

# *Awakening the Lotus*

Mindfulness verses inspired by Định Quang Temple

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## *Namo A Di Da Phat*

*In celebration of the ten-year  
anniversary of the construction of*

**Dinh Quang Buddhist Temple,**

*we bow with gratitude for all who have  
supported our community.  
We are especially grateful to our  
teacher,*

**Ven. Ty Kheo Thich Thong Chanh.**

*Returning to and relying on the  
Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha,  
we aspire to practice deeply  
for the well-being of all.*



July 20, 2022

Namo Sakyamuni Buddha,

Dear Most Venerable Sirs of the Sangha,

Dear distinguished guests and lay devotees near and far,

Dinh Quang Buddhist Temple is in Springfield, Missouri, in the Midwest region of the United States, and is the main center of Buddhist activities for the Vietnamese and American communities. With the desire for Buddhism to become brighter and more widespread, we aspired to build a place dedicated to cultivating and nurturing the spiritual life, forming a temple in the hearts of each one of us. However, the ancient saying that:

If not a cold frost.

Cherry blossoms are not easy to release fragrance.

Building a Buddhist temple in the United States is not easy, financially or legally, but the tougher the task, the more meaningful and valuable it is. Regardless of religious or life, there are always certain difficulties and obstacles. However, as a Buddhist, we understand the universal natural law, therefore, we are not discouraged when facing challenge but instead try harder, as well as always dedicate ourselves for the Buddha Dharma and for the ultimate benefit of all sentient beings.

We respectfully wish you Venerable in good health, always be the shade of an ancient tree to protect us on the path of serving and wishing all lay Buddhists to develop Bodhicitta, diligently learning to bring peace and happiness to yourself and your families.

Abbot,

Venerable Thich Thong Chanh



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# *1. Buddhas and Bodhisattvas*





The heart-mind,  
rising with the eyes,  
perceives the Bodhisattva  
and opens with compassion.







Uttering the Great Vow,  
Ksitigarbha understands:  
all obstacles will be overcome.

Walking the Bodhisattva way, we understand:  
the six paramitas suffuse the six realms;  
no realm or being will be abandoned.





Before me with one thousand arms,  
Avalokiteshvara manifests supreme giving.

Bowing with palms together,  
may kindness and wisdom  
be in perfect harmony.







Perceiving the boundless ocean of merit,  
Samantabhadra holds nothing for himself.

Jeweled lotus flowers fall like rain;  
all obstacles disappear.





Manjushri wields the scepter  
that cuts through all dualities.

Beyond syllables and sounds,  
the entrance opens.







Medicine Buddha awakens in us  
the aspiration to cultivate well-being  
in the realm of pain, disease, and suffering.

May we live in such a way  
that all beings are free from harm  
and quickly find the path of liberation.





Compassion and Power together,  
like Sun and Moon,  
illuminate the Land of Bliss.

With Amitabha, they welcome us  
to the Pure Land of the here and now.







A beam of sunlight travels countless miles  
before awakening the lotus' radiant bloom.

Well-traveled through countless lives,  
insight awakens Shakyamuni's radiant mind.







The Dharmapalas,  
knowing the  
immeasurable value  
of the Teachings,  
pledge themselves  
to guard this place  
and all who practice.



May I also abide  
in mindfulness of  
the Dharma treasure,  
with grateful attention  
and fierce resolution  
to walk the  
Bodhisattva path.





## II. Practices







Entering the Buddha Hall,  
I recognize the generosity and care  
that sustains this place of practice.

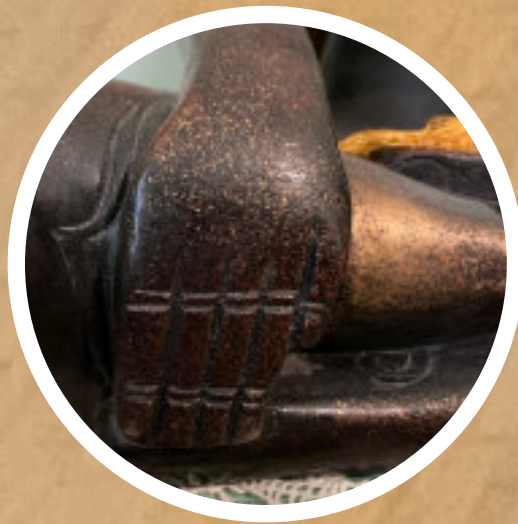
The heart-mind brightens with gratitude  
and quickly resolves to practice so that  
such beauty can blossom in all places.



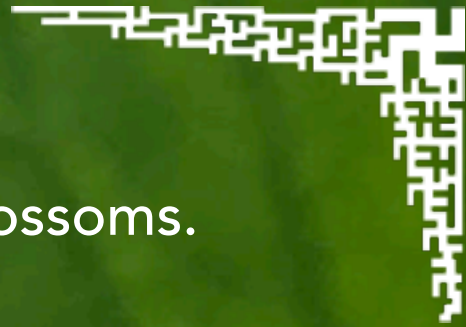


The earth rises to meet the cushion,  
bearing witness to the present moment.

The Buddha's right hand  
reaches downward;  
I smile.







From the mud, the lotus blossoms.

From the suffering, understanding blooms.

From the heart-mind, the delicate petals  
of love and equanimity open,  
offering their perfume.





Bowing to the ancestors,  
I gratefully resolve to nurture  
the skillful qualities I inherited from them.

Bowing to the ancestors,  
I gratefully resolve to heal  
the suffering I inherited from them.







Happy is our mutual dependence:  
householders offering requisites;  
monastics offering the Dharma.

Happy is the purpose of this path:  
crossing the flood of suffering,  
arriving safely at the Other Shore.





Flame and smoke disappear,  
while the fragrance of incense lingers.

May the fragrance of the Dharma  
linger in the heart-mind.







Following the sound of the bell,  
like a path to the present moment,

we joyfully accept the invitation  
to live deeply in the here and now.





You don't need to go far  
to see the entire universe.

Look! It is already waiting  
inside this humble cup of tea.







The spoon is my teacher:

this moment  
holds enough  
for this moment.

Not reaching for the next bite,  
I eat with gratitude.







### *III. Celebrations*







Entering the Buddha Hall,  
a cherry blossom greets me.

I bow in gratitude to see  
an old friend in the New Year.





Experiencing the new year as a gift,  
we express gratitude with offerings  
of incense, flowers, tea, and fruit.

Experiencing each moment as a gift,  
we express gratitude by cultivating  
wisdom, generosity, and kindness.







One year closes as another opens,  
like the falling and rising of a breath.

May we practice so that  
peace and harmony  
unfold with each rising  
and setting of the sun.





In Lumbini, on that sacred day,  
the sky offered two streams of water  
to bathe the Buddha-to-Be.

I hold this prayer as I hold the ladle:  
May my practice bring: freedom from harm,  
abundance of good, and universal liberation







The palace behind him,  
and abandoned by friends,  
Gotama was undeterred.

He sat beneath a Bo tree,  
with legs folded and  
heart-mind resolved.

Mara was heartbroken  
as the Buddha awoke,  
and fragrant flowers fell  
like a gentle rain.





Everything that begins, ends.

Everything that arises, ceases.

Beyond this coming and going,

the Self-Awakened One

was totally unbound.





With a voice like a young lion,  
the noble Buddha taught the Dharma,  
a radiant aura surrounding him  
as moonlight in the clouds.

Those colors, now reflected in a flag,  
draw together a community of all  
who find his discourse still  
sweet and beautiful to hear.







My life blossoms from the roots of  
my mother, father, and all my ancestors:

May this path of practice transform  
our suffering into healing and peace.





The Hungry Ghosts reveal to us  
the true nature of greed, hatred, and delusion,  
but the compassionate Dharma opens  
to all the path of Awakening.







His mother's suffering and  
Mahamaudgalyayana's deep sadness  
were transformed by the  
power of the Sangha.

Receiving this Dharma of rescue,  
we also make offerings,  
with chants and prayers,  
for the benefit of  
seven generations past.





## IV. Giving Thanks



## With gratitude for all who helped with this project:

Cover: Blooming lotus flowers in front of the temple.  
Photo by David Ketchum (DK).

3, 4: Ven. Thay Chanh ringing bell (DK).

7, 8: Shakyamuni Buddha in the main hall (DK).

9, 10: Quan Am, Bodhisattva of compassion, with  
sunburst. (DK)

11, 12: Ksitigarbha, Earth-Store Bodhisattva. (DK)

13: Nun with palms together. Photo by Rheanna Pulley  
(RP).

14: Avalokiteshvara with 1,000 arms, demonstrating the  
mudra (gesture) of supreme giving. Photo by Marc  
Spess (MS).

15, 16: The Bodhisattva Samantabhadra. (DK)

17, 18: The Bodhisattva Manjushri. (DK)

19, 20: Medicine Buddha. (DK)

21, 22: The 3 Sages of the Western Pure Land:

Avalokiteshvara, Amitabha Buddha and

Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva. (DK)

23, 24: Shakyamuni Buddha in the garden. Lotus flower  
with a bee (DK)

25, 26: The Dharmapalas, or Dharma Protectors. (DK)

28: Wooden fish (traditional practice drum). (MS)

29: The Buddha Hall. (DK)

30: Monastics lead community chanting. (RP)

31: The touching-the-earth mudra. (DK)

32: Meditation cushions await practitioners. (DK)

33, 34: Blooming lotus flowers. (DK)

35: Ven. Thay Chanh leads practitioners in a memorial  
service (DK)

36: Monastics lead a ceremony honoring the ancestors.  
(RP)

37: Monastics lead the community in the Ullambana  
service. (RP)

38: A traditional collection box, shaped as a lucky pig.  
(DK)

39, 40: Incense offerings at the Quan Am statue and  
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41: Monastic invites the temple gong. (MS)

42: Traditional temple bell. (DK)

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Photo courtesy of Ven. Thay Chanh (VT)

49, 50: Cherry blossoms, a traditional symbol of the  
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53: The Buddha Hall is prepared for a New Year vigil.  
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54: Venerable Thay prepares for the New Year  
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55: Temple members gather to bathe the Buddha.  
Photo by Kyle Clymore (KC).

56: The basin and flower offering is prepared for the  
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57, 58: A bodhi leaf, a symbol of the Buddha's  
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59, 60: Reclining Buddha. (DK)

61: Temple members celebrate Vesak. (KC)

62: The Buddhist flag. (MS)

63: Ven. Thay Chanh receives a yellow rose for  
Ullambana. (RP)

64: A tray of white roses (honoring deceased parents)  
and red roses (honoring living parents). (MS)

65, 66: Offerings for the Hungry Ghosts. (DK)

67: Monastics lead chanting for the Hungry Ghost  
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68: A temple member makes a rice offering to the  
Hungry Ghosts. (KC)

69: The view of the temple from the front gates. (MS)

71, 72: Quan Am, with the nectar of compassion. (DK)

74: Group photo of Ullambana celebration. (VT)

Book layout by Max Prater.

Mindfulness verses composed by David Ketchum.





Quan Âm rides the waves of  
birth and death to deliver to us  
the nectar of compassion.

In the transformation of all afflictions,  
we find a single drop is enough.







We bow with gratitude to the Triple Gem.  
On this anniversary of our temple's construction,  
we especially dedicate the merit of this offering  
to all who have supported our temple community  
and all who benefit from receiving the Dharma here.

May what is useful support us in deepening our practice.

May what is incomplete or inaccurate  
be corrected and not become an obstacle.  
And may all beings be free from suffering.

*Namo A Di Da Phat*

