. Caring. That is all!

"Distance begins with the meals people no longer wish to share."

Source: Vụn điều hay.

# The silent father · The origin of the Vu Lan rose

Original p. 36

## The silent father

Since birth, Thắng had never heard his father's voice. Not because his father did not want to speak, but because he... could not. He had been deaf and mute from birth. Not a sound had ever entered his inner world. He could therefore produce only faltering, unfamiliar noises. Yet little Thắng had never felt that anything was "missing." To him, his father was simply... silent. It was not a pitiable silence, but a warm one, like the sky before dawn: quiet, yet always there.

His mother had left before he could remember her lullabies. Without a word. Neighbours whispered, blamed, and criticized. But his father had never shown resentment. Even without words, Thắng knew that he had forgiven her. Or, more simply, had chosen to go on living... for his child.

Thắng's childhood passed in a tin-roofed house tucked among the fields. Each evening, when the oil lamp cast wavering shadows on the wall, his father sat facing him, pencil in hand, drawing simple shapes to help him learn to spell. He could not pronounce the sounds or repeat the letters. But he knew how to draw a fish beside "C," a sun beneath "M," and a small heart beneath "Y" to say: "Dad loves you."

His patience was like water flowing endlessly in a stream: never a shout, never a scolding. Even when his son grew angry, tore his notebook, or cried, his father remained there, calm, waiting for him to return. Thắng grew up within that wordless love. His father had never said, "I'm proud of you," but he was always outside the gate when his son finished school. He did not praise his good marks, but stayed awake until midnight to mend his worn-out shoes. He did not ask about his friends or interests, but silently followed his every step.

One day, in his third year of primary school, his classmates teased him: "Your dad is mute! Aren't you ashamed?" He ran home, stamped his feet, and burst into tears. His father did not understand why. He looked at his son in bewilderment. Then he went inside silently and returned with a small piece of paper. On it he drew a loudspeaker, crossed it out, and added a hand resting on a heart. Thắng understood. For the first time, he hugged his father and said through his tears: "It's all right, Dad. You can't speak... but I can hear your heart."

At fifteen, he passed the entrance examination for a specialized high school, then later won a university scholarship. On the day he left home, his father tied his old suitcase with string and slipped in a scrap of paper, awkwardly written: "Keep going, Thắng!"

During his years away, Thắng rarely came home. A new life, new friends, the pressure of study... Even phone calls became less frequent: calling someone who could neither hear nor speak was not easy. Yet his father continued quietly sending money every month, asking for nothing and making no demands. Only when a handwritten letter arrived from his son did he draw a few signs in reply, a way of keeping their fragile connection alive.

One day, while packing to study abroad—he had won a full scholarship to Japan—Thắng accidentally knocked an old wooden box off a bookshelf. Inside were a few faded photographs, medical papers, and a folded consultation form. He opened it. It was a

hospital certificate: "This patient may undergo surgery to restore partial hearing if performed between the ages of 40 and 50. Estimated cost: 235 million đồng." Below, in awkward handwriting: "Postponed. Save the money for Thắng."

His heart tightened. He had reproached his father for being clumsy; he had thought his father did not understand him and could share nothing in his life. Yet he had given up the chance to hear for the first time, simply so that his son could continue his education and go further.

The next day, Thắng made a video call. His father, his hair now white, was repairing a bicycle beneath the porch. Seeing the phone flash, he looked up; his face lit up when his son appeared on the screen. Without speaking, Thắng raised his hands before the camera and signed: "Dad, I miss you." His father smiled, a soundless smile warmer than any words. Thắng continued: "I'll send you money. You must have the operation. One day I want... to hear you call my name. Even just once." His father nodded without speaking, but his eyes were already wet.

A year later, Thắng returned through Nội Bài Airport. Among the crowd welcoming relatives, he glimpsed a shy figure holding a sign written in red marker: "Welcome home, Thắng!" It was his father. He wore a neatly pressed white shirt; Thắng had never seen him dressed like that. Wearing leather shoes, he stood straight. Thắng ran to embrace him. And a miracle happened.

His father gently placed a hand on his shoulder, looked into his eyes, pressed his lips together, and slowly a rough, awkward sound emerged from his throat: "Th... ă... n... g..." Just one word. A name. But it was like the first rain falling upon his son's heart after long months of drought. Overcome, Thắng held him tightly. For the first time in his life, he heard the voice of the man who had taught him everything through wordless love.

Another year later, Thắng had become a young speaker, sharing inspiring stories with young people. In a simple suit beneath the stage lights, he said: "I once thought that success meant being loud, constantly proving that I was capable and worthy. But I came to realize that the person who helped me become better each day... was someone who had never spoken a word. My father was born deaf and mute. Yet he taught me patience, sacrifice, and love... without a single sound."

In the audience, his elderly father sat silently. He could hear nothing. But he could see everything: his radiant son, the applauding crowd, and the joy shining in the eyes of a father who had never spoken.

Conclusion: true love... needs no words. Sometimes silence expresses the deepest things. Have you ever thanked your father for loving you without saying anything...?

## **Vu Lan, the season of filial gratitude: understanding Vietnamese Buddhism's rose-pinning ceremony**

Continued from page 32 of the original bulletin.

Abroad, once Vietnamese refugees had settled, they also built pagodas and monasteries. Buddhism developed everywhere, as the flourishing temples could attest. Major festivals, such as the Buddha's Birthday and Vu Lan, were celebrated there. Where there was no temple but a community of devotees, they rented premises, arranged them as a peaceful place of practice, and invited a monk from a nearby temple to officiate. Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Families likewise continued to maintain and develop Buddhist ceremonies

in their activities, including rose pinning during Vu Lan. Western observers have also remarked: “The people’s filial devotion, raised to the status of a religious rite, is a refined expression of affection; this profoundly creative ceremony responds to the feelings and faith of the Vietnamese Buddhist people.”

We can therefore clearly see the origin of the rose-pinning ceremony. First, Master Nhất Hạnh “borrowed the Japanese custom of pinning a rose on Mother’s Day and applied it to Vu Lan’s day of filial gratitude.” He then wrote “A Rose for Your Pocket” and sent it to Sài Gòn. The young people of Sài Gòn welcomed it enthusiastically and created the rose-pinning ceremony.

For Buddhists must fulfil their responsibilities both in the spiritual path and in worldly life. According to the popular tradition of remembering those who gave us birth and nurtured us, people often speak of the Father’s merit and the Mother’s love: “Wholeheartedly cherish your mother and respect your father: fulfilling filial duty is the child’s way” (folk verse). Similarly, in the West, there is Mother’s Day, but also Father’s Day.

During Vu Lan’s season of gratitude, people often think only of mentioning the Mother. Yet speaking of the Mother naturally recalls the Father, as the folk verse affirms: “A father’s merit is like Mount Thái Sơn; a mother’s love is like water flowing from its source.” Filial affection always unites them, like a figure and its shadow.

Trần Đan Hà.

# My mother

Original p. 37

## My mother

People say boys love their mothers and girls love their fathers. I am a girl too, yet I love my mother so dearly, and have done so since I was little.

My mother was beautiful, full of personality and very lively. She told us that my grandmother had once belonged to a well-to-do family, so she had sent my eldest aunt, my uncle, and my mother to school, making no distinction between girls and boys. My mother was a very good student. But my aunt died young, and then my grandmother died suddenly. My mother remained with her father and could no longer continue her schooling; it stayed that way until she married.

In the old days my parents only worshipped the ancestors and did not follow Buddhism. My father thought every religion was good. If a child wanted to become Catholic, he allowed it. My paternal grandmother was Buddhist. Thus, as children, my brothers and I also attended schools taught by nuns and priests. My mother loved reading. When I was in sixth grade, I visited a friend, noticed Buddhist scriptures and books in her house, and borrowed them for my mother. She had an affinity with the Buddha: after reading them, she began going to the pagoda and taking refuge. She then adopted a vegetarian diet and went to the temple to chant sūtras. My father, a gentle man who loved his wife, willingly accommodated her.

My mother had a fiery temper like Trương Phi, with anger to match. At that time our family owned a cycle rickshaw and traded in rice; most people in our neighbourhood ran small grocery shops. My father often bought goods to sell to them wholesale. Some women drove such hard bargains that it infuriated my mother. A restless woman named Ly also complained to my father about her harshness. He would drink, pretend to be tipsy, and tease them. Each time, even in the middle of a meal, my mother would put down her chopsticks and rush out to argue. And each time my father advised her: "Come now, you eat vegetarian food, chant sūtras, and go to the pagoda; all that swearing wipes out your merit!" But at heart she was kind: she harmed no one and eventually let things go.

As a young woman she had been an excellent student, and she required all her children to know their multiplication tables thoroughly, as she did. I remember that in my second year of primary school, at Uncle Tâm's house, he taught me to divide by two. Delighted that I could do it, I rushed home to tell my mother: "Mum, I can do hai con division!" I meant "division by two," but had reversed the Vietnamese words. She laughed heartily and immediately gave me division-by-three exercises at the standing blackboard. Of course I could not do them. She scolded me loudly, saying my head was still too stupid, and I even received a beating. Luckily, my father came home from work and intervened: "She's only in second grade!" Only then did my mother exclaim, "Oh!"

During the war and upheaval, my parents built their livelihood from nothing. I have never forgotten the image of my mother in her brown bà ba tunic, going out to sell fish sauce. She saved and worked hard for her husband and children; I never saw her buy anything for herself. I inherited her thrift: whenever I went to have my hair permed, I picked up rubber bands discarded in the street and brought them home to her; she salvaged worn clothes,

washed them, and wore them, or knitted each of us a winter sweater. In this way we grew up and could acquire spacious houses, all built from our parents' hardship and sweat.

After 1975, during the difficult years, the family was forced to move and all seven children were already growing up. Tirelessly, my mother carried goods to the neighbourhood market at one in the morning to earn money for food, then sold hats at the flea market. I was teaching in a remote rural area. Knowing the family's hardships, I took nothing when I returned to visit. Yet she always tucked rice crackers, pork floss, and money into my bag. Only when I opened it far away did I discover them, my eyes filling with tears and my heart with love for her.

After my father died, my mother chanted even more sūtras to pray for him and for her children. But whenever the grandchildren made too much noise during her chanting, she put down the bell and wooden fish to scold them: "Damn your ancestors! Damn your fathers!"

At that time there was a small shrine—I do not know to whom—on the terrace outside the house. My mother often bought bananas to offer on every altar in the house. My youngest brother loved bananas. One day he ate almost a whole bunch. My mother was busy trading until late; after washing, she solemnly put on her practice robe, lit incense, and bowed. That evening, as she raised her head, she discovered the bananas had vanished. Forgetting where she was standing, she began cursing before the altar: "Damn your ancestors, you pack of demons! Which demon has taken the bunch of bananas I bought for the offering?" My siblings and I knew the youngest was responsible, but none of us dared say anything. Without my father there to restrain her, she scolded for even longer.

Later, when the family had grown, the house our parents had built had to be sold so that each child could buy a home, sons and daughters receiving equal shares. My mother came to live with my children and me, no longer near the pagoda. When she went there, my little boy usually cycled over to fetch his grandmother. One day his tyre went flat and he could not mend it. After waiting a long time, she grew impatient and walked home; on arriving, she began scolding: "Damn your ancestors..." forgetting she had just come back from the temple. We advised her to control her anger; she fell silent, but thinking about it only made me love her more. She was already so old, yet we still did so many things to upset her! Without my father, she alone protected her children in her own way. When I married and had the misfortune to encounter troubles that left me distressed, my mother accompanied me to places of worship, invoking the Buddha and Guanyin, praying for help for her daughter. At home, she looked after the children, cooked, and did all the housework for me.

Then, when my younger brother had an accident, she accompanied him from hospital to hospital and cared for him while he lay helpless. When my elder sister gave birth, my mother, who was in the countryside, hastily gathered her things and travelled to Sài Gòn, first to the hospital and then home, caring for mother and baby until they recovered. My sister was working then, and little Bé stayed with his grandmother. He sang: "The rain falls, bong bong, my mother is getting married, who will Bé stay with?—With Grandma.—Grandma, come home, Bé wants to watch Cô gái Đồ Long!..." When my sister-in-law gave birth, once again it was my mother who cared for the newborn through its first month. Seven children, but only one mother. One mother, yet she worried about each and every one of us.

In the past, we regarded all this as simply the natural course of motherly love. Only when our own hair turns grey do we see how dearly our mother of those days deserved to be loved. Time passes, carrying us farther and farther from her youth. After my father was gone, she walked life's road alone. It had been a long time since anyone heard her familiar "Damn your fathers!" She was no longer angry or abusive, but gentle and patient among her children and grandchildren. Life's burdens and illness had made her thin. She had given us all her money; now my brothers and sisters sent her money for medicine. My part was to care for her, wash her, and prepare her food, until the day she entered hospital and left us.

She has been gone a long time. I too am now walking toward life's twilight. I am my mother's image today. Yet I know how to look back upon her life, choose its best qualities, and live more lightly. Nothing can undo regret and remorse. Today, hearing this song by chance, I wrote these lines straight from my heart.

"Let me  
Carry Mother once,  
All your life already  
You have laboured for me.  
Let me carry you, Mother,  
All the stone within your heart,  
Carry you across the ocean...  
Mother has borne a life of storms;  
How can I repay  
The labour of an entire life?  
A rose pinned on, then falling,  
Where is the rose of filial gratitude  
Beneath the boundless sky?  
Let me carry my elderly mother,  
So that the one I carry later  
May also be my own child..."  
Thái Thanh (song Gánh Mẹ—Carrying Mother).

## Quảng Đức Buddhist Youth Family: 2025-2026 programme

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Quảng Đức Buddhist Youth Family activities—photograph from the bulletin.



Quảng Đức Buddhist Youth Family activities—photograph from the bulletin.



Quảng Đức Buddhist Youth Family activities—photograph from the bulletin.



Quảng Đức Buddhist Youth Family activities—photograph from the bulletin.



Quảng Đức Buddhist Youth Family activities—photograph from the bulletin.

## **Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam in Europe · Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Family of Europe**

Guidance Committee of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Family in France

Quảng Đức Buddhist Youth Family

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No. 2427-019/QĐ/LĐT · Buddhist Era 2569

Évry-Courcouronnes, July 20, 2025.

### **Activities programme for the 2025-2026 school year**

September 14, 2025 — Vu Lan (Ullambana) festival and celebration of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday.

September 20-21, 2025 — European Heritage Days.

October 5, 2025 — Activities.

October 12, 2025 — Tết Trung Thu, Mid-Autumn Festival.

October 19, 2025 — Friendly year-end social meal.

November 9, 2025 — Activities.

November 23, 2025 — Activities.

December 7, 2025 — Activities.

December 21, 2025 — End-of-year activities.

January 11, 2026 — Activities.

January 25, 2026 — Activities.

February 2, 2026 — Activities.

Monday, February 16, 2026 — Vietnamese New Year's Eve.

Tuesday, February 17, 2026 — Tết Nguyên Đán, Vietnamese New Year.

February 22, 2026 — New Year performance.

March 1, 2026 — Pilgrimage to pagodas around Paris.

March 8, 2026 — Full moon of the first lunar month (15th day).

March 22, 2026 — Activities.

April 4-6, 2026 — Quán Âm gathering camp of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Families of France, at Quảng Đức Pagoda in Toulouse.

Parents who wish their children to join the activities of the Quảng Đức Buddhist Youth Family—Vietnamese language classes, performing arts, Buddhist teaching, practical skills, games, and more—may request details from the unit leader: [quanghung@gdptquangduc.fr](mailto:quanghung@gdptquangduc.fr).  
Ms Diệu Thông Nguyễn Ngọc Dung Tuyền: 06 98 17 00 34.

Mr Quảng Hưng Đặng Thành Long: 06 84 97 80 08 · [quanghung@gdptquangduc.fr](mailto:quanghung@gdptquangduc.fr).

On behalf of the leaders of the Quảng Đức Buddhist Youth Family, we wish all members and parents good health and peace.

Évry-Courcouronnes, July 20, 2025.

Quảng Hưng – Đặng Thành Long, unit leader.

Networks indicated by the original QR codes: YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram.

# Calendars, bulletin information, and subscription

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## Programme at Khánh Anh Pagoda, Évry

Saturday, August 9 — 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.: Pure Land practice day.

Friday-Saturday, August 22-23 — 8 p.m.: taking the eight precepts.

Thursday, September 4 — 13th day of the seventh lunar month, Ất Ty year, 8 p.m.: festival of Bodhisattva Đại Thế Chí (Mahāsthāmaprāpta).

Saturday, September 6 — full moon of the seventh month, 10:30 a.m.: grand Vu Lan festival, Buddhist Era 2569. Reading the lists of deceased persons for whom liberation prayers are requested; send the corresponding forms to the pagoda.

Sunday, September 7 — 16th day of the seventh lunar month, 3 p.m.: weekly prayers for the deceased. At 3 p.m.: Vu Lan memorial ceremony, reading dedication lists, and Mông Sơn food offering.

Monday-Saturday, September 8-13 — 3 p.m.: chanting the Vu Lan Sūtra, with daily reading of death-anniversary lists.

Sunday, September 14 — 23rd day of the seventh lunar month, 10:30 a.m.: seventh-month full-moon celebration and grand Vu Lan festival 2569; celebration of the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday. At 3 p.m.: reading dedication lists for the deceased from submitted forms.

Monday-Saturday, September 15-20 — monks from Gyuto Monastery stay at the temple and create a mandala.

Saturday, September 20 — 9:30 a.m.: lecture by Venerable T. T. Thanh Tuấn.

Friday, September 19: school visits; Saturday-Sunday, September 20-21, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.: European Heritage Days, with the mandala's dissolution at 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, September 21 — 30th day of the seventh lunar month, 11 a.m.: weekly prayers for the deceased; 3 p.m.: anniversary of Bodhisattva Địa Tạng (Kṣitigarbha), with Mông Sơn food offering.

Saturday, September 27 — sixth day of the eighth lunar month, 8 p.m.: festival of Patriarch Huệ Viễn, first patriarch of the Pure Land school.

Monday, September 29 — eighth day of the eighth lunar month, 8 p.m.: festival of Ānanda.

Saturday, October 4 — 9 a.m.: Pure Land practice day.

Sunday, October 12 — 1:30 p.m.: Tết Trung Thu, children's Mid-Autumn Festival, with the Quảng Đức Buddhist Youth Family.

Monday, October 13 — 22nd day of the eighth lunar month, 8 p.m.: festival of Dīpaṅkara Buddha.

Sunday, October 19 — 9 a.m.: tribute to Patriarch Nguyên Thiều; 11 a.m.: weekly prayers for the deceased and Minh ceremony; 12:30 p.m.: social meal.

Saturday, November 8 — 19th day of the ninth lunar month, 9 a.m.: Pure Land practice day and festival of Bodhisattva Quán Thế Âm; assembly chanting the Buddha's name and the Universal Gate chapter (Phổ Môn).

Wednesday, November 19 — 30th day of the ninth lunar month, 8 p.m.: Medicine Buddha festival, establishing the mandala and chanting his sūtra.

Saturday, November 22, 2025: death anniversary of Patriarch Liễu Quán.

Monday, November 24 — fifth day of the tenth lunar month, 8 p.m.: festival of Bodhisattva Đạt Ma, the Chan patriarch.

Friday-Saturday, November 28-29 — 8 p.m.: taking the eight precepts.

Thursday, December 4 — 15th day of the tenth lunar month, 8 p.m.: tenth-month full moon and Hạ Nguyên festival.

Saturday, December 13 — 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.: Pure Land practice day.

Monday-Wednesday, December 15-24, 2025: winter retreat of the Unified Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation in Europe.

Tuesday, December 16, 2025 — 8:30 a.m.: opening ceremony of the winter retreat of the Unified Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation in Europe.

## **2025 calendar—Khánh Anh ancestral temple, Bagneux**

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Saturday, August 9, 2025 — 16th day of the sixth lunar month: taking the eight precepts, 9 a.m.-7 p.m.

Sunday, August 24 — 15th day of the seventh lunar month: Hoàn Nguyên ceremony, grand Vu Lan festival, and 13th anniversary of the passing of the founding master of Tổ Đình Khánh Anh, Bagneux.

Thursday, September 4 — 15th day of the seventh lunar month: festival of Bodhisattva Đại Thế Chí.

Saturday, September 6 — 15th day of the seventh lunar month: seventh-month full moon and Trung Nguyên festival.

Saturday-Sunday, September 20-21 — 29th-30th days of the seventh lunar month: Bodhisattva Địa Tạng mandala.

Monday, September 29 — eighth day of the eighth lunar month: festival of Ānanda.

Friday, October 10 — 19th day of the ninth lunar month: commemoration of Bodhisattva Quán Âm leaving home.

Saturday-Sunday, October 18-19 — 27th-28th days of the eighth lunar month: assembly chanting the entire Lotus Sūtra.

Saturday, November 15 — 26th day of the ninth lunar month: taking the eight precepts, 9 a.m.-7 p.m.

Wednesday, November 19 — 30th day of the ninth lunar month: Medicine Buddha festival.

Thursday, December 4 — 15th day of the tenth lunar month: tenth-month full moon, Hạ Nguyên festival.

Dates and lunar indications follow the printed bulletin, including its inconsistencies. Some small-print ritual titles are difficult to read in the scan.

## Periodical director, publisher, and address

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**A hurried expedition to Myanmar—continued from page 26**

On May 28, 2025, the delegation brought aid to the village of Ta Da and to two pagodas, Tam Gian and Tịnh Minh Thiền Tự. On May 29, 2025, after breakfast, Venerable Diệu Đàm took the two Venerables back to Yangon for the evening flight to Europe. Although the expedition was very short, it left a deep impression on the Buddha's disciples, who witnessed scenes of devastation, families forced to live in tiny tents, ruined monasteries, damaged statues, and more.

The Buddhist Congregation brought €55,000 to Myanmar to ease the suffering of many Burmese people, monks, and nuns. May the merits of the charitable offerings of Buddhists and monasteries be witnessed by the Triple Jewel and protected by the gods, so that everyone may lessen bad karma, live long, enjoy good health, and bring all their efforts to success.

Namo Bodhisattva Mahāsattva of Truth.

# Grand Vu Lan festival 2025: programmes and announcements

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## Seventh-month full moon: deliverance of departed souls · Grand Vu Lan festival, Ất Tỵ year 2025

At Khánh Anh Pagoda, Évry-Courcouronnes—programme.

Saturday, September 6, 2025, full moon of the seventh lunar month in the Ất Tỵ year, 10 a.m.: Vu Lan festival; reading the lists requesting liberation prayers for nine generations of parents and seven generations of ancestors, from submitted forms.

Sunday, September 7, 2025, 16th day of the seventh lunar month, 11 a.m.: weekly Sunday prayers for the deceased; 3 p.m.: opening of the Vu Lan Sūtra recitation and reading of submitted forms.

Monday–Saturday, September 8–13, 2025, every evening at 7:30 p.m., chanting the Vu Lan Sūtra at the old temple and reading the lists of deceased persons enrolled in permanent memorial worship.

Saturday, September 13, 2025, 22nd day of the seventh lunar month, 10:30 a.m.: memorial ceremony for the late benefactor and master, Venerable Thích Minh Tâm, on the 12th anniversary of his passing, 2013–2025.

Illustration of filial gratitude from the original bulletin.



Religious illustration from the original bulletin.



### **Sunday, September 14, 2025—23rd day of the seventh lunar month**

10 a.m.—Celebration of the Dalai Lama’s 90th birthday.

10:30 a.m.—Grand Vu Lan festival in the distinguished presence of Venerable Thích Tánh Thiệt, second president of the Executive Council of the Unified Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation in Europe, and the Venerable monks and nuns.

10:45 a.m.—Reading the prayer lists for nine generations of parents and seven generations of ancestors.

11:15 a.m.—Reading the names of deceased persons enrolled in permanent memorial worship; submit a form to the pagoda if requested.

11:30 a.m.—Offerings to the Buddha and the spirits of the deceased.

Noon—Meal offering to the monastic community; devotees are invited to a self-service meal provided by the pagoda.

1 p.m.—Artistic programme offered by singers Hương Thủy (from the United States), Yến Trang, Nguyễn Đan, Phương Hạnh, Ngọc Xuân, Mai Anh, lay devotee Thanh Mai, the Johnny and Em Paris dance troupe, and the Pacific band.

5 p.m.—Small Mông Sơn food-offering ceremony for solitary spirits.

Families wishing to request liberation prayers for deceased parents and ancestors during Vu Lan are asked to complete the “Vu Lan prayers” form included in this bulletin and send it to the pagoda for reading during the seventh month, the season of filial gratitude.

The lists of deceased persons enrolled in permanent memorial worship at Khánh Anh, Évry-Courcouronnes, will be read before their families on the following three days: Saturday, September 6, at 3 p.m.; Sunday, September 7, at 10:30 a.m.; and Sunday,

September 14, 2025, at 10 a.m., subject to adjustment.

For families who live far away or cannot attend on September 6, 7, or 14, the permanent memorial lists will be read Monday–Saturday, September 8–13, 2025, following the Vu Lan chanting at 7:30 p.m.

Families of the deceased concerned are invited to arrive punctually to participate in the prayers. The Vu Lan schedule and other ceremonies during 2025 may be adjusted as needed; thank you for your understanding.

## **European Heritage Days 2025**

Open for three days: Friday for school pupils, Saturday and Sunday for everyone, September 19, 20, and 21, 2025, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## **Tết Trung Thu 2025 at Khánh Anh, Évry-Courcouronnes**

Sunday, October 12, 2025, 21st day of the eighth lunar month in the Ất Ty year, from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.: Mid-Autumn Festival performances for children. Lion dances, games, and a selection of young Vietnamese singers... Sweets and a Mid-Autumn lantern procession. Free admission.

## **2025 year-end social meal**

To help fund restoration work at Khánh Anh Pagoda, Évry-Courcouronnes, France, devotees, fellow Vietnamese, and friends in Paris and the surrounding area are warmly invited to attend in large numbers. This year the proceeds will support paving the courtyard. The 2025 year-end social meal will take place on Sunday, October 19, 2025, at 12:30 p.m.

## **Khánh Anh ancestral temple, Bagneux—completion of the main shrine reconstruction, 12th anniversary of the benefactor-master's passing, and grand Vu Lan festival 2025**

Saturday, August 23, 2025, first day of the seventh lunar month in the Ất Ty year: at 3 p.m., opening of the Vu Lan Sūtra chanting. The printed programme also states: at 10 a.m., opening of Vu Lan; at 3 p.m., chanting the Vu Lan Sūtra and the Sūtra on the Profound Kindness of Parents; at 6 p.m., Dharma teaching.

Monday–Saturday, August 25–September 6, 2025, daily at 4 p.m.: chanting the Vu Lan Sūtra and the Sūtra on the Profound Kindness of Parents. On Sundays, the Vu Lan chanting takes place at 3 p.m. (this clarification is repeated in the original).

Sunday, August 24, 2025, second day of the seventh lunar month in the Ất Ty year: ceremony fulfilling the vows for reconstruction of the main shrine, 12th anniversary of the benefactor-master's passing, and grand Vu Lan festival. In the distinguished presence of Venerables Thích Tánh Thiệt (Lyon), Thích Trí Minh (Oslo, Norway), and Venerable monks and nuns from many countries.

10:20 a.m.—Purification of the commemorative stele by sprinkling.

10:45 a.m.—Ceremony fulfilling the vows for reconstruction of the main shrine; grand Vu Lan festival of filial gratitude; memorial ceremony for the late Venerable benefactor-master.

Noon—Meal offering to the monastic community; devotees are invited to individual meals provided by the temple.

3 p.m.—Grand Mông Sơn offering, ceremony for solitary spirits, and thanksgiving ceremony for the fulfilment of vows.

Please complete and send the list of names for whom you request prayers for peace, for yourselves and your family, and liberation prayers for deceased relatives, to Tổ Đình Khánh Anh, 14 avenue Henri Barbusse, 92220 Bagneux, France. The chair of the council of officiating ritual masters will include your intentions during the ceremony for solitary spirits on Sunday, August 24, 2025, at 3 p.m.

Some programme details may be adjusted as needed; thank you for your understanding.

Dates, anniversaries, and times are reproduced as printed. The bulletin sometimes gives different indications on different pages or within one announcement, notably for August 23 and the Vu Lan prayers.

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