

Bảo Anh Lạc Bookshelf 42



40 YEARS IN THE DHARMA

A Life of Study and Service
Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương



Editorial Board of Hương Sen Temple

Bảo Anh Lạc Bookshelf 42

FORTY YEARS IN THE DHARMA:

A LIFE OF STUDY AND SERVICE

VENERABLE BHIKKHUNI GIỚI HƯƠNG

Editorial Board of Hương Sen Temple

Perform: NUN DISCIPLES IN HƯƠNG SEN TEMPLE
Present: EDITORIAL BOARD
(Bhikkhuni Trí Minh, Rev. Viên Quang, Rev. Viên Nhuận,
Rev. Viên Tiến and Rev. Viên Khuông...)
Chief Editor: VENERABLE BHIKKHUNI GIỚI HƯƠNG
Covers & Pages Layout: HỒ THANH SƠN
Printed by XPRESS PRINT, California.

Address to contact:
HUONG SEN BUDDHIST TEMPLE
19865 Seaton Avenue, Perris, CA 92570, USA
Tel: 951- 657- 7272 • Cell: 951- 616- 8620
Email: huongsentemple@gmail. com • thichnugioihuong@yahoo. com
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/huongsentemple>
Web: www.huongsentemple.com

Copyright©2020 by Bhikkhuni Gioi Huong, Sunyata Pham,
Huong Sen Buddhist Temple in the United States.
All rights reserved.

CONTENTS

Part I: Introduction

1. 1. Foreword of The Editorial Board.....	3
1. 2. Invitation to Contribute an Article For a Collection.....	5
1. 3. Biography Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Giới Hương.....	6
1. 3. 1. Bảo Anh Lạc Bookshelf.....	8
3. 1. a. Books in Vietnamese - English.....	8
3. 1. b. Buddhist Music Albums.....	10
1. 3. 2. Photo Memories.....	11
3. 2. a. Ordained.....	11
3. 2. b. Nurture the Knowledge.....	14
3. 2. c. Establishing Hương Sen Temple and Training Nuns.....	17
3. 2. d. Activities of Sharing Buddhism.....	27
1. 4. Venerable Giới Hương Received The Viet World Record for Writing and Translating Many Buddhist Publications..... Võ Văn Tường.....	34

Part II: The Dharma Rain

2. 1. Forty- Year Spiritual Road.....	<i>The Most Venerable Như Điển</i>	39
2. 2. Abundant Virtue: Spreading The Lotus Scent.....	<i>Venerable Đồng Trí</i>	43
2. 3. Ride the Dharma Boat.....	<i>The Most Venerable Phước Thuận</i>	59
2. 4. A Letter to Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Giới Hương.....	<i>The Most Venerable Thái Siêu</i>	61
2. 5. A Train Moving on Rails.....	<i>The Most Venerable Như Minh</i>	63
2. 6. The Moon Follows The Starry Path.....	<i>The Most Venerable Nguyễn Trí</i>	65
2. 7. Words for The New Year.....	<i>The Most Venerable Minh Mẫn</i>	67
2. 8. The Dignity of Hương Sen.....	<i>The Most Venerable Tâm Vân</i>	69
2. 9. Victory Over Ourselves Is The Greatest.....	<i>Venerable Thông Đạt</i>	72
2. 10. Offering Golden Handwritten Words to Each Other... ..	<i>The Most Venerable Minh Trí</i>	74
2. 11. Praising The Conduct of Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Thích Nữ Giới Hương.....	<i>Ven. Bhikkhunī Nguyễn Thanh</i>	75
2. 12. Disciples of The Nun Patriarch Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī... ..	<i>Ven. Bhikkhunī Giác Hương</i>	77
2. 13. The Merit of Sharing Buddhism.....	<i>Venerable Nguyễn Tạng</i>	79
2. 14. A Bright Future.....	<i>Venerable Tâm Đức</i>	86
2. 15. A Spiritual Journey.....	<i>Venerable Phước Đạt</i>	88

2. 16. Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Giới Hương: A Vigorously Active Nun in Modern Times	Venerable Nhật Từ	91
2. 17. Overcome Hardship	Venerable Tâm Thành	94
2. 18. A Devoted Vietnamese <i>Bhikkhunī</i>	Dr. Thero Sumedha	97
2. 19. The Noble Ideal	The Most Venerable Đức Trí	101
2. 20. White Clouds Ask for Directions	Venerable Minh Thường	103
2. 21. Sound of Mites	Venerable Hạnh Tấn	107
2. 22. Pervading Fragrance	Venerable Trùng Sỹ	108
2. 23. Hương Sen To Be a Great Monastery	Venerable Minh Chí	111
2. 24. Portrait of a Respectable Nun	Reverend. Quảng Tĩnh	113
2. 25. A Fallen Leaf	Venerable Kiến Khai	114
2. 26. Hương Sen, I Have Come	Venerable Huệ Giáo	116
2. 27. Happy in The Present Moment	Venerable Nhuận Hải	119
2. 28. This Spring, The Lotus Became More Fresh	Venerable Từ Lục	121
2. 29. A Disciple Of The World- Honored One	Venerable Mật Hạnh	125
2. 30. Delightful Are The Forests	Phar Natthapon Khantiko	127

Part III: The Sisterhood

3.1. The Inclination to Ordain of Venerable Bhikhuni Giới Hương	Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Tâm Nhựt	131
3.2. A Dharma Friend	Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Diệu Tánh	134
3.3. The Lotusaroma	Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Giới Định	136
3.4. The Powerful Will to Propagate Buddhism	Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Hạnh Quang	138
3.5. The Fragrance of Precepts Is Supreme	Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Tịnh Vân	140
3.6. Late Night Light Forever Bright	Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Hương Nhũ	142
3.7. Dharma Friend Giới Hương	Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Tuệ Liên	145
3.8. Sunshine in The Blue Sky	Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Trí Minh	147
3.9. There Are Five Monastics in <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Giới Hương's Family	Tịnh Tâm Giải	149
3.10. Nurturing a Bodhi Seed Since Childhood	Reverend Viên Khuông	153
3.11. A Colleague in <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Ordination	Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Hồng Phúc	155
3.12. To My Dearest Dharma Sister	Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Thanh Đức	159
3.13. A Life: A Flashing Light	Reverend Tâm Diệu	161
3.14. Connecting The Dharma Sisterhood	Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Hải Quang	163
3.15. Meet Again in a Circle	Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Tường Hạnh	168
3.16. Advice on Propagating Buddhism in Modern Time	Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Tâm Thảo	170
3.17. Establishing a Temple to Nurture Compassion	<i>Bhikkhunī</i> Liên Tạng	174
3.18. Thinking of Hương Sen	<i>Bhikkhunī</i> Hạnh Minh	176
3.19. Sincerely Recite Buddha's Name	Samaneri Diệu Hải	177
3.20. Plant a Bodhi Seed	Reverend Hạnh Bảo	179
3.21. A Shining Star	Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Minh Huệ	181
3.22. A Good Characteristic of Promoting Harmony	Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Phước Từ	183
3.23. A Few Lines for My Friend	Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Trí Liên	185

3.24. Several Thoughts.....	<i>Venerable Bhikkhunī Minh Duyên</i>	187
3.25. Firm Foot, Soft Stone.....	<i>Venerable Bhikkhunī Nguyễn Ý</i>	189
3.26. True Fragrance Flying Far, Naturally.....	<i>Venerable Bhikkhunī Chân Thiền</i>	192
3.27. Theory and Reason Balance.....	<i>Venerable Bhikkhunī Chân Diệu</i>	194
3.28. A Young Nun Truly Entering Buddhism.....	<i>Bhikkhunī Ngọc Liên</i>	196
3.29. Remembering Childhood Renunciation & Practice.....	<i>Ven. Bhikkhunī Chánh Tuệ</i>	199
3.30. Words to Bhikkhunī Giới Hương - A precious Gem.....	<i>Ven. Bhikkhunī Tiến Liên</i>	204

Part IV: Shadow of The Pine Tree

4.1. Lucky To Be Your Nun Disciples!.....	<i>Bhikkhunī Viên Bảo, Bhikkhunī Viên Như</i>	209
4.2. Gratitude to Master!.....	<i>Bhikkhunī Viên Quang</i>	212
4.3. To My Beloved Master Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Giới Hương.....	<i>Bhikkhunī Viên Tuệ</i>	216
4.4. A Place for Refuge.....	<i>Bhikkhunī Viên Tiến</i>	218
4.5. Your First Nun Disciple in California.....	<i>Bhikkhunī Viên Chân</i>	221
4.6. Happy To Be a Part of Hương Sen Temple.....	<i>Viên Bảo Sen, Viên Bảo Hương, Viên Bảo Luân</i>	224
4.7. The Great Courage, Great Power and Great Compassion Of Master.....	<i>Bhikkhunī Viên An</i>	230
4.8. Love Master with All My Heart.....	<i>Bhikkhunī Viên Trang</i>	234
4.9. The Immense Love from Master.....	<i>Bhikkhunī Viên Nhuận</i>	237
4.10. Sangha: A Worthy Master of Celestial and Human Beings.....	<i>Bhikkhunī Nguyễn Hiếu</i>	239
4.11. A Grateful Word.....	<i>Bhikkhunī Hiếu Liên</i>	241
4.12. The Master-Disciple Relationship.....	<i>Reverend Diệu An</i>	243
4.13. Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Giới Hương: A Precious Flower in The Buddhist Garden.....	<i>Samaneri Diệu Hoa</i>	246
4.14. Virtues of Our Master.....	<i>Viên Bảo Khải</i>	250
4.15. Wishing to Listen to Master's Teaching.....	<i>Viên Bảo Luật</i>	251
4.16. Three Jewels Refuges for Villagers in The 6th Hamlet, Vĩnh Lộc a Commune.....	<i>Viên Bảo Trân and Viên Bảo Sen</i>	253
4.17. Two Words: "Dear Master!".....	<i>Viên Diệu</i>	256

Part V: Gratitude To The Teacher

5.1. To Our Dear Teacher - Dr. Venerable Tn Giới Hương.....	<i>Nun student Liên Khôi</i>	261
5.2. Failure: A Measure of Success.....	<i>Monk student Thiện Hiệp</i>	263
5.3. Take People Across The River.....	<i>Nun student Diệu Ngọc</i>	267
5.4. Remembering Our Dear Teacher With Gratitude.....	<i>Nun student Thọ Liên</i>	270
5.5. The Sermon on Emptiness.....	<i>Đức Tâm Youth Association</i>	272
5.6. Chalk Dust on Hands.....	<i>Nun student Liên Phát</i>	274
5.7. Build a Bridge.....	<i>Monk student Đồng Thành</i>	276
5.8. Grateful to The Masters on Teacher's Day.....	<i>Nun student Thánh Thảo</i>	277
5.9. Half a Word Is Also Thanks to Teachers.....	<i>Nun student Nguyễn Trí</i>	278
5.10. Show Me The Way to Turn.....	<i>Nun student Huệ Hòa</i>	279
5.11. Chalk Dust Is The Flower.....	<i>Nun student Nguyễn Hiền</i>	281

5.12. Person Holding a Pen to Teach	<i>Monk student Duy Tuệ</i>	283
5.13. Giving Love to Life	<i>Monk student Quảng nguyên</i>	285
5.14. Lighting The Wisdom Lamp	<i>Nun student Tuệ Thành</i>	286
5.15. Paying Homage to Master	<i>Nun student Huệ Cảnh</i>	287
5.16. A Human Life: A River	<i>Nun student Hiểu Thiện</i>	289
5.17. Without Learning or Knowledge	<i>Nun student Nhuận Lạc</i>	290
5.18. The Teacher-Ship	<i>Monk student Viên Quang</i>	292
5.19. A Wonderful Morning with Venerable Giới Hương	<i>Nun student Nhật Nghi</i>	294
5.20. A Career Planting Human Seeds	<i>Nun student Quảng Hiền</i>	296
5.21. Faith in The Next Generation	<i>Monk student Minh Nguyên</i>	298
5.22. The Energy Source of Love	<i>Nun student Thuần Huy</i>	299
5.23. A Silent Ferrywoman	<i>Nun student Hạnh Liên</i>	301
Part VI: The Pervasive Love		
6.1. From The Dawn in India	<i>Samaneri Thông Đạt</i>	305
6.2. Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Giới Hương: A Good Daughter of The Tathagata	<i>Professor Võ Văn Tường</i>	307
6.3. Universe Forever Speaks Dharma	<i>Mật Nghiêm</i>	312
6.4. Songs From The Temple	<i>Musician Nam Hung</i>	316
6.5. Congratulatory Letter to Venerable <i>Bhikkhunī</i> Thích Nữ Giới Hương	<i>Journalist Nguyễn Giác</i>	320
6.6. At That Place	<i>Editor Phù Vân</i>	322
6.7. A Word of “Duyên” (Predestined)	<i>Quảng Trí and Tịnh Bình</i>	324
6.8. Steps of a Sage	<i>Lê Bá Bôn</i>	327
6.9. A True Master: Venerable Dr. Thích Nữ Giới Hương	<i>Journalist Nguyễn Hà</i>	328
6.10. A Verse without Title	<i>Lê Huy Trứ</i>	334
6.11. Our Relationships	<i>Minh Mẫn</i>	335
6.12. Songs Go into Hearts	<i>Singer Thúy Anh</i>	339
6.13. Under the Temple Veranda Listen to The Chanting	<i>Musician Khánh Hoàng</i>	341
6.14. Sila Fragrance, Meditative Fragrance, Wisdom Fragrance	<i>Diệu Liên</i>	342
6.15. The Way Back to The Old Hometown	<i>Thanh Phi</i>	343
6.16. A Poetic Nun	<i>Musician Uy Thi Ca</i>	346
6.17. Best Wishes from Germany	<i>Viên Bảo Chuyên</i>	349
6.18. Nuns at a Countryside Temple	<i>Tâm Tường</i>	351
6.19. A Talented Nun	<i>Nhật Quang</i>	359
6.20. Give a Dharma Word	<i>Hoàng Cần</i>	361
6.21. The Happiness	<i>Thanh Mai</i>	363
Part VII: Calligraphy		
7. Calligraphy		367
7.1. The Dharma Fragrance	<i>Bhikkhu Thích Nhuận Tâm</i>	369
7.2. The Prajna Fragrance	<i>Bhikkhunī Thích Nữ Tuệ Liên</i>	370
7.3. Fragrance Nurtures The Spirit	<i>Bhikkhunī Thích Nữ Tuệ Liên</i>	371

7.4. Fragrance to Mountains And Hills.....	<i>Hồ Ý</i>	372
7.5. The Golden Elegant Lotus.....	<i>Hồ Ý</i>	373
7.6. Realize The True Mind.....	<i>An Lạc Pháp Buddhist Youth Association</i>	374
7.7. The Awakened Light.....	<i>Diệu Bích, Diệu Ngọc & Diệu Sen</i>	375
7.8. Pháp Quang Radiates!.....	<i>Chơn Tâm Tuyết & Tâm Hậu</i>	376
7.9. Trust in The Three Gems.....	<i>Diệu Ngọc, Chân Thiện & Viên Bảo Nhẫn</i>	377
7.10. The Buddha's Teachings Reflected in Cherry Flowers	<i>Giác Nguyệt, Nguyễn Hạnh & Phương Anh</i>	378
7.11. Who Is the Full Moon Waiting For Over a Thousand Years?	<i>Viên Bảo Lê & Viên Bảo Tuyên</i>	379
7.12. The Moonlight of Dharma-Buddha!.....	<i>Tony, Ann, Thị Cảnh, Tuyết & Oanh</i>	380
7.13. Realize the True Mind.....	<i>Diệu Linh & Thiện Đạt</i>	381
7.14. Listen to Your Inner Mind!.....	<i>Thiện Giác & Ngô Ngọc</i>	382
7.15. The Gift of Dharma!.....	<i>Tịnh Thu, Xuân, Nguyễn & Tâm Hậu</i>	383
7.16. Come and Go in Freedom.....	<i>Thích Nữ Giới Hương</i>	384

We respectfully acknowledge:

- The Masters, the Patriarchs, the predecessors and the monks and nuns who have compassionately conveyed the precepts, as well as wisdom, and led the good path for us during the past forty years.

We sincerely thank:

- As the cause for the Triple Gem dwelling forever in the world, the devoted donors and benefactors have sponsored the spirit, as well as materiality, for the Nuns and Hương Sen Temple to be presented, maintained, and developed.

With all hearts of gratitude, we respectfully offer this collection of Dharma reflections - a spiritual gift to:

- All the venerable sanghas of Monks and Nuns, Dharma sisters and Buddhist followers, far and near.

Part I

INTRODUCTION

1. 1. FOREWORD OF THE EDITORIAL BOARD

COLLECTED WRITINGS: FORTY YEARS IN THE DHARMA: A LIFE OF STUDY AND SERVICE VENERABLE BHIKKHUNI GIỚI HƯƠNG

Namo Sakyamuni Buddha.

Dear Most Venerable Monks and Nuns,

Ladies, Gentlemen, Friends, Intellectuals, and Buddhists,

*Fragrant lotus spreads everywhere,
Lotus mind always loves beings without fading.*

In 2018, our teacher, Master Venerable Giới Hương, completed forty years of ordination, study and service in Buddhism. The period of forty years is not a long time for a person who puts wholeheartedness, perseverance and determination in practice as reflected in the Buddha's teaching, "Light a torch in the darkness" and "Trust in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha." Yes, those forty years were short but held a very passionate penetrating of the Dharma Love, the Life Love, and the Humanity Love. From that feeling, we along with many Buddhist friends at Hương Sen Temple in Bình Chánh District, Sài Gòn, and Hương Sen Temple in Perris, California, earnestly suggested that Master Giới Hương accept and allow us to put together a book of collected writings with the title, *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service - Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*. We had to wait a while, because of the Master's humility, inherent modesty and "without desire" lifestyle. Then, fortunately, Master Giới Hương finally agreed to allow us to carry out this volume.

To us, this collection plays the role of an offering. It symbolizes our presence, our gift, our reward. Yes, all that good and beneficial is for Master Giới Hương, for us and for all Buddhists of Hương Sen Temple.

We could not hide our surprise of wholehearted joy and blessing because in just three months - from October to the end of December 2019, after the Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương's invitation to the most venerable monks, nuns and close Buddhist followers, we received your 130 articles, poems, and calligraphies which encourage us practice, share living experiences and send the best regards. We always remember your precious gifts and teachings as we prepare our spiritual luggage on the way to practice.

This anthology celebrates a journey of forty years practice of Master Giới Hương, marking what has passed, looking back and then continuing on. The collection is the life experiences and lessons for

future generations of nunsto follow. For anonymous enlightened practitioners, this book may not be necessary, but for novices and Buddhist beginners, this volume plays a very necessary role as a guided road towards the ultimate goal.

Opening each page of the book, we see beautiful memories of a young nun who committed to Buddhist servicein a country abroad. It iswell- illustrated with photos. These articles are written with sincere words, vividly describing a nun who has been ordained since a child, who preserved moral precepts, overcame difficulties in cultivation to gain religious and life knowledge, engaged in study abroad tocollect East- West quintessence, nurtured great aspirations, built temples, wrote books, composed poems and preached in the new land. We sincerely pay homage toyour noble contributions. We cherish each article, every image of the monks, nuns, brothers and friends whohave been given to Master GiớiHương. You all have set an example of a Buddhist nun disciples in the modern timeand maintaineda beautiful image to encourage our nuns to diligently practice. These are beautiful flowers left for the human world.

The title of the book is *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service - Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*”(40 Năm Tu Học Và Hoàng Pháp của Ni Sư Giới Hương). It is bilingual, written in Vietnamese and English. Each language has 400 pages, so we would like to print two separate books in Vietnamese and Englishfor our readers’ convenience. In the English section, there are many passages, especially music and poems which are briefly translated, essentially keeping the main points. Please authors kindly accept it.

While editing, translating, designing and printing, it will not avoid shortcomings- we look forward to your guidance and suggestions so that the next edition will be more complete. On this occasion, the Editorial Board is also sincerely gratefulto the English translation team (Venerable Bhikkhuni GiớiHương, Bhikkhuni HiếuLiên, Hisayo Suzuki, and Pamela Kirby), the Vietnamese correction team (Nguyễn Tánh and Thanh Phi), the design, the typing, printing, and publishing committee (Bhikkhuni Viên Quang, Bhikkhuni ViênTiến, Bhikkhuni ViênNhuận, and BhikkhuniViênKhuông), and many more.

In regard to the layout, it is arranged bythe Editorial Board as follows:

- I. Introduction (*4 articles of the editorial board*)
- II. The Dharma Rain(*30 articles fromvenerable monks and nuns*)
- III. The Sisterhood (*30 articles by Dharma friends*)
- IV. TheShadowof Pine Tree (*17 articles of monastic and lay disciples*)
- V. The Gratitude to a Teacher(*23 articles bystudent monks and nuns*)
- VI. The Pervasive Love (*21 articles from intellectuals*)^[1]
- VII. The Calligraphy (*the sentence pairs from 5 artists*)

This English- Vietnamese collection is a small spiritual gift. We respectfully offer it to the venerable monks and nuns, and our Buddhist friends who have a close affinity with HƯƠNG Sen Temple. We especially and sincerely present this offering to Master GiớiHương.

1. We received more than 200 articlesfrom the monastic students. Due to the limitations of the collected book, the Editorial Board chose 23 writings. The rest will be presented in a new book, Teacher’s Day, number 42 of Bảo Anh Lạc Bookshelf, Hương Sen Temple. Please authors kindly accept it. Thank you.

*Master came like a bright star
Helping us out of the ignorant cloud.*

In the spring of the New Year 2020, we faithfully wish all Venerable Sangha, Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and Buddhist followers a happy New Year, the Rat year of 2020, in peace, love and joy from the Father Buddha's blessing.

Huong Sen Temple, February 29, 2020

Respectfully paying triple homage

On behalf of the Editorial Board:

Rev. Viên Quang, Rev. Viên Nhuận,

Rev. Viên Tiến, Rev. Viên Khuông...

1. 2. INVITATION TO CONTRIBUTE AN ARTICLE FOR A COLLECTION OF VIETNAMESE- ENGLISH WRITINGS:

FORTY YEARS IN THE DHARMA: A LIFE OF STUDY AND SERVICE VENERABLE BHIKKHUNI GIỚI HƯƠNG

As of September 2018, it has been forty years since Venerable TN Giới Hương was ordained as a Buddhist Nun. On this occasion, there were many suggestions from senior monastics, colleagues, practitioners, students and laypeople, both in and out of the country, who proposed that we should make a book of collected writings: "Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service- Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương" both in English and Vietnamese. These sincere and earnest suggestions have been considered, and this time we agreed because we realized that a collection such as this would be a valuable spiritual gift that will help us teach and share Buddhism, as well as helping us to fulfill our noble duty in the coming years. It would also provide meaningful and useful lessons for the sake of our Nun disciples and close devoted Buddhists.

We would like to receive writings from the most respectful Monks and Nuns, friends and Buddhists to make the content rich and diverse. The category of artistic compositions includes literature, poetry, memoirs, music, and painting. Please attach the writer's photo and email. It would be good if there are any pictures relating to Hương Sen Temple or Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương.

Please email your work tohuongsentemple@gmail.com before December 31, 2019 for publication and we will take care of translating it into English or Vietnamese. We very much appreciate your contributions for this Dharma project.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Autumn in Perris, California, October 15, 2019

Best Regards,

Venerable TN Giới Hương and Bhikkhuni Community



*Venerable Giới Hương (sixth from right) and Bhikkhunis - Backyard of Hương Sen Temple
(Website: huongsentemple.com)*

1. 3. BIOGRAPHY VENERABLE BHIKKHUNI GIỚI HƯƠNG

World name: Phạm Thị Ngọc Dung aka Sūnyatā Phạm

Born: 1963 in Bình Tuy, Lagi, Bình Thuận, Vietnam

Father: Phạm Văn Danh

Mother: Trần Thị Sáu

Domicile: Bà điểm, Hóc Môn

Ordained: 1978

Dharma name: Giới Hương

Title: Diệu Hương

Denomination: Thanh Hương

Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương comes from a peasant family in Bà điểm, Hóc Môn, Sài Gòn. The family of eight siblings has two ordained persons. Bhikkhuni Trí Minh is a disciple of the Most Venerable Thích Thanh Từ, while Venerable Giới Hương had the good fortune to ordain under the Most Venerable Hải Triều Âm when she was fifteen years old at Tịnh Thất Liên Hoa (Lê Quang Định, Bình Thạnh, Sài Gòn). In the family line, there are three more who are ordained: an aunt (Bhikkhuni Tâm Diệu), a cousin (Bhikkhuni Thanh Đức) and a nephew (Śikṣamānā Viên Khuông).

During the time in Liên Hoa Temple, she studied the scriptures (sutras), precepts (Vinaya) and treatises (Abhidhamma) under the guidance of the most famous Hải Triều Âm. In the spring, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness is taught; in the summer, the Vinaya is delivered, in the autumn, it is time for the Śūraṅgama Sūtra and in the winter, the Amitabha Sutra is preached.

Venerable Giới Hương received full ordination as a bhikkhunī on October 12, 1983, at the forum of Long Hoa Pagoda, Bà Rịa, Vũng Tàu. The monk Saṅgha included the Most Venerable Thích Như Mậu (who played the role of the leading venerable bhikkhu), the Most Venerable Thích Huệ Hải (as a lawyer) and the Most Venerable Thích Thanh Đức (as a teacher). The nun Saṅgha was held at Liên Hoa Temple with the Venerable Bhikkhuni Như Nguyễn (as the leading Venerable Bhikkhuni), Venerable Hải Triều Âm (as a lawyer) and Venerable Như Lý (as a teacher).

In 1989, Bhikkhunī Giới Hương left Liên Hoa Temple to enter the Advanced Buddhist Institute in Phú Nhuận, Sài Gòn, which was founded and headed by the Most Venerable Thích Minh Châu. During the four years in dormitory, she was educated by many high monks and masters, as well as famous professors, such as the Most Venerable Thích Minh Châu, the Most Venerable Thanh Từ, the Most Venerable Trí Quảng, the Most Venerable Phước Sơn, the Most Venerable Phước Sơn, the Most Venerable Thiện Nhơn, the Most Venerable Thiện Siêu, Venerable Bhikkhunī Trí Hải, Professor Trần Phương Lan, Hoàng Như Mai, Nguyễn Khuê, Trần Tuấn Mẫn, and so forth.

In 1989, she studied literature at General University, which is now called the University of Social Sciences and Humanities (Đình Tiên Hoàng, Sài Gòn).

In 1994, she graduated with a Bachelor of Buddhist Studies and a Bachelor of Arts in Saigon.

From 1995 to 2005, She studied in India for ten years, and in 2003 graduated with a PhD in Buddhist Philosophy from the University of Delhi, India along with certificates of Chinese and Japanese. (Intensive Advanced Diplomas in Chinese and Japanese- four years).

In 2005, she settled down in the United States.

The most Venerable Thích Mãn Giác appointed her to be the abbess of Phước Hậu Pagoda, Wisconsin, and there she later studied at Milwaukee Area Technical College, graduated from a Nursing Assistant Course with certificates in English and computer qualifications.

In 2010, she left Wisconsin for warm California and founded Hương Sen Temple, as well as studying sociology at Riverside Community College and later Moreno Valley College.

In 2015, she studied and earned a second Bachelor's Degree in Literature at the University of Riverside, California.

In 2017, she enrolled in the master's degree program at the same university, as well as serving as a part-time lecturer at the Vietnam Buddhist Institute, Saigon.

In 2000, she established Hương Sen Temple, Bình Chánh, Sài Gòn, Việt Nam.

In 2010 – Now, she founded Hương Sen Temple in Perris, California, USA, and has thirteen disciples, including seven bhikkhunīs along with three sikkhāmanas and three samaneras seeking ordination: Bhikkhunī Viên Bảo, Bhikkhunī Viên Như, Bhikkhunī Viên Tuệ, Bhikkhunī Viên Quang, Bhikkhunī Viên Chân, Bhikkhunī Viên An, Bhikkhunī Viên Trang, Śikṣamānā Viên Quý, Śikṣamānā Viên Nhuận, Śikṣamānā Viên Hiếu, Samaneri Viên Hoàng, Samaneri Viên Đàm, and Samaneri Viên Từ...

She is the founder of the website, huongsentemple.com and she also created the Bảo Anh Lạc Bookshelf where forty-one other English and Vietnamese works are displayed, as well as eleven Buddhist music albums from 2004 to the present:

1.3.1. BẢO ANH LẠC BOOKSHELF**1.3.1. a. BOOKS IN VIETNAMESE - ENGLISH**

1. *Bodhisattva and Śūnyatā in the Early and Developed Buddhist Traditions*, Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, 1st- 2nd reprint, Delhi- 7, Eastern Book Linkers, 2003–2006; Vietnam Buddhist University, 3rd reprint, 2010.
2. *Bồ- tát và Tánh Không Trong Kinh Tạng Pali và Đại Thừa (Bodhisattva and Śūnyatā in the Early and Developed Buddhist Traditions)*, Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, Delhi- 7, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc, 2005. NXB Tổng Hợp Tp HCM, 2nd- 3rd reprint, 2008 & 2010.
3. *Ban Mai Xứ Ấn (The Dawn in India)*, (3 vols.), Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, Delhi- 7, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc, 2005. Publisher Văn Hoá Sài Gòn, 2nd- 3rd reprint, 2006 & 2008.
4. *Vườn Nai- Chiếc Nôi Phật Giáo (Deer Park- The Cradle of Buddhism)*, Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, Delhi- 7, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc, 2005. NXB Phương Đông, 2nd - 3rd reprint, 2008 & 2010.
5. *Xá Lợi Của Đức Phật (The Buddha's Relic)*, Tham Weng Yew, translated into English by Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, Delhi- 7, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc. 2003. 2nd- 3rd reprint, 2005 & 2006; NXB Tổng Hợp Tp HCM, 4th reprint, 2008.
6. *Quy Y Tam Bảo và Năm Giới (Take Refuge in the Three Gems and Keep the Five Precepts)*, Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc, Wisconsin, USA. 2008. NXB Tổng Hợp Tp HCM, 2nd - 3rd reprint, 2010 & 2014.
7. *Vòng Luân Hồi (The Cycle of Life)*, Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, NXB Phương Đông, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc. 2008. NXB Phương Đông, 2nd- 3rd- 4th reprint, 2010, 2014, & 2016.
8. *Hoa Tuyết Milwaukee (Snowflake in Milwaukee)*, Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương. NXB Văn Hoá Sài Gòn, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc. 2008.
9. *Luân Hồi trong Lăng Kính Lăng Nghiêm (The Cycle of Life in Śūrangama Sūtra)*, Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, NXB Văn Hoá Sài Gòn, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc, 2008. 2nd - 3rd- 4th reprint, 2012, 2014, & 2016.
10. *Nghi Thức Hộ Niệm Cầu Siêu (The Ritual for the Deceased)*, Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, Delhi- 7, Eastern Book Linkers. 2008.
11. *Quan Âm Quảng Trăn, (The Commentary of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva)* Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, Publisher Phương Đông, 2010. 2nd - 3rd reprint, 2012 & 2014.
12. *Sen Nở Nơi Chốn Tử Tù (Lotus in the Prison)*, many authors, translated into English by Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, NXB Văn Hoá Sài Gòn, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc, 2010. 2nd - 3rd reprint, 2012 & 2014.
13. *Nữ Tu và Tù Nhân Hoa Kỳ (A Nun and American Inmates)*, (2 vols.), Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, NXB Văn Hóa Sài Gòn, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc, 2010. 2nd - 3rd- 4th reprint, 2011, 2014, 2016.
14. *Nếp Sống Tỉnh Thức của Đức Đạt Lai Lạt Ma Thứ XIV (The Awakened Mind of the 14th Dalai Lama)*, (2 vols.), Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, NXB Hồng Đức, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc. 2012. 2nd - 3rd reprint, 2014 & 2016.
15. *A- Hàm, Mưa pháp chuyển hóa phiền não (Agama- A Dharma Rain Transforms the Defilements)*, (2 vols.), Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, NXB Hồng Đức, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc, 2012. 2nd - 3rd reprint, 2014 & 2016.

16. *Góp Từng Hạt Nắng Perris (Collection of Sunlight in Perris)*, Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, NXB Phương Đông, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc. 2014.
17. *Pháp Ngữ của Kinh Kim Cang (The Vajracchedikā- Prajñāpāramitā- Sūtra)*, Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, NXB Phương Đông, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc, 2014. 2nd - 3rd reprint, 2015 & 2016.
18. *Tập Thơ Nhạc Nắng Lăng Nghiêm (Songs and Poems of Śūraṅgama Sunlight)*, Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, NXB Phương Đông, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc, 2014. 2nd reprint, 2015.
19. *Chùa Việt Nam Hải Ngoại (Overseas Vietnamese Buddhist Temples)*, Vol. 2, Võ Văn Tường & Từ Hiếu Côn, translated into English by Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, Nhà Xuất Bản Hương Quê, Hoa Kỳ. 2016.
20. *Việt Nam Danh Lam Cổ Tự (The Famous Ancient Buddhist Temples in Vietnam)*, Võ Văn Tường. Translated into English by Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, NXB, Phương Nam. 2017.
21. *Rebirth Views in the Śūraṅgama Sūtra*, Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Fifth Edition, Ananda Viet Foundation, USA. 2018.
22. *The Commentary of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva*, Fourth Edition, Ananda Viet Foundation, USA. 2018.
23. *Phật Giáo- Một Bậc Đạo Sư, Nhiều Truyền Thống (Buddhism: One Teacher, Many Traditions)*, Bhikṣu Tenzin Gyatso, the fourteenth Dalai Lama and Bhikṣuṇī Thubten Chodron, translated into Vietnamese by Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, Prajna Upadesa Foundation Publication. 2018.
24. *Nét Bút Nơi Song Cửa (Reflections at the Temple Window)*, Thích Nữ Giới Hương, NXB Hồng Đức: Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc. 2018.
25. *Bản Tin Hương Sen (Anh- Việt): Xuân, Phật Đản, Vu Lan (Hương Sen Newsletter: Spring, Buddha's Birthday, and Vu Lan, annual/ Mỗi Năm)*, Hương Sen Press, USA. 2019.
26. *Máy Nghe (Hương Sen Digital Mp3 Radio Speaker): Buddhist Lectures, Books, Articles, Songs, and Poems from Venerable TN Giới Hương (383/278 pieces)*, Hương Sen Buddhist Temple. 2019.
27. *Phóng Sự về Chùa Hương Sen (Introduction on Huong Sen Temple)*, USA. Executive Producer: Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Producer: Phú Tôn. 2019.
28. *Famous Words in Vietnamese- English: Danh Ngôn Nuôi Dưỡng Nhân Cách- Good Sentences Nurture a Good Manner*, collected by Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Hương Sen Press, USA. 2019.
29. *Hương Sen, Thơ và Nhạc- Lotus Fragrance, Poems, and Music (Bilingual Language)*, Nguyễn Hiền Đức. English Translator: Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Hồng Đức Publishing. 2019.
30. *Cách Chuẩn Bị Chết và Giúp Người Sắp Chết- Quan Điểm Phật Giáo (Preparing for Death and Helping the Dying- A Buddhist Perspective)*, Sangye Khadro, translated into English by Thích Nữ Giới Hương. Hồng Đức Publishing. 2019.
31. *The Key Words in Vajracchedikā Sūtra*, Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Hồng Đức Publishing. 2019.
32. *Văn Hóa Đặc Sắc của Nước Nhật Bản- Exploring the Unique Culture of Japan (Bilingual Language)*, Thích Nữ Giới Hương. Hồng Đức Publishing. 2019.
33. *Take Refuge in the Three Gems and Keep the Five Precepts*, Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Hương Sen Press, USA. 2019.
34. *Sống An Lạc dù Đời không Đẹp như Mơ- Live Peacefully though Life is Not Beautiful as a Dream (Bilingual Language)*, Thích Nữ Giới Hương. Hồng Đức Publishing. 2019.

35. *Sārnātha - The Cradle of Buddhism in the Archeological View*, Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Hương Sen Press, USA. 2019.
36. *Hãy Nói Lời Yêu Thương- Words of Love and Understanding (Bilingual Language)*, Hồng Đức Publishing. Thích Nữ Giới Hương. 2019.
37. *Văn Hóa Cổ Kim qua Hành Hương Chiêm Bái- The Ancient- Present Culture in Pilgrim (Bilingual Language)*, Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Hồng Đức Publishing. 2019.
38. *Cycle of Life*, Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Hương Sen Press, USA. 2019.
39. *Nghệ Thuật Biết Sống- Art of Living (Bilingual Language)*, Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Hồng Đức Publishing. 2019.
40. *Tuyển Tập Ni Giới trong Thời Hiện Đại- The Contributions of Buddhist Nuns in Modern Times (Bilingual Language)*, Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Hồng Đức Publishing. 2020.
41. *Tuyển Tập 40 Năm Tu Học & Hoàng Pháp của Ni sư Giới Hương*. Thích Nữ Viên Quang, TN Viên Nhuận, TN Viên Tiến, & TN Viên Khuông, Xpress Print Publishing, USA. 2020.
42. *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service - Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*. Thích Nữ Viên Quang, TN Viên Nhuận, TN Viên Tiến, & TN Viên Khuông, Xpress Print Publishing, USA. 2020.

1.3.1. b. BUDDHIST MUSIC ALBUMS

1. *Đào Xuân Lộng Ý Kinh (The Buddha's Teachings Reflected in Cherry Flowers)*, Poems: Thích Nữ Giới Hương. Music: Nam Hưng, Volume 1, 2013.
2. *Niềm Tin Tam Bảo (Trust in the Three Gems)*, Poems: Thích Nữ Giới Hương. Music: Hoàng Y Vũ & Hoàng Quang Huế, Volume 2, 2013.
3. *Trăng Tròn Nghìn Năm Đón Chờ Ai (Who Is the Full Moon Waiting for over a Thousand Years?)*. Poems: Thích Nữ Giới Hương. Music: Võ Tá Hân, Hoàng Y Vũ, Khánh Hải, Khánh Hoàng, Hoàng Kim Anh, Linh Phương và Nguyễn Tuấn, Volume 3, 2013.
4. *Ánh Trăng Phật Pháp (Moonlight of Dharma- Buddha)*. Poems: Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Music: Uy Thi Ca & Giác An, Volume 4, 2013.
5. *Bình Minh Tỉnh Thức (Awakened Mind at the Dawn: Piano Variations for Meditation)*. Poems: Thích Nữ Giới Hương. Solo Pianist: Linh Phương, Volume 5, 2013.
6. *Tiếng Hát Già Lam (Songs from the Temple)*. Poems: Thích Nữ Giới Hương. Music: Nam Hưng, Volume 6, 2015.
7. *Cảnh Đẹp Chùa Xưa (The Magnificent, Ancient Buddhist Temple)*. Poem: Thích Nữ Giới Hương. Music: Võ Tá Hân, Nam Hưng, Hoàng Quang Huế, Volume 7, 2015.
8. *Karaoke Hoa Ưu Đàm Đã Nở (An Udumbara Flower Is Blooming)*, Poem: Thích Nữ Giới Hương and Musician Nam Hưng, Hương Sen Temple, 2015.
9. *Hương Sen Ca (Hương Sen's Songs)*, Thơ: Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Nhạc: Nam Hưng, Volume 9, năm 2018.
10. *Về Chùa Vui Tu (Happily Go to Temple for Spiritual Practices)*, Poem: Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Music: Nam Hưng & Nguyễn Hà, Volume 10, 2018.
11. *Gọi Nắng Xuân Về (Call the Spring Sunlight)*, Poem: Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Music: Nam Hưng, Hương Sen Temple, Volume 11, 2020.

Please read Bảo Anh Lạc Bookshelf at our website: www.huongsentemple.com

1.3.2. PHOTO MEMORIES

1.3.2. a. ORDAINED



Ven. Giới Hương, eleven years old in 1974 before ordination



Samaneri Giới Hương, 1981



Śikṣamānā Giới Hương, 1982



Row behind from left: Ven. Vĩnh Lạc (now the abbess of Dược Sư Temple, Đại Ninh), Ven. Giới Hương, Ven. Hiếu Đức (with glasses, now abbess of Linh Quang Temple, Philadelphia); second on first row: Ven. Tâm Nhứt and other nuns at Liên Hoa Temple, 1983.



Master Hải Triều Âm and her nun disciples presented the Dharma Practice of Hearing Nature to the Most Venerable Tuệ Nhuận (who came from the north) at Vĩnh Nghiêm Temple, 1984.



*Ven. Giới Hương returning from Vietnam to the USA.
She, along with her nun disciples, visited Master Hải Triều Âm, June 2011.*



*Ven. Bhikkhunī Vĩnh Lạc (fourth from left) – abbess of Dược Sư Temple,
with the Hương Sen Pilgrimage which visited the memorial
of the Late Master Hải Triều Âm on October 29, 2016.*



Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương in 2019

1.3.2. b. NURTURE THE KNOWLEDGE



Graduated from the Bachelor of Buddhist Studies program



*The Most Ven. Trí Quảng and monastic students (Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, center with glasses)
at Delhi University, India, 2000*



*Bhikkhunī Giới Hương (first) and Bhikkhunī Hằng Liên (next)
in line to receive the Degree of PhD at Delhi University, India, 2013*



PhD, Doctor of Philosophy Degree at Delhi University, India, 2013



Graduated with a Degree in Literature from the University of California, Riverside in 2016

1.3.2. c. ESTABLISHING HUONG SEN TEMPLE AND TRAINING NUNS



Leveling the soil to build the temple ground, 2013



Cutting trees, 2014



Laboring together, 2015



Connecting the fence, 2015



Making the lotus road, 2016



Making the parking lot, 2016



Pouring concrete, 2017



Digging soil, 2019



Carrying brick, 2019



Sweeping the yard, 2020



Balancing the soil, 2020



Guan Yin front yard, 2018



Inscriptive stupa, 2018



Hương Sen inscription, 2018



Red bridge in the back yard, 2018



The Most Ven. Nguyễn Thanh and nuns at the Samaneri and Bodhisattva Ordination, Chùa Hương Sen Temple, 2018



The Three Steps and a Prostration Retreat, 2019



Sunshine in winter, 2019



Bodhisattva Ordination for lay people, at Chùa Hương Sen Temple, 2019



Meditation, 2020



Mindful walk, 2020

1.3.2. d. ACTIVITIES OF SHARING BUDDHISM



Bhikkhuni Giới Hương (third row, far left) at the conference of Sakyadhita International Association of Buddhist Women in Thái Lan, 2011



Giving a sermon at Việt Nam Temple, Texas, 2013



Preaching at Phước Hậu Temple, Wisconsin, 2015



Talk at community, 2016



Lecture at Giác Ngộ Temple, Sài Gòn, October 2016



Introducing Buddhism to American Students at University, 2017



Communicating with American pupils, 2018



Sharing the experience with intellectuals, 2018



A talk at the Summer Retreat at Điều Ngự Temple, June 2019



With monastic students at Vietnam Buddhist University, Sài Gòn, 2019



Attending the 35th anniversary of the establishment of the Vietnam Buddhist Institute, 2019



The first Ceremony of Gotami Nun Patriarch at An Lạc Temple, California, August 30, 2019



Giving a lecture at the Sangha Center of Đuốc Tuệ Buddhist Association, 2020

1. 4. VENERABLE GIỚI HƯƠNG RECEIVED THE VIET WORLD RECORD FOR WRITING AND TRANSLATING MANY BUDDHIST PUBLICATIONS

At 2pm on December 15, 2019 at Anaheim Convention Center (800 West Katella Avenue, California, USA), the Vietnam- American Fellowship Buddhist Sangha solemnly organized the Buddha Enlightenment Day, opening the First Great Conference (2020- 2024), the Lotus Sutra Mahayana Assembly and the Golden Dharma Light Festival.

On this occasion, Professor cum Journalist Võ Văn Tường, the General Secretary of The Viet World Record Association has honors 3 pagodas:

1. The Most Venerable Thích Trí Viên, Venerable Thích Như Minh and Venerable Thích Thông Hải representatives for Vietnam Temple in Los Angeles, to receive a Record of ***Vietnam's Cultural Heritage, the First Vietnamese Pagoda in the United States*** from the Viet World Record Association.

2. Venerable Thích Tâm Hiền, the abbot of Trúc Lâm Monastery in Georgia honorly received a book “Vietnam Temples - Records of Cultural Heritage” for the global Vietnamese Cultural Heritage Record of ***the 186 marble open statues of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas...***

3. Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương received a Record: “***A Vietnamese- American Female Doctorate for writing and translating many Buddhist publications***” from the Viet Global Record Organization.

Namo Shakyamuni Buddha.

News and photos: Võ Văn Tường

Please visit: Bảo Anh Lạc Bookshelf has Venerable Giới Hương's 42 books with poems and 11 music albums:

<http://www.huongsentemple.com/index.php/kinh-sach/tu-sach-bao-anh-lac>

<https://quangduc.com/p222a67055/03-phap-hoi-dai-thua-dieu-phap-lien-hoa>

<http://www.huongsentemple.com/index.php/tin-tuc/sinh-hoat/4420-gioi-huong-nhan-bang-ky-luc>



Venerable Minh Hiền, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, Prof. Võ Văn Tường on the stage



General Secretary Võ Văn Tường handing the Record to Venerable Giới Hương



*Right on: Rev. Viên Tiến, Ven. Hạnh Quang,
Ven. Giới Hương, Prof. Võ Văn Tường and Rev. Liên Hiếu*



*Left on: Rev. Viên Tiến, Ven. Giới Hương,
Ven. Hạnh Quang, and Rev. Liên Hiếu on the stage*

Part II

THE DHARMA RAIN

2. 1. FORTY- YEAR SPIRITUAL ROAD

If a person's time in life is eighty years long, then forty years of being ordained as a nun is such a long time; Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương has gone through more than half of a human life already. I assume that at least from the age of eight to fifteen or seventeen, she had the idea of renunciation. In general, people are born at the pagoda due to many different circumstances (which we do not mention here), while most monastics leave and renounce the secular world due to the right causes of liberation. Thus, the time needed to become monastic disciples of the Tathagata must be calculated to include a period of making plans and intentions.

Those who become monks and nuns at a young age are called young child novices (*đồng chơn nhập đạo*), while adults who marry and later become monks and nuns at the temple are called middle-aged renunciants (*trung niên xuất gia*) or semi- life renunciants (*bán thế xuất gia*). The Buddha and the Patriarchs do not distinguish age or gender (men or women); whoever wants to become a nun/monk, whenever, can find Buddhist masters with whom they can take refuge to actualize their wishes. If there is no original master, one must seek a second master to rely on for renunciation and ordination. If this wish is acted upon, a person can become a nun leading a pure and liberated life for herself and others, joining the line of great monastic beings (*Đại trượng phu*).

Venerable Bhikkhuni TN Giới Hương, abbess of Hương Sen Pagoda in Perris, Southern California, is one who has been engaged with that noble monastic path for the past forty years. And this year, her nun disciples wanted to make a record of her spiritual journey in order to remember this special occasion. Thus, they wanted to call for writings on their master to make a collected book. This is worthy work; therefore, I took the time to express this in writing. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương ordained under Master Hai Trieu Âm in Vietnam in 1979 and has been ordained for forty years as of 2019. The 1980s were certainly a time of hard work and effort for most monks and nuns in Vietnam.

The abbess had to declare residents, permanent or temporary, to the local government, which was not a simple matter. Given the low economic circumstances seen throughout the country, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương must have had difficulty managing to have enough food to eat, fulfilling religious duties at the temple, joining Buddhist schools and educational institutions, and meeting many more challenges—who could dare to imagine? Because suffering in the world is already too much, how could lay people have upheld the Triple Gem as easily as they can now? Therefore, it is certain that striving to become a monastic during the 1980s, which was difficult to actualize, required a great will to overcome obstacles in the temple as well as in the outside world.

I knew Bhikkhuni Giới Hương when I pilgrimaged to the holy places in Bodhgaya and other places in India. I did not know the identity of most monastics before they came to see me at the Vien Giac Buddhist Center in Bodhgaya. I studied abroad in Japan in the early 70s, and I was very sympathetic to the hard situation of students at that time. Therefore, I provided scholarships for monks and nuns studying in India from 1994 to 2011. I helped them and required nothing, just wishing that after they graduated from university, they serve Buddhism well, engage in field of education, and repay their master and temple. That was more than enough. Since then, over nineteen years, 187 Vietnamese monks and nuns studying in India came to me to receive the scholarship. At first, I asked Venerable Hanh Chanh to introduce the students to me, but a few years later, students came to me on their own to express their difficulties. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương was among them. Of course, every person who came to me introduced themselves and their master's names, expressed their monthly financial needs,

and relayed at what level they were studying (bachelor's, master's, or doctorate) so that I could make provisions according to each situation. Thanks to them, I could act upon my altruism. At first, there was Venerable Hanh Chanh, and then Rev. Như Tú received it. Of those 187 monks and nuns, it is unknown how many students are still monastics and how many disrobed. How many monks/nuns are teaching at universities or schools domestically or abroad? Or how many people died because of illness or other causes? This result is not accurate for me, but according to the file I am keeping at the office of Viên Giác Hannover, there are 132 students who graduated with doctorates, while the rest have master's or bachelor's degrees. Unfortunately, since 2011, I have not continued this scholarship program because nineteen years of such support is a long time. Besides, my age has also increased; I should save time for translating scriptures, writing books, and giving lectures, so that I can let the next generation continuously follow this holy work. I have stopped providing scholarships ever since.

When students monks and nuns complete their doctoral or master's theses, these are often offered to me. So at Vien Giac Buddhist Center in Bodhgaya as well as at the library of Vien Giac Pagoda in Hannover, Germany, many dissertations are displayed, including the doctoral thesis of Bhikkhuni Giới Hương. I read a long time ago the contents of the dissertation, which she wrote in English: *Bodhisattva and Śūnyatā in the Early and Developed Buddhist Traditions*. This thesis was later translated into Vietnamese, and I was also fortunate to write a preface for her Vietnamese publication in Vietnam as well as abroad. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương is a nun who actively enjoys writing, educating, sharing culture, and doing charity work to help those in need, etc. , so she wrote, composed, and translated more than forty works on Buddhist music, poetry, history, philosophy, and literature. Among them are books such as: *Ban Mai Xứ Ấn (Dawn in India)* and *Sarnath- The Cradle of Buddhism*. Please visit Bao Anh Lac Bookcase (<http://www.huongsentemple.com/index.php/kinh-sach/tu-sach-bao-anh-lac>). By exploring the website, you will gain interest and find out more about her.

She also often went to prisons in the United States to help inmates to approach Buddhism, practice meditation, and appreciate their spiritual lives (see the book, *A Nun and American Inmates*). In addition, she has also returned to Vietnam to teach at the Vietnam Buddhist University in Saigon for many years and has achieved certain results through this teaching. At the same time, she also conducts the training of disciple nuns for the future, as did her Master Hải Triều Âm, who converted and ordained thousands of nuns. For the monastics, in their religious lives, this is the most meaningful way to repay the Buddha and the ancestors' grace.

Studying for a degree is very necessary for present- day monks and nuns. Because we live in a foreign country, without basic background knowledge of Buddhism and foreign languages, we cannot reach our goal of bringing religion to the locals in the places where we live. At the same time, cultivation is even more important than that. If a monk has only a degree and goes on lectures all year round neither practicing nor keeping precepts- meditation- wisdom, he is like many other scholars teaching in secular life or at universities, etc. Therefore, as renunciants, we must pay more attention to this spiritual practice. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương shows this through bringing up her disciple nuns as well as in daily practice, chanting, and meditating, which adorn her monastic manner. Liberation from *samsara* is still far from this life, but in the cycle of birth- death and chaos, renunciants know how to make improvements and be mindful: this is also a relative form of liberation in this life.

Tâm Thụy- Võ Văn Tường, who is a talented professor cum photographer of many Vietnamese temples in and outside the country, has published the work *Overseas Vietnamese Temples*, volume 1, in four languages: Vietnamese, English, Chinese, and Japanese. It is very valuable. For the second volume and the book *Famous Ancient Buddhist Temples in Vietnam*, he asked Bhikkhuni Giới Hương to translate

these from Vietnamese into English. Venerable Nhật Từ in Vietnam and the Venerable Nguyễn Tạng in Australia reviewed it before it was published. For the Japanese and Chinese translations, I took up the task.

After this, Mrs. Thiện Tâm- Suzan from Boston asked me to introduce Bhikkhuni Giới Hương to translate a book by the Dalai Lama, *Buddhism: One Teacher, Many Traditions*, from English to Vietnamese. Bhikkhu Dao Tinh in Atlanta edited this work, while I tried to review the translation, the idea of the sentences, and the Buddhist terms. In addition, I also wrote other introductions for her books, which were composed for publication both in Vietnam and outside the country as follows: *Commentary on Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, Vajracchedikā- Prajñāpāramitā- Sūtra, Agama- A Dharma Rain Transforms the Defilement, Cycle of Life in Sūrangama Sūtra, Vajracchedikā- Prajñāpāramitā- Sūtra*, and so forth. Since then, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and I have had many opportunities to have exchanges in this aspect, and I found that her style of writing or translation is very clear, easy, and creative, whether it is *Mūla- madhyamaka- karikā* or emptiness, whether written in English or Vietnamese. That's why sometimes I think that in Vietnam, we have our senior nuns, such as the Most Venerable Bhikkhuni Như Thanh, the Most Venerable Bhikkhuni Diệu Không, Venerable Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Trí Hải, etc. In America or abroad, Vietnamese Buddhism also has some outstanding nuns, including Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, who contributes to the nuns' Sangha in particular and Vietnamese Buddhists in general.

I found it necessary to write in encouragement and support of a collected book like *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service- Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*. Because when an author comes up with a work that the readers neglect without care, it also means we are not appreciating her heart for Buddhism. So I write these solemn words to her for the 40th anniversary of her Buddhist ordination, which also implies that we directly and indirectly rejoice at her deeds done over a long period. At the same time, I also hope that there are many other eminent nuns who contribute to the common duty for the Buddhist home. In this way, culture, literature, lyrics, as well as Buddhist thought can easily enter the hearts of people.

We wish that in the remaining days of her life, maybe twenty, thirty, or forty years, she will continue to compose and teach more and more, so that monastics and laypeople never forget her image in this world.

*Writing on November 18, 2019
at Viên Đức Monastery, Southern Germany*

With metta,

Thích Như Điển

chuaviengiac2012@googlemail.com



Giving a lecture at Hương Sen Yard in April 2018



Chanting the Śūraṅgama Heart Mantra



*The Most Venerable Như Điển and his Sangha
visiting Hương Sen Temple on April 12, 2018*

2. 2. ABUNDANT VIRTUE: SPREADING THE LOTUS SCENT

*Hương Sen fragrance in a strange land,
Her whole life, she devoted in the black mud,
A great bodhisattva, over a long way
Fearless, facing hardship and cold wind.*

I got to know Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương twenty- two years ago, when I was studying abroad in Delhi, India. The Vietnam International Student Association met to discuss plans to visit the Taj Mahal and scenic spots in Delhi before the fall course, in August 1997. Ven. Giới Hương had studied in India two years before us and joined the course for a bachelor’s degree in Buddhist Studies at Vạn Hạnh University one course before us (she was in the second course, while I attended the third course). My first impressions at that time of Ven. Giới Hương was that she was **friendly, willing to help others, modest, fluent in English, always respectful of others, and observant of the eight rules for nuns** (she respected young bhikkhus, even when they were younger than her in religion or age). Surely many of the nuns in our class dreamed and wondered: *I don’t know when I will know English and Delhi as well as Giới Hương*. That trip created many happy memories and went really well; just over twenty years have now passed. I have now received an invitation to write a contribution for the collected writings, *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service- Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*, so I have gathered here my memories, information, and feelings about this enthusiastic and energetic nun.

After arriving in India, I was determined to join the Mansarovar Hostel **after choosing between many options, because at that time students chose either to rent a house on their own or to apply for the university’s dormitory at Delhi University, and I also knew Ven. Giới Hương**, who stayed at the P. G. Women’s Hostel for ten years (1995–2005). In a hostel, “you are not free,” because you have to follow its rules according to the time, and you often have to ask for permission for many things when leaving or entering. It is not as comfortable or spacious as renting rooms outside; you must get used to eating Indian food. Those who want to spend more time studying (rather than spending time on cooking), want to have more chances to practice speaking English with native and international people, and do not spend much time entertaining guests just for fun- the best choice for such people is staying at a hostel. Ven. Giới Hương also decided to live in the multicultural environment of the hostel, which shows her determination to save more time for cultivation, study, research, and engagement with her new environs.

During that time in India, I was fortunate to write articles for *Giao Điểm Newspaper* (USA), whose editorial board also let me know that Bhikkhuni Giới Hương also regularly wrote articles for *Giao Điểm* and received royalties to help her pay part of her fees in India. It is practical and beneficial work: we can share knowledge about Buddhism and social issues, and we can also get royalties, rewards, and motivation to see if our cultivation has specific results and reduce the financial burden for sponsors. Writing is a way for Bhikkhuni Giới Hương to actualize her strongpoints in literature, since she finished a bachelor’s degree in literature in Saigon before studying abroad in India. There is the saying, “review words and train in kung fu” (*văn ôn võ luyện*), which means writing more words, gaining skill in writing more fluently, is a means to convey compassion, the Buddhist way, and so on... That is the premise for the creation of many books, such as *Ban Mai Xứ Ấn* (*The Dawn in India*) (three volumes), *Vườn Nai - Chiếc Nôi Phật Giáo* (*Deer Park- The Cradle of Buddhism*), and many more.

After ten years of studying in India, worshiping the Buddhist holy places, and learning about

Dharma experiences from many international student monastics, in 2005, through a predestined relationship, she came to the United States to start a new period: contributing to turning the Dharma wheel in a new land, where Buddhism is still new to Americans. I came to the United States a year before her, but very early in 2005, I heard that she gave Dharma lectures at Đuốc Tuệ Buddhist Association, which is a prestigious lay association in California and the USA. It was a great honor for her as a female or a nun to be invited as a teacher. I also know about her Buddhist activities in the first four years at Phước Hậu Pagoda, Wisconsin, USA. At that time, I was the owner of a forum sharing international Dharma through the Paltalk network; many Buddhists praised her and shared her lectures at the forum. **I smiled joyfully and thought to myself:** How could she so soon reach the mark of propagating Dharma in the United States like that, when the United States is a place gathering the talented? But after reflection, I realize that it was not by chance or luck, it was justified. After all, she became a nun when she was fifteen years old and ordained and studied under the most famous Vietnamese nun, Ven. Hải Triều Âm, at Dược Sư Pagoda, Đức Trọng, Lâm Đồng. There is the saying, “A famous master produces a high- ranking disciple, ” i. e. , she demonstrates her abilities well because she received her basic Buddhist education from a discerning master. Moreover, she took much time to earn many degrees from secular educational institutions, such as bachelor of arts degrees in Vietnam and the USA and a doctoral degree in Buddhist Studies. With such knowledge, she can feel solid, full of confidence, when sharing her Dharma experience.

Then, just like her, depending on my predestined relationships, I met her again at Buddhist festivals at Quang Thiện Pagoda (Ontario) and Đại Bi Quan Âm Pagoda (San Bernardino) in California. Then, she invited me to visit Hương Sen Temple at Fir Avenue, Moreno Valley, which was founded by her and was later relocated to Perris. That day, I was asked to help with special “library work, ” arranging a considerable amount of books both in English and Vietnamese on the bookshelves in alphabetical order by title, so that they could be located easily. This was a test of my patience, meticulousness, care, and accuracy, but because I wanted to help her, someone so fond of reading and knowledge, I tried to arrange the books. It was very difficult to transport those valuable books from India and Vietnam, passing through many places to finally reach the library at Hương Sen Temple. I can imagine her often spending day and night, whenever she has free time, just sitting at her desk, wearing glasses, attentively reading, writing, thinking, and making friends with books.

Bhikkhuni Giới Hương feels “knowledge is the main career” (*Duy Tuệ Thị Nghiệp*); despite it being a lot of work, she still continued to go to college to earn a bachelor’s and master’s degree at the University of California, Riverside. Many people wonder: why did she gain a PhD in India and come to the United States to study again for a bachelor’s and a master’s degree, why go backward? In fact, she has a PhD in Buddhism, but when she enters the field of US literature, she has to gain new knowledge for a bachelor’s degree in the United States. For example, you may have a PhD in mechatronics, but if you enter the field of philosophy and religion, you would have to go to school again- you need to have new basic background and learn again from a bachelor’s degree or consider what gaps need to be filled for the bachelor’s. The ocean of learning is large; it is hard to know when we reach the destination. Thus, learning is just the process of discovering our ignorance. Do we know how many great writers there are in English and American literature? Going back to university like that, she can return to the beautiful days of a student: pure, humble, ready to learn, receiving good things and beauty. Moreover, it is a good opportunity for her to communicate with indigenous and international people, improve her English, sharpen her writing skills, and absorb and penetrate the culture of the United States and other countries. This is very important in promoting the Dharma because a good preacher should give

a lecture suitable for the **listeners' ability, customs, time, culture, place**, and so forth. Describing the same subject to a Vietnamese and an American, the preacher should deliver the topic in different ways according to the level and culture of that person. Otherwise, it may be ineffective, rejected, or obsolete.

Ven. Giới Hương strives to establish Hương Sen Temple in Perris, California, USA. This is truly marvelous and full of challenges. Depending on the conditions, lay Buddhists have busy lives in the United States, so the monastic is the direct owner of the temple land who takes care of everything: bill- paying, repairs, building, clearing the garden, decorations, etc. To save money, she often drives to Home Depot to buy building materials and repair the temple (there was a period her father visited and gave her a hand). So much sweat has been shed on the land of Hương Sen Temple. Surely most people no longer believe the United States is a paradise on earth, where people come to enjoy themselves or pick up money. On the contrary, America is a place where an abbess or abbot must hold a crowbar, hammer, or shovel, doing the labor, taking action on all sorts of things because of a lack of attendants and helpers. On Sundays only, some Buddhists have time to come to temple to chant. The establishment of a temple signifies the patience and hard work of the abbess. Day after day, she has tried to continue maintaining the temple as well as manage the finances to develop it. Many churches of other religions have had to be sold because there was not enough financial support for maintenance. When we plant a Bodhi tree at the cross (build a Buddhist temple in the USA), things are not that simple. The masters spreading Buddhism abroad have to make a 200% effort with their strength, and every precious hour and moment that they forget their ego for the sake of many can create such success.

As a messenger of the Tathagata, a practicing bodhisattva, Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương actively engaged with prisons to point out the way of happiness and alleviate suffering for inmates, especially in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. As the Buddha always taught: “The greatest bankruptcy in one’s life is despair” (the 9th) and “The greatest accomplishment in one’s life is reaching up after falling” (the 8th).^[1] His Holiness the Dalai Lama also declared the same idea: “We are all potential criminals, and those whom we have put into prison are no worse, deep down, than any one of us. They have succumbed to ignorance, desire, and anger, ailments that we all suffer from but to different degrees. Our duty is to help them.” Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương often visits, gives books as gifts, comforts, advises, and then often write letters to guide inmates in Buddhism. “When a person falls, let us extend our arms and give them more motivation, more faith, more strength to stand up, rebuild their lives, and turn their gaze to the safe and happy shore.”^[2] These words are from her diary, which narrates interactions between her and inmates, under the title, *A Nun and American Inmates* (Thích Nữ Giới Hương).

These are my first impressions when I think about her. However, in order to summarize more systematically her forty years of practice and service to the Dharma, we see highlights that can become lessons for following generations:

1. Having a solid foundation in the early stages of ordained life

We often recite “Sám Quy Mạng” (A Whole Life Confession), in which there is the saying: “Born in the center of the country, grow up to meet a virtuous master, and ordain while young with true faith.” This is true for her case, ordained at fifteen years old with Master Hải Triều Âm at Đại Ninh Dược Sư

1. 14 Lời dạy của Đức Phật (Fourteen Teachings from the Buddha), from *Thiếu Lâm Temple, China*, translated from Chinese to Vietnamese by Most Venerable Kim Cang Tử in 1998- 1999, Hồng Đức Publishing House, 2014, <http://www.daophatngaynay.com/vn/tu-sach-dao-phat-ngay-nay/15874-14-dieu-phat-day.html>. English translation of this quote by Bhikkhuni Giới Hương.

2. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, *A Nun and American Inmates*, <http://www.huongsentemple.com/index.php/kinh-sach/tu-sach-bao-anh-lac/1910-nu-tu-va-tu-nhan-hoa-ky-tn-gioi-huong>.

Pagoda, Bảo Lộc, Lâm Đồng. She penetrated so many beautiful, awakened things or thoughts during the time she approached her venerable master, as Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương expressed in a memorial poem when her master passed away:

*Although mountains and river have to move,
Heavy gratitude cannot fade,
I promise to inscribe the Master's teachings,
As spiritual luggage for me throughout life.*

(Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Hương Sen Temple, USA, August 1, 2013)

The majestic manner of her first spiritual teacher created and nurtured the noble characteristics affecting the whole life of the disciple. The pure teacher- student relationship, the sweet homeland, and the Buddhist cradle are boundless motivations for practitioners to overcome many obstacles on the journey back to the ultimate destination. Therefore, when renouncing, practitioners should choose a good environment that suits them, find a good master, and abide by strict rules, even if the place does not have enough accommodations, supplies, and comfort. Moreover, the abbots and monastics must solemnly conduct themselves and the environment for the welfare of monks and nuns, as instructed in the handbook “Thiền uyển tập Anh” (The Core of the Zen Garden). They must not use the excuse that they are too busy with rituals, ceremonies, building projects, and so forth while neglecting their duty to bring up young, newly ordained generations.

2. Focusing on spiritual cultivation

We have seen that it is no coincidence that Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương has achieved so many significant accomplishments. It is the result of a long training process: when she was at the Dược Sư Temple, Tổng Hợp University of Arts (literature), ten years studying Buddhism in India, the US bachelor's and master's programs in literature, self- study through books in libraries, and so forth... Don't be complacent by saying, “My knowledge is enough to use.” We must have good and complete gear to have assurance we can travel far. To be able to save the drowning, firstly, we must know how to swim firmly, to avoid being in a state where “a blind man leads a group astray from the road and falls into a pit.” Those who have completed their intermediate studies or bachelor's in Buddhist Studies and then return to their temple after a month without opening up a page of sutras, only concerning themselves with the two main recitations and funeral services, or Buddhists who go to the temple, mainly doing “merit from service,” “reciting” without caring about studying or listening to the Dharma- that is regrettable. We are still ignorant and should develop wisdom through the method of listening, thinking, and practicing, until we reach enlightenment and attain the ultimate, perfect wisdom.

3. The merit from building monasteries

As described above, Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương is patient and courageous, determined in establishing temples and decorating Zen gardens to create a tranquil religious place in the world for those who have the opportunity to visit and attend retreats at Perris, California. She chose a remote place to create a temple because she realized that some places in Southern and Northern California have many Vietnamese pagodas, while remote areas such as Perris and its surroundings have no Vietnamese pagoda, and the local people, including the Vietnamese, Americans, and Mexicans there, need a spiritual guide. As the Buddha himself taught his first sixty bhikkhu disciples: “Go forth, o bhikkhus, for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, benefit, and happiness of gods and men. Let not two go by one way. Preach, O Bhikkhus, the Dhamma, excellent in the beginning, excellent in the middle, excellent in the end, both in the spirit

and in the letter. ”^[3] If we are teachers of the Dharma but feel disdainful of other monks or nuns who only pay attention to building pagodas, without considering the work of Dharma, the question must be asked: *who will create the basic infrastructure for teachers to come to teach?* Therefore, depending on the conditions of each person in which there are a hundred- thousand paths, each person should make his or her best contribution to the Dharma according to ability, and the Sangha members must mutually support one another. In the United States, some states are very cold- how can monks stay in the forest, go for alms, or sleep under trees (as they did in the Buddha’s time)? Thus, depending on predestined conditions, there must be suitable accommodations for study and practice over a long time.

Having such a Hương Sen Temple, she can easily continue to go to graduate school, read books, practice, and create good conditions for monastics and laypeople who come to Hương Sen Temple to practice. She also has taken responsibility for a small temple in Bình Chánh, her home town. These duties create more work, need for arrangements, and fatigue.

4. Contributing to creating harmony in the Sangha

Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương arranged time for and participated in retreats held at the International Buddhist Institute (Phật Học Viện Quốc Tế), Bảo Quang Pagoda, Huệ Quang Pagoda, Điều Ngự Pagoda, etc. in the United States to support and contribute to the presence of the pure Sangha and the four harmonious Sangha groups. In the United States, Vietnamese Buddhism has many different sects or congregations. The monastics are based in the Sangha: “Mutual respect, mutual harmony, mutual education, and mutual confession” (the instructions of the late Most Venerable Thích Đôn Hậu). If a Buddhist Sangha is not harmonious and supportive, it would be very funny; how can such a Sangha be a good role model and guide for laypeople? Thus, religious conflict and world wars are filled with anger, sorrow, defeat, and suffering.

In addition to Buddhist work in the United States, Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương often returns to Vietnam to teach the Dharma at many provincial monasteries and Vietnam Buddhist University in Saigon, regardless of whether the congregation be domestic or foreign. We take refuge in the Buddhist Sangha, but political parties, institutions, and secular forces contribute to divisions. All wars arise from greed, hatred, ignorance, distrust, and misery, etc. within us, so take care of them, transform them in order to contribute to strengthening the Sangha’s harmony.

5. The role of converting nun disciples and laypeople

I was destined to lead rituals and preach for the Ullambana (Vu Lan Báo Hiếu) ceremony at Hương Sen Temple in Perris, California, in 2017. At that time there were quite a number of nuns ordained under Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, and some from other temples came to ask her to be their teaching master. She also has some monastic disciples at Bình Chánh Temple, Vietnam. She follows the example of her master by dedicating herself to converting nun disciples.

The monk/nun cannot, with the rationale of there being much work to do for the temple and society, neglect the responsibility of cultivating new monastics. There is the saying, “Bamboo is old, young shoots grow, ” i. e. , pass on the light, generation by generation. In ordinary life, each family tries to nurture two good children to contribute to society. Likewise, in the monastery, each monk/ nun must try to train his or her disciples to continue to inherit the Dharma tradition. There is nothing more important than creating a human resource because our strength is definitely limited and only

3. *Mahavagga, Vinaya Pitaka. Ven. Nārada Mahāthera, The Buddha and his Teachings, <https://www.budsas.org/ebud/budtch/budteach07.htm>.*

lasts a certain amount of time. Each abbess creates a successor, and more monastics would be better because the merit is vast as the ocean. If the temple has no successor or a bad successor, then will what the previous abbot has done be destroyed? The abbot should have time to have lunch, practice, and attend meetings with the laypeople, so that he/she can remember the name, situation, mind, education, difficulties, needs, and aspirations of each person in the temple to help him/her progress and to guide him/her to diligently endeavor on the right path...

I see the nuns at Hương Sen Temple have all kinds of members, of all ages, and there are people who are difficult to treat. One must have a mind like Ven. Giới Hương to be able to touch them. When they ordain, they send both body and soul to us, so we have to make sure their dependence is sure, peaceful, and developing in the right direction.

6. Setting an example and creating conditions for nuns in the United States

In the United States, Buddhism is still young; the number of nuns and elders nuns is very small. The first generation who came to the United States before 1990, such as the late Most Ven. Bhikkhuni Đàm lựu (Đức Viên Pagoda), the late Most Ven. Bhikkhuni Diệu Từ (Diệu Quang Pagoda), the Most Ven. Bhikkhuni Nguyễn Thanh (An Lạc Pagoda)... The second generation of the Vietnamese Buddhist nuns' Sangha is here, including Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, who came to the United States after 2003. The first generation of nuns, due to the Vietnam war and harsh conditions, did not have formal education or much preparation before coming and practicing in the United States, but they were able to create a Buddhist career with temples and disciples and demonstrated a lot of dedication. Therefore, the second and later nun generations, who must have a lot of opportunities for study and for approaching and interacting with the world, continue to inherit and promote the significant achievements of the overseas Vietnamese Buddhist nuns' Sangha. Buddhist needs, such as spiritual practices, advice regarding education, precept masters in ordination, administering nuns in summer retreats, and others, are increasing, and nuns like Ven. Giới Hương present in the United States came at the right time and met those urgent needs. We do not have to wait for people to leave the world (pass away) to praise and respect them as ancestors. Indeed, based on the historical fact of the development in overseas Buddhism, the fully qualified image of Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương really is a high mark adorning the Zen garden.

7. Integrating with the local culture and engaging in social welfare activities

To propagate the Dharma well overseas, the abbot or abbess must have creativity, sensitivity to time and place, and suitability. For example, the main hall is not so big, which direction should be worshiped, what is worshiped, which ceremony is celebrated on which day of the week, at what time, which sutra should we recite, what should be taught? We should know what the local Buddhists are thinking, what they want, and what they fear and abstain from so that the abbot or abbess can organize well. While propagating the Dharma, the true doctrine must be suitable for the listeners' background, culture, customs, interests, level, and capacities, etc. , so that they can receive it effectively. **Sometimes it can't be 100% Vietnamese style:** "the previous generation showed us the plan, the present one takes action. " For example, the Zen model of Master Nhất Hạnh is very suitable for European and American culture so has great influence- where can we find a Vietnamese monk like him? Although we are not equal to him, we try to imitate, adapt, and integrate with the native culture as much as possible. Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương has been to visit the prisons and played a role as a spiritual engineer who comforted prisoners to help them to reform and become good people in society. She has made great contributions to the overseas Vietnamese community, skillful and flexible in accordance with the local culture.

8. Depending on invariant grace in using the musician's skillful means for propagation

“Abstaining from entertainment, singing or intentionally listening to it” is the seventh of ten precepts of the Samanera (male novice)/Samaneri (female novice) and the sixth of eight precepts for lay Buddhists who join a retreat for one day. But in real life, Buddhists are neither Samanera/Samaneri: they don't have to join a retreat every day, and their nerves need to relax. Otherwise, they will become stressed out. Without Buddhist music, they would listen to other music. So, instead of listening to “worldly love songs of men and women” or “golden music,” which is used to express lovesickness, grief, tragedy, numbness, dreamlike states, and so on, we should orient laypeople to listen to the songs of ethics, Zen, piety, and Buddhism, which help their bodies and minds become calmer, more tranquil, and less stressed. Let us look at all of the ceremonies for the New Year, Buddha's Birthday, Ullambana, or other Buddhist festivals: almost all Mahayana temples organize Buddhist art programs to provide music for Buddhist followers. In addition, many overseas Buddhists, who usually drive to work and spend more time on the road, sometimes in traffic jams, listen to pleasant Zen music to relax and to approach the meaning of Buddhist theory (as in a lecture). The song is a companion on their hard journey. Làng Mai Monastery of Zen Master Nhất Hạnh also has Zen music, which even replaces chanting in the main hall. Obviously, Zen music is a spiritual dish needed by the lay Buddhist community. Thus, Hương Sen Temple has published eleven music DVDs using Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương's poetry. I had the opportunity to be the host (MC) on the occasion of introducing and performing a DVD of her music. She is a nun who has made outstanding contributions to this difficult field because it requires energy, patience, time, meticulousness, inspiration, poetic proficiency, musical rhythm, lyrics, etc.

Please visit the music DVDs of Ven. Giới Hương at the website address:

<http://huongsentemple.com/index.php/am-nhac>

9. Exemplary virtue, obeying the eight respectful rules specifically for nuns

As the first part mentioned above, Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương is harmonious, friendly, humble, ready to learn, caring, generous, diligent in the Dharma, reverent of the Sangha, and observant of the eight respectful rules for nuns. Despite her achievements, she is not conceited or disrespectful to monks, even when they are younger than she is. The more ostentatious people are, the more they perform; the more they encroach on others, the emptier they are, lacking devoted inner practice. With juniors, if we keep distant as strangers, they respect us but avoid us. As a consequence, we don't have many chances to contact, understand, and help them.

For a long time, all sentient beings, parents, and friends have been close, and she has brought many good things to others without discrimination based on class and level. I have seen many monastics who are very attached to their names and positions, “fame” and “rank.” If the host accidentally places them in a wrong seat, introduces the wrong positions, welcomes them with improper greetings, does something unsatisfying, etc., their temper quickly explodes to protect their prestige. The Buddha removed his royal attire and put on a hundred-piece patched robe to beg for alms and be a monk. We want to become monks/nuns, disciples of the Buddha, rather than officials or administrators. Learn the virtue of the Never Looking Down (Sadeparibhute) Bodhisattva, who lives and shows what he is saying, teaches, preaches, and gives kindness, compassion, joy, equanimity, and egolessness to everybody. Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương has been molded in and embodied these fine virtues, and perhaps this is why the temple in Perris, California is named “Hương Sen” - only virtue with the scent of the pure lotus can fly against the wind.

10. Dedicated wholeheartedly to missionary activities to benefit beings

With the aspiration to be a messenger of the Tathagata, “propagating Dharma as one’s duty; **benefiting beings** as one’s career” (*Hoằng Pháp vi Gia vụ, lợi Sinh vi sự nghiệp*), Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương has been to many monasteries, Pure Lands of this world, and temples to preach. She had to overcome the harsh and hot weather of California, travels to many states and cities of the United States, and also goes to many temples in Saigon and provinces in Vietnam, responding to the requests to sow predestined Dharma. In addition, she reseeds regularly to share her experience on what is essential for practice with the young student monks and nuns of the faculties: Buddhist Philosophy, Preaching Arts, and Dharma Course in English at Vietnam Buddhist University in HCM City (previously known as Vạn Hạnh University). Knowing her wishes and abilities, every time she returns to Vietnam, I invite her to take a few classes for me in the Department of Buddhist Philosophy when she can fulfill her function as lecturer about topics such as general philosophy of Buddhism, religion, Mahayana, compendium of the Shurangama Sutra, experiences of practice and Dharma propagation, etc. Her teaching and communication methods are easy to understand, new, practical, beneficial, and a great source of inspiration for students.

Because of her aspiration to propagate the Dharma, her strong Bodhi mind, her artistic ability to express literature, skillful words, and fresh ideas to penetrate the mind and the suttas and to meet the thirst of the Buddhist masses, she has a large volume of Dharma teachings, which can be found and heard at the following addresses:

<http://www.trangsuoitu.org/MP3-gioihuong.htm>

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=ns+th%C3%ADch+n%E1%BB%AF+gi%E1%BB%9Bi+h%C6%B0%C6%A1ng

<http://huongsentemple.com/index.php/huong-sen-online/phap-am-audio>

<http://huongsentemple.com/index.php/huong-sen-online/phap-am-video>

In addition to preaching, as mentioned above, she is passionate about reading and writing. Reading is inheriting the thoughts of others to enrich our knowledge; writing books is our turn to provide fragrant, sweet, spiritual flowers or gifts from our thoughts. She has written for many journals, such as *Điều Ngự News*, *Bảo Quang Magazine*, *Chánh Pháp Newspaper*, *Hương Sen Magazine*, *Giao Điểm News*, and so on. During her fourteen years in the United States, she has written forty- two valuable books, i. e. , three books a year on average. I have not written a book for many years, but she has forty- one books in Bảo Anh Lạc Bookcase, Hương Sen Temple. Just making a simple comparison like that, we can see the level of her attention to work with efficiency and style. What rich thoughts and accomplishments she has! Whether propagating the Dharma through speaking or writing, which is a means for language to enter one’s heart, she inspires people and shines the Dharma light on every step of life, for the sake of readers and listeners.

In short, the value of life does not rely on how long we live but how to live for the benefit for others- what have we contributed to life? After fifty- six years of human life and forty years of monastic life, she has dedicated her life to Buddhism through so many products and accomplishments, which many people in life have not been able to match today. Her image is an endless source of inspiration for students (student life), unfortunates (miserable prisoners), teachers, preachers, abbesses, writers, poets, musicians, Buddhist masses, and subsequent generations. I congratulate Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương on making a book of collected writings, *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service*- this

is not a time to be proud, complacent, and boastful, but a time for self- reflection, to draw more from her lessons and experiences to share with those in similar situations or about to step on such journeys. If every one of Buddha’s disciples was aware of diligence in studying, practicing, and contributing like *Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*, the treasure of Buddhist literature would be more abundant, Zen poems and music would have more flavors for listeners to enjoy, more Dharma sounds would share, and greater harmony would exist in the Sangha. As the ancestors taught, “That person is a great being, how about us?” From the references to her books, I hope the readers will gain many benefits, inspired by *Ven. Giới Hương* to be more diligent, enjoy more successful achievements, and receive all of the good Dharma practice for the sake of Buddhism and life. May the Three Jewels bless and protect *Ven. Giới Hương*’s body and mind always, peacefully, for many good conditions, unshakable Bodhicitta, and successful Buddhist works, to make possible more auspicious contributions in the upcoming period of her life, such as self- effort, other- effort, self- enlightenment, other- enlightenment, and further enrichment of truth, good, and beauty for this world.

*Lotus scent spreading everywhere
The will to save beings immovable
Forty years even, reflect back
Lotus step by step, making life beautiful...*

London, December 16, 2019

Thích Đồng Trí

thichdongtri@gmail.com

Lecturer of Philosophy Faculty in Vietnam Buddhist University, Saigon
Director of English- Vietnamese Buddhist Interpretation Center
Vietnam Buddhist Studies Institute

BẢO ANH LẠC BOOKSHELF

BOOKS IN VIETNAMESE - ENGLISH

1. *Bodhisattva and Śūnyatā in the Early and Developed Buddhist Traditions*, Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, 1st- 2nd reprint, Delhi- 7, Eastern Book Linkers, 2003–2006; Vietnam Buddhist University, 3rd reprint, 2010.
2. *Bồ- tát và Tánh Không Trong Kinh Tạng Pali và Đại Thừa (Bodhisattva and Śūnyatā in the Early and Developed Buddhist Traditions)*, Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, Delhi- 7, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc, 2005. NXB Tổng Hợp Tp HCM, 2nd- 3rd reprint, 2008 & 2010.
3. *Ban Mai Xứ Ấn (The Dawn in India)*, (3 vols.), Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, Delhi- 7, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc, 2005. Publisher Văn Hoá Sài Gòn, 2nd- 3rd reprint, 2006 & 2008.
4. *Vườn Nai- Chiếc Nôi Phật Giáo (Deer Park- The Cradle of Buddhism)*, Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, Delhi- 7, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc, 2005. NXB Phương Đông, 2nd - 3rd reprint, 2008 & 2010.
5. *Xá Lợi Của Đức Phật (The Buddha’s Relic)*, Tham Weng Yew, translated into English by Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, Delhi- 7, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc. 2003. 2nd- 3rd reprint, 2005 & 2006; NXB Tổng Hợp Tp HCM, 4th reprint, 2008.
6. *Quy Y Tam Bảo và Năm Giới (Take Refuge in the Three Gems and Keep the Five Precepts)*, Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc, Wisconsin, USA. 2008. NXB Tổng Hợp Tp HCM, 2nd - 3rd reprint, 2010 & 2014.

7. *Vòng Luân Hồi (The Cycle of Life)*, Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, NXB Phương Đông, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc. 2008. NXB Phương Đông, 2nd- 3rd- 4th reprint, 2010, 2014, & 2016.
8. *Hoa Tuyết Milwaukee (Snowflake in Milwaukee)*, Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương. NXB Văn Hoá Sài Gòn, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc. 2008.
9. *Luân Hồi trong Lăng Kính Lăng Nghiêm (The Cycle of Life in Śūraṅgama Sūtra)*, Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, NXB Văn Hoá Sài Gòn, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc, 2008. 2nd - 3rd- 4th reprint, 2012, 2014, & 2016.
10. *Nghi Thức Hộ Niệm Cầu Siêu (The Ritual for the Deceased)*, Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, Delhi- 7, Eastern Book Linkers. 2008.
11. *Quan Âm Quảng Trản, (The Commentary of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva)* Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, Publisher Phương Đông, 2010. 2nd - 3rd reprint, 2012 & 2014.
12. *Sen Nở Nơi Chốn Tử Tù (Lotus in the Prison)*, many authors, translated into English by Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, NXB Văn Hoá Sài Gòn, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc, 2010. 2nd - 3rd reprint, 2012 & 2014.
13. *Nữ Tu và Tù Nhân Hoa Kỳ (A Nun and American Inmates)*, (2 vols.), Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, NXB Văn Hóa Sài Gòn, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc, 2010. 2nd - 3rd- 4th reprint, 2011, 2014, 2016.
14. *Nếp Sống Tỉnh Thức của Đức Đạt Lai Lạt Ma Thứ XIV (The Awakened Mind of the 14th Dalai Lama)*, (2 vols.), Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, NXB Hồng Đức, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc. 2012. 2nd - 3rd reprint, 2014 & 2016.
15. *A- Hàm, Mưa pháp chuyển hóa phiền não (Agama- A Dharma Rain Transforms the Defilements)*, (2 vols.), Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, NXB Hồng Đức, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc, 2012. 2nd - 3rd reprint, 2014 & 2016.
16. *Góp Từng Hạt Nắng Perris (Collection of Sunlight in Perris)*, Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, NXB Phương Đông, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc. 2014.
17. *Pháp Ngữ của Kinh Kim Cang (The Vajracchedikā- Prajñāpāramitā- Sūtra)*, Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, NXB Phương Đông, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc, 2014. 2nd - 3rd reprint, 2015 & 2016.
18. *Tập Thơ Nhạc Nắng Lăng Nghiêm (Songs and Poems of Śūraṅgama Sunlight)*, Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, NXB Phương Đông, Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc, 2014. 2nd reprint, 2015.
19. *Chùa Việt Nam Hải Ngoại (Overseas Vietnamese Buddhist Temples)*, Vol. 2, Võ Văn Tường & Từ Hiếu Côn, translated into English by Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, Nhà Xuất Bản Hương Quê, Hoa Kỳ. 2016.
20. *Việt Nam Danh Lam Cổ Tự (The Famous Ancient Buddhist Temples in Vietnam)*, Võ Văn Tường. Translated into English by Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, NXB, Phương Nam. 2017.
21. *Rebirth Views in the Śūraṅgama Sūtra*, Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Fifth Edition, Ananda Viet Foundation, USA. 2018.
22. *The Commentary of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva*, Fourth Edition, Ananda Viet Foundation, USA. 2018.
23. *Phật Giáo- Một Bậc Đạo Sư, Nhiều Truyền Thống (Buddhism: One Teacher, Many Traditions)*, Bhikṣu Tenzin Gyatso, the fourteenth Dalai Lama and Bhikṣunī Thubten Chodron, translated into Vietnamese by Dr. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, Prajna Upadesa Foundation Publication. 2018.

24. *Nét Bút Nơi Song Cửa (Reflections at the Temple Window)*, Thích Nữ Giới Hương, NXB Hồng Đức: Tủ Sách Bảo Anh Lạc. 2018.
25. *Bản Tin Hương Sen* (Anh- Việt): Xuân, Phật Đản, Vu Lan (Hương Sen Newsletter: Spring, Buddha's Birthday, and Vu Lan, annual/ Mỗi Năm), Hương Sen Press, USA. 2019.
26. *Máy Nghe (Hương Sen Digital Mp3 Radio Speaker)*: Buddhist Lectures, Books, Articles, Songs, and Poems from Venerable TN Giới Hương (383/278 pieces), Hương Sen Buddhist Temple. 2019.
27. *Phóng Sự về Chùa Hương Sen (Introduction on Hương Sen Temple)*, USA. Executive Producer: Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Producer: Phú Tôn. 2019.
28. *Famous Words in Vietnamese- English: Danh Ngôn Nuôi Dưỡng Nhân Cách- Good Sentences Nurture a Good Manner*, collected by Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Hương Sen Press, USA. 2019.
29. *Hương Sen, Thơ và Nhạc- Lotus Fragrance, Poems, and Music* (Bilingual Language), Nguyễn Hiền Đức. English Translator: Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Hồng Đức Publishing. 2019.
30. *Cách Chuẩn Bị Chết và Giúp Người Sắp Chết- Quan Điểm Phật Giáo (Preparing for Death and Helping the Dying- A Buddhist Perspective)*, Sangye Khadro, translated into English by Thích Nữ Giới Hương. Hồng Đức Publishing. 2019.
31. *The Key Words in Vajracchedikā Sūtra*, Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Hồng Đức Publishing. 2019.
32. *Văn Hóa Đặc Sắc của Nước Nhật Bản- Exploring the Unique Culture of Japan* (Bilingual Language), Thích Nữ Giới Hương. Hồng Đức Publishing. 2019.
33. *Take Refuge in the Three Gems and Keep the Five Precepts*, Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Hương Sen Press, USA. 2019.
34. *Sống An Lạc dù Đời không Đẹp như Mơ- Live Peacefully though Life is Not Beautiful as a Dream* (Bilingual Language), Thích Nữ Giới Hương. Hồng Đức Publishing. 2019.
35. *Sārnātha - The Cradle of Buddhism in the Archeological View*, Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Hương Sen Press, USA. 2019.
36. *Hãy Nói Lời Yêu Thương- Words of Love and Understanding* (Bilingual Language), Hồng Đức Publishing. Thích Nữ Giới Hương. 2019.
37. *Văn Hóa Cổ Kim qua Hành Hương Chiêm Bái- The Ancient- Present Culture in Pilgrim* (Bilingual Language), Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Hồng Đức Publishing. 2019.
38. *Cycle of Life*, Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Hương Sen Press, USA. 2019.
39. *Nghệ Thuật Biết Sống- Art of Living* (Bilingual Language), Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Hồng Đức Publishing. 2019.
40. *Tuyển Tập Ni Giới trong Thời Hiện Đại- The Contributions of Buddhist Nuns in Modern Times* (Bilingual Language), Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Hồng Đức Publishing. 2020.
41. *Tuyển Tập 40 Năm Tu Học & Hoàng Pháp của Ni sư Giới Hương*. Thích Nữ Viên Quang, TN Viên Nhuận, TN Viên Tiến, & TN Viên Khuông, Xpress Print Publishing, USA. 2020.
42. *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service - Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*. Thích Nữ Viên Quang, TN Viên Nhuận, TN Viên Tiến, & TN Viên Khuông, Xpress Print Publishing, USA. 2020.

BUDDHIST MUSIC ALBUMS

1. *Đào Xuân Lộng Ý Kinh (The Buddha's Teachings Reflected in Cherry Flowers)*, Poems: Thích Nữ Giới Hương. Music: Nam Hưng, Volume 1, 2013.

2. *Niềm Tin Tam Bảo (Trust in the Three Gems)*, Poems: Thích Nữ Giới Hương. Music: Hoàng Y Vũ & Hoàng Quang Huế, Volume 2, 2013.
3. *Trăng Tròn Nghìn Năm Đón Chờ Ai (Who Is the Full Moon Waiting for over a Thousand Years?)*. Poems: Thích Nữ Giới Hương. Music: Võ Tá Hân, Hoàng Y Vũ, Khánh Hải, Khánh Hoàng, Hoàng Kim Anh, Linh Phương và Nguyễn Tuấn, Volume 3, 2013.
4. *Ánh Trăng Phật Pháp (Moonlight of Dharma- Buddha)*. Poems: Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Music: Uy Thi Ca & Giác An, Volume 4, 2013.
5. *Bình Minh Tỉnh Thức (Awakened Mind at the Dawn: Piano Variations for Meditation)*. Poems: Thích Nữ Giới Hương. Solo Pianist: Linh Phương, Volume 5, 2013.
6. *Tiếng Hát Già Lam (Songs from the Temple)*. Poems: Thích Nữ Giới Hương. Music: Nam Hưng, Volume 6, 2015.
7. *Cảnh Đẹp Chùa Xưa (The Magnificent, Ancient Buddhist Temple)*. Poem: Thích Nữ Giới Hương. Music: Võ Tá Hân, Nam Hưng, Hoàng Quang Huế, Volume 7, 2015.
8. *Karaoke Hoa Ưu Đàm Đã Nở (An Udumbara Flower Is Blooming)*, Poem: Thích Nữ Giới Hương and Musician Nam Hưng, Hương Sen Temple, 2015.
9. *Hương Sen Ca (Hương Sen's Songs)*, Thơ: Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Nhạc: Nam Hưng, Volume 9, năm 2018.
10. *Về Chùa Vui Tu (Happily Go to Temple for Spiritual Practices)*, Poem: Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Music: Nam Hưng & Nguyễn Hà, Volume 10, 2018.
11. *Gọi Nắng Xuân Về (Call the Spring Sunlight)*, Poem: Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Music: Nam Hưng, Hương Sen Temple, Volume 11, 2020.











2. 3. RIDE THE DHARMA BOAT

Namo Sakyamuni Buddha.

I remember at the end of 2005, she came from India to the United States, and after that the Most Venerable Mãn Giác appointed her as the abbess of Phước Hậu Pagoda, Wisconsin. Due to sickness, the Most Venerable Mãn Giác sent Venerable Như Minh and me (the most Venerable Phước Thuận), who replaced him to attend her Enthronement Ceremony (2006) and other important ceremonies in Wisconsin. In 2010, seeing that her predestined relationship with cold Wisconsin was done, she wanted to move to warm California. Once again, I on behalf of the late Venerable Mãn Giác (who passed away in 2006), asked permission from Phước Hậu Association for her to leave.

After nearly ten years in California, she worked hard to pursue her studies and graduated with a bachelor of arts degree from the University of California, Riverside. In addition, she also established a temple to help nuns and laypeople have a place to live and learn Buddhism. She is gifted at writing, so she has written and translated many books in both Vietnam and the United States. I am very happy to see her and her nun disciples at Hương Sen Temple trying to share the Dharma abroad.

The mind appears in the meditative moon
Deep gratitude for living in life
Without words but abundant inner words
Engaging with the world, but without leaving emptiness.

(Tuệ Thiền)

On the occasion of Hương Sen Pagoda collecting articles for *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service - Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*, I wish that she and all her nuns have good and strong lives, so that they can ride the Buddha Dharma boat everywhere. May the Triple Gem and the guardian deities' support for the main hall of Hương Sen Pagoda be soon accomplished.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Trí Phước Pagoda, Santa Ana, November 24, 2019

The Most Venerable Thích Phước Thuận



The Most Venerable Phước Thuận in a red robe at the Vu Lan Festival at Hương Sen Temple



Visiting Hương Sen Temple, 2019



Hương Sen Red Bridge

2. 4. A LETTER TO VENERABLE BHIKKHUNI GIỚI HƯƠNG THE PRECIOUS DHARMA

1. If anyone listens to, reads, and recites **the precious Dharma** with a sincere heart, he/she will gain blessings for many lives.
2. If anyone practices **the precious Dharma** very devotedly, he/she will surely shorten the path of rebirths and be peaceful at present.
3. If anyone creates unconditionally the good way for those to listen, read, recite, and practice **the precious Dharma**, he/she is a Bodhisattva appearing in life for the sake of many.

Not only monks and nuns, but also lay Buddhist people can share the promotion of Dharma.

Vạn Hạnh University was founded in 1963 as a center of culture, education, language, journalism, society and sharing as well as practicing **the precious Dharma**.

At that time it was a difficult time, the lotus flowers were submerged under the muddy water, waiting for opportunities to sprout up.



*The Most Venerable Thái Siêu (seated leftmost), Bhikkhuni Giới Hương (third from left)
at a retreat at the International Buddhist Institute, Los Angeles, July 27, 2013*

There were faceless sacrifices and vast enthusiasm, and the blood and sweat shed by the Lạc Việt silently rebuilt the country.

The Advanced Buddhist Institute was born, and the most Venerable Thích Minh Châu became the Director.

At that time, Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương was part of the younger nuns' generation. She realized that life is impermanent and has a moral sense in her heart, so she devoted herself to making her life as meaningful it is today.

Quảng Đức Bodhisattva's heart is an example of compassion.

The fire of Quảng Hương Bodhisattva is the light of wisdom.

The departure to the other world by schoolgirl Quách Thị Trang is a courageous way of life.

The Vietnamese people, Vietnamese homeland, and Vietnamese Buddhism are three but one, one but three: accompanying each other in miserable degeneration and sharing happiness with one another when there is peace and prosperity.

Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương has passed through forty years of the holy life and is still continuing on the path: "The road is not difficult as the river is separated from the mountain, but it is difficult as we are afraid of the rivers and mountains" (Nguyễn Bá Học). She has now succeeded in three areas: Buddhist Studies, writing, and translation.

More than forty books have been published; this number is not few, which contributes to not only diversifying **the precious Dharma** but also bringing a lot of fresh fragrance to Vietnamese culture and the Vietnamese people, in the homeland as well as overseas.

Please read each page of her manuscripts to see how much hard work and effort Ven. Giới Hương has exerted!

Here are some simple words praising her merits and achievements.

Congratulations to Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and the nuns at Hương Sen Pagoda for achieving dreams and taking actions in transmitting the mission of the Tathagata's messengers.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Đại Bảo Trang Nghiêm

Sakyamuni Buddha's Enlightenment Day

Hayward, January 2, 2020

The Most Venerable Thích Thái Siêu

General Director of Education Department

In the United Buddhist Sangha in the USA

thaisieu@yahoo.com

2. 5. A TRAIN MOVING ON RAILS

America is not a paradise to collect money as some people feel. Heaven or not heaven is due to each individual case. Each country has its pros and cons, suitable or inappropriate for each individual. The bliss realm of Amitabha Buddha or the Nirvana state of the arahant is absolutely perfect, serene, immaculate and pure. However, in this modern United States of America, if we work hard, adapt and promote, there are many opportunities for advancement and achievement.

There is a saying that “*Life is like a train moving on rails. You are never allowed to turn back, only forward.*” I sincerely wish Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, the nuns and Buddhist followers use their youth and energy to sow holy seeds in this Perris semi- desert region of Southern California. May the Dharma train of Hương Sen Pagoda always move forward, bringing the Blessed One's happy message to everyone, domestic or overseas, regardless of skin or religion.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Los Angeles, March 1, 2020

Yours sincerely,

The Most Venerable Thích Như Minh

Abbot of Vietnam Temple

ddaiphuong_dp@hotmail.com



*Ven. Như Minh (far left), Ven. Pháp Chánh,
Ven. Trí Đức (next) attend the ceremony; Bhikkhuni Giới Hương
hits the bell, Hương Sen Temple in 2013*



*The Thirteenth Death Anniversary of the Most Venerable Thích Mãn Giác,
President of Vietnam United Buddhist Churches in America,
Việt Nam Temple, Los Angeles, 2019*



*The Most Venerable Như Minh (corner left) and Bhikkhuni Giới Hương
(far left with gray scarf) in the Fellowship Buddhist Conference
at Anaheim, California, December 15, 2019*

2. 6. THE MOON FOLLOWS THE STARRY PATH

With the intelligent, the wise, the learned,
the enduring, the dutiful, and the Ariya
with a man of such virtue and intellect should one associate,
as the moon [follows] the starry path.

Dhammapada, Verse 208^[1]

On the occasion of Hương Sen Pagoda making a commemorative book of collected writings, *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service - Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*, I, nuns, monks and lay Buddhist people from Bát Nhã Monastery would like to wish you, your nun disciples, and Buddhist followers to practice diligently, live with dignity, and live peacefully.

You allow liberation to always shine in this world.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Santa Ana, Southern California, February 27, 2020

The Most Venerable Nguyễn Trí
Abbot of Bát Nhã Monastery
batnhacali@yahoo.com



*Cutting cake to celebrate long life for the Most Venerable Nguyễn Trí
on the Buddha's Birthday, May 19, 2019*

1. Dhammapada, Verse 208, Vietnamese translation by Most Venerable Thích Minh Châu, Vietnam Research Institute, TpHCM. 1991. <http://www.buddhismtoday.com/viet/kinh/pali/phapcu1.htm>



*Left: Rev. Viên Tiến, Ven. Giới Hương, the Most Ven. Nguyễn Trí,
and Rev. Liên Hiếu at Bát Nhã Monastery, January 4, 2020*

2. 7. WORDS FOR THE NEW YEAR

In the forty- year process of renunciation and monastic training, Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương ordained in Vietnam, then traveled to India to study for the purpose of expanding the knowledge, keeping the lineage of the Buddha Dharma, and bringing the teachings of the Buddha throughout this world in order to repay her gratitude to the Three Jewels, Master, ancestors, Buddhists, parents and patrons who have nurtured and supported her so far. After that, the predestined relationship opened, and she came to settle down in the United States of America to propagate the Dharma and establish Hương Sen Temple in the semi- desert of Perris, California. This is appointed by the Buddha and her noble vow to spread Buddhism in remote areas clearly shows that she is not afraid of hardship and are willing to sacrifice.

She is very active, spending a lot of time studying, composing, building the temple and helping the nuns. As the Buddha's disciple, wherever we have to serve sentient beings, we go there, but don't go beyond our reach- we remember to keep our health. If you're feeling good, if you find it helpful to life according to your ability and knowledge, do it now, don't postpone it. (A few words from someone who is senior and came to America before you.)

She will be a powerful hand and a great help to the nun Saṅgha in the United States and other regions, so that Dharma will shine. She presents a bhikkhuni lifestyle of diligence and dignity in a foreign land. She has numerous Buddhist works in the United States and abroad. This high ideal is high appreciated by many and is always a good role model for young nuns.

Finally, under the sunlight of the Lunar New Year 2020, I congratulate you and your nuns at Hương Sen Temple. May you all gain more health, more diligent practice, more facilities in your temple, and may all your dreams be achieved as expected, especially that the monastic fold will be developed day by day in order that you bring Buddhism to life.

Namo the Future Birth Maitreya Buddha.

Huệ Quang Pagoda on February 16, 2020

The Abbot of Huệ Quang Pagoda
The Most Venerable Thích Minh Mẫn



The summer retreat at Huệ Quang Pagoda in 2017



Bhikkhuni Giới Hương (second from right) with nuns sending wishes of a Happy New Year to the Most Venerable Minh Mẫn (sitting) on February 16, 2020



Ven. Minh Mẫn (middle standing) reads the Vinaya rules for the summer retreat, Bhikkhunī Giới Hương (first right), at Huệ Quang Pagoda, Southern California

2. 8. THE DIGNITY OF HƯƠNG SEN

Dear Venerable Bhikkhunī Giới Hương,

I have a few words of encouragement. I respect you very much. You have a spirit up beyond the body. I know that in America, it is difficult to succeed. You must overcome many challenges to make “the fragrance smells far from the motherland, to the low grass, and up to the high mount peak.”

Establishing the Buddha's inheritance is not easy, but you do not hesitate to do many things, such as writing books, teaching, building temples and promoting Buddhist culture in a foreign land.

You created a solemn temple to raise nuns to repay the Three Jewels. I think you have a strong iron liver and a generous heart, covering for many old and young nuns to live at Hương Sen. Your heart is not small because the nuns of Hương Sen are in the hands of your tolerance.

The photos of Hương Sen Temple show the Zen Garden with two beautiful red bridges, a majestic Quan Âm monument, and the solemn Buddha statue on natural rocks interspersed with big tree shadows. There are young and old nuns like a big team of valiant soldiers using shovels and hoes to level the soil, along with mowing grass, sweeping the yard, and so forth. With such a commitment, the Buddha Hall's construction will soon be completed to turn out a majestic nunnery where the nun Saṅgha continues their duties.

At the door of the New Year 2020, the Mouse Year, wishing that you and the nuns have 365 peaceful days and the temple's works are fully achieved.

Just a few brief words for the collection of your fortieth anniversary of study and service to Buddhism- an abbess of Hương Sen Temple, Perris City, California

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

The Full moon of first month, California

February 8, 2020

The Most Venerable Thích Tâm Vân

venthichtamvan@yahoo.com



*Hòa Thượng Tâm Vân (số 2 từ phải) tại Tu Viện Đại Bi
ngày 22 tháng 02 năm 2020*



*First row from left: the Most Venerable Viên Lý, the Most Venerable Tâm Vân and Venerable Tâm Thành.
Third row from left: Bhikkhunī Giới Hương and Hương Sen's Nuns
at Rose Hill Hall, Los Angeles, August 11, 2019*



Nuns walking on Red Bridge in Hương Sen back yard February 3, 2020



Nuns leveling soil at Hương Sen yard on February 3, 2020

2. 9. VICTORY OVER OURSELVES IS THE GREATEST

Our lives are shaped by our own minds. We will become what we think. The one who conquers himself is a thousand times greater than one who conquers thousands on the battlefield as the Buddha taught in the Dhammapada:

*Though one should conquer
a million men in battle,
yet he indeed is the noblest victor,
who has conquered himself.*

Dhammapada, Verse 103^[1]

On March 22, 2020, Hương Sen Temple will hold a celebration for Venerable Giới Hương's many years of service to the Dharma. The disciples of Hương Sen Temple will make a book of collected writings available, *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service - Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*.

I am happy to write a few words for this memorial book. I sincerely wish for Ven. Giới Hương and her nuns to always be strong in subduing the mind to increase self-awareness. Then, you can help others to be awakened, like the Blessed One did after mastering his mind under a bodhi tree. Naturally, beings in the three thousand worlds and in the human realm, people from many places came to take refuge in him. Even today all five continents over the world search to learn the “wonderful method-how to conquer the mind for the Buddha.”

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Đại Nhật Như Lai Pagoda, San Jose, March 2, 2020

Sincerely,

The Most Venerable Thích Thông Đạt

Thongdat72@yahoo.com

1. *Dhammapada, Verse 103, translated into English by the Most Venerable Narada, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1963, 1971.*
<https://thuvienhoasen.org/a10361/07-pham-a-la-han-the-worthy-103>



*Left on: Rev. Viên Tiến, Ven. Thông Đạt (center),
Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, Quảng Hồng, Quảng Dũng, Quảng Hoa, Quảng Linh,
and Buddhists at Đại Nhật Như Lai Pagoda, San Jose, May 2018*



*Rev. Viên Trang, Rev. Viên Chân, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương,
Ven. Thiện Thái, Ven. Thông Đạt, Rev. Liên Tạng, Rev. Liên Hiếu
and Rev. Viên Tiến at Hương Sen Temple, Perris, in 2019*

2. 10. OFFERING GOLDEN HANDWRITTEN WORDS TO EACH OTHER

Tặng Offering gold handwritten words to each other
Nhau Temple rings every bell, sounds far away
Hương Fragrance sweet, fragrant smells in the saha realm,
Sen Lotus yellow lotus pistil sprouting pink petals,
Ni Venerable nun chanting the Buddha's teaching
Sư Bhikhuni preaching Dharma music for life,
Giới precepts and concentration adding to wisdom,
Hương incense reflected throughout the ten directions,
Forty years have gone by quickly,
A lifetime passing by like a glance
Today offering gold handwritten words to a soulmate,
A smile remains on the lips.

Garden Grove, Southern California, December 21, 2019

Abbot of Huệ Nghiêm Temple

Yours sincerely,

The Most Venerable Thích Minh Trí

(Tiny novice Cao Nguyên)



Ven. Thích Minh Trí, wearing a yellow wool hat and glasses (sitting on the right)

2. 11. PRAISING THE CONDUCT OF VENERABLE BHIKKHUNI THICH NU GIỚI HƯƠNG

Namo Sakyamuni Buddha.

Dear Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương,

I hear that Bhikkhuni Giới Hương settled down in United States (in September 2015) and from that day has been working very hard, learning at a university, visiting prisons, setting up temples, raising nuns, leading pilgrims in other countries, teaching Buddhism, writing books, making poems, and so on. I am very happy to see that she is one of the nuns who are engaged in society actively for Buddhism overseas. Praise her deeds!

I have invited her a few times to come to An Lạc Temple, San Jose, to lead a retreat and teach Buddhism. Buddhist followers at An Lac Pagoda love it because she preaches very simply and practically in life. She gives many actual examples to help Buddhists, who can then approach and understand numerous problems and difficult topics. In 2017, she also invited me to Hương Sen Pagoda to attend the Buddha's Birthday Ceremony and to be the Most Venerable Bhikkhuni Master leading the Samaneri, Bodhisattva Precepts, and the Five Precept Ordinations for nearly one hundred people. On August 30, 2019, she and I, together with many other nuns in California side by side, organized the first Memorial Ceremony of Nun Patriarch Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī. The ceremony successfully marked this historic women's event in the United States. Hopefully, we will continue to maintain it each year. I hope that she with all nuns in America will remember it in order to maintain and develop the nun's sangha, because I was old and weak now.

Tathagata's disciples execute his missions
Succeeding him to share sacred Buddhism
Fulfilling the role of pedagogical teachers to open the intellectual stores
Connecting the lineage of the holy path leading beings.

On the occasion of commemorating the collection of writings, *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service - Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*, I wish that she and all her disciple nuns who live in her temple have good fortune and integrity, always keep the beautiful images of the descendants of Nun Patriarch Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, and also always have good support for the main hall construction to be completed, as desired.

Namo Nun Patriarch Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī proved.

An Lạc Pagoda, San Jose, November 24, 2019

Chief Nun's Sangha, The Most Venerable Nguyễn Thanh
anlactu1647@gmail.com





*Venerable Bhikkhuni Nguyễn Thanh in center (with a yellow hat)
with all nuns at Hương Sen Pagoda on May 21, 2017*



*Venerable Bhikkhuni Nguyễn Thanh (center, hands wearing blue chain)
with nuns chanting outdoors in the courtyard of Hương Sen Pagoda*

2. 12. DISCIPLES OF THE NUN PATRIARCH MAHĀPAJĀPATĪ GOTAMĪ

Namo Sakyamuni Buddha

Dear Venerable Bhikkhunī Giới Hương,

In 1986, I settled down in the United States and in 1987, I rented a house to use as a small temple in Seattle, Washington. In 1993 we moved to the new place established as Vạn Hạnh Pagoda and we are still there. Time passes fast; thirty- four years flew by as quick as a flash with many experiences of ups and downs.

I realized that nuns who set up temples, go to school, receive the ordained, and propagate Buddhism in the United States face more difficulties and obstacles than nuns in Vietnam. Venerable Bhikkhunī Giới Hương is one of the nuns who have had favorable conditions to share Dharma in the United States. Surely you must be very persistent, overcoming many challenges to achieve the results seen today.

I have a good impression of you because our names have nearly similar pronunciation (I am Giác Hương while you are Giới Hương). I am also glad to see that you make a good name for the honorable daughters of Sakyamuni Buddha. You are worthy to be a great disciple of the Nun Patriarch Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī.

On the occasion of the anniversary of forty years of studying and service in Dharma, I wish for you, the other nuns and the Saṅgha abroad to try our best in keeping our initial renunciate vows, whether we are in Vietnam or overseas. This is the Buddha and Patriarch's conduct.

Namo the Great Nun Patriarch Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī.

Spring of Mouse Year, Seattle, January 19, 2020

Abbess of Vạn Hạnh Pagoda
The Most Venerable Giác Hương



From left: Bhikkhu Thiên Đức, Bhikkhunī Giới Hương and the Most Venerable Giác Hương at Vạn Hạnh Pagoda, Seattle, January 19, 2020



Front side of Vạn Hạnh Buddha Hall



*Ven. Giác Hương (sitting) and Bhikkhuni Giới Hương (kneeling)
at Vạn Hạnh Pagoda, Seattle on January 19, 2020*

2. 13. THE MERIT OF SHARING BUDDHISM

I met Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương for the first time on April 17, 2008, when I came to teach at Phước Hậu Pagoda. At that time, she was the abbess in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA. That day, I went to lecture with Thích Đồng Văn (currently abbot of Phổ Bảo Pagoda, Munich, Germany).

Every year, the most Venerable Thích Như Điển, abbot of Viên Giác Pagoda in Hannover, Germany, organizes a mission to the United States and Canada. That year (2008), I had the opportunity to accompany his delegation, which was held from March 11 to May 13, 2008. When the delegation arrived in Chicago, it stayed at Trúc Lâm Pagoda (under the late Most Venerable Abbot Thích Hạnh Tuấn, who passed away in 2015). From there, Ven. Thích Như Điển sent me and Ven. Đồng Văn to preach at Phước Hậu Pagoda (which is far, about a two- hour drive).

That afternoon, Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and two other nuns drove down to Trúc Lâm Temple to pick Ven. Đồng Văn and me up. On the way to Phước Hậu Pagoda, she took both of us on a round of a Milwaukee city tour, and she avidly played the role of tour guide introducing the surrounding scenery. She also did not forget to tell the reason why Buddhists here invited her to be the abbess of Phước Hậu Pagoda, after she graduated with a doctoral degree in Buddhist Studies in India in 2005.

I was impressed by Bhikkhuni Giới Hương's humble manner because during the two- hour Dharma talk that day (from 7 pm to 9 pm, Ven. Đồng Văn preached an hour and I preached the next hour), she sat there to attend and listen to the Dharma with local Buddhists. This is a rare act for an abbess or abbot because she/he is always busy with many works for the temple and rarely sits down to listen to entire lectures with the disciples. But here, she sat and focused on the lectures. This means that she is mainly encouraging the disciples to take advantage of the short time in this life to study about Buddhism and experience with monks, to diligently practice before it's too late.

I think Bhikkhuni Giới Hương has a predestined relationship: she ordained with the Most Venerable Hải Triều Âm from a young age and must have been taught and trained well by her teacher, since she has become such a successful, virtuous nun honoring the late Venerable Hải Triều Âm.

Since 1999, from the time she was still studying in India, she often contacted me to send collaborative articles to the Quang Duc website. I did not have the opportunity to meet her up to 2008. Please see the page of her works at this link:



<https://quangduc.com/author/post/40/1/ns- thich- nu- gioi- huong?o=0>

It can be said that she is one of the few Vietnamese Buddhist nuns with the gift of writing. She has written and translated very well; she is honored as the one who has the most published works today.

On December 15, 2019, the committee on Records of Global Vietnamese People officially awarded her as the "American- Vietnamese female doctorate who has written and translated the most Buddhist publications. " Vietnamese Buddhism in the United States was accorded such pride and honor!

Indeed, Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương deserves to be awarded the title because wherever and whenever she goes, she also embraces the dream of "waking up to support a culture. " The desire and aspiration has now become a reality as she has established two Hương Sen Pagodas, one in Bình Chánh, Saigon, Vietnam and the other in Perris City, California, USA. In addition, she also founded Bảo Anh Lạc Bookcase and the website Huongsentemple. com to disseminate the Buddha's teachings.

In November 2012, Ven. Giới Hương came to Australia to attend the Grand Patriarch Sixth Ceremony of Returning to Roots at Pháp Hoa Monastery, Adelaide, South Australia. On this occasion, the abbot, Venerable Thích Tâm Phương, and I invited her to visit and preach at the Eight Precept Retreat at Quảng Đức Monastery. Our Buddhist followers here were very happy to receive her two Dharma talks and were even happier when she offered many dharma gifts, such as scriptures, DVDs, and the Buddhist music she has composed.

On this occasion of the disciples of Hương Sen Temple celebrating the 40th anniversary of the study and service in the Dharma by Ven. Giới Hương, I would like to write a couple of lines to praise the merit of the Dharma sharing by Ven. Giới Hương, who has great dedication in this life. The Western proverb says, "Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety- nine percent perspiration, " which is right for her. Just forty years of "engaging in Buddhist works here and there, " but she has done so many things worth admiring, such as building temples, raising nun disciples, translating books, composing poems, giving lectures everywhere, and guiding pilgrimages for worship, etc. Master Hải Triều Âm in the far- away realm may smile happily when she sees one of her disciples gaining such professional accomplishments.

Once again, please congratulate her and praise her merits and contributions to turning the Dharma wheel in this life. May the Buddha bless her, may she always be happy and peaceful, and may she create many more works for Vietnamese Buddhist literature.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

*Writing at Quảng Đức Monastery, Melbourne
December 18, 2019*

Senior Venerable Thích Nguyên Tạng
Abbot of Quảng Đức Monastery
General Secretary of Overseas Vietnamese Buddhist Temples
in Australia - TTL
quangduc@quangduc. com



*Venerable Nguyễn Tạng and Bhikkhuni Giới Hương
at Phước Hậu Temple, Wisconsin, in 2008*



*Venerable Nguyễn Tạng teaching at Phước Hậu Pagoda (2008),
which was headed by Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*



Ven. Giới Hương gave a lecture at Quảng Đức Monastery in 2012







*Visit the Most Venerable Thích Huyền Tôn
at Bảo Vương Lăng Nghiêm Temple, Australia, in 2012*



Visit Ven. Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Như Tuyết, at Diệu Âm Temple, Australia, in 2012

2. 14. A BRIGHT FUTURE

Namo Sakyamuni Buddha.

Dear Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and Nuns,

On the occasion of commemorating the making of *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service - Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương* in English and Vietnamese, I would like to wish you and your nuns much good fortune on your path of establishing Hương Sen Temple and sharing the philosophy of the Buddha to everyone, especially overseas, where the cultures and languages are different from ours.

“Don’t be afraid of moving forward. The future is bright. ”

Vigorously move forward. A beautiful future is waiting!

Van Hanh Monastery, October 28, 2019

With metta,

Venerable Thích Tâm Đức

thaytamduc@gmail.com

Vice Rector, Vietnam Buddhist University in HCMC

Cum Dean of the Buddhist English Department

Vice President of Vietnam Buddhist Research Institute



*Venerable Thích Tâm Đức (the tallest in the center)
with other lecturers on December 20, 2018*



Venerable Prof. Thích Tâm Đức, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương (eleventh and ninth from the left, row two) with the lecturers and students of the Department of Buddhism in English Course, December 2018



Sharing cake to celebrate a graduation event



Visiting Hương Sen Temple

2. 15. A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Anyone who has been born and raised must take steps on the perpetual journey of the continuum of life. Therefore, the poet sees himself as a traveler who roams along the way and then gets puffed up in the fantasy of the impermanent world: "Wandering from all eternity, meeting from the time of reincarnation."

Our brothers in the three regions (North, Center and South) have long wandered on the "S" shape of Vietnam's land, as these two lines well describe: "A long time we are voyagers; day by day we are far from our homeland, a thousand miles." And then we gathered to learn together at the Second Course of the Advanced Buddhist Institute (now called Vietnam Buddhist University) in HCM City.

After passing through a long period of nearly five years (1988–1992) of learning "love and understanding," the day of graduation came; everyone knew that it was just the end of a journey that had no final destination. Because after completing the bachelor's program of this course, we depended on our goodwill, and each person continued the journey in his/her own way.

But life always has value appearing from the amazing movement inherent in life. When one door closes, another door opens. On the way ahead, there is a new, welcoming prospect; above our heads, there is the immense sky; and on the immense ground, there are a thousand turning paths for the steady, firm steps of each person.

At that time, through the friendly cooperative relationship between Vietnam and India, along with the prestige of the President, the Late Venerable Thich Minh Chau, and the Vice President, the Late Venerable Thich Chon Thien, the monastic students of the Second and Third Course, respectively, of the Advanced Buddhist Institute were allowed to go abroad to study at the Buddha's place, India, at the higher levels, such as master's, doctorates, and post- doctoral work in Buddhist Studies.

Among the brothers and sisters at that time, there was Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương of the second course, who went to study abroad in India like many others. At the institute, classmates knew Bhikkhuni Giới Hương as the type of person who diligently studied everywhere, taking every advantage of the breaks to search for each word definition (to save time, she rarely joined the holiday trips that were organized by the institute).

Like a hardworking bee seeking flowers, sucking nectar, and then giving fragrance to life, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương enthusiastically completed a bachelor's degree in Buddhist Studies in 1992, then a bachelor's in Vietnamese literature in 1994. Yes! With a fairly solid foundation, she confidently went to study in India with the desire to acquire Buddhist knowledge and practice the Buddha's teachings. It was a new beginning for a new path on the endless journey to the world of freedom, peace, and liberation, for which anyone who is a disciple of Buddha must hope, aspire, and wait.

Ten years of living and experiencing life in India, the root of the foundation of Buddhism: it was neither long nor short but was extremely important for a human life. It was this time that made her "grow and mature," and then in 2003, she graduated with a PhD in Buddhist philosophy from Delhi University. Perhaps this was also the happiest time because she fulfilled the highest academic degree and actuated her practice at the Buddha's holy place as her dream.

She did not stop at that level of journey; life has many paths, and it is difficult to foresee them. After India, she had the destiny to go far to a new land to practice. She settled in the United States in 2005. In that foreign land, from the first days, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương also strived to overcome difficulties in order to learn, preach, and cultivate, so that the fragrance of sweet fruits could be gained.

In 2015, she graduated with a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Riverside, and she is currently pursuing a master's degree at the university. It seems that no matter where she lives, whatever the language or culture, her aspiration keeps lighting up to build her wisdom as spiritual food for her to take firm steps forward in her life.

Perhaps that is Bhikkhuni Giới Hương's character and manner on the journey of perpetual introspection towards the peaceful land with the full scent of precepts- meditation- wisdom. Therefore, reflecting on this journey, it sometimes seems to be without starting and end points to her.

Last but not least, forty years of renunciation and service is also a forty- year duration of studying and sharing the Buddha's scriptures. In 2000, she founded Hương Sen Pagoda, Binh Chanh, Saigon (Vietnam) and in 2010 and until today, she has established and is the abbess of Hương Sen Pagoda, Perris City, California, United States. Up to now, she alone shared time between the two temples, whose distance apart is halfway around the earth, but her Dharma echoing in the two ashrams seems very near. Of further interest, she has also actively been involved in teaching at the Vietnam Buddhist University in Ho Chi Minh City as well. Perhaps the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and heavenly dharma protectors were very happy to support her often, so Bhikkhuni Giới Hương "depended on her case" to engage in Buddha's work vigorously, without tiring.

How much merit and how many accomplishments have been manifested in her Bảo Anh Lạc Bookcase, which includes forty research works on Buddhist culture, literature, history, music, and so on, composed in bilingual English- Vietnamese, published and reprinted many times for the sake of readers. The time of forty years in this life- and- death stream is really precious, and it is more precious with the impressive presence of her forty works.

Perhaps this is the reason why people who live in the religion love the monastic life. Her monastic students and nun disciples love her and want to ask her to implement the forty- first publication for readers near and far, *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service- Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*, as the end of a spiritual road on the endless journey for monastics studying and practicing Buddhism.

Suddenly, I remember clearly the words of Zen Master Nhat Hanh: "Don't know how to play in the Pure Land, / Being a human is not done in a lifetime. ”

Vietnam Buddhist University, November 18, 2019

Bhikkhu Thích Phước Đạt

minhdang0112@yahoo. com

Deputy Director of Vietnam Buddhist Studies Research
Institute, HCMC

Cum Director of Vietnam Buddhist Literature Research Center,

Deputy Director of Vietnam Buddhist University, HCMC

Cum Head of Vietnamese Buddhism Department

Member of Executive Committee of Vietnam Literature
Research Association, HCMC



Bhikkhu Phước Đạt and Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, April 14, 2019



*The entire class of course II visits the Late Most Venerable T Minh Châu
at the Vietnamese Buddhist University at Campus 1*

2. 16. VENERABLE BHIKKHUNI GIỚI HƯƠNG: A VIGOROUSLY ACTIVE NUN IN MODERN TIMES

Dear Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương,

I came to know you while we studied in Delhi University, India (1995–2005). During this time, we- around one hundred student monks and nuns- often gathered every half- month to chant the precepts (pātimokkha) at the Tibetan Temple (near Redford) and we had a small group (more than ten people) to discuss Dharma in workshops. Our group included Master Minh Thành, Master Bửu Chánh, myself (Ven. Nhật Từ), Master Thiện Hữu, Bhikkhuni Tường Liên, Bhikkhuni Vân Liên, Bhikkhuni Hằng Liên, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, Bhikkhuni Liễu Pháp, and Mrs. Tâm. We practiced to present each chapter in our thesis to the group, who could give ideas to make it better. We started to install a website and composed a Buddhist dictionary, and so on. After graduating, I returned to Vietnam to share the Dharma, while you continued to study and settled down in California, United States.

I occasionally went to the United States to preach and deliver lectures at your temple. I learned that you made efforts to study continuously at University of California, Riverside and graduated with an honors bachelor of arts degree. To graduate from a US university and obtain a US scholarship is a big challenge that you overcame. Besides going

to university, you also engaged in preaching at prisons, churches, schools, pagodas, and public places to convey the liberated teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha as well as introduce Asian culture, specifically the Vietnamese one, for the sake of overseas Vietnamese- Americans and local American communities.

You also made great efforts in writing and establishing Bảo Anh Lạc Bookshelf (please visit the website, huongsentemple. com) with forty English- Vietnamese works by the end of this 2019 year and the Hương Sen Newsletter (published three times a year), which is bilingual English- Vietnamese. You also bought a vast piece of land to establish Hương Sen Pagoda, where you have ten nun disciples and many lay Buddhist followers. From 2016 to the present, every year you have spent the last four months of the year returning to Vietnam to teach a Dharma- English course at the Vietnam Buddhist University in Ho Chi Minh City, to share the knowledge and experience of monastic practice with young student monks and nuns.

On the occasion of the collection of Vietnamese- English writings, Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service- Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, I would like to write a short introduction



*TT Nhật Từ và Ni Sư Giới Hương
vào ngày 06/12/2019
Ngày Kỷ Niệm 35 Năm Thành Lập HVPGVN*

about you. On the experience base of your knowledge and practice, you have enthusiastically and actively used many means to bring the beauty of Buddhism to life in modern times. There is a saying: “Success comes only to those who strongly believe in themselves and are prepared to win. Good luck.” It means achievement comes only to those who heartily trust in themselves and strive in dedication to others.

I would like to wish you and your nun disciples enjoyment of good health and more contributions to Buddhism in general and the nuns’ Sangha in particular.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Giác Ngộ Pagoda, October 11, 2019

With metta,

Ven. Dr. Thích Nhật Từ

thichnhattu@gmail.com

Abbot of Giác Ngộ Pagoda, Third District, HCM City

Vice Rector, Vietnam Buddhist University in HCMC

Cum Dean of the Philosophy Department

General Secretary of Vietnam Buddhist Research Institute

Deputy General Secretary of the Sangha Affairs

Cum Chairman of Culture Department

in Vietnam Buddhist Sangha in HCMC

Vice President of the World Accessory Alliance

on Buddhist Culture



Venerable Nhật Từ introducing Bhikkhuni Giới Hương before her lecture at Giác Ngộ Pagoda, 2018



2. 17. OVERCOME HARDSHIP

Namo Sakyamuni Buddha.

Dear Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương,

From 2010 to the present, I have had the opportunity to accompany the delegation with Venerable Giới Hương to attend the Sixth Ceremony of Returning to Roots at Viên Đức Monastery (Ravensburg, Germany), to join the summer course with her at the International Buddhist Institute (Phật Học Viện Quốc Tế), Niệm Phật Đường Fremont, Huệ Quang Pagoda, Bảo Quang Pagoda, and Điều Ngự Temple, and to attend the North American Retreat, Vesak, Vu Lan ceremonies, and community rituals at Southern California pagodas, so I as well as many monastics already know that Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương is a highly qualified scholar nun with a doctorate in Buddhist philosophy, a bachelor's degree in literature, and the outstanding aspiration to share the Dharma, which are very encouraged.

From 1975 up to now, the first generation of nuns is counted as the chief Venerable Bhikkhuni Nguyễn Thanh (An Lạc Pagoda), Venerable Bhikkhuni Diệu Từ (Diệu Quang Pagoda), Venerable Bhikkhuni Như Hòa (Dược Sư Pagoda), and Venerable Bhikkhuni Giác Hương (Vạn Hạnh Pagoda). We regard Venerable Giới Hương (Hương Sen Temple) as part of the second- generation nuns' Sangha, along with other nuns in the US such as Venerable Giới Châu (Quang Minh Pagoda), Venerable Nguyễn Thiện (Huyền Không Pagoda), Venerable Thanh Lương (Viên Thông Pagoda), Venerable Như Phước (Đức Viên Pagoda), Venerable Tiến Liên (Tinh Xả Ngọc Hòa), and so on. They demonstrate many advantages and efforts to engage in integration into the environment and possess American academic training to adapt to a new culture.

In the current situation in the US, new immigrant people often experience challenges going to school, establishing temples, maintaining the temples, teaching the local residents far and near, in prison or in society, inside or outside the country, leading pilgrimages, and so forth. There are countless difficulties that she is committed to overcome.

I am very pleased to have congratulated her on forty years of devotion to Buddhism. On this anniversary of *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service - Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*, I wish her good health and aspirations; please continue to overcome all difficulties and challenges and achieve the ideal to save sentient beings.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Staton, California, December 18, 2019

Sincerely,

Senior Venerable Tâm Thành

Abbot of Phật Quan Âm Zen Monastery

thichtamthanh@gmail.com



Right on: Ven. Tâm Thành, Ven. Quảng Thanh, Ven. Bhikkhuni Diệu Từ, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương (far left) in Vu Lan Ceremony, Phật Quan Âm Thiền Tự Temple in 2017



Ven. Tâm Thành, Rev. Tín Mãn, Rev. Thiện Đạo and Bhikkhuni Giới Hương as the examiners in the competition of Lạc Pháp Buddhist Youth Association, California in 2012



Senior Venerable Tâm Thành standing, Venerable Thanh Nguyên, Venerable Ân Minh, and Bhikkhuni Giới Hương Vu Lan ceremony, Điều Ngự Temple, August 12, 2019

2. 18. A DEVOTED VIETNAMESE BHIKKHUNI

Felicitation of Venerable Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Giới Hương on Completion of Forty Years of a Nunhood, Monastic Services, and Contributions to the Dharma

We are the Venerable Sangha of Indo- Sri Lanka International Buddhist Societies in Sarnath, Sacred Sites of the Buddhist Places in India, extending our heartfelt congratulations and felicitations to Venerable Dr. Thích Nữ Giới Hương. Her completion of forty years of nunhood, monastic services, and contributions to the sharing of Dharma, not only in USA, but around the whole world, is notable. She has extended innumerable contributions in Dharma through literary publications, music, and Mp3s, including some English books on Buddhist philosophy showing her strongpoints in both the traditional Theravada and Mahayana. Moreover, she also learned ancient and present- day languages such as English, Japanese, Chinese, Sanskrit, and Pali to help her in deep research. Her efforts in learning multiple languages is a good example for young nuns, Buddhist followers, and new generations around the world. Dr. Giới Hương has also organized many Buddhist pilgrimages to India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Tibet, Cambodia, and so forth to assist Buddhists have a chance to pay homage to Buddhist holy places, do acts of charity, and develop their faith in the Triple Gem. She also established Dharma sites, the Hương Sen Buddhist Temples in USA and Vietnam, as places for nuns and devotees to practice and learn Buddhism. This is her great achievement. The whole Buddhist world is indebted to her Dharma contributions and achievements.

It is noticeable that I personally met Venerable Giới Hương in 1996 during her first visit to Bodhgaya and Sarnath with twenty student monastics from Delhi University under the leadership of Ven. Hạnh Tấn and Ven. Bửu Chánh, and then in 2000 on pilgrimage with the most Venerable Thích Trí Quảng (president of the Dharma Dissemination Board of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha). Later, I met her in 2002 when she extended her helping hands for the marble stone inscription for Dhammachakka in the Vietnamese language under the bodhi tree at



Sarnath, the place where Buddha preached his first sermon. In 2003, I met her at the International Buddhist Conference in New Delhi, which was organized by the Indian government. In 2008, as the abbess of Phước Hậu Temple, she invited me to attend the Buddha's Birthday ceremony under the auspices of the Milwaukee Buddhist Council in Milwaukee City, Wisconsin and made the introduction for me to preach at a retreat at Quang Minh Temple, Chicago, under the abbot Venerable Thích Minh Hạnh, who had learned the Sanskrit language at Banaras Hindu University (the same city as us). Later, in 2015, at Hương Sen Temple, which she established in Perris, California, USA, she invited me to attend a retreat, and a week later, I attended and gave a lecture on Vesak Day at Quảng Đức Buddhist Center, San Bernadino, California. On September 14, 2019, she led a pilgrimage from the

USA to visit Buddhist holy places in India and stopped at our temple to donate items such as sari dresses, rice, sugar, chapati powder, and money to 150 poor families in Sarnath village. We were much obliged and overwhelmed with joy and respect in participating as well as supporting her charity. In all of the meetings and interactions with Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, we have known that she is friendly, simple, open- minded, and kindly, willing to help and learn with anybody, regardless of skin, region, education, and so forth.

To appreciate her forty years of monastic life, on behalf of the venerable monks of Indo- Sri Lanka International Buddhist Association, we pray the Buddha to bless Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and her nun disciples at Hương Sen Temple for good health and happiness. May her Dharma services guide mankind for a long time.

Bhavatu Sabba Mangalam

Sarnath, January 4, 2020

Yours in the Dharma,

Ven. Dr. K. Siri Sumedha Thero

drsumedhathero@yahoo.in

President of Indo- Sri Lanka International Buddhist Association
Incumbent Jambudvipa Sri Lanka Buddhist Temple
Sarnath, Varanasi, India



*The Most Ven. Trí Quảng (center), Ven. Dr. K. Siri Sumedha Thero (next)
Bhikkhuni Giới Hương (third from left, in brown with glasses) in 2000*



Ven. Dr. K. Siri Sumedha Thero standing to give a lecture on Buddha's Birthday at Quảng Đức Buddhist Center, San Bernadino, California, June 7, 2015





Ven. Dr. K. Siri Sumedha Thero at Hương Sen Temple in June 2015



Charity at Indo- Sri Lanka International Buddhist Association Sarnath, India, September 14, 2019

2. 19. THE NOBLE IDEAL

*Choose the right path on this human journey
The whole time, live with compassion
Step onto the path of salvation
Live in religion, but never forget the secular.*

*Leading a noble life is opposite to the river's flow
Forty years of trials within the self
Sacrificing health and time for the ideal
With steps here and there for propagation.*

*Study and practice is forever a treasure
For that truth we definitely search
Salvation is a wonderful, vast road
Like a freed bird flying in the middle of the sky.*

*Disciples of Tathagata living in this lifetime
A bowl and three robes, full of ideals
Sacrificing their entire lives for peaceful beings
Their hearts are gentle as the falling dew.*

*Giving love and understanding everywhere
The three realms are where they preach
May this body be sacrificed for religion
With the aim of improving human life.*

*Although tomorrow is the end of the journey
Making torches to illuminate the dark world
Open wide to opportunities
Manifest many bodies of happiness under the afternoon light.*

Offering this to Venerable Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Giới Hương for the collected book, *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service*. We wish that you and all your nuns achieve many accomplishments on the right path and the preaching of Dharma abroad.

Beginning of winter in Đà Nẵng, December 2, 2019

Bhikkhuni Thích Đức Trí

Abbot of Tường Quang Pagoda

Thanhduc2615@gmail.com

Cell: 0236 3572 093

A Classmate at the Advanced Buddhist Institute, Course II,
and Department of Bachelor of
Arts at Tổng Hợp University, Ho Chi Minh City



The Most Venerable Đức Trí and Bhikkhuni Giới Hương at Vietnamese Buddhist University, i. e. , the Advanced Buddhist Institute after thirty years (1989–2019)



Entire Course II class, meeting for the first time at Vĩnh Nghiêm Monastery, April 14, 2019

2. 20. WHITE CLOUDS ASK FOR DIRECTIONS

*Begging for a bowl of rice at thousands of houses,
I travel miles and miles away,
Blue eyes see the world,
White clouds ask for directions.*

Tạm dịch là:

*Một bát cơm ngàn nhà,
Thân chơi muôn dặm xa,
Mắt xanh xem trần thế,
Mây trắng hỏi đường qua.*

(Thiền đạo tu tập^[1] - Như Hạnh)

Ven. Giới Hương and the nuns of Hương Sen Temple: please take care.
I wish for you successful sharing of the Dharma abroad.

Early spring of the mouse year, January 1, 2020

Genuinely,

Bhikkhu Thích Minh Thường

Abbot of Linh Sơn Cổ Tự, Vũng Tàu



*Ven. Minh Thường and Ven. Giác Tין Celebrated Bhikkhuni Giới Hương
to graduate at the Advanced Buddhist Institute in 1993*

1. Thiền đạo tu tập – Như Hạnh. English translation by Bhikkhuni Giới Hương.



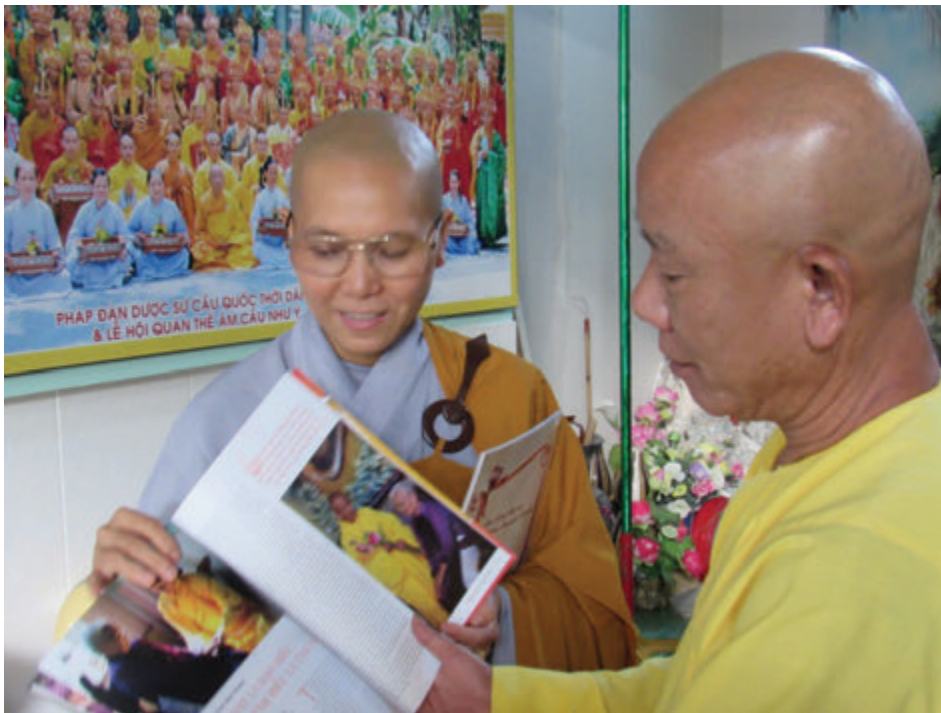
*Join the pilgrimage with the Most Ven Tịnh Viên,
Rev. Minh Thường and Linh Sơn Temple's Buddhists in 1994*



Commemoration of Master Tịnh Viên, Linh Sơn Cổ Tự Temple, Vũng Tàu City, October 28, 2016



Conversation on a hammock



Venerable Minh Thường is showing the Collection Vu Lan photos and articles by Venerable Minh Thường and his mother



SC Viên Quang, SC Viên Nhuận, SC Viên Tiến, SC Tâm An, Rev. Hạnh Quang, Rev. Thiện Phước, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, Tịnh Tâm Giải (second sister of NS Giới Hương), SC Viên Quang's mother (from left). Hương Sen Temple delegation attending the anniversary of the commemoration of the Grand Master on October 28, 2016



Mỹ Linh, younger sister of Venerable Minh Thường, and Bhikkhuni Giới Hương kneeling in front of the monk's statue and altar

2. 21. SOUND OF MITES

*Turn back to reach for the sky
Keep in a space to view at leisure
Wandering in many lives
Finding but a second time cannot be seen.*

*Turning back to find Buddha inside
Finding it at the corner, in the room and outside
Suddenly the sun's ray is tilting
Brightening the eyes, seeing peacefully in the sky.*

*Coming back to calm the mind
Hope for the absolute Dharma is presented
How it annoys the Zen letter
Thousands of defilements are empty.*

*Return to wash the yellow robe
Our shoulder is penetrated by the gentle wind and horn
Allowing us to get in line on a cycle
At dawn, we step tranquilly toward the Blissful West.*

*From afar the bell rings suddenly
Take my soul back to the body
Eyes open in surprise at the moment
We are wandering, yet return to the final destination!!!*

Written for the book,

*Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service - Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương.
We wish Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and the nuns at Hương Sen diligent practice.*

*Vô Lượng Thọ Monastery, Germany, November 2, 2019
Without Discrimination - Bhikkhu Thích Hạnh Tấn
thichhanhtan@gmail.com*



2. 22. PERVADING FRAGRANCE

Ni Nun Sangha overseas is bright
Sư She and her disciples lead their peaceful lives
Giới Precepts being observed solemnly
Hương Fragrance pervades marvelously, spiritually
Trụ Living in the world stably and durably
Trì Practicing sutras, reciting Buddha's names, praying everywhere
Chùa Nunnery being established to help life
Hương Scent of virtuous people is bright, all over gods and human beings
Sen Lotus blooms fully and freshly
Tại Here is the holy place of cultivation
Mỹ America- Vietnam helping all share the Dharma to benefit living beings
Quốc Country is friendly and open to the immensely right path.

Senior Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương,
Abbess of Hương Sen Buddhist Temple in America.

Austin, Tx, December 21, 2019

Genuinely,

Thích Trùng Sỹ

Abbot Chùa Pháp Nhãn

136 The Ranch Road, Del Valle, TX 78617, USA.

Phone: 512- 366- 2686

Email: phapnantemple123@gmail. com

thichtrungsy123@gmail. com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/phapnantemplesite>

www.phapnhan.net/ www.phapnantemple.com



Venerable Trừng Sỹ and Bhante Sukkha



*Venerable Trừng Sỹ and Rev. Quảng Đạo
visited Hương Sen Temple January 8, 2020*



Lunch with nuns



Hương Sen Red Bridge

2. 23. HƯƠNG SEN TO BE A GREAT MONASTERY

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Dear Venerable Giới Hương,

Hương Sen Temple has developed rapidly in many aspects, which is a praiseworthy thing for Southern California Buddhism in general and for the nuns' Sangha in particular. With your vigorous activities, who knows in the future, it may become a great Hương Sen Monastery. I sincerely wish for this and congratulate you.

May the sweet Hương Sen scent always be far and near.

Namo Diligent Often Bodhisattva Mahatat.

Los Angeles, December 22, 2019

Best regards,

Bhikkhu Thích Minh Chí

Head of the International Buddhist Institute
thichminhchi@yahoo.com



*Summer Retreat at the International Buddhist Institute in 2013
Venerable Minh Chí in the middle of the third row*



*Rev. Minh Thông, Rev. Minh Chánh, Ven. Minh Chi (standing),
Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, Rev. Phước Quang, Rev. Diệu Tịnh, and Rev. Huệ Tâm (from right)
at Niệm Phật Đường Fremont Retreat, San Jose, 2009*



Presentation group is rewarded

2. 24. PORTRAIT OF A RESPECTABLE NUN

I met Venerable Giới Hương for the first time when I welcomed her to lecture for a retreat at Giác Ngộ Pagoda with more than a thousand Buddhists attending. Her first impression on me was a slender nun, her face radiating peacefulness, with a smile always on her lips. That day, her excellent lecture made the whole hall silent and word by word poured into their ears with the great awakening. After the lecture, she also offered her books to them. People lined up to ask her to sign the books and offered some small presents to her in turn. Her eyes sparkled delightedly at Buddhist hearts. I understand that it is the ultimate happiness for a Tathagata's messenger when the miraculous truth of the Blessed One has been successfully spread by the Sangha and brings great joy to the audience.

A few times later, we were busy following our responsibilities, but we invited her to lecture at our temple whenever we knew she had returned to Vietnam. The Noble Eightfold Path class at Giác Ngộ Temple, which is chaired by me, was also fortunate to be taught by her once with the unforgettable discourse, "Bodhisattva Ideal in the Practice Path for Laypeople. "

The spirituality of her lectures clearly shows in each of her gestures and words, which show the true meaning of teaching through body and speech. She maintains a well-known temple in the United States, has published more than forty books, and has a devoted dedication to Vietnamese Buddhism in America. Every year, she spends the last four months returning to Vietnam, teaching and imparting profound knowledge and motivation to the young student monastics at the Vietnam Buddhist University in Ho Chi Minh City.

When she learned I was going to preach in the United States, she happily invited me to visit Hương Sen Pagoda with enthusiasm: "Dear Venerable Quảng Tịnh, our Hương Sen Pagoda, which is far from the center of the Vietnamese community, located almost in the middle of the desert, has not many Vietnamese people. However, there are seven nuns at the temple, practicing every day and studying Buddhism. I would like to invite you to visit and have a meal with us; we would be extremely happy to welcome you!"

I was very touched and wanted to visit, but then my time did not allow me to visit Hương Sen Temple because I had gone to five states in only three weeks. In the near future, I promise to visit Hương Sen Temple and have a friendly luncheon with them.

Ho Chi Minh City, December 8, 2019

Sincerely,

Venerable Thích Quảng Tịnh

Lecturer at Giác Ngộ Pagoda, Ho Chi Minh City

thichquangtinh@gmail.com



2. 25. A FALLEN LEAF

Hoa Nghiêm Pagoda was fortunate to have Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương visit several times to preach to Buddhist followers on many topics, such as “A Fallen Leaf,” “The Art of Life and Death,” “Four Foundations of Mindfulness,” “Samsara,” and so forth. Among the topics, “A Fallen Leaf” was very impressive; Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương talked about how a dry yellow leaf always floats on the water, just as our perseverance will overcome difficulties and challenges. At the beginning of 2017, Venerable Giới Hương lectured on this topic when Dr. Nguyễn Tu, who was the head of Hoa Nghiêm Association, was still alive. He smiled with much interest while listening to the lecture- now he has returned to Buddha’s land.

Of particular note is that Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương also had some English talks with young people at Hoa Nghiêm Pagoda. The generation born and raised in the US has very weak Vietnamese language skills and strong English skills, but since she can speak English, she communicated well with them. Her lectures are successful and meaningful; her books and English translations are also very useful in America. Thanks to her English ability, she has assisted many local people to understand Buddhism. She has been credited with helping inmates in prisons to understand Buddhism, acknowledge their misdeeds, repent, and live peacefully in the Dharma. In general, overseas people need people who have a deep knowledge of Buddhism and the language ability to share Buddhism for the benefit of sentient beings in the United States, as she does.

On the occasion of the celebration of *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service*, the monks and lay Buddhists of Hoa Nghiêm Pagoda sincerely wish for Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and the nuns of Hương Sen Temple good health and success in accomplishing Buddha's works soon. May the Bodhi trees shed light for all beings to be liberated ultimately.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Christmas in Virginia, December 25, 2019

With metta,

The Most Venerable Thích Kiến Khai

Abbot of Hoa Nghiêm Pagoda

thichkienkhai@hoanghiem.org



*Venerable Kiến Khai introduces Bhikkhuni Giới Hương
at Hoa Nghiem Pagoda on April 4, 2019*



*Venerable Kiến Khai sitting on a chair (right)
listening to the Dharma talk by Bhikkhuni Giới Hương
Hoa Nghiem Pagoda, April 4, 2019*

2. 26. HƯƠNG SEN, I HAVE COME

Being born in this life and having a human body is a great blessing. Meeting, knowing, and respecting each other is another great blessing, based on predestined relationships. The more noble we are when we meet while doing good for the same ideal in the miraculous house of Dharma, the more special we are. That reunion is necessary for all of us. I know about Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương; this is a special connection among many different predestined relationships. I came to know and enjoy reading or listening to her valuable works, research materials, articles, Dharma talks, awakened songs, gentle lyrics, and so on before I had the opportunity to meet her.

Some of her awesome works on the Buddha's teachings include: *Bodhisattva and Śūnyatā in the Early and Developed Buddhist Traditions* (Bồ- tát và Tánh Không Trong Kinh Tạng Pali và Đại Thừa), *A- Hàm, Mưa pháp chuyển hóa phiền não (Agama–A Dharma Rain Transforms the Defilements)*, (two volumes), *Pháp Ngũ của Kinh Kim Cang (The Vajracchedikā- Prajñāpāramitā-Sūtra)*, *Tập Thơ Nhạc Năng Lăng Nghiêm (Songs and Poems of Śūraṅgama Sunlight)*, and many other treatises, genres, and languages, which I have read (please read



them on the website, www.huongsentemple.com). This is a great achievement, marking her effort and study over a long time. Through these works containing many valuable research resources, I learned more about her path of learning, what she has been engaged in for over forty years in the middle of an immense path, with fruitful, enlightened flowers but also many sharp, challenging thorns. I was very honored to have the opportunity to visit Hương Sen Pagoda in Perris, which is full of wind and sunshine and is always dry, for a Vu Lan (Ullambana) ceremony to inaugurate the bell, Avalokitesvara statue, and other construction. She has just settled here for more than a year, but she has built and decorated Hương Sen Pagoda nicely in this semi- desert environment, which is an ideal place for nuns and Buddhists to study.

What I want to say here is that Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and I, neither of the same temple lineage nor classmates, do not have many opportunities to work together. We just live in a vast Dharma house, looking in the same ideal direction as neighbors (my Bảo Sơn Temple is about a thirty- minute drive from her Hương Sen Temple). However, I have special respect for her and the nuns of Hương Sen Temple. I would like to list here some points on Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, as follows:

1. STUDY: To gain immense knowledge is not easy for many people. Aside from intelligence and natural gifts, learners need to be persistent and determined until the end. Genius is hard work and perseverance. Her time invested in learning is great; she is a university lecturer today, but she still does not give up the pursuit of learning at a university to deepen her knowledge about the East and the West. This is a very admirable thing. Many monks and nuns also have the dedication and conditions to go to university, but because of Buddhist administrative work, unfinished construction of pagodas, and many other conditions to which they are subjected, they fail to persevere in their learning. She is a role model for many young monks and nuns to emulate, and this is how she guides her monastics and nuns

in the present and the future. Birds have two wings that allow them to fly, people have two legs to walk far. Monastics should possess insight and virtues to be able to achieve much Buddhist work.

2. ENGAGEMENT: Service is a great form of conduct among the thousands of virtues for monastics to cultivate. Monks and nuns who do not nourish this noble form of conduct all the time and do not vow to perform it suffer from a great lack. Serving the Three Jewels, adorning the Buddha's world (through developing precepts, meditation, and wisdom), and committing to the holy life for the sake of the many make up the responsibilities and career of monastics. If we failed to take action, we would be like ruined wood and cold ashes in the house of the Buddha. After many years studying in India, she has committed to serving Buddhism by going from this temple to other, here and there and abroad, to share the liberated message of the Buddha. Hương Sen Temple is located in a semi- desert area, a place where there are not many Vietnamese people and few Buddhist communities. It is very difficult to live here, but here in this remote area she is engaged in preaching the Dharma and ringing the meditation bell, even as a weak female. How respectable she is with such conduct!

3. DYNAMISM: From the beginning, I noticed that she works in silence, as part of her personality. This dynamism means she is always available to serve, regardless of time or distance; whenever there is an opportunity to serve, she is ready, whether big or small, whatever is entrusted to her by monks and nuns, Buddhists, and the Sangha. This dynamism is very necessary for ordained people serving in a preaching role in modern times. With today's rapid progress in industrial and social processes, it is difficult for monks and nuns to sit still in monasteries, serving and practicing Buddhism. This dynamic conduct is the core of the teachings of the Buddha, who guided his disciples, especially in the noble work of propagation.

4. MODESTY: Progressing slowly in modesty is another of her special virtues. Modesty is a necessary virtue for renunciants; is also hard to actualize for everyone, especially those who hold higher academic degrees and have greater intelligence. Only those who have good conduct and knowledge can demonstrate such modesty.

Many, many things could be used to describe Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương: it can be said that she is a monastic role model in modern times, having the two wings of virtue and insight. I always appreciate her and think that she is an example for many young renunciates, who need to learn and follow her for the benefit of the many. Learning much and having much knowledge does not really help a person to attain enlightenment. On the contrary, learning without practice is useless and sometimes becomes an obstacle on the spiritual path. The unity of theory and practice is the basis for cultivation and a required process for the path to enlightenment.

Commemorating a religious journey, recording what has been passed: one may think it may not be necessary for enlightened liberation. However, to mark a spiritual journey with a beneficial direction for future generations is really much needed!!!

With gratitude for what has been gained on the immense path of studying the Dharma, I would like to write some lines to show my heart full of admiration at her life, contributing fragrance to the book *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service- Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*, as a gift to her and all the nuns and lay Buddhists of Hương Sen Temple in the spring of the mouse year, 2020.

Winter in California, December 27, 2019

Abbot of Bảo Sơn Temple

Venerable Thích Huệ Giáo
chuabaoson@gmail.com



*Left: Rev. Viên Chan, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, Venerable Huệ Giáo (center)
Rev. Quảng Đạo at the Buddha's Birthday Ceremony San Diego Park, May 11, 2014*



*Venerable Huệ Giáo (left), Rev. Quảng Đạo, Rev. Ân Giáo, the Most Ven. Phước Thuận,
Ven. Bhikkhuni Diệu Tánh at the Vu Lan Ceremony at Hương Sen Temple on August 24, 2014*

2. 27. HAPPY IN THE PRESENT MOMENT

Dear Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương,

Congratulations, you have spent forty years in the monastic life. It's been a pleasure to study with you at the Advanced Buddhist Institute and then meet you again in a foreign country, the United States, over nearly twenty years.

We would like to wish you and all the nuns in your temple success in building Hương Sen Temple soon. May your work in training and sharing the Dharma for the sake of sentient beings also result in great achievements.

I would like to offer you a new poem:

POEM ON BUDDHA'S ENLIGHTENMENT DAY

*My friend! Live and be happy in the present,
What's bothering the past with the future,
True happiness comes from a gentle breath,
From the heart of tranquil serenity...*

*Let go of all sorrow,
Live the full days we have,
Tomorrow we will be far, without regret
Smiles we offer for each other.*

*With love and a whole heart,
With a pure and bright soul,
Wishing you peace and happiness during the four seasons,
With smiles always on your lips.*

Celebrating the Buddha's Enlightenment Day
with boundless joy at Viên Ngộ Monastery,

Atlanta, USA, December 27, 2019

Truthfully,

Bhikkhu Tuệ Đức, aka Thích Nhuận Hải

Address:

3254 Rosebud Road SW

Loganville, Georgia 30052

Telephone: (404) 944- 5751

Facebook: Thích Nhuận Hải



Bhikkhuni Giới Hương (far right), next to Ven. Nhuận Hải, together with classmates from the Second Course at their first meeting April 14, 2019



Ven. Nhuận Hải, a representative of the Second Course class, sends warm regards to the Most Ven. Trí Quảng, the Head of Vietnam Buddhist University, at Huệ Nghiêm Monastery, Second District, April 14, 2019

2. 28. THIS SPRING, THE LOTUS BECAME MORE FRESH

Spring comes, the favorite blessing season, with its peaceful and liberating spiritual fragrance, but the lotus blooms in any season. Like when a festival celebrated in heaven and earth, every Buddhist disciple feels delight, knowing there are fellow practitioners who have been on the same path to search for enlightenment for more than forty years. They have overcome challenges, persisted in the renunciate vow and have found true happiness in monastic life for the sake of many. Venerable Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, the abbess of Hương Sen Temple in Southern California, is a prominent Dharma practitioner on the monastic path. She has achieved success on the road of propagation overseas in order to open the compassionate light for suffering people.

In the past, I happened to know Venerable Giới Hương and received some of her books, including *Ban Mai Xứ Ấn* (The Dawn in India) which narrated her studying abroad in India. In this reprinted work, the Most Venerable Thích Mãn Giác, aka the poet Huyền Không, graciously introduced the Indian people and land where the compassionate lineage as the source of the truth of liberation developed.

*Open your eyes to look far
The Indian mornings are beautiful
Save the Buddha historical page for life
The water of Ganges River flowing radiantly
Thousand years the Buddha Tathagata existing
Ganges glittered with his shadow.*

I read the book and realized right away that the exemplary person (Ven. Giới Hương) who is persevering and dedicating for the renunciate ideal, is still a hidden soul with a high degree of intuitive wisdom- very sensitive to the outside world. She is quickly aware and thirsts for potential beauty in the world and in every being. The beauty is filtered, simple, familiar but still has the capability to stir the hearts of people. The subtle images and emotions quietly cling to the soul of the penner. It's the sound of birds at the quiet noon in the hostel of Delhi University. It's the birdsong in the homeland's garden deep in your memory. It's a gentle but deep trace of affection aroused in people away from home, one of the hardships that students far away from home have to face, though little shared with outsiders.

Recalling what happened before, when the Most Venerable Minh Châu and the Most Venerable Huyền Vi studied in the land of Buddha, they went through a lot of complicated, difficult and miserable experiences. It can be compared to the present time if one tries to integrate in a strange country. The efforts of student monks and nuns deserve to be recognized, However, the situation now is no longer a cause for much concern.

In the Saṅgha community, not only the monks and nuns, but two sets of Saṅghas are referred to as inseparable structures of an organization: bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs. The bhikkhunīs are officially recognized for their significant roles and their peer status of bhikkhunīs in the organization. And especially, since I knew the Venerable Bhikkhunī Đàm Lựu at Đức Viên Pagoda in San Jose and went through the common activities in northern California, I have always believed in the contribution of young nuns to the joint effort for the development, promotion of ethics and benefits related to people and society.

Indeed, in the past and future, nuns are an important factor contributing to achievements, as well as one of the essential core relationships in all successful future plans. The solidarity has been revealed before- every challenge is understood and its solution is strongly promoted in educational, cultural and social activities where the nuns are excellent at expression, meeting and speaking up.

They are experienced with extensive cooperation between the four Buddhist groups (male and female laypeople, monks and nuns) in Buddhism. From here, I think, the spirit of service and the behavior of Bhikkhunī Giới Hương seems also an earnest invitation for a direction, a mode of operation, consistent and suitable with the thoughts and ambitions of the present times.

The spiritual path is broadening, not only for devout souls, but also for welcoming new dreams which are formed in completely different circumstances and conditions from the previous generation. I think that some nuns in Phổ Từ Temple who have English knowledge and ability to meet the present needs may share some of these new thoughts and ideas to young generations. Bhikkhunī Phổ Châu also added that the Sakyadhita International Association of Buddhist Women, established in 1987, has not yet shown a clear transformation but it is a promising start.

In fact, Bhikkhunī Giới Hương's contribution is diverse in many areas, methodically and clearly programmed, and in the familiar development order, from a modest but solid beginning. From a small house, when I first visited, now transformed into a spacious facility of ten acres. There are ornamental plants with statues adorned around the garden, creating a solemn and meditative setting. Daily practice activities here have progressed to a large scale, the nuns gathered more than ten. Ven. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương also appears familiar in the field of publishing. Particularly, the library of Phổ Từ Pagoda has research materials for ordained and lay people

At the University of California Riverside, you enroll in the literature program and at other times, you visit the prison to help and teach those who are in the unfortunate prison cycle. In the spiritual direction, Ven. Hương is willing to open the necessary doors to assist others.

The outside activities are very positive and enthusiastic. You rarely miss any of the forums, festivals or ceremonies in the temples. You present there with a tolerant generous smile.

But above all, it is still the noble conduct of a nun with a mind towards the path of enlightenment and liberation. After more than forty years, Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương has overcome the difficulties and indispensable conditions on the path of monastic life to be able to create a Bodhi place where you can nurture disciples, fulfill the roles and responsibilities of the daughter of Sakyadhita lineage and a Gotami nun.

On the first day of the Rat Year 2020, I would like to contribute a few words to you. First of all, I sincerely pray the Three Jewels bless you with good health and conditions to continue carrying the Buddha's work. May all nuns in Hương Sen pagoda be strong to bring more mutual benefits to all. Then again, in the Dharma friendship, wishing for you to attain Buddhahood soon to set an good example for future generations. Congratulations on your renunciate conduct!

In the spring sunshine, we sincerely offer the aroma scent with the name of the Hương Sen Temple, the endless scent of the Zen garden.

The new spring, Hayward, northern California
Abbots of Phổ Từ and Phổ Trí Pagodas

Thích Từ- Lực
thichtuluc@yahoo.com



*Venerable Từ Lực (center) and Bhikkhuni Giới Hương (left)
Phổ Từ Pagoda on March 3, 2013*



*From right: Bhikkhuni Phổ Châu, Bhikkhuni Thanh Nguyên, Venerable Từ Lực
and Bhikkhuni Giới Hương (wearing glasses) at Phổ Từ Pagoda on March 3, 2013*



Thượng Tọa Từ Lực (thứ ba bên trái) viếng thăm Sư Bà Như Hương và Ni Sư Giới Hương (phải) tại Chùa Hương Sen cũ ngày 20 tháng 12 năm 2012

2. 29. A DISCIPLE OF THE WORLD- HONORED ONE

Namo Sakyamuni Buddha.

The world is constantly expanding, and with increasing needs, information, and development, Buddhism as applied to life becomes even more necessary. Because without Buddhist knowledge, without spiritual practice and ethics, people would remain submerged in the deep ocean of suffering forever. For the purpose of propagating Dharma, wishing to apply Buddhist practices to life to save all sentient beings, Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương has shown forty years of hard- working commitment to setting up temples, converting nuns, and bringing the teachings of the Buddha to remote areas at home and abroad:

*A disciple of the World- honored One
Bring the Dharma tide rain
Help sentient beings to be enlightened
Appreciated for your blessings.*

On the occasion of commemorating Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service, I would like to wish that you and the nuns of Hương Sen will always be the Tathagata's messengers, bringing the Dharma light to all sentient beings, at all times and everywhere.

Namo Joy Bodhisattva.

Bảo Tích Pagoda, Texas, USA, December 18, 2019

Bhikkhu Thích Mật Hạnh
thichmathanh@gmail.com





Bhikkhu Mật Hạnh, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, Rev. Viên Chân, Rev. Viên Trang, Rev. Viên An, and Mát Thương Nhìn Đời Association, California, 2016

2. 30. DELIGHTFUL ARE THE FORESTS

Today, March 1, 2020, along with my classmate Pháp Hạnh (Vietnamese student) at Riverside Community College, I come to visit Hương Sen Temple and learn more about Buddhism in a large environment. We are very happy to see Venerable Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Giới Hương and her nun disciples, who extend a warm welcome to us. We chant and take lunch together. The tranquil beautiful temple is a good place for the development of Buddhism. I hope the abbess' mission will be successful and perfect in the near future.

We are Dharma brother and sister, even though I am a Thai monk from the Theravada tradition and she is from the Mahayana tradition. With our missions, we hope to make Buddhism dynamic in the American community. I think we can serve the community in our own Dharma way. The Buddha teaches us to be kind and to help each other with a pure heart and sincerity.

We are happy to know that on March 22, 2020, Hương Sen Temple will hold a party to celebrate the collection, Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service - Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương. On this occasion, I would like to say thank you to Venerable Thích Nữ Giới Hương for her contributions, dedication and determination to build this beautiful Buddhist temple in this remote area.

*Delightful are the forests where worldlings delight not;
the passionless will rejoice [therein],
[for]) they seek no sensual pleasures.*

Dhammapada, Verse 99^[1]

Riverside Community College, March 1, 2020

Best regards,

Bhante Phar Natthapon Khantiko

Khantiko. c@gmail. com

1. Dhammapada, Verse 99, Translated into English by the Most Venerable Narada, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1963, 1971.
<https://thuvienhoasen.org/a10361/07-pham-a-la-han-the-worthy-90-99>



Bhante Phar Natthapon Khantiko and nuns chanting



Bhante Phar Natthapon Khantiko, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương (third from right) nuns, Viên Bảo Sen and Pháp Hạnh

Part III

THE SISTERHOOD

3.1. THE INCLINATION TO ORDAIN OF VENERABLE BHIKKHUNI GIỚI HƯƠNG

*Time passes as quickly as a shuttle
Ven. Giới Hương, abbess of Hương Sen Temple,
Forty years—a lifetime
Inclination to ordain as a great nun.
Practicing under the guidance of the true Dharma
Thanks to a predestined relationship to meet a master,
Propagation to benefit being everywhere
Following the ancestors, "ordained for a cause."
Ven. Giới Hương spent forty years in monastery
"Taking steps up to a wide land"
Keeping conduct as a nun,
"A body different from the lay Buddhist's, for the sake of all beings."
Leading the life of a holy sage in a nunnery,
Not wasting a lifetime at the Zen door
Appreciating your valuable time,
From my heart, I respectfully praise you.
Morality spreads far and near
Spiritual fragrance offered to the Blessed One
Disciple engraves in the heart,
Ordaining is supreme moral merit.
The vow of self-benefit and other-benefit
Fulfilling the wish Gautama Buddha proved.*

*Hương Sen Temple, Celebrating a New Day
January 1, 2020
Truthfully,*

Venerable Bhikkhuni Tâm Nhựt
thichnutamnhut@yahoo.com



Left: Ven. Tâm Nhứt, the Most Ven. Nguyễn Thanh (standing), and Bhikkhuni Giới Hương teaching the precepts to the nuns at the summer retreat at Điều Ngự Temple, June 2019



Ven. Tâm Nhứt (right), Ven. Hiếu Đức (abbess of Linh Quang Temple, Pennsylvania) with Ven. Giới Hương (left) at the old Hương Sen Temple on First Street, Moreno Valley, California, 2013



Ven. Tâm Nhật (right far) with the Most Venerable Như Điển attending the worship ceremony at Hương Sen Temple on April 12, 2018

3.2. A DHARMA FRIEND

There is a saying that a close friend doesn't need you to keep constant contact. Even if you meet after not seeing each other for a long time, you both can just sit down and eat together and even a "hello" is not needed. We just lift up our sleeves and eat while saying "Let me tell you . . ." as if we had visited yesterday. Friendship makes the distance of time and space disappear.

To have a Dharma friendship is to have the key to open the soul of others.

On the occasion of March 22, 2020, Hương Sen Temple will hold a celebration, "Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service - Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương." I wish for Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and her nuns to be healthy, happy and full of energy to take action doing Buddhist works with the Sangha.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Đạo Tràng Temple, the New Spring, March 2, 2020
Best regards,

Venerable Bhikkhunī Diệu Tánh
dieutanhthich@yahoo.com



*Ven. Phước Thuận, Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, Bhikkhunī Diệu Tánh,
Bhikkhunī Thanh Châu and Bhikkhunī Huệ Tâm*



*Venerable monks, nuns and Bhikkhuni Diệu Tánh
(standing center of the second row)
attend the Vu Lan festival at Hương Sen Temple, 2016*



*Ven. Giới Hương (right) with Ven. Diệu Tánh
at Bát Nhã Monastery, California, January 4, 2020*

3.3. THE LOTUSAROMA

Hương fragrance spreads throughout the Zen forest
Sen lotus two thousand lift the Buddha's foot
Tu practice the pure precepts
Viện Institute of Bodhicitta opens the Buddha's mind
Trụ abide at the remote tranquil area
Trì maintains Buddhism without hesitation
Thích like the Buddha land, sharing the Dharma,
Nữ female followed Gotami nun partriach
Giới precept decorates the Sakyaditta lineage
Hương aroma far for saving the beings.

Bát Nhã Monastery, Spring of the Mouse

February 16, 2020

Best regards,

Ven. Bhikkhuni TN Giới Định

gioidinh2015@yahoo.com



From middle to right: the Most Venerable Nguyễn Trí, Ven. Thiện Long, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương (blue scarf) and Bhikkhuni Giới Định at the Foundation Ceremony to build the monk rooms at Bát Nhã Monastery on February 16, 2020



Venerable Giới Hương (blue scarf), Venerable Nguyễn Bốn and Venerable Giới Định (third from right) attend the Bát Nhã Monastery's ceremony on February 16, 2020

3.4. THE POWERFUL WILL TO PROPAGATE BUDDHISM

Inheriting and lighting the Dharma lamp, Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương has given her best to preach and serve Buddhism.

With diligence and wisdom penetrating impermanence, she has constantly contributed without pause, by translating, editing, and publishing many Buddhist scriptures.

Reviewing her missionary career is to mark her strong will and compassion: she has lived her life for the sake of humanity. After nearly ten years of study in India, she earned a doctorate in Buddhist philosophy. She was destined to go to the United States to study, continue the path of propagation, and do Buddhist works. With the support of Buddhists and her family, she was able to establish Hương Sen Temple in Southern California.

Hạnh Quang had the good fortune to meet Bhikkhuni Giới Hương in the 1980s in many Buddhist classes, such as Two Important Chanting Courses (Nhị Khóa Hiệp Giải) with the late Venerable Kim Cương, Awakening Words from Quy Sơn Ancestor (Quy Sơn Cảnh Sách) with Venerable Lê Trang at Hòa Bình Pagoda (Phú Nhuận district), and the four-year (1990–1994) course on literature at Humanities Science University (at Đinh Tiên Hoàng Street), as well as while studying abroad in India. On September 19, 2005, both of us, together with Venerable Nhuận Thông and Venerable Nhuận Dung, went to the US for the first time to attend a conference at the University of the West (Hsi Lai Temple, Fo Guang Shan in California, USA). After that, Venerable Nhuận Dung and Bhikkhuni Giới Hương decided to stay in the United States, while Venerable Nhuận Thông and Hạnh Quang returned to Vietnam. Since 2016, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương has often come back to Vietnam to teach Buddhism at Vietnam Buddhist University and has also come to Diệu Giác Pagoda to teach at the Đức Tâm Buddhist Youth Association and many other temples. Hạnh Quang has also gone to the US several times to visit Bhikkhuni Giới Hương. During those times, I was invited to teach the Vinaya and sutras to her nun disciples at Hương Sen Pagoda. We have cherished our spiritual friendship and supported the Buddha's works together. To me, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương is a good model for diligence and devotion to the dharma, which originates from her compassion and the nectar of her insight.

Hạnh Quang wishes that Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and her disciple nuns will always develop Bodhi mind and further increase their will to propagate the Dharma for the benefit of sentient beings. Her virtuous fragrance spreads throughout the world.

Namo Amitābha Buddha.

November 7, Earth Pig Year

Venerable Bhikkhuni Hạnh Quang

Lecturer of Middle Buddhist School, Dist. 9, HCMC

hanhquang012005@yahoo.com



*Ven. Hạnh Quang (fourth right), Rev.Quảng Đạo and Ven.Trường Sỹ
Ven. Giới Hương and nuns at Hương Sen Temple front yard*



*Ven. Hạnh Quang teaching Vinaya for
Bhikkhunis at Hương Sen Temple ngày 6 tháng 1 năm 2020*

3. 5. THE FRAGRANCE OF PRECEPTS IS SUPREME

Sandalwood, *tagara*, lotus, jasmine:
Above all these kinds of fragrance,
The perfume of virtue is by far the best.

(Flower – Puppavagga, Dhammapada, Verse 55)

On the occasion of celebrating the collected writings, *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service—Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*, I would like to congratulate Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and her disciple nuns at Hương Sen Pagoda (California, USA) and Hương Sen (Vĩnh Lộc A, Bình Chánh, Ho Chi Minh City), whose bodies and minds are peaceful and to whom thousands of auspicious blessings will come.

Namo Sakyamuni Buddha.

Vạn Thiện Pagoda, Bình Chánh, November 19, 2019

Best regards,

Venerable Bhikkhuni Tịnh Vân

thichtinhvan@gmail.com

- Abbess of Vạn Thiện Pagoda,^[1]

- Deputy Faculty of Pali,

Vietnam Buddhist University in Ho Chi Minh City



Visiting Vietnam Buddhist University, Campus 1, Lê Minh Xuân, Hồ Chí Minh City (Venerable Bhikkhuni Tịnh Vân at far left)

1. Hương Sen Pagoda in Vietnam of Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương is in the Vĩnh Lộc A Commune, Bình Chánh District. So the two temples, Hương Sen and Vạn Thiện, are neighbors to each other. It is far about 20 minutes to the Vietnam Buddhist University, Bình Chánh District, Lê Minh Xuân Area, so we drive to teach is also close..



*Venerable Bhikkhuni Tịnh Vân stood and saluted the Buddhists
on a trip with the overseas Sangha
Visiting Hương Sen Pagoda on April 12, 2018*

3.6. LATE NIGHT LIGHT FOREVER BRIGHT

*The fragrance of flowers drifts with the wind
as sandalwood, jasmine, lavender.*

*The fragrance of virtue oversweeps the wind,
all pervasive is virtue of the good.*

(Dhammapada, Verse 54)^[1]

The lines of this poem describe a daughter of the Buddha: Venerable Bhikkhunī Giới Hương. My Dharma sister always leaves many beautiful impressions in my heart.

More than twenty years have passed since the day I met Venerable Bhikkhunī Giới Hương in the dormitory of Delhi University (P.G.Woem's Hostel). Now twenty years later, we meet again. She still presents as a nun with a soft, gentle voice and a peaceful, innocent expression. Venerable Giới Hương looks young, but she has wisdom and great energy in the practice, a persistent strength in learning, as well as research, and has contributed many admirable writings to the Buddha's works. She has composed good works in both domestic and foreign literature and Buddhist forums.

Remembering the years at Delhi University, most students that day knew the Vietnamese nun who worked hard in studying and researching in Room C-2, located on the ground floor in the massive building of the PG Women Hostel. It connected with many lush, green beautiful lawns. She was senior to me and for four years sometimes we would meet at the library or on Uposatha Days, where she always greeted me with a smile, "Hello Hương Nhũ," which was so warm and friendly. Once, there was something I didn't understand in class and she wholeheartedly instructed me.

Over the years, Ven. Giới Hương graduated with a master's degree, then went to earn a doctorate in Buddhism. She returned to Vietnam, to her No. C-2 room at the dormitory, where she found the quiet light at night. May that late-night light continue to shine wherever she is and welcome her footsteps.

A few years later, when I returned home from India and started teaching at the Vietnam Buddhist University in Ho Chi Minh City (in 2006), I didn't see Ven. Giới Hương teaching there. Asking, I learned that she had gone to the United States to continue to study and propagate the Dharma. She is one of the rare nuns who succeeds overseas in establishing temples and training nuns and Buddhist followers.

Then one day, I happened to hear her voice giving a lecture at Giác Ngộ Pagoda, Hồ Chí Minh City, teaching student monks and nuns at the Vietnam Buddhist University. I really admire the enthusiasm and compassion of my Dharma sister. So now my Dharma sister began to embark on a journey of sharing the Dharma in her new homeland.

Seeing her again on the thirty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of Vietnam Buddhist University in HCM City (December 8, 2019), we sat happily next to each other. I heard her confide, still with a gentle voice and innocent eyes as she was in India, "Hương Nhũ, do you know my happiness is to go everywhere to share the wonderful Dharma. There is nothing better than using my capacities to contribute to missionary work and Buddhist education."

1. *Dhammapada, Verse 194, translated into English by the Most Venerable Narada, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1963, 1971.*
<https://thuvienhoasen.org/a10361/07-pham-a-la-han-the-worthy-54>

Understanding the sincere wishes of this daughter of the Sakyaditta lineage, I sincerely pray for and admire the moral virtue, wisdom and compassion of the Vietnamese Saṅgha. They are always blessed by the Three Jewels so Buddhist teachings can be shared with many.

Thiên Quang Nunnery, Bình Dương, March 3, 2020

Best regards,

Venerable Bhikkhuni Hương Nhũ

huongnhu9@gmail.com

Lecturer in Philosophy

at Vietnam Buddhist University in HCM City



*Ven. Giới Hương (sitting with a leaf hat), Bhikkhuni Nguyễn Hương (next)
and Ven. Hương Nhũ (behind row, in a grey cloth)
at the conference hall of Delhi University, India, in 1999*



Twenty years later: Ven. Giới Hương (left) and Ven. Hương Nhũ (right) in the conference hall of Vietnam Buddhist University in 2019



Ven. Giới Hương (right corner) and Ven. Hương Nhũ (right third) on the thirty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of Vietnam Buddhist University in HCM City, December 8, 2019

3.7. DHARMA FRIEND GIỚI HƯƠNG

Giới (Precepts) trains in ethics, preserves Tathagata's duty, actualizes Dharma works

Hương (Fragrance) nurtures the spirit, diligently cultivates the mind of the holy one,
engages as a great human.

Giới (Precepts) builds meditation-wisdom, offers Hương Prajna blooming Dharma flowers

Hương (Fragrance) displays conduct, preserves Giới Precepts,
Bhikkhuni protecting the spiritual body.

I would like to offer this to Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương for her book, *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service—Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*. I wish for her and her nuns accomplishment of their aspiration to study and propagate Buddhism overseas.

Early Winter, December 22, 2019

Sincerely,

Venerable Bhikkhuni Tuệ Liên

A classmate from the second course

at the Advanced Buddhist Institute

Lecturer of Chinese Faculty at Vietnam Buddhist University



Entire class of the second course of the Advanced Buddhist Institute (1989–1993), meeting for the first time and visiting the Most Ven. Thích Trí Quảng at Huệ Nghiêm Monastery, the second District, on April 14, 2019 (Bhikkhuni Tuệ Liên wearing glasses on left)



Venerable Bhikkhuni Tuệ Liên at the far left of the main hall of Phước Sơn Monastery, Đồng Nai, on April 14, 2019

3.8. SUNSHINE IN THE BLUE SKY

Who became Buddha from practice
Attach strictly to practice, making it more binding
Enlighten the secret of universe in a bright gem
Just as the sun rises in the blue sky.

(Zen Master Bảo Giám)

This poem is offered to Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương on the collected writings:
Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service—Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương.

Tịnh Tâm Hut in Đà Lạt Province, November 21, 2019

Yours sincerely,

Bhikkhuni Trí Minh

The seventh younger sister of Ven. Giới Hương
tlphapdung@gmail.com



*Ven. Thông Phương (upper) Bhikkhuni Giới Hương (left on),
Rev. Viên Bảo, Rev. Trí Minh, Viên Hậu and Viên Tuệ
At Trúc Lâm Zen Center, Đà Lạt, in 2016*



*Bhikkhuni Trí Minh and Chơn An Thiện (third and second from left)
visiting Hương Sen Temple, 2017*



*Rev. Trí Minh (center) and father, Chánh Đức Minh (right)
Canada, 2018*



Bhikkhuni Trí Minh in 2019

3.9. THERE ARE FIVE MONASTICS IN BHIKKHUNI GIỚI HƯƠNG'S FAMILY

On the occasion of Hương Sen Temple making a book of collected writings, *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service—Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*, I, Tịnh Tâm Giải (Mrs. Phương), on behalf of siblings in our family such as Đào, Đức, Hải, Uyên, Bách, Chi, Hà, Nhi, Hằng, and so on, have written a few words to share.

Returning to the past years 1976–1980, from Bình Tuy (now Bình Thuận), we followed our mother to move to Bàn Cờ Market, Ngã Bảy, Saigon, temporarily staying at Trúc Mai's house so that our mother could work. At that time, sister Dung (now Bhikkhuni Giới Hương), who was just thirteen or fourteen years old, had long, firm hair (often tied in two long braids) and was fond of learning. Our group (youngest auntie Mỹ Lệ, Sister Ánh Hồng [daughter of the third auntie], Dung and I [daughters of the sixth auntie] and Phương [daughter of the tenth auntie]) often went to Ấn Quang and Linh Chưởng Temples to chant, retreat, labor, and write the Buddhist scriptures (Lotus Sutra, Earth Store Sutra...) on a notebook to cite, and so forth. These small deeds were the seeds of goodness sown in in our Bodhi mind. So shortly after, Dung and Phương went to become samaneris of Thanh Hương (titled Giới Hương) and Thanh Đức under Master Hải Triều Âm at Liên Hoa Temple (Bình Thạnh District). I got married and have two daughters. Later, my older daughter also ordained with the Dharma name Viên Khuông at Viên Chiếu Temple (Bà Rịa). Our seventh sister also became a nun with the title Bhikkhuni Trí Minh under Master Thích Thanh Từ (Đà Lạt). Then, the tenth aunt (mother of Bhikkhuni Thanh Đức and sister of our mother) also became a monastic Tâm Diệu under Master Thích Trí Hiếu, Bảo An Temple (Long Điền).



*Chánh Đức Minh made a toilet tunnel
for Hương Sen Temple*

In the Buddhist sutras it is said: "A person who is ordained saves seven generations of parents." A monastic is so precious; now our family lineage has five monastics, so we are very happy and supportive. The rest of our family members are busy with their own lives and not yet able to live in the temple, but we are always sincere Buddhists who support the Three Jewels, recite the Buddhist scriptures, observe vegetarianism, and do good deeds. Our father Chánh Đức Minh (who took refuge under Venerable Thanh Từ) had good karmic preconditions with Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương because he followed her to live in the temple and helped to build Hương Sen Temple in Bình Chánh (Vietnam) and in California (USA) until the day he passed away on October 6, 2018.

Talking about these five precious nuns, each one of them contributes to the Buddhist garden according to her capacity, for example:

Bhikkhuni Trí Minh loves to communicate less often in order to have time to contemplate internal meditation.

The young nun **Śikṣamānā Viên Khuông** is studying the sutras to absorb Buddha's words.

Bhikkhuni Tâm Diệu is an old Buddhist nun and recites prayers for rebirth in the Amitabha Buddha Land.

Bhikkhuni Thanh Đức prefers to do good deeds, giving to the poor and sick.

Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương went to study in India and the United States, specializing in culture, academics, teaching, writing, making poems, building pagodas, creating statues, raising nuns, and guiding laypeople. She actively engages in bringing Buddhism into society both in Vietnam and the USA...

*To give up worldly objects
Leave the negative ways
Calm the mind at each bell
Come home at the Buddha Land.*

On behalf of our great family, here are a few words in honor of the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương in study and service for Buddhism. A wish for Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, Bhikkhuni Thanh Đức, Bhikkhuni Trí Minh, Bhikkhuni Tâm Diệu, and śikṣamānā Viên Khuông as well as the nuns at Hương Sen Temple in Vietnam and the United States: have good health, practice diligently, keep your virtue, and always propagate Dharma in order to deserve to be Buddhist disciples, noble supermundane ones.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Railway Station apartment, Ngã bảy, Saigon, November 21, 2019
Honestly,

Tịnh Tâm Giải (sister Phương) and family
vanhong19660@gmail.com



Father Chánh Đức Minh (standing in center with a cloth hat) and family, in front of the house



Chánh Đức Minh (far left)



Mrs. Phương (right), Ven. Bikkhuni Giới Hương, and Bikkhuni Tri Minh



Uncle Chín (father's younger brother, far left) visited Hương Sen Temple



The two generations of Bhikkhuni Giới Hương's family are bowing to the Buddha and chanting

3.10. NURTURING A BODHI SEED SINCE CHILDHOOD

Dear Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương,

I congratulate your forty years of study and propagation! Time has passed quickly, from the day I was a little child often following you to a temple. After that, you went to India and the United States, while I became a nun in Vietnam.



Śikṣamānā Viền Khuông (far left)

Dear auntie, I have a good predestination to be born in a Buddhist lineage in which many people became nuns according to the Buddha's teachings. When I was six, seven years old, I didn't know anything about Buddhism, but I remember that whenever you visited my mother (your older sister, you are the third in the family), "Đen" (Black, my nickname at home) used to go with you to temples, while my younger sister, "Nâu" (Brown), who was about three or four years old, just burst into tears at seeing you come in

because she thought you looked a strange one with a bald head. My childhood was very beautiful; with the arrival of every summer, after school closed, you came and picked me up (little black girl) to go to Linh Sơn Cổ Tự Pagoda (Vũng Tàu, Bà Rịa) to listen to a lecture and swim at the beach together. You like the sea, so that once we were on the beach, we spent around four hours, because Saigon and Delhi do not have the sea. Along the way, for a few days, you often introduced the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha to my immature mind and taught me little by little about prostrations and rituals. When I followed you, I was able to eat delicious vegetarian food and brought back fruits of mangos or bananas (fortunes from Buddha's gifts), so I liked it a lot. You were the first one to plant the Bodhi seed in my mind since I was a child. It is a beautiful memory; I'll never forget it.

Just like that, the image of nuns and the Triple Jewel crept into my mind, which I didn't acknowledge at all when I grew up and had a private life. Each person has her own life, and I was too busy for a while to remember the temple and you. At that time, you went to study in Delhi and the United States to expand your knowledge of Buddhism and devote yourself to education. One day, suddenly the great honor of the Three Jewels arose in my heart; I suddenly really wanted to live at the temple to listen to the dharma daily, and the thirst to become a nun was nurtured from there.

Finally, I decided to follow in the footsteps of my two real aunts, Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and Bhikkhuni Trí Minh, who have been nuns for a long time. My parents and my family are devout Buddhists, so they supported my wish.

That's why I think that the holy seeds planted since childhood have not been lost. When predestined conditions are replete, they will sprout and develop. I feel happy being a nun; there is no higher happiness. This is the only way leading to a peaceful and lasting liberation for the benefit of myself and others.

I pay homage to the grateful Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương—a spiritual teacher, a precious aunt—who has graciously sowed Bodhi seeds since I was a child. Although you said nothing, your simple, pure monastic image silently lifted my mind.

I pray wholeheartedly to study and follow you to success on the Buddhist path that you left at Huong Sen Pagoda in Bình Chánh, Sài Gòn. I will try to complete the path and develop in the way I can. May the Three Jewels bless you and Bhikkhuni Trí Minh, and may all nuns at Hương Sen (in Vietnam and the United States) be peaceful and long-lived to benefit everyone.

I also pray that the two Hương Sen temples be developed into great nunneries, the ideal spiritual places for monastics and laypeople relying on the way of liberation. It is one kind of repayment for the hard work and the establishment from your beginnings.

Namo Sakyamuni Buddha.

Dedicated to Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương on the occasion
of your 40th Anniversary in the Dharma and Service

Bà Rịa-Vũng Tàu, November 22, 2019

Respectfully,

Śikṣamānā Viên Khuông

thanh@lenkims- knithat. com



Śikṣamānā Viên Khuông (far right)

3.11. A COLLEAGUE IN BHIKKHUNI ORDINATION

This morning I received an invitation from Venerable TN Giới Hương in the US to write a few words to celebrate the 40th anniversary of her ordination. She is a colleague in bhikkhuni ordination with me (Ven. Hồng Phúc) and Ven. Thanh Đức (a cousin of Ven. Giới Hương) in 1983. The three of us were born in 1963, received the full precept ceremony at the same time, and were also roommates at Liên Hoa Temple, Bình Thạnh District. I have now settled down in France and Ven. Bhikkhuni Thanh Đức is in Vietnam, while Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương lives in America.

The span of forty years is neither long nor short for a nun's life. How many ups and downs, sad times and happy times, successes and failures were experienced from the time when I was a minor in the temple until the day I was mature enough to be out of the temple to live my religious life independently. Then up to the time I travelled abroad alone to practice as well as share Buddhism, I have overcome many challenges and obstructions. Sometimes I felt as if I were being pushed against a wall, but there was still an invisible hand that pulled me out so that I could strive to live. Forty years have passed, with many real lessons about rising and falling. These experiences only take time to examine, and we could not have purchased them with money.

Going to the temple to become a monastic is not easy; if you don't have good roots then you cannot stay long at the temple. The monks and nuns are like water flowing upstream; if they are not diligent, they cannot flow upwards and instead drift back to the mundane life. So practitioners need to force themselves in the Buddha's teaching. Otherwise, they will waste the religious life and pass time in vain.

There are many ways to practice; our Dharma sisters are very blessed because we have met the insightful and compassionate Master Hải Triều Âm, who taught us how to go upstream. Our teacher taught us carefully and wholeheartedly day and night, not only with theories but with disciplined actions. She guided us in a direction, which is the same guideline such that no matter how lost we are when we step towards the horizon of the sea, we also recognize the right direction of the Dharma light. That's why there is the saying: "In this life, we were guided on the right path by the insightful master. Then forever in the future, we just keep going straight to the shore of liberation."

By the way, I would like to briefly explain the word "practice." There are many who rely on the folk saying:

Cultivating from home is the best
Serving parents is a true practitioner.

Then based on the above two sentences, people suppose that filial piety for parents at home is the first practice and that one does not need to go to the temple to become a monastic. If you think like that, then it's called a mundane view.

I would like to explain a little that there are many ways to practice. The word "practice" means to correct and change for the better, such as in improvement, replenishment, training, and enlightenment.

If you're at home serving parents, this is called cultivating PIETY.

Going to charities, freeing animals, fasting, and preserving the precepts: this is called cultivating GOOD.

Going to the temple to make offerings, helping the needy, building bridges and roads: this is called cultivating MERIT.

Transforming craving for beloved ones to enter the temple to study: this is called cultivating LIBERATION.

These above four methods are all called cultivation, but each produces different results, depending on which one we follow.

The Buddha taught, “If there is no craving, then we will not be reborn in the saha world” (that means we are still in samsara). The Buddha thus teaches that those who want to escape reincarnation have to transform the craving for relatives, go to the temple to shave their heads, and lead the monastic life. Therefore, the monastic’s conduct is very noble, but few people can practice it without enough good roots. It is not easy to live in a temple, just as moving water downstream is always faster and easier than moving water upstream. If those who enter the temple to be like the water flowing upstream are difficult and slow, without patience, they will slip down the mundane stream.

1) The cultivation of PIETY

If anyone cultivates PIETY, then that person will have a warm and harmonious family, and their children and grandchildren will have disciplined guidelines, upper and lower order, filial piety, and gratitude, but they will be subject to reincarnation in the world and receiving the suffering body (therefore, the Buddha teaches that the flesh body is the root of misery).

2) The cultivation of GOOD

People who practice good karma will eventually be born in heaven because heaven is a place for those with a good heart. In the human world, those who often do good deeds will be reborn there to enjoy a peaceful, long life. But according to the Buddha's teaching, heaven still is subject to accidents because it is too full of material, form, and luxury, so that they only enjoy pleasures without creating more good. In the end, when they have finished enjoying all of the blessings, they will fall down to a lower realm.

3) The cultivation of MERIT

Those who often offer their labor and wealth to the temple, create Buddha statues, print sutras, build roads, build bridges, and help people reduce their poverty will be born with lasting wealth, fame, and prosperity. But no matter how wealthy they may be, riches will one day come to an end. The world is a temporary illusion, and they will eventually close their eyes and leave behind all possessions, such as houses, cars, wives, children, money, and so forth. So the highest teaching of Buddha is to seek for true liberation.

4) The cultivation of LIBERATION

Renunciation to lead a temple life is to practice the virtue of detachment and be freed from the cycle of birth and death. If there is rebirth, there is still suffering. In the Sutra of Eight Enlightenments of the Great Person, Buddha taught: “Rebirth is tired.” This means birth and death are full of suffering. Each instance of birth creates thousands of sufferings, such as miseries from husbands, children, love, money, homes, laws, officials, repression, exploitation, and competition with others because of earnings, feelings, positions, and reputations. In present society, thousands upon thousands of disasters and accidents happen to families and countries. While happiness is rare to see, sadness and misfortune abound. In life, tears flow more than smiles. That is not to mention the suffering of the sick without medicine or caretakers.

Therefore, the Buddha taught that when there is reincarnation, there is a body, and it must be

still suffering. If you want to transform samsara, please find a way to get out of the three sense realms quickly. If you want to escape the three realms, there is only one way, which is to obey the Buddhist teachings of monastic life and renunciation.

Renunciation has three meanings:

1. Renunciation from the secular family to lead a temple life.
2. Renunciation from defilements to live a pure life with chanting, meditation, and precepts, to gradually discharge the three poison of greed, hate, and ignorance.
3. Renunciation from the three realms: sense, form, and formless worlds. Once greed, hate, and ignorance are ended, then the suffering cycle of reincarnation is disappeared.

Each of the four CULTIVATIONS is good. Every level's results will be different. Do not rush to bring your shortsighted knowledge to criticize it.

These few words are for my Dharma sister, who shares the same bhikkhuni ordination. I hope these words will contribute a bit to your forty-year monastic yearbook. May the Buddha bless Venerable Giới Hương and her nun disciples for the rest of their lives, and may their spiritual practice and service become smoother and better.

Namo Sakyamuni Buddha.

Paris, Fall of the Earth Pig Year (2019)

Best regards,

Venerable Bhikkhuni TN Hồng Phúc (Thanh Lương)

Abbess of Liên Hoa Tịnh Độ Temple, Razes, France

duyenthihuynh63@yahoo.com



Bhikkhuni TN Hồng Phúc (third from right), Rev. Viên Chân, Ven. Giới Hương, and Hương Sen Pilgrimage visited London, 2016



Liên Hoa Temple, where Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, Bhikkhuni Hồng Phúc, and Bhikkhuni Thanh Đức shaved their hair to become nuns and received the full precepts

3.12. TO MY DEAREST DHARMA SISTER

(Aka beloved cousin whom I adore the most)

This morning on the last day of autumn in the Pig Year (2019), I have just received an invitation to write a few words on the commemorative collected book for the 40th anniversary of the monastic ordination of Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương (my dearest dharma sister).

Forty years have passed. I remember the first day of renunciation and the bhikkhuni ordination. I (the youngest) was always with Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương (aka Thanh Hương, the oldest) and Hồng Phúc (the middle one) to form a group of three (we are even born in the same year, 1963). After receiving the full precepts, our Master Hải Triều Âm chose Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương (aka Thanh Hương) and nineteen other excellent nuns (from one hundred nuns in the temple) to join a strictly returning hearing nature (of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva) retreat and to subsequently go to Vĩnh Nghiêm Pagoda to present Dharma practice to the highest sangha member, Thích Đức Nhuận (who came from the North in 1983).

At that time, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương was very young and serious (she laughed and talked less); therefore, she was elected to the dignified position of Buddhist lawyer of Liên Hoa Temple. I often wandered, talked, and smiled while socializing with others, so I was elected as a medical nurse (to provide medicine, scrape poison winds from patients, take care of the nuns' sicknesses, and take them to see the doctor). Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and the other nuns detached themselves from the six worldly objects to sincerely and strictly practice the whole time and enter the penetrated hearing nature. How holy all of the nuns looked! From that cause, over the next twenty years, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương has now attained insight in dharma and has become a skilled professor, Dharma lecturer, and master. According to Avalokitesvara's virtue, listening to the sound of beings, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương has done a lot for the sake of many.

My name is Thanh Đức, and I am both a cousin and a dharma sister of Bhikkhuni Giới Hương. I greatly admire her. She always studied the Buddhist scriptures and sincerely followed them. She is very bright and intelligent in the field of education. She has written many bilingual Buddhist books in English-Vietnamese, taught Dharma at many places, built two temples to ordain nuns, and so on. Today, writing these words, I sincerely bow my hands to celebrate the merit from Sister Giới Hương, who followed the the Buddha and ancestors to share the Tathagata's teaching so that sentient beings can attain **wisdom** on the right path. I prefer to earn **merit** (rather than study like my sister) by giving alms and taking care of patients and poor people according to Samantabhadra Bodhisattva. Thus, we are cousin sisters (I am the daughter of the sixth sibling while Thanh Đức is the daughter of the tenth sibling) and dharma sisters (under the same Master Hải Triều Âm). We have sowed the seeds of WISDOM and MERIT, so we complement each other to fulfill two wings.

Linh Quang Temple, October 30, 2019

Respectfully,

Venerable Bhikkhuni Thanh Đức

hoanglinh6297@gmail.com



Ven. Giới Hương (stand) and Ven. Thanh Đức (sit) at Dinh Mount, Long Hải, 1994



Bhikkhuni Thanh Đức (yellow robe and second from right)



Bhikkhuni Thanh Đức (second kneeling down behind Venerable Giới Hương)

3.13. A LIFE: A FLASHING LIGHT

Namo Sakyamuni Buddha.

Dear Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương,

I am Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Tâm Diệu, the tenth aunt of Venerable Giới Hương (the mother of Venerable Giới Hương is the sixth) and also the mother of Venerable Thanh Đức (who was born in the same year in 1963 and received the same ordination as you). I solemnly send a few words to Venerable Giới Hương, to participate in *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service—Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*.

Years and months have drifted along the timelines of life: birth, maturity, marriage, childbirth, striving for livelihood, getting old, and preparing to lie down, which is a birth-death cycle we are continually subjected to. Life is like a flashing light; that is the reason why everyone who ordains to experience the most happiness by living in a monastery with a tranquil lifestyle is superior. I have comprehended the meaning of the word “impermanence.” Since then, I have practiced letting go of the worldly life, turned towards the Dharma, and ordained to live in the Tathagata’s house, relying on the door of the Buddha’s temple. Although I am old, a little late, it’s still better than nothing.

The image of a young nun (Bhikkhuni Giới Hương) who studied abroad at Delhi University (in India) and the United States: she usually comes to visit me whenever she comes back to Vietnam and gives lectures to encourage me to become a nun. Her teaching is very good and easy to understand. I always feel love for her because I realize she is very filial; after the death of her mother, she was determined to follow the Buddha and ordained as a nun to be filial and repay her parents by leading a pure, liberated life in the monastery. Therefore, I have greatly admired her filial piety since she was very young. As for me, now I am old, but I am happy with this, and this dream has also been fulfilled, as I wished. I do not have enough conditions to preach, translate, and serve in the same way as Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương or to do charity work as does Bhikkhuni Thanh Đức (my first daughter), so I have tried to recite Buddha’s name and pray to be reborn in the Buddha’s realm.

I am very proud of our family, which has such celebrity, virtue, and talent as Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương. She lectures, translates scriptures, writes books, composes poetry, travels around the world, and knows many languages to express Buddha’s words. She is a true pillar of Dharma Buddhism who has contributed greatly to the cause of Buddhist education and culture.

I sincerely pray that Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, Bhikkhuni Thanh Đức, as well as Bhikkhuni Trí Minh (the seventh younger sister of Bhikkhuni Giới Hương), śikṣamānā Viên Khuông (my niece), and all nuns at the two pagodas of Huong Sen (Vietnam and the United States) forever carry the torch of insight, illuminating the darkness, and that samadhi-wisdom’s fragrance from all of you will spread everywhere.

Namo Joy Bodhisattva Mahatat.

Bảo An Pagoda, Long Điền, November 22, 2019

Best regards,

Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Tâm Diệu

hoanglinh6297@gmail.com



Bhikkhuni Tâm Diệu (standing) and Bhikkhuni Thanh Đức (kneeling)



Bhikkhuni Tâm Diệu (standing) and niece Ánh (daughter of the fourth aunt)

3.14. CONNECTING THE DHARMA SISTERHOOD

Dear Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương,

To commemorate the 40th anniversary of your ordination and propagation of the dhamma, I offer a few words expressing my sincere respect.

I am your younger sister and also a disciple of Master Hải Triều Âm. I had heard that our Master had several disciples in America, including Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương. In 2015, through Ven. Bảo Liên's introduction, you invited me to come to the United States. I was very touched as I held your invitation because you don't know who I am, yet you still invited me. I heard that you also sponsored many brothers or sisters like that. Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương is generous, tolerant, and willing to extend her arms to help us.

In 2016, some other nuns and I went to the United States for a month. We visited and experienced a field trip to learn and nurture our knowledge in the USA. At the end of 2016, we were honored to welcome you and your two disciples, Rev. Viên Quý and Rev. Viên Nhuận, to visit my Thiên Long Temple, Yên Nhân Village, Tiền Phong Commune, Mê Linh District, Hà Nội City. You led the retreat for Buddhists in Mê Linh district (descendants of Hai Bà Trưng Ladies), and we deeply appreciated and admired you even more. After our master's death, all of the Dharma sisters have been busy with their practice and temple affairs, and we rarely see and visit one another.

It is difficult to visit one another within the same country, let alone from abroad. Ven. TN Giới Hương and her nun disciples went to Hà Nội to visit juniors such as me (Ven. Bhikkhuni Hải Quang of Thiên Long Temple), Ven. Kiến Đạo and Phương Tú (Trung Lữ Pagoda, Tiền Châu Commune, Phúc Yên Province), Ven. TN Từ Ân (Hưng Ký Temple, Minh Khai Downtown, Hanoi City) and Ven. Như Hòa (Đồng Nai). This memory we remember forever.

Before finishing these words, we sincerely wish that Ven. Bhikkhuni TN Giới Hương and all of the disciples at Hương Sen be healthy and flourish, that the construction of the Buddha Hall be completed soon, and that the vast Bodhi tree bestows its shade on us forever.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Yên Nhân Village, November 11, 2019
Abbess Thiên Long Temple

Venerable Bhikkhuni TN Hải Quang
Thichhaiquang1969@gmail.com

Here are some beautiful pictures of when Ven. Giới Hương went to the North. We took her and two nun disciples to visit the northern temples as follows:



Ven. Giới Hương and Ven. Hải Quang at Cái Bầu Monastery, Quảng Ninh



with Master Thích Trúc Bảo Tú at Ba Vàng Monastery, Quảng Ninh



Cái Bầu Monastery, Quảng Ninh



*Ven. Giới Hương, Ven. Hải Quang, Ven. Kiến Đạo, Ven. Phương Tú,
Ven. Nhu Hòa, and two nuns (Rev. Viên Quý and Rev. Viên Nhuận)
have tea at Thiên Long Tự*



Nice elders at Thiên Long Temple



*Buddhists Thiên Long processing,
Dharma Master Giới Hương to give a sermon*



Solemnly gathering in front of the lecture hall of the Thiên Long Pagoda

3.15. MEET AGAIN IN A CIRCLE

Namo Sakyamuni Buddha.

Dear Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương,

I have just received an invitation to write an essay for her book: *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service - Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*. In the Dharma sisterhood, I was happy to meet her at the Retraining Course at Việt Nam Phật Quốc Tự Temple, Sài Gòn, in March 2018. Then, in November 2018, I was invited by her family in Bà Điểm, Hóc Môn, to attend the 49th day ceremony of her deceased father. In December 2018, she came to teach at the retreat at Thiên Lâm Temple, where I am the abbess. Later, she invited me, Bhikkhuni Thanh Nhã, and Bhikkhuni Thông Tịnh (sister of Bhikkhuni Chánh Tuệ, as her dharma sister under Master Hải Triều Âm) to come to Hương Sen Pagoda in the USA to attend the ceremony for the Buddha's Birthday (May 26, 2019). As for me, she assigned me to give a lecture, while Bhikkhuni Thông Tịnh was the leader of the ritual.

Later, Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and I attended the summer retreat at Điều Ngự Pagoda (Westminster, California) and Như Lai Meditation Temple (San Diego, California) to exchange Buddhism and spiritual practices. Since then, the sisterhood between us has become closer and we understand each other even more. Although the conditions of each person's missionary activities are different, we always expressed joy in the Dharma, and when we must say goodbye to return to our duties at the local monastery, we always bring spiritual energy, harmony, practice, training, and love from the summer retreat and Hương Sen. With every beat of our heart, in the future on the path of cultivation and service, despite facing the storm of hardships, I will use this energy to determine faith in the Dharma and encourage the sisterhood to turn on the light of the Dharma lamp to benefit living beings.

We would like to praise the virtue of Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, a daughter of the Tathagata leading a noble, enlightened life. With the position of a bhikkhuni, no matter where you go, living in any environment or situation, you carry the wish, "Wherever human beings need us, we are present"—that service is very widespread. Because of the Buddha's noble and compassionate ideal, he declared that "serving beings is making offerings to the Buddhas."

May the Three Jewels protect Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and her nuns at the Hương Sen Temples (in Vietnam and the United States). Always attain success in all parts of the country and be full of health to transform sentient beings on the liberated way.

Thiên Lâm Pagoda, November 8, 2019

With metta,

Venerable Bhikkhuni Tường Hạnh

Thiên Lâm Pagoda: 4/54 Đặng Thúc Vịnh,
ấp Nam Thới Hamlet, Thới Tam Thôn Commune,
Hóc Môn District, HCM City
Phone: 0909 185578
anhtrangmai2012@gmail.com



*Bhikkhuni Tường Hạnh (left)
and Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, November 8, 2019*



A peaceful one-day retreat at Thiên Lâm Pagoda on November 8, 2019

3.16. ADVICE ON PROPAGATING BUDDHISM IN MODERN TIME

Being Buddhist monks, each of us also carries these thoughts and ambitions: “to promote the Dharma is our responsibility, benefitting human beings is our profession,” to repay the debt of gratitude to the Buddha, and not to betray the aspiration of renunciation. Propagation is indispensable for today's society, requiring every Buddhist monk and nun to know how to apply the teachings of the Buddha flexibly as well as combine “compassion and wisdom,” “egoless (Anatman)/selfless,” and “throwing oneself in dangerous positions to serve and sacrifice,” but this must be suitable to the environmental situation, the people of the region, and the weather. In this way, this work can accomplish the full potential of the missionary career, bringing “good life, good Buddhism” and “loving Buddha's grace” together.

Monks and nuns need to raise their awareness through renunciation; we need to follow closely the rules and discipline of the temple or monastery, respect the precepts, practice according to the Buddha's teachings, and find for ourselves a guiding teacher to live as Dhamma sisters and brothers. We follow a suitable method to practice accordingly.

Actively learning at Buddhist schools, acquiring listening skills to cultivate both religious education and secular education, participating in local Buddhist activities, and vigorously promoting and accelerating the spread of teachings of the Buddha, combined with the opening of retreats in the area where one is staying and the timely application of Buddha's teachings to life makes the spiritual life more and more sublime. With humanitarian values and Vietnamese cultural identity, when monks evangelize wherever they go, they will work towards doing good deeds, acting in tandem with “One thousand words also do not equal a small work,” and “It's for the Dharma.” Therefore, the application of Buddhist ideological thought to today's society is a necessity for education as well as propagation.

With propagation, when we give rice and clothes or give charitable gifts to help people, this is the work of showing the Buddhist spirit of “compassion, alleviating suffering, giving happiness.” But “giving money” only brings present benefits to the needs of a human being, while “preaching the Dharma” could bring the spiritual benefit in this and next life. Thus, preaching the Dhamma has great value in providing benefits to human beings. Because the Buddha taught, “Among all gifts, the dharma has the greatest merit, no merit equals it.”

The country of Vietnam has been integrating into a globalized environment, not only culturally, but also economically, with many challenges in this period. Therefore, in order to integrate into society, monks and nuns, in addition to being properly aware of the problem of cultivation, must also be motivated to make appropriate changes to receive these challenging opportunities.

The propagation efforts of monks and nuns are being promoted and socially responded to today because the Buddha's teachings are not far from the real world, are easy to relate to, and also provide a source of practical happiness for each person in this progressive, civilized age. Therefore, monks and nuns need to commit themselves to service and engagement in spreading the Dhamma, depending on the basis of the people's qualifications and the region more and more deeply in order to help them overcome the tragic misery of the temptations of life.

The future of Vietnamese Buddhism still contains a strong national identity and sustainable development, depending on Buddhist education through propagation. Therefore, the educational program for monks and nuns at all levels must be suitable for the era and taught in many forms, specializing in the practice of actual contact rather than the podium theory. The ancients taught that

“virtue is the root, talent is the top,” so Buddhist education must promote morality, quality rather than quantity. Although the economy has developed and cultural civilization has integrated this, it is also impossible to pursue anything while forgetting its origin, because morality is the basic foundation for human personality.

Going back to the golden era of Vietnamese Buddhism many centuries ago, so many images of the Sangha record the shining examples of virtue and the spirit of strictly studying the discipline and leaving behind many works of sutras-vinaya-commentary. These examples have timeless value for Vietnamese Buddhist education, such as the late Most Venerable Thích Thiện Hoa, Thích Trí Tịnh, Thích Minh Châu. . . Venerable Bhikkhuni Như Thanh, Venerable Bhikkhuni Diệu Không, Venerable Bhikkhuni Diệu Nhân, and so on. . . but words cannot relay or match ink strokes. Compared to His Holiness, the young monks and nuns now study a great deal, do not lack foreign degrees, and are fluent in foreign languages, but sometimes their internal strength and the results of their religious practice are not satisfactory, and they quickly become bored. They become depressed easily, irritated and angry, giving up or going astray. This is the paradox that each one of us should question and give attention to, in order to achieve the correct answer and the optimal solution to the problems of today's generation of monks and nuns.

Buddhism is a religion of “Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance,” so the basic factors forming a good monk help create a good life and faith. It starts from these three factors and accompanies self-awareness and awareness; “Discipline-Meditation-Wisdom” is important to practice suitably.

The management of people and the career of educating people for future generations are extremely important tasks in all times. It always carries within itself the mission of survival vs. destruction of a generation, from the unknown to the known, the imperfect to the perfect. Therefore, in any space, time, country, or environment, the management of people and the education of people, especially the missionary role of the monk, always is the first and foremost responsibility, living in the spirit of continental peace. United living: no matter how difficult, there is a solution. This also requires the Sangha to pay due attention and plan to train the monks and nuns on the right path, especially with the younger generation of monks and nuns today.

The role and responsibility of the Buddhist Sangha is very important in social life. Therefore, society finds indispensable the monks who are dedicated to serving, those who are truly virtuous and internally as well as externally capable, awakening people's hearts, listening and understanding suffering and feeling their emotions, sharing, knowing how to practice the doctrine of “selfless selflessness” that the Buddha taught. People who work in education or propagation must always learn from experience, update their knowledge regularly, innovate ways to address reality, and communicate with others to encourage them to join. The innovation is about overcoming existing realities, opens up new things for the future, and decisively persuade people to help them lead a peaceful and liberated life in Dharma. It is true: “Monasticism is a beautiful organization; monks walk on the path, have fun, and practice liberation to find peace in life.”

In closing for this article, the author would like to send her best wishes to Venerable Dr. Thích Nữ Giới Hương on the occasion of forty years since ordination for finding her Master, studying religious education, setting her mind on renouncing home for homelessness, saving the human world, and repaying the debt of gratitude to the Buddha, as a bhikkhuni. She looks like an elder sister who has been a nun before, her pedagogical level with a simple and pure life, her mind always rejoicing, a shining example for us to follow. She is truly a worthy nun to be praised both at home and abroad:

*The four-way monk's life is walking quickly
Everywhere she is, our home
Alone with the robe and bowl
All over the house are relatives.*

Vietnam Buddhist University HCMC, November 27, 2019

With metta,

Venerable Bhikkhunī Tâm Thảo

Lecturer of Buddhism in English Department

tamthaovn@gmail.com



*Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and Venerable Tâm Thảo,
December 6, 2019 On the 35th anniversary of establishing Vietnam Buddhist University, HCMC*



*Sc Viên Trang, Sc Viên Chân, Ni sư Chánh Tuệ, Ns Giới Hương,
Ns Tâm Thảo, Sc Viên An và Sc Viên Tiến (từ trái sang)*



Trước cổng chùa Hương Sen

3.17. ESTABLISHING A TEMPLE TO NURTURE COMPASSION

*Spring hair of a life is shaved off
Overcoming the afflictions from the world
Build a temple to nurture compassion,
Hương Sen taught beings to practice diligently.*

On the occasion of all dear Dharma brothers, sisters, friends, and followers in both Vietnam and the United States preparing to write and send photos for a book of collected writings, *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service—Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*, I also would like to present my thanks and words to you, Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, who generously helped with my immigrant papers for staying in the USA.

I wish that you and your disciple nuns will always be healthy and strong, so as to steer the Buddha Dharma boat everywhere.

Hương Sen Temple, November 24, 2019
Honestly,

Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Liên Tạng
diemtang2020@gmail.com



Bhikkhuni Liên Tạng (third from right)



*Bhikkhuni Liên Tạng (carrying a tray)
at the paying salute at every three steps retreat May 21, 2019 at Hương Sen Temple*

3.18. THINKING OF HƯƠNG SEN

Hương Sen brightly blooms in the United States
Venerable Giới Hương is the abbess
We are delighted for the nuns' Sangha
In the empty desert, pureness is present.

Anniversary of forty years
Cultivate Dharma in far places
Still stepping forward over challenges
Guiding beings to salvation.

Letters to the lonely prisoners
Help orphans find happiness
Assist unlucky people to have better food
Actualize the Kuan Yin Bodhisattva's virtue.
Actualize the Kuan Yin Bodhisattva's virtue.

Offered to Venerable Giới Hương on the occasion of
Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service—
Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương.

Pháp Nhân Temple, Tustin, Texas, December 18, 2019

Sincerely,

Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Hạnh Minh
hanhminh122@gmail.com



*Rev. Hạnh Minh, Rev. Nguyễn Ý, Ven. Giới Hương, and Ven. Minh Huệ (from right)
A speech at a summer retreat at Điều Ngự Temple, June 12, 2019*

3.19. SINCERELY RECITE BUDDHA'S NAME

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Dear Venerable Thích Nữ Giới Hương,

I am Samaneri Dieu Hai, your younger Dharma sister, staying in the quiet rural countryside in Texas state and only reciting the Buddha's name all day, since I am older and weak. According to my feelings, you are a dharma sister, caring for your small juniors, disciples, and Buddhists; you always satisfy all spiritual aspirations, and whenever anyone needs you, you never refuse. You are a person who is very determined and patient when implementing your wish to overcome all difficulties.

Dear Venerable, now obeying you, I would like to copy an Awakening Passage from the Great Master Hám Sơn (excerpt from "The Great Bliss Homeland" (Quê Hương Cực Lạc) by Venerable Thích Thiện Tâm) to offer to you, since our late Master Hải Triều Âm often read it:

ANCESTOR HÁM SƠN DECLARED

Every day except for the two main chanting periods, we only read the name of Amitabha Buddha with two hands touching at the chest, keeping mindfulness to never forget and never become delirious or trapped in illusions. Just take the Buddha's sentence as our important living code, clench our teeth firmly without letting go; even when we eat, move, walk, lie, or sit, we never forget to recite the Buddha's name in the present moment.

If we encounter scenes of ups/downs, joy/sadness, happiness/anger disturbing our mind, when we bring up the sound of Buddha's name, then the illusions disappear; immediately see the negativity, and then destroy it. Because defilement is the root of birth and death, now using Buddha's name to eradicate defilements, the Buddha will be blessed to transform our suffering. Reading the Buddha's name can shift defilements to be out of rebirth, which is a simple method.

If you recite Buddha's name until you can control the defilements, then you can master your sleepwalking. If your dreams are controlled, then you will be able to master the suffering. If you have mastered "yourself" during illness, when you die, you know where to go.

If you are sincerely urgent to get out of samsara, you only need to rely on the recitation of Buddha alone, without any other thoughts. Through long-term maturity in practice, naturally directed at the pure meditation of reading Buddha's name, you can gain the beneficence of it for life.

On the occasion of Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service—Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, I wish you all the best of health and happiness; always recite the Buddha's name and share this Pure Land method with all human beings, as ancestor Hám Sơn and Master Hải Triều Âm did.

Giác Huệ Hut, Texas, November 18, 2019

Sincerely,

Samaneri Diệu Hải
lieunguyen@yahoo.com



*Samaneri Diệu Hải (left)
Behind: Ven. Giới Hương, Rev. Viên Chân, and Samane Huệ Đức*

3.20. PLANT A BODHI SEED

*The teachings of the Buddhas are wonderful
Silence in time, delivery Dharma
Boring through the illusory, worldly places
Set foot in Sakyamuni's lineage
Learning humbly, generous heart
Planting a Bodhi seed firmly
Gratitude towards parents, masters, and Buddhist devotees
Listening, thinking, and practicing, always diligently
Giới Hương – Fragrance of precepts travels against the wind, everywhere.*

This simple poem is offered to Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương on the occasion of her fortieth anniversary of study and service. I wish for her career to be always successful.

Diệu Giác Pagoda, December 14, 2019

Sincerely,

Venerable Bhikkhuni Hạnh Bảo

hanhbao. dg@gmail. com



*Ven. Bhikkhuni Hạnh Bảo (far right) as a Precept Master
for the Samaneri Ordination Ceremony at Hương Sen Temple, May 20, 2017*



Ni sư Hạnh Bảo (người thứ hai bên phải) trong buổi ngộ trai tại Lễ Phật đản Chùa Hương Sen ngày 21 tháng 5 năm 2017

3.21. A SHINING STAR

Giới (Precepts) decorate the nun's body and mind to honor Sakyamuni Buddha's daughters.

Hương (Fragrance) transmits the sacred, pure light flourishing in the Buddhist Sangha.

Venerable Thích Nữ Giới Hương is a talented one in the nuns' Sangha in the United States as well as in Vietnam. I was predestined to know her when I studied in India (2004). One year after meeting her, she left India because she had completed the PhD program in Buddhist philosophy and traveled to the United States to share the Dharma. Although the time was very short for us, I know she is a talented nun, harmonious and energetic. She studied, wrote articles, and composed books at the same time since she was in India. When I went to India, for the first time, I was given the three-volume *Ban Mai Xứ Ấn* (Dawn in India), written by her. I really commend her because often students studying abroad are very stressed, dealing with assignments, exams, and finding materials for their writing, so they have no mind for other works. Yet, she is remarkable beyond her studies; she took advantage of her time to write a great deal. . . So admirable she is!

When I came and settled down in America, I met her again. Her active manner seems to have increased even more. With the abbess's duties, taking care of Buddhist works, converting nun disciples, joining Californian programs, writing books, translating scriptures, and going to lectures in prisons, hospitals, and so forth. . . Not only in foreign countries, she also teaches at Vietnam Buddhist University and preaches the Dharma at many pagodas in her native Vietnam. Although she bears a female body, her will is as strong and firm as a man's. Her limbs are soft and weak, but because of the Buddha Dharma and for the sake of sentient beings, she has overcome the weakness "ordinary women" often have and has committed to a life with the spirit of a Bodhisattva dedicated to the life and Dharma. This is what our nuns should learn and follow.

More particularly, she is a person who lives very close to and in harmony with people, particularly with junior nuns. She is very enthusiastic to help, sharing when juniors need her hands. As for the meaning of what the Buddha taught, she does not distinguish between sects, country, skin color, relatives, etc. . . For the sake of life, for religion where needed, she is enthusiastically involved and contributes. I have a predestined relationship with her and have always worked with her. Whenever there is a need, I ask her, and she never refuses, always ready to share and assist enthusiastically. I think that the present era really needs people who are smart, virtuous, and sincere like her.

It's hard to talk or write about her. I just admire her, learn from her, and follow her example.

I wish her all the best, as a constant shining star in the sky of the nuns' Sangha, contributing many benefits to the Buddha Dharma, sentient beings overseas, as well as the homeland of Vietnam.

Los Angeles, Diệu Pháp Temple, December 22, 2019

Genuinely,

Sister in Dharma, Venerable Bhikkhuni Minh Huệ

thichnuminhhue@gmail.com



Ven. Minh Huệ (third from right) with Ven. Giới Hương and all of the nuns of Hương Sen on the occasion of Buddha's Birthday 2019 at Diệu Pháp Pagoda



Ven. Minh Huệ (fifth from the left), next to Ven. Giới Hương and nuns

3.22. A GOOD CHARACTERISTIC OF PROMOTING HARMONY

Every year after the full moon day of the fourth lunar month, monks and nuns in California gather in a monastery to attend the summer retreat. I often meet Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương at Phật Học Viện Quốc Tế Temple (North Hills), sometimes at Huệ Quang Pagoda or Bảo Quang Pagoda (Santa Ana), sometimes at Niệm Phật Đường Fremont (San Jose), sometimes in Như Lai Thiền Tự Temple (San Diego), sometimes at retreats in North America, and so forth.

Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương is ranked at the "top" of **sisters in old Dharma age**, even if her worldly age is rather young (she became a nun at the age of fifteen and received full ordination very early), so that she usually keeps a position among the administrators or preachers in the nuns' Sangha. But what shines in our eyes is her simplicity and sense of harmony in her interactions with young nuns, such as when she joins in arranging the table for meals, labors, and chants with the young nuns. She holds many **high academic degrees** from secular universities and Buddhist institutes, but she doesn't think of it. She has a high religious age but works as a fresh bhikkhuni; one time, she came to stay in a tent with young nuns (such as at the summer retreat at Phật Học Viện Quốc Tế Temple in 2013), refusing to stay in a proper room in a building for nuns who were ordained a long time.

Once she was a leader in a nuns' group—there was a farewell party at the end of the retreat, and she mobilized the nuns to rehearse the song "Về mái chùa Xưa" (Return to the Old Temple) by the teacher, Trường Khánh. She then stood and sang with our young nuns to make the program fun. Her dedication and sense of harmony in working with nuns, without considering high or low positions, young or old age, big or small things: whenever there is a work, she engages in it to bring forth the best results. This proves that she forgets herself to harmonize with everyone and every task for the sake of many, as the Buddha taught in the Mahā Nibbāna Sutta, Digha Nikaya 16: "Bhikkhus, when monks are among fellow practitioners, in a crowded or remoted place, they keep body, speech, and mind in harmony with others. From this, the Sangha will be prosperous and not decline."^[1]

On the occasion of Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương's fortieth anniversary of study and service, we wish her and the nuns of Hương Sen Temple peace and happiness: always rise to victorious achievements in the spring of 2020.

Winter in California, Đại Bi Pagoda, December 27, 2019

Sister in Dharma,

Bhikkhunī Thích Nữ Phước Từ

1. *Digha Nikaya 16, Trường Bộ Kinh 16, Kinh Đại Bát-Niết-Bàn (Mahāparinibbāna sutta), translated into Vietnamese by the Most Ven. Thích Minh Châu, <https://www.budsas.org/uni/u-kinh-truongbo/truong16.htm>. Quote translated into English by Bhikkhuni Giới Hương.*



*Rev. Phước Từ (below stage at far right),
Bhikkhuni Giới Hương (standing in the middle, sixth from left),
Conference of Vietnam America Fellowship Buddhist Sangha,
Anaheim, California, December 15, 2019*

3.23. A FEW LINES FOR MY FRIEND

It has been more than thirty years since we sat under the roof of the Advanced Buddhist Institute, the First Campus, the Second Course (1988–1992), and after nearly ten years studied together at the Faculty of Buddhist Studies in Delhi University and lived in the same dormitory (P.G. Women's Hostel, Delhi University, Delhi 7, India) and the same building C. Giới Hương was in room C-2, while Trí Liên's room was C-51. We have many beautiful memories of student and research life.

Giới Hương is a nun who studied well and worked hard. During the time we were living at the P.G. Women's Hostel, whenever Trí Liên came to Giới Hương's room, I saw her always with a book in hand, studying and writing, spending most of the time for research. So admired she is! My beloved classmate was favored with high aspirations for learning, research, and service to others.

I wish for her good health and peace of mind to devote to the Buddhist Sangha and serve sentient beings, in accordance with the Dhammapada (verse 54) that Buddha taught:

“The scent of flowers cannot go against the wind; nor the scent of sandalwood, nor of rhododendron (*tagara*), nor of jasmin (*mallika*); only the reputation of good people can go against the wind. The reputation of the virtuous ones (*sappurisa*) is wafted abroad in all directions.”

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

*The 35th anniversary of the establishment
of Vietnam Buddhist University, December 6–8, 2019*

Sincerely,

Ven. Bhikkhuni Trí Liên

Lecturer in the Pali Department
at Vietnam Buddhist University
delhitriilien@yahoo.co.in



*Ven. Bhikkhuni Trí Liên, Ven. Huệ Liên, Prof. Sarao (History Department of Delhi University),
Ven. Giới Hương, and Ven. Liên Đạt (from right)*



*Bhikkhuni Giới Hương và Bhikkhuni Trí Liên (seven and sixth from right)
with other nun classmates at Advanced Buddhist Institute in 1990*

3.24. SEVERAL THOUGHTS

Back in time about fifteen years ago (2004–2005), I was a graduate student in Vietnam. At that time, the Internet communication network was not as popular as it is now. If we wanted to find documents for research projects related to our lessons, we had to go to the Internet shop, where we paid rental fees calculated by the time. One day, I went to the "Quang Duc Homepage" website to search for documents, and I accidentally saw pictures of Ven. Giới Hương and her work. I clicked to read more.

Her writings were very practical and insightful. I admired her silently. I was also proud that there were talented people in the nuns' community contributing articles and materials on such global websites. Since then, from the bottom of my heart, I always cherished a desire to have the opportunity to meet her.

It is true that on "a round earth," I gained the opportunity to go to America and settle in the US to meet her. At the funeral of my most venerable master, I was very happy to hear the MC announce the delegation's names: there was Ven. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương. Kneeling in front of my master's altar, she read a very touching poem with a sweet voice, which I will always remember.

Due to a predestined rotation, I succeeded my master to take charge of Đại Bi Quan Âm Temple in the San Bernardino region, as Ven. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương's neighbor. Since then, I have had many opportunities to meet her and understand more about her, such as: how to work hard, enthusiasm, friendliness, harmony, supporting each other when doing the Buddha's work, attending her temple's ceremonies, and so forth. I gain a lot of lessons and experiences due to her talent and virtues.

Thanks to a predestined relationship in a round Earth circle, I was able to become a neighbor with Ven. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, whom I have long respected. I wish for her and all the nuns of Hương Sen Temple achievement of their dreams and contribution of more benefits to religion and life. She is definitely a mainstay in the nuns' Sakya lineage overseas.

New year, January 2, 2020

Abbess of Đại Bi Quan Âm Pagoda

Warm regards,

Venerable Bhikkhunī Thích Nữ Minh Duyên

nhanduyen2005@yahoo.com



*Bhikkhunī Minh Duyên standing up to greet the Sangha
in a ceremony led by the Most Venerable Như Điển and the German delegation
at Hương Sen Temple, Perris, California, April 12, 2018*



*Bhikkhunī Minh Duyên, Ven. Tâm Nhật, Bhikkhunī Giới Hương (upper row at left)
at Đại Bi Quan Âm Temple, San Bernadino, California, July 7, 2019*

3.25. FIRM FOOT, SOFT STONE

Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương was ordained from a young age under the famous Master Hải Triều Âm. When there were sufficient affinity, she settled down in the United States and has continued on the path of propagating Dharma, guided the future generations to repay the Buddha grace. At present, she became a distinguished doctorate nun in Oversea Buddhist world.

Although in the first time, she encountered many difficulties in America, but with her strongly mission in this land of America, with a Dharma saying "self-effort and other-effort", she has been embarked on life with a selfless heart. She has gone to prison to bring the light of the Buddhism to prisoners, who are in deep suffering, to soothe the hearts and wounds of every prisoner. With the gentle heart, she did neither back down from the adversities of life outside nor in the prison. She came to inmates like a spritual teacher bringing the fresh wind of Dharma to the thirsty suffering students. The prisoners, too, hope that someone like the messengers will bring them the hearts of love and the joys of spiritual practice so that they can stand firm and live the right life. She has done things that few people can do. What a respectable deed!

Besides going into life to save communities, she has also spent much time in studying Buddhism and have published many valuable works such as:

- Ban Mai Xứ ấn (Dawn in India)
- Vườn Nai – Chiếc Nai Phật Giáo (Sarnath – the Cradle of Buddhism)
- Luân Hồi Trong Lăng Kính Lăng Nghiêm (The Rebirth View in Śūraṅgama Samādhi Sūtra) etc. and many other works.

The 40-year journey to study and service in Buddhism of Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương shows that she is an outstanding nun. Although sometimes it is sad and happy, sometimes up and down, but she has overcome all to achieve the good results like today.

On the occasion of celebrating "40 years of studying and servicing in Dharma of Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương," Nguyên Ý would like to wish you always have a firm and hard career and further promote the role of propagating the Dharma.

I wish you immeasurable bliss, attain all the Buddha's works and always be the fulcrum for the young nuns to follow.

Finally, I would like to borrow two verses of Poet Bùi Giáng to offer you.

*"It said that it is wrong to say more,
Because spring is waiting for whoever comes in."*

Việt Nam Temple, Los Angeles,
Third day of Mouse Year, January 28 2020
With metta,

Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Nguyên Ý
nguyenysakya05@yahoo.com



Bhikkhuni Nguyễn Ý (sixth from left) at the Fellow Buddhist Conference, Anaheim, California, December 15 2019



The view of the Fellow Buddhist Conference, Anaheim, California, December 15 2019



*Bhikkhuni Nguyễn Ý (second from right) and Ven. Giới Hương (centre)
at the Retreat of Điều Ngự Temple, California, June 18 2019*

3.26. TRUE FRAGRANCE FLYING FAR, NATURALLY

Bhikkhuni Venerable Giới Hương
(among the best nuns overseas)

*It is real: true fragrance flying far, naturally!
Overseas, this place has Giới Hương
Wisdom, Morality, and Precepts are fragrant in the Dharma
Is this why we have respect and love for her?*

To you, for the book of collected writings:
Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service—Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương.

*Sùng Nghiêm Zen Center,
February 5, 2020
With metta,*

Bhikkhunī Thích Nữ Chân Thiên
sungnghiem@hotmail.com



*The most Venerable Tâm Châu (left second)
Bhikkhuni Chân Thiên (far right) and monks*



*Venerable Chân Thiên and Venerable Chân Diệu (third and fourth on right),
Bhikkhuni Giới Hương (far left) at Vu Lan Ceremony at Sùng Nghiêm Zen Center.*

3.27. THEORY AND REASON BALANCE

*Fragrance of lotus spreads in all ten directions
Theory and practice balance as a role model for life
Pilgrimages come to worship
Here is the Bliss Land, asking who does not miss it after leaving.*

*Sùng NghiêM Zen Center,
February 5, 2020*

Thanh Diệu Đức - Thích Nữ Chân Diệu
sungnghiem@hotmail.com



*Bhikkhuni Chân Diệu (left second and in brown dress)
and Bhikkhuni Chân Thiên (next) and nuns*



*Bhikkhuni Chân Diệu giving gifts to young Buddhists
at Sùng Nghiêm Zen Center*

3.28. A YOUNG NUN TRULY ENTERING BUDDHISM

It is a great honor in the Vietnamese Buddhist nun Saṅgha that we have the worthy nun, “a young nun truly entering Buddhism (đồng chân nhập đạo) from a childhood due to the results of her past good karma. Venerable Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ giới Hương has developed spontaneous bodhicitta, kept a pure body and mind, cut off the world relationships and rejected bad karma. She stepped straight onto the monastic path with diligent aspiration, and single-minded practice. She has achieved great success through every glorious step, both in Dharma and in life, with activities involving the material world to spiritual endeavors, with daily hardships.

Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương was born in Bình Tuy, and ordained as a nun at the age of fifteen under the famous Master Triều Âm (Đại Ninh, Vietnam). She has studied in India for ten years and graduated with a PhD in Buddhism in 2003 at Delhi University, India. Currently, the abbess of Hương Sen Pagoda in Perris, California, USA, she is studying literature at the University of California, Riverside.

She writes poetry, articles and thinks deeply about Buddhism. She established Bảo Anh Lạc Bookcase and is the author of more than forty-one valuable books:

1. *Bodhisattva and Sunyata*
 2. Bồ tát và Tánh không trong kinh điển Pali và Đại thừa (*Bodhisattva and Sunyata in Pali Nikaya and Mahayana Sutras*)
 3. Ban Mai Xứ Ấn (*The Dawn in India*)
 4. Vườn Nai - Chiếu Nôi Phật Giáo (*Sarnath - The Cradle of Buddhism*)
 5. Xá Lợi của Đức Phật (*The Relics of Buddha*)
 6. Quy Y Tam Bảo và Năm Giới (*Taking Three Refuges and Keeping Five Precepts*)
 7. Vòng Luân Hồi (*The Cycle of Life*)
 8. Hoa Tuyết Milwaukee (*Snow Flowers in Milwaukee*)
 9. Luân Hồi Trong Lăng Kính Lãng Nghiêm (*Rebirth Views in the Śūraṅgama Sūtra*)
 10. Nghi Thức Hộ Niệm Cầu Siêu (*The Ritual for the Deceased*)
 11. Sen Nở Chốn Tù Tù (*Lotus in the Prison*)
 12. Nữ Tu và Tù Nhân Hoa Kỳ (*A Nun and American Inmates*)
 13. Quán Âm Quảng Trần (*The Commentary of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva*)
 14. Nếp Sống Tỉnh Thức của Đức Đạt Lai Lạt Ma Thứ XIV (*The Awakened Mind of the 14th Dalai Lama*), (2 vols)
 15. A-Hàm: Mưa pháp chuyển hóa phiến não (*Agama - A Dharma Rain Transforms the Defilement*), (2 vols)
 16. Góp Từng Hạt Nắng Perris (*Collection of Sunlight in Perris*)
 17. Pháp Ngữ của Kinh Kim Cang (*The Key Words of Vajracchedikā-Prajñāpāramitā-Sūtra*)
 18. Tập Thơ Nhạc Nắng Lăng Nghiêm (*Songs and Poems of Śūraṅgama Sunlight*)
 19. Chùa Việt Nam Hải (*Overseas Vietnamese Buddhist Temples*)
 20. Việt Nam Danh Lam Cổ (*The Famous Ancient Buddhist Temples in Vietnam*)
- and others... Please see the website details: www.huongsentemple.com.

There are also a lot of your poems that were converted to songs by many famous musicians. All of them have been made into very good CDs, giving listeners moments of enjoying great lyrics with rhymn.

With the desire to promote the golden Buddhist light, popularize Vietnamese culture and share the Dharma, you came to the US with empty hands. You courageously established Hương Sen Temple

in the semi-desert area of Perris City, California with the aim to create favorable conditions to help the nuns have a suitable place of sanctuary to stabilize their spiritual practice, and at the same time, help the local residents and Vietnamese people have a temple to meet their spiritual needs.

Currently, Hương Sen pagoda has been established and has had the opportunity to expand to a large area (up to ten acres). That is why it is very necessary for active support from Buddhists.

As fellow nuns, who are sincere female disciples of the Buddha, we sincerely praise the merit and spirit upholding and promoting the culture and the Dharma of Venerable Dr. Thích Nữ Giới Hương, Abbess of Hương Sen Temple in Perris City. We sincerely wish all the best to the Venerable Dr. Thích Nữ Giới Hương.

Namo Shakyamuni Buddha.

Southern California, February 24, 2020

The Abbess of Minh Đăng Quang Monastery

Faithfully,

Reverend Doctor of Buddhist Economics Bích Liên

bichliendoctorate@yahoo.com



Rev. Ngọc Liên means Miss Bích Liên



Rev. Ngọc Liên (fourth from right) receiving the Certificate of Record at Minh Đăng Quang Monastery as the first temple of the World Buddhist Medicant Saṅgha on October 5, 2019, in Westminster, California.



Venerable Giới Hương (fourth left) and Rev. Ngọc Liên (second row, opposite from right) at the Fellowship Buddhist Conference, Anaheim, California, December 15, 2019

3.29. REMEMBERING CHILDHOOD RENUNCIATION & PRACTICE

On this occasion, Hương Sen Temple is assembling an anthology of writings, *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service – Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*. From the United States, Ven. Bbikkhuni Giới Hương sent out an earnest email:

Dear Bhikkhuni Chánh Tuệ!

Please consider writing an article for the new collection. Could you drop a few lines of childhood memories of our sisterhood at Liên Hoa Pagoda in the 1980s? It would be good if you also give an update, as you work at the office of the Vietnam Buddhist University, HCM City, while I, from the United States, teach at this University.

Your presence in the anthology would be an honor for us, as we highlight the time when we ordained and practiced together under our great Master Hải Triều Âm. This master converted a few hundred nun disciples, including Ven. Giới Hương (her Dharma title is Thanh Hương), Ven. Thanh Đức (cousin sister of Ven. Giới Hương) and Ven. Chánh Tuệ.

* * *

Dear Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương,

Allow me to use the close greetings of "senior sister" and "younger sister," because in my memory, you acted like a sibling in a family, as well as in the religion. You are very gentle, quiet, and have taken care to guide me from the time I became a novice at the age of eleven. At the end of 1981, I left family behind to lead a monastic life; perhaps I was the youngest novice at Liên Hoa Temple.

The memorable picture in my mind is that it was arranged for me to live in the same room with you and Dharma sister Thanh Đức on the temple's mezzanine floor. You are a sister who has a great deal of detachment (following the ascetic conduct of Ancestral Mahākāśyapa). The monastic robes you wore were frayed with many layers on the shoulders (which you still wear). Each of us was allowed only three sets, but you gave me one of yours. It was so old but I cherished it so much. You had a bead string of noctilucent bracelets. At night, in the main hall, as lights were turned off for the nun community to read the name of Amitābha Buddha, your beads lit up like an aura; as an innocent child I liked it very much. Under the hard economic circumstances at that time (1980s), your beads were a fortune for you, but you dared to give them to me so that I could always show off my beautiful hands with other sisters – then I was willing to sit next to our big sisters to recite the Buddha's name. I really liked to attend the reciting Buddha's name course, because you always told me that more reading of the Buddha's titles and more touching of the beads would cause them to become brighter and prettier day by day.

In 1981–1985, at a series of practice days under the big shadow of the Master at Liên Hoa Temple, you exuded a special feature of less talking, but more cultivation: "People respect a dignified appearance." Due to your noble manner, the master appointed you to the position of Buddhist lawyer in the temple, and you were also luckily selected to join a retreat group (twenty bhikkhunis) to practice intently with the meditative method of "reflecting on the hearing nature." Your group later presented your Dharma practice to the highest monk in the Vietnamese Saṅgha, the Most Venerable Thích Đức Nhuận (he is from the north and came south and stayed at Vĩnh Nghiêm Pagoda, the third District). I remember at that time, even though you were young, your dignified manner indicated to me that you would reach your goals. Your walking and actions were mindful like a Zen Master from the mountain. You were elegant and dedicated to all the responsibilities assigned by our master. In my eyes then and now, you are a role model with personality, confidence, and perseverance, as the motto says:

STUDYING – hardworking to the end.

PRACTICING – until the ultimate.

It can be said that Sister Giới Hương is a good example of trying to overcome difficulties to reach success on the path of practice Buddhism; you are worthy of being a good role for juniors, disciples, and students.

The coniferous trees shaded green on the road in the autumn of August 2016. From the USA, Sister Giới Hương returned to Vietnam with a PhD in Buddhist philosophy and a master's degree in literature. You applied to teach the Dharma in English course (three months each year) at the Vietnamese Buddhist University. I am Chánh Tuệ, who established Hải Quang Temple in the Gò Vấp district, as well as having worked at the office of the Buddhist University. So I had the opportunity to assist with all of the procedures at the academy to help you, my dear sister, where you have participated in the role of a lecturer.

We have not seen each other for nearly thirty years. You have gone out to study in institutions here in Vietnam and abroad. You earned a bachelor's degree in Buddhist studies at the Buddhist Institute of the Most Venerable Minh Châu, along with a bachelor's degree in Vietnamese literature from the University of Humanities and Society. In addition you earned a PhD in India, along with a bachelor's degree in literature from an American university.

In 2016, the happy day I met you at the Vietnam Buddhist University, you looked mature – a successful nun. Wow! Look at your biography, your achievements of both internal and external wisdom, as well as your rich dedication to education (you have written more than forty works in English and Vietnamese; you are building and developing a ten-acre pagoda in the US and currently have thirteen renunciant disciples). I bow in admiration, but I couldn't follow. Such a position like that! Such knowledge like that! But you are still my sister as in the past. A sister who has always been simple, peaceful, and with a deep connection to me. I am always proud of my elder sister who is an example of overcoming difficulties in the path of cultivation and service to Buddhism.

Then, one day in the warm sunny summer of June 2018, with full grace, you completed the necessary paperwork for me and Bhikkhuni Tâm Thảo (a lecturer in the Buddhist University) to visit Hương Sen Temple in the USA. Although the purpose was traveling and attending the summer retreat in the American temples, you also invited us to teach the Buddhist precepts for your nun disciples, with your persuasive explanation as follows:

In Buddhism, we have a saying: “When Saṅgha (monks/nuns) arrives, it means the Buddha appears.” When monks and nuns have the karma to come to Hương Sen Temple, I always invite them to kindly give a lecture sharing the valuable training experiences of those who are senior to the young and new practitioners, both the renunciants as well as laypeople, especially since in this remote place, it can be hard for folks to hear the Buddha Dharma.

When people meet you, usually your advice is for them to put effort into studying, reading, practicing, and taking advantage of everything to be useful and devoted, and of course to avoid wasting a lot of time on eating, sleeping, with some leisure here and there.

Looking at the ten acres of land (equivalent to about four acres in Vietnam), with foundation preparations for the project, you shared with us:

My dream is this temple which will serve as a great nunnery for all nuns, both from foreign lands and elsewhere. I do not have any major events to raise funds. I often go here and there to give lectures,

offer my books, from which I can accumulate some small income. Buddhists who know this project can contribute to building a Buddhist nunnery which will exist forever to bring the light of Buddha Dharma everywhere, especially in remote areas in the United States.

We pray that the Buddhas will bless, sooner or later, the construction of Hương Sen Temple. I feel optimistic and believe that the miracle of the Three Jewels will bless Hương Sen.

Once again, I pray sincerely to Venerable Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, my wonderful sister, to be healthy, to make yourself a great nun, a role model for Buddhism today and in the future, so that we and the young nuns who soon will leave their homes, their temples and their country to study abroad follow my sister's example so the future of Buddhism will have more excellent nuns, such as my sister which is well illustrated by the meaning of her Dharma name, "Giới Hương" (Fragrance of the Precepts).

May Venerable Giới Hương and the nuns at Hương Sen Temple (California, USA) and Hương Sen (Vĩnh Lộc A, Bình Chánh, Hồ Chí Minh City), have a peaceful body and mind. May your Buddha works be full of joy, and may your aspirations be fulfilled for the sake of many, both domestically and internationally as your vows shine the light of Dharma.

March 19, 2020

Hải Quang Temple, Gò Vấp District

With Metta,

Venerable Bhikkhunī Chánh Tuệ

chanhtue81@gmail.com



*Ven. Chánh Tuệ (third from left) and Ven. Tâm Thảo (fifth from left)
visiting Hương Sen Temple, USA, June 16, 2018*



*Ven. Chánh Tuệ taught the Vinaya for the bhikkhunīs
(Rev. Liên Hiếu, Rev. Viên Tiến, Rev. Viên Chân, Rev. Viên Trang and Rev. Viên An)
Hương Sen Temple, June 2018*



From left: Ven. Chánh Tuệ, Ven. Tường Hạnh, Rev. Giới Viên, Ven. Giới Hương, Ven. Thông Tịnh (the real older sister of Ven. Chánh Tuệ) and Ven Thanh Nhã, at the Buddhist Conference, HCM City, November 3, 2018



From left: Ven. Thông Tịnh, Ven. Thanh Nhã, Ven. Tường Hạnh, Ven. Giới Hương and Ven. Chánh Tuệ with all young disciples at Hải Quang Temple in June 2018

3.30. WORDS TO VENERABLE BHIKKHUNĪ GIỚI HƯƠNG A PRECIOUS GEM

Namo Sakyamuni Buddha

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Venerable Bhikkhunī Giới Hương for inviting me to contribute a couple of lines in the collection of writings celebrating her forty years of studying and serving Buddhism.

I remember in 2004 when the eighth Sakyadhita International Association of Buddhist Women was held in South Korea. It was the first time we had the good karma to meet Vietnamese nuns and other nuns from other countries in the world. I had the opportunity to organize an international Nun's Sangha for a week. Venerable Giới Hương and a number of nun students studying in India contributed presentations on Vietnamese Buddhism during the conference. Thanks to that, we had the opportunity to interact with each other during the conference.

In 2005, we met again when Venerable Bhikkhunī Giới Hương visited temples, monasteries, and Zen temples in San Diego. At that time, we knew Venerable Giới Hương had settled down in the United States and was appointed the abbess of Phước Hậu Pagoda in Wisconsin by the most Venerable Thích Mãn Giác.

In 2010, Ven. Giới Hương returned to southern California to study at Riverside Community College and build Huong Sen Temple. During this time, we had many opportunities to meet and participate in common activities, such as attending the Great Ceremony and the summer retreat.

You were a very dedicated person in the educational field and worked hard writing and translating books. In my memory, you are always holding a pen and notebook in the ceremonies to record all the events, then immediately on that day we have the updated records from you. You are gifted at writing, so you are one among the young nuns who have contributed a lot to Buddhism as an author of many valuable books, such as *Bodhisattva and Śūnyatā in the Early and Developed Buddhist Traditions*, *Agama – A Dharma Rain Transforms the Defilements*, *Key Words in the Vajracchedikā Sūtra*, and many others. Moreover, you compose Dharma music and release many tapes and discs.

I greatly admire your energetic spirit and unwavering will. Although the work of building the temple, sharing the Dharma and education take up a lot of your time, those things do not distract from your writing. You often released new works continuously every year.

I am very honored to offer a few lines for this collection. I would like to borrow the opportunity to express my admiration to Venerable Bhikkhunī Giới Hương for your writing career. You are a precious gem in the Buddhist garden, being diligent and determined in sharing the Dharma by establishing Bảo Anh Lạc Bookcase. Thank you for your contribution to the pride of the Vietnamese Buddhist Nuns.

Especially, I am pleased to introduce readers to the anthology, *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service, Venerable Bhikkhunī Giới Hương*. Let's read it to experience what I have written about Venerable Giới Hương.

Wishing you to always be strong on the path of sharing Dharma for the sake of many.

Ngọc Hòa Vihara, San Jose, California
May 3rd, 2020

Venerable Bhikkhunī Tiến Liên
ngochoatemple@gmail.com



Ven. Giới Hương (right) and Ven. Tiến Liên (behind) walking for alms at Minh Đăng Quang's Buddhist Community Center at the summer retreat July 27, 2013.



Ven. Giới Hương (kneeling far right, second row) and Ven. Tiến Liên (far left, second row) chanting in the main hall of Minh Đăng Quang's Buddhist Community Center, July 27, 2013

Part IV

THE SHADOW OF PINE TREE

4.1. LUCKY TO BE YOUR NUN DISCIPLES!

We are including Bhikkhuni Viên Bảo, Bhikkhuni Viên Như, the late śikṣamānā Viên Hiếu, śikṣamānā Viên Quý, Samaneri Viên Hậu, Samaneri Viên Hoàng, Samaneri Viên Từ, and Samaneri Viên Đàm as nun disciples under Master Giới Hương. We were fortunate to be ordained and to study under Master Giới Hương at Hương Sen Temple (Vietnam) and Hương Sen Temple (USA). Because of sickness and private reasons, wanting to recite Buddha's name at the end of life, we asked you for permission to leave and stay in our personal hut. Despite being separate, our thoughts are always directed to your and Grand Master Hải Triều Âm's examples to diligently practice.

Now, on the occasion of Master making a book of collected writings, *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service—Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*, we sincerely pay homage forward to Hương Sen Temple in the USA, respectfully pray for the grace of the Three Jewels to protect our Master, who has great, mighty power, compassion, and wisdom to overcome all difficulties and challenges, and to achieve the noble purpose of the Buddha Dharma: "Upper level, to become Buddha and lower level, to save sentient beings."

Winter season in Phước An Hut, Wisconsin, December 20, 2019

Respectfully,

Bhikkhuni Viên Như and other nun disciples

thichnuvientu215@gmail.com



Bhikkhuni Viên Như sitting (right) while Master Giới Hương gives a lecture



*Bhikkhuni Viên Bảo (left)
and Master Giới Hương*



*Śikṣamānā Viên Quý (left)
and Master Giới Hương*

**Bài này hình ảnh
trong Word file khác
với bản tiếng Việt**



TXMN Viên Quý



Samaneri Viên Đàm



Samaneri Viên Từ

4.2. GRATITUDE TO MASTER!

In this life, from the time we are born and raised, apart from parents who give us this body, our teachers are the ones who give us the lamp of knowledge. Therefore, a beautiful tradition is for disciples to express respect and thanks to masters. It is a basic virtue for people in Vietnam and all over the world.

My ancestors had the sayings: "Think of the source when you're drinking water," "Respect your mentor and what is right," "Once a teacher, always a teacher," and so on. These true words remind us about the beautiful memories of our teachers, such as the images of teachers on the podium, cultivating knowledge for future generations, students diligently reading books, and red flowers in the schoolyard as summer arrives, which have entered poems and been engraved into people's hearts. Vietnamese songs such as "Chalk Dust" (Bụi phấn) or "Calling for the Past Memories" (Mong ước kỉ niệm xưa) make our minds anxious and agitated whenever we hear them. They are about ordinary teachers in secular life. Now, I will talk about supermundane masters, especially **Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương**, who has spent both her youth and her life since then bringing happiness and peace to everyone.

Time passes by quickly. Life is neither long nor short, but like a dream. I have been a nun for more than ten years. I recollect the first day I left my family behind to step into the temple for a monastic life with so many surprises and new things. I started to live a pure and innocent life without cares about gains/losses, sadness/happiness. I focus on keeping pure (in speech, body, and mind), eating a vegetarian diet, chanting, and studying Buddhist scriptures to open wisdom. Such things are thanks to the great virtue and the generous support of many masters including Venerable Giới Hương.

I chose the monastic path for myself in order to practice, not because of boredom with life, debt evasion, or lovesickness, as most people think. The day I became a nun, the villagers gossiped with my parents: "Why did she become a nun when she has a good job with a high salary?" They complained, "Your child is weak to run away from worldly life and hide under the Buddha's compassion." In fact, the reason I became a nun was because I realized that life is fragile and impermanent and worldly happiness is transient; however, the villagers don't realize this. There is a famous sentence in a Vietnamese song describing that "Đường thương đau, đày ải nhân gian, ai chưa qua chưa phải là người," i.e., "The world is full of suffering, those who have not experienced this are not yet human beings." It is true that although I am young, I have experienced many ups and downs and ups in life.

Because of having experienced so many adversities and pain, I realize that life is miserable, and I want to get rid of suffering, birth, old age, sickness, and death and really seek the salvation and happiness in Buddhism over the years. I have never regretted when I shaved my hair and left behind beautiful clothes to put on plain Buddhist garments. Such things are thanks to the great virtue and the generous support of many masters including Venerable Giới Hương.

Over these years, every day from my heart, I always called Venerable Giới Hương as my "dear master." She is a person whom I have always admired and respected over many years because she has a great heart and talent in using many means to shine the Dharma light for the sake of many. People including me know how to do good deeds and avoid evil, know how to turn away from ignorant darkness towards the light, from delusion to enlightenment. Over many years, many people under her guidance learned how to return and practice the Buddha's way to achieve happiness.

The virtue of Master Giới Hương can be well understood in the Dhammapada verse described below:

*The scent of flowers
Can't fly against the wind;
The example of a virtuous person
Flies against the opposing wind.*

Therefore, for many years, I have always attempted to study hard to repay her heart. Sometimes when we have shallow thoughts and are young, we make frequent mistakes and are stubborn, but after we see our wrongdoing and repent, she always shows a compassionate smile of forgiving our mistake. She always said, "To be human is to err. If you do not hide it but instead correct it, you will still be a good person."

"In this life, if we are guided on the right path by an insightful master, then we just keep going straight to the shore of liberation to repay our debts."

If parents are those who give birth and form to the child, then the spiritual master is the second parent who puts in a lot of effort, dedication, training, and education about good things for the child to become a moral and intellectual person. Yes! Dear Master, you always look forward to the best for my future. The figure of Master will forever be the light guiding me to the shore of happiness.

My gratitude towards Master is very deep and vast. You guide me in knowledge and morality so that I can become a valuable person. That grace is very great: the Great Enlightenment calls it the Gratitude to Teachers, which is greater than gifts given by parents. I always remember in my heart the saying, "Learning a word is to thank a teacher, learning half a word is also from a teacher." Sometimes I was wrong and was scolded by you, but I respect and love you for all my life. I remember the words that you ever taught, "If you respect me one time, you must respect the Buddha a thousand times."

I wish to bring the morality and knowledge that you taught me to guide the next generation. I will try my best to exhort your Dharma, Buddhist books, music, temple-building, sister nuns, and holy works continuously. I always want to realize the ideal; the morality of Master spreads widely, forever.

Master's love is a priceless gift that my dharma sisters and I have received. We are respectfully in debt to you and we always remember your every smile and act of care. In the life with its many disturbing afflictions, I feel sometimes lost, like a one-way train rushing forward, the driver having lost control at the steering wheel. I really need the protective hands and the long-lived shadow of Master, who can bring many holy dreams and young aspirations to a bright tomorrow, even though now you and I are far halfway apart on the earth's cycle. I always see you by my side. And I will always remember the figure of a great master who has lived and served her whole life for Buddhism. I will try to fulfill the wishes that Master expected.

I always remember the image of Master!

Finally, I would like to express here a few lines from my heart in place of the thousands of things I want to say.

*Kelaniya University in Sri Lanka, December 12, 2019
Two hands touching and head bowed,*

Bhikkhuni Viên Quang
vienquangsakya@gmail.com



Bhikkhuni Viên Quang (center) with her Sri Lankan friends



*Sư phụ Giới Hương (trái) và Viên Quang (phải)
Học Viện PGVN, cơ sở 1, Nguyễn Kiệm, Phú Nhuận*



*Bhikkhuni Viên Quang graduating with a bachelor's degree in Buddhist Studies,
with Master Giới Hương in November 2018*

4.3. TO MY BELOVED MASTER VENERABLE BHIKKHUNI GIỚI HƯƠNG

Dear Master,

In 2011, I went to Huong Sen Pagoda, Binh Chanh, Vietnam and was ordained by you, and eight years have passed. Thanks to my Master, I have a place to live to practice reciting Buddha's name and do the Buddhist work of serving the Three Jewels. I have been a bhikkhuni for four years (since 2015) and have been assigned by Master to take care of Huong Sen Pagoda in Vietnam. It has been nearly eight years, and now Rev. Viên Khuông (Master's niece) will take charge of the temple instead of Master and me.

This year, I am sixty-four years old (I was born in 1956), and I want to save more time for the rest my life to recite Amitabha Buddha's name. I will diligently practice reciting the Buddha's name so that I will not disappoint my Master, who guided and led me to the path of awareness. I am keeping my body, speech, and mind pure to attain full liberation.

I sincerely appreciate Master very much.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Huong Sen Pagoda, Binh Chanh, on October 27, 2019

Respectfully,

Bhikkhuni Viên Tuệ

thichnu_vientue@yahoo.com



*Bhikkhuni Viên Tuệ (sitting on third left)
October 16 2016 at Hương Sen Temple, Bình Chánh, Việt Nam*



*Bhikkhuni Viên Tuệ, kneeling down, and Master Giới Hương behind
November 2019 at Hương Sen Temple, Bình Chánh, Việt Nam*



*Bhikkhuni Viên Tuệ, kneeling down (far right)
October 16 2016 at Hương Sen Temple, Bình Chánh, Việt Nam*

4.4. A PLACE FOR REFUGE

In the life of endless greed, defilement, and envy, we sometimes assume that we are prisoners of relentless competition. The whirlwind of fame keeps us away from the right track and our souls are also enclosed in evil and selfish thoughts. We keep walking without finding the light source for our lives. Like those who have lost their way in the dark, exhausted, we wonder:

*Where to find the light of truth amid a dark life?
Where to find the road among thousands of turns?*

And then...

*You have come to give care to me
As the sun shines on all sides
From the heart, the ego lacks love
Take me out of selfishness.*

Although life's whirlwinds can sweep everything away, Master has illuminated our lives with the sun of truth. She gave us a warm place, including a sacred, spiritual guide. Master has given us her loving heart and generous helping hands in the fragile and temporary sea of life.

Meeting her is the most fortunate thing I have experienced in my life; since then, the defilements of ups and downs, losses and gains have stopped. When I came to her, I felt gently peaceful. I reflect that our parents gave me this shape in flesh but it is Master who gave us our spiritual birth so that I can follow the right way to the supreme shore of enlightenment. We are like homeless children who suddenly burst out when they found a place for refuge. In that place, Master is as the beloved mother, carrying Buddha's heart inside, as well as an ideal, living by the Buddha's enlightenment and breathing with the Buddha's faith.

We grope along every step under Master's guidance and enjoy our life due to the fortune of having our Master around. Thus, the immensity of Master's love, as vast as the universe, cannot be measured.

Throughout her life, Master has gone here and there without becoming tired, moving through so much hardship and effort to instill the source of spiritual life, from the smallest to the highest ideals, for the sake of many.

Despite the hardships and worries, Master still radiates a wonderful peace inside, like an artist singing an unnamed song. Those who come near can hear the holy spirit from the singer's heart. Even though she is female with a slender body, her mind is as solid as a firm pillar. Therefore, she can receive and tolerate all of our negativities and shortcomings. Master has a special courage, an overwhelming will, timeless thoughts, and infinite compassion. Master's virtue, from the bright moonlight, from the tranquil lake, gives us eternal aspirations.

The weather turns warm or cold quickly; winter ends to receive the spring; every phenomenon revolves in cycles of impermanence, but our respect for Master is forever unshakeable. A moment is also immortal; once we have become her disciple, then we will be her students forever, over countless lives. And no matter which life we live and what our position, we vow:

*Share hardships with Master,
Together build the truth for life.
In the sky, the compassionate Buddha blesses
With faith, we eagerly go ahead...*

We vow together with Master to build a peaceful, happy, holy world as in her aspiration.

*To repay our debts to Master, we will be diligent,
Patiently stepping over difficulties,
Or when temptation appears,
Remembering you, we are determined to avoid it.*

*Imagining a loving smile on your face,
A dignified, solemn appearance,
We offer you all our hearts,
Following your virtue forever.*

Huong Sen, Early Winter in November 2019

Truthfully,

Bhikkhuni Viên Tiến
vientiensakya@gmail.com



Bhikkhuni Viên Tiến cutting oranges in Huong Sen Yard



Bikkhuni Viên Tiến walking while reading the Buddha's names



Under the pink cherry blossoms in Philadelphia

4.5. YOUR FIRST NUN DISCIPLE IN CALIFORNIA

My Dearest Master,

In 2010, I was blessed to know you after my family experienced tragedy when my late husband passed away. Since meeting you, you have been a great master in guiding me down the path to the Buddha, leaving secular habits behind. From the bottom of my heart, I truly thank you for bringing my spirit great joy, leading me from low to high stairs, from the five precepts of the laywoman to the ten precepts of a samaneri and become your first nun disciple in California. Later I kept going to receive six rules of a *śiksamānā*, and up to the 348 precepts of a bhikkhuni. In 2017, I was able to join the nuns' Sangha for the summer retreat and learn the Vinaya.

My soul has become stronger and free from any stress from daily life. I thank you, Master, for this amazing opportunity to walk this path with you as a Buddhist nun, sharing duties with you in constructing the old Hương Sen Temple (on Fir Avenue, Moreno Valley) and the present Hương Sen Temple (on Seaton Avenue, Perris).

May the Buddha bless our journey to liberation, for success in the end.

Hương Sen Temple, November 10, 2019

Bowing three times,

Disciple Bhikkhuni Viên Chân

baosen777@gmail.com



*Bhikkhuni Viên An, Bhikkhuni Viên Chân, Master Giới Hương,
The Most Venerable Minh Hối, Ven. Bảo Liên, and her nun disciple (from left)*



Bhikkhuni Viên Chân (third with a leaf hat), Master Giới Hương, The Most Ven. Tịnh Từ, and nuns, at Hương Sen Temple, in 2017



Bhikkhuni Viên Chân (mixing cement), Rev. Thiên Đức and Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương making the walking path with lotus leaves



Bhikkhuni Viên Chân carrying a flower tray, going first

4.6. HAPPY TO BE A PART OF HƯƠNG SEN TEMPLE

Dear Master Sư phụ Giới Hương,

I am Sean, whose Buddhist name is Viên Bảo Luân, born in 2012. Now I am seven years old. I am so happy to live here in Hương Sen Buddhist Temple with Master and Bhikkhuni Viên Chân (my grandma) since the time I was born to now. You allowed me to take the refuges with you when I was six months old.



*Master providing refuges for Viên Bảo Luân at six months old in 2012
Sister Viên Bảo Hương holds me, while my mom, Viên Bảo Sen, kneels*

I would like to thank to you, Sư phụ, for your wonderful teachings of Buddhism. I feel joyful when I live with you and Grandma at Hương Sen Temple and I can go to my beloved Columbia Elementary School in Perris, nearby, too.

Many blessings to you.

New Year, January 1, 2020

Love,

Viên Bảo Luân



Viên Bảo Luân (two years old) holding a cement tool to help, 2013



Viên Bảo Luân (four years old) standing on a chair high enough for him to mix oranges for the temple



Viên Bảo Luân (seven years old) in November 2019

THINKING OF MY MASTER

Dear Master Sư phụ Giới Hương,

I am Serenity, whose dharma name is Viên Bảo Hương. I was born in 2012; now I am nine years old. I am happy to follow you and my grandma (Bhikkhuni Viên Chân) to lectures at many temples. Monastics and laypeople love me very much because I'm so cute in Buddhist attire, wearing many Buddha's beads.



Viên Bảo Hương at two years old (2012)

I am your tiny disciple. My Dharma name is Viên Bảo **Hương**. My mother's name is Viên Bảo **Sen**. Hương + Sen = Hương Sen Temple. My family is appreciative and honored to be a part of your temple.

Love Master and Grandma very much,
Viên Bảo Hương



Viên Bảo Tuệ, five years old (right), and Viên Bảo Hương, two years old (left)



Master Giới Hương teaches Viên Bảo Hương (two and a half years old)



Viên Bảo Hương and dog Mimi

THANKFUL TO BE A PART OF HƯƠNG SEN BUDDHIST TEMPLE

Dear Master Venerable Giới Hương,

In celebration of your forty years of Buddhism, which is seen as a rare and treasured event that only comes to those standing strong and conquering all trails along the way. You are truly a light post for all others who follow in your footsteps to be part of Buddhist life.

In 2010, I had the great pleasure of getting to know you, Master, as a great and compassionate person who converted my family after my father's death and guided us down a beautiful and serene path to heal my soul. We have learned a lot from you, and the most important thing is that I have grown spiritually while having the chance to live at the temple. In my heart, I truly thank you, and I am very blessed to be here at Hương Sen Buddhist Temple. In everything that you do, you show to me that your essence here on earth is truly needed. I hope to be able to grow with you and to learn more from you in the present and future, as I remain part of your wonderful Hương Sen Buddhist Temple.

We are happy to be your disciples forever.

Hương Sen Temple, October 30, 2019

Bowed head,

Viên Bảo Sen (mom of two kids)

baosencolvil@yahoo.com



Viên Bảo Sen (the second from right) and kids clearing garden at the first period of Hương Sen Temple



Taking rest after hard labor

4. 7. THE GREAT COURAGE, GREAT POWER AND GREAT COMPASSION OF MASTER

I just received her message that was sent from to Vietnam to Hương Sen Buddhist Temple in the United States, “Please write some articles for the English-Vietnamese collection for Venerable Giới Hương’s 40th year of practicing and preaching the Dharma.” I myself recall Master’s cultivation during her past forty years, yet she still looks so young and enthusiastic for Dharma work.

Master has a wide knowledge of Buddhism because she has received a PhD degree in Buddhist Studies ten years ago and a bachelor’s degree in literature from the University of California, Riverside, in the United States. Master has used bilingual English and Vietnamese to write more than thirty Buddhist books in Vietnamese and about ten books in English, which were published and distributed to Vietnamese Buddhists in the United States. For four months out of every year, she has gone to Vietnam to teach a Buddhism in English course to the young student monks and nuns at Vietnam Buddhist University, HCMC, as well as to the laity who speak English all over the world.

Before I became a Buddhist nun, I used to go to Phật Tổ Temple to attend the services and practices. One weekend, I met Venerable Giới Hương, listened to her Dharma talk, and was gifted her two volumes of the Agama Sutra. At that time, I heard many lay devotees say that although Venerable Giới Hương is young, her Dharma talk was excellent. Since that time, I have admired Master so much and desired to become a Buddhist nun under her. My dream came true, as I became a disciple of Master in 2014.

After becoming a Buddhist nun under Master, I have come to admire Master more and more—Master established a new Buddhist temple in a remote area by herself. This is part of a semi-desert region whose weather is extreme, so hot during the day, while so cold and desolate at night. There is just a small house without a proper fence, where we can hear the howling of wolves at night, making people so afraid. At times, the wolves come and kill the small dogs of the temple. (What a **great courage** Master has!)

The more I become close to Master, the more I admire her. Master is very diligent; while continuing to study at the English literature program at the university, Master takes care of the temple and trains her three old disciples very carefully. Master has taught us the Buddhist precepts, how to wear the robe properly, how to use the Buddhist Dharma tools for chanting. Whenever we had Buddhist nuns visit the temple, Master invited them to teach us the Dharma and Vinaya. For the annual Buddhist festivals, Master has arranged everything, from assigning tasks for everyone to organizing the activities, such as opening Buddhist retreats, giving lectures, programming, preparing foods and drinks, and decorating, from the main hall to the garden. There was a monk who attended the Buddhist festival at Hương Sen who used to say that “Venerable Giới Hương directs everything in the temple as a female general.” It is the truth. Whenever Master assigns tasks for somebody, she often tells us thoroughly because all of us are over sixty years old already. Master even writes them down to make sure that we won’t forget them. Master loves us and takes care of the three of us very carefully. When we are about to get sick, Master tells us to take a rest and take medication. She even gives us the medicines; we have to take it in front of her and we are told to rest early without doing any other work. Another thing that makes me respect Master more is that she stays up to 1 or 2 am every night although she is working very hard during the day. Master has to do her assignments, which are very long and difficult, while she has written many articles for different Buddhist journals, such as Chánh Pháp, Thư Viện Hoa Sen, Hoa Vô Ưu, Quảng Đức, Đạo Phật Ngày Nay, etc. The next day, when we hear the bell for the morning chanting, Master is

there already. Nevertheless, on some busy days, Master has to stay up the whole night to write for some temples, which often invite Master to give Dharma talks at their places. I am really afraid that Master will become sick if she works that hard for a long time. I have suggested that Master have more rest, but she still has not agreed with me. This is just repeated over and over. In order to console me, Master even said: “I will sleep when I am on the plane.” We are happy that Master is in good health. We often say to one another that Master has superpowers. (What a **great power** Master has!)

I recall a statement from the Surangama Sutra, “Great Courage, Great Power, and Great Compassion.” Regarding the quality of great compassion, Master did not intend to raise animals; however, she adopted five dogs from some people who left the state or were hospitalized. Master made two big doghouses for them, with the name, “Hut for Transforming Dog’s Karma.” They are very clean and cool, a place to sleep with enough blankets for the winter season, too. In the summer, Master trims their hair and washes their bodies. She has bought yummy foods for her “small disciples” herself. Besides, she often saves some foods for them when someone offers good foods to her. Therefore, all the dogs are so happy and run out to greet her (before the human disciples) whenever Master comes back to the temple from outside.

In addition, there were some single women who wanted to ordain, but they were afraid that they were too old and that Master would not accept them due to their elderly sickness. However, Master always opened her arms and said, “Master will accept all ages.” I think Master is so compassionate and tolerant. Among the three of us now, the youngest one is also over sixty-six years old. We have different personalities, yet Master has patiently teaches us out of compassion and loving-kindness. During the time I am with Master, I feel protected and cultivate well. When we were about to get full ordination, Master helped us to review the lessons and to prepare the robes and other necessary things, while Master had to direct the construction works of the temple at that time. Master drove one and a half hours to Điều Ngự Temple in order to bring the robes to us. We tried them, but they were not fixed, and Master took them back and readjusted the sizes. After finishing them, Master brought the robes and other necessary things to us again. Before receiving the great ordination, Master reminded us that we need to do things very meticulously. Her love and care touched me, so that I burst into tears when I bowed to her at the ordination ceremony. (What a **great compassion** Master has!)

Loving Master, I am old now, and I don’t know what to do to repay your kindness. I will do my best to serve the Triple Gem and to complete all the tasks that Master has assigned to me, as well as to practice hard in the Dharma with a wish to repay a little of your kindness. With a wholehearted mind, I pay homage to the Buddhas in the ten directions to bless my Master, who always has Great Courage, Great Power, and Great Compassion: good health so that Master will propagate the Dharma and help all sentient beings to be free from suffering and obtain happiness and fulfillment of Master’s wish of being a messenger of the Buddha.

Hương Sen Temple, November 22, 2019

Bowing three times,

Disciple Bhikkhuni Viên An
quyen_hoang84@yahoo.com



Bhikkhuni Viên An (far right) with Master Giới Hương and nuns



Bhikkhuni Viên An



Left: Bhikkhuni Viên An, Viên An's mother, Mrs. Hoàng, Diệu Nghiêm, Master Giới Hương, and Viên Chân at the New Year of Hương Sen, 2019



Bhikkhuni Viên An (black warm cloth)

4.8. LOVE MASTER WITH ALL MY HEART

Dear beloved Master,

I am honored to be one of your renunciant disciples. I thank you for your wonderful and compassionate way, which has transformed me and helped others. When I first met you in 2010, I knew that this was a predestined relationship for my learning, and you became the spiritual master who converted me to become a nun. I really appreciate and thank Master for giving me the opportunity to become your disciple as well as join the nuns' Sangha of Hương Sen Temple.

Since that time up to now, I have learned a lot about a Buddhist nun's role and enjoyed the true happiness of liberation, so that I have grown in my heart and am happy with my true self. To celebrate your forty years of Buddhism, from this moment, I will try my best to practice as you wish, and I pray that you and my other monastic sisters always be in good health and have success.

Thank you from my heart's depths.

Hương Sen Temple, October 2019

Respectfully,

Disciple Bhikkhuni Viên Trang



Left: Bhikkhuni Viên Trang, Ven. Hạnh Quang, Master Giới Hương, Bhikkhuni Viên Tiến and Bhikkhuni Viên Chân in January 15 2020



Bhikkhuni Viên Trang sweeping Hương Sen Yard in 2020



Bhikkhuni Viên Trang (center with black warm cloth) with Master Giới Hương, Ven. Hạnh Quang and sister make letters of New Year in January 15 2020



*Bhikkhuni Viên Trang (yellow robe, far left)
With Master Giới Hương and nuns' Sangha on retreat day, May 20, 2019*

4.9. THE IMMENSE LOVE FROM MASTER

*My teacher steadfastly ordained
Forty years, still full of previous prayers.
Practicing Dharma for years
Just hoping to repay her for the four deep gratitudes.
Converting nuns and building a temple,
Propagating the Dharma, enlightening the liberated way.
Loving the whole world,
Never thinking of fame, worldly comments
Smiles always blooming
Walking tranquilly, though humbly.
Sorrow over many lives,
Thanks to Master guiding me, I return to the true mind.
Let me understand impermanence,
Suffering, selflessness, to love life.
Life is dark, goes crazy
Thanks to Master, the ignorance recedes.
Happy people live in Dharma,
Also thanks to what the great Master handed on.
We are all your nun disciples,
Grateful to Master and trying to practice.
To cultivate virtue and purity,
Sacrifice for Buddhism, integrity, and filial piety.
With a sincere heart,
Grateful to Master for years.
Take me to leave behind delusion,
Ignorance ends, and I return to Buddha nature.
Someday leaving the world
I still remember the vastness of your love.
I wish you live a long life,
Leading posterity, enlightening the way for others.*

On the occasion of Vietnam Teachers' Day and the 40th anniversary of Master's ordination and propagation of Buddhism, we would like to express our gratitude to the beloved Master Giới Hương, who is always dedicated to the cause of young monastic training and developing Buddhism. I wish our master and sisters at Hương Sen Temples in Vietnam and the United States lasting health, achievements, and the complete fulfillment of your dreams.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

*Nunnery, the first campus, Vietnam Buddhist Institute HCMC,
November 18, 2019*

Disciple śikṣamānā Viên Nhuận (Course 12)
thichnuviennhuan@gmail.com



*Śikṣamānā Viên Nhuận (left) and Master Giới Hương
at Thiên Long Tự, Mê Linh, Hà Nội*

4.10. SANGHA: A WORTHY MASTER OF CELESTIAL AND HUMAN BEINGS

Forty years is quite long in a lifetime. This is made more meaningful and precious when Sangha disciples of the Buddha effortlessly spread his teachings on compassion and non-self. I had the great fortune to meet Venerable Giới Hương during the years she has been spreading the Dharma in the US, a land of the greatest civilization but yet the most challenging place for those who wish to transmit the Buddha's Dharma. Senior Venerable Giới Hương has sauntered down this path, bringing the Dharma to life with wholehearted goodwill and skills. In spring 2019, Venerable Giới Hương published the first issue of Hương Sen Newsletter for the lunar New Year in bilingual Vietnamese and English. For the celebration of the Buddha's birthday and Ullumbana Festival, two more issues were published and distributed to monastics and lay devotees in Vietnam and the US. Hương Sen Buddhist Temple has published four issues of Hương Sen Newsletter so far, which will be continued in the future. Such merit is worthy of praise and admiration.

I still remember Senior Venerable Giới Hương used to remind us to diligently study and effortlessly propagate the Dharma using our merits and skills during her lectures at Điều Ngự Buddhist Temple's summer retreat. She said, "If you start writing after you become perfect, that would be endless waiting." This saying was so meaningful to me personally. I was afraid to write about her deep in my heart because words cannot describe the virtue and merit of a great master. However, taking her saying that year, I gathered my courage to write some lines. Please forgive my "false" words.

Together with a Korean nun and a Chinese monk, I came to visit Senior Nun Giới Hương in late winter 2015 for the first time. There were not many nuns at Hương Sen Buddhist Temple at that time. Venerable Giới Hương gave us many of her books as gifts and told me to bring back a lot of cookies, fruits, and juice and share them with my Dharma friends at the University of the West. I would guess she has forgotten all of that, yet it has stayed with me for many years already. It was such an honor that a great master like Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương cherished me that way. I've kept reminding myself to study and cultivate hard so that my master (Venerable Bhikkhuni Hạnh Thanh) and Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương would be happy.

Those who have read the venerable nun's books would realize that she has written a lot about the teachings of sunyata, vajra and prajna, and so on. Therefore, I believe whatever she has done, such as building temples, giving ordinations for Buddhist nuns, writing books, or printing sutras, were not beyond the application of sunyata nature. Doing Buddhist works is just like not doing anything: after finishing a work, she is not attached to it anymore. She is not affected by worldly blame; she only focuses on working for the Dharma and all beings. I will try to follow such an attitude and stance.

On the occasion of commemorating forty years of Dharma propagation by Senior Venerable Giới Hương, we wish that she and her nuns have good health and that Hương Sen Buddhist Temple becomes more and more prosperous and a great Buddhist place protecting all of the younger nuns' Sangha, in the present and in the future.

University of the West, November 23, 2019

Respectfully yours,

Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Nguyễn Hiếu

hie.u.shakya@gmail.com



Bhikkhuni Nguyễn Hiếu (sixth, in the middle of the bridge)



Bhikkhuni Nguyễn Hiếu at PhD presentation with professors at University of the West, Los Angeles, 2019

4.11. A GRATEFUL WORD

Dear Master Giới Hương,

I celebrate Master Giới Hương's forty years in Buddhism, which is a truly rare event marking the time, battles, challenges, and hardships you spent in Buddhism to keep your yellow robes and serve many beings. It would be hard for many people to do as you did, especially in a foreign country. Therefore, your journey in Buddhism in such a period is a great treasure. To the present day, you are still strong and outstanding in many fields (education, publishing, teaching, building temples, and converting monastics and laypeople) in the Vietnamese-American community.

Two years ago, I came to America to learn English and found a way of life in America. Luckily, I had an opportunity to meet you, and you helped me with my immigration papers. Since then, I have become a part of your temple. Living in Hương Sen Temple, I have noticed that you have great compassion for others and help all those in need, including me. You live and eat simply but possess great knowledge of Dharma and lectures. I become a better Buddhist nun or assistant by sacrificing my time to translate Buddhist books and transcripts for the temple. I also have learned much English from you. I am truly happy and blessed to live at Hương Sen Buddhist Temple.

I would like to send a grateful word from my heart's depths to you on this occasion to celebrate Master Giới Hương's forty years in Buddhism.

Hương Sen Temple, November 12, 2019

Yours Sincerely,

Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Hiếu Liên

tnhieulien@gmail.com



From right: Bhikkhuni Viên Tiến, Rev. Liên Hiếu, Rev. Liên Tạng The Most Venerable Thông Đạt, Ven. Thiện Thái, Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, Rev. Viên Chân, and Rev. Sc Viên Trang at Hương Sen's front yard, June 14, 2019



*Carrying a tray for the ritual
of every three steps a prostration*



Bhikkhuni Liên Hiếu (standing second from right)

4.12. THE MASTER-DISCIPLE RELATIONSHIP

I have long admired the civilized culture of America. When studying at the Intermediate Buddhist School, I met and talked with a nun, a disciple of Master Giới Hương. After listening to my dream of going to the United States, she immediately and enthusiastically said, "Let me ask my Master Giới Hương to sponsor you." Time passed, and I studied at the Buddhist University in Ho Chi Minh City for two years. A Dharma sister of my Vietnamese master invited me to her temple in the United States, and I stayed there for a couple of years. Going a long way in the US, finally. . . I came back to Master Giới Hương to ask her to sponsor my immigration papers to stay and work at Hương Sen Temple.



Since then, I have had enough affinity with Master Giới Hương and have become a member of Hương Sen Temple. The more I live and work with her, the more I realize the depths of her insight and that her heart is open generously to everyone who needs her.

For a long time, I have heard about the Most Venerable Hai Trieu Am, who ordained Master Giới Hương. The Late Master Hai Trieu Am was very famous for her great virtue, and when I met Master Giới Hương, I could see the dignified image of Master Hai Trieu Âm. I am lucky to be among those fortunate to live under the loving care of Hương Sen Pagoda. Master Giới Hương is always polite and listens and understands the situation of each disciple in the group to help us as best she can.

The first time I visited the pagoda, I saw that the temple was simple and rustic, as if it represented the modest person of the abbess, Master Giới Hương. But hidden within, her heart and compassion are immense.

Although Master Giới Hương often goes here and there to spread Buddhism, each of the Dharma sisters in the temple diligently chants, learns scriptures, waters the plants, and takes care of the temple, always following Master Giới Hương's example to reflect upon and purify our mind. In the depths of my mind, I am particularly thankful to the Buddhas for bringing me to Hương Sen Pagoda. After wandering around so far in the USA, I finally met and took refuge under Master Giới Hương, which is enough to see the deep, predestined relationship between us. Master's grace is so great, I cannot describe it in words.

May the Buddha bless our Master Giới Hương and all the nuns so that we are always peaceful, develop merit-wisdom, and experience Bodhi growth and success.

Remembrance

*Standing from afar, approaching Hương Sen Pagoda
We are always thinking of you
Thousands of admiring words we want to utter
May the Master's Buddhist career soon be fulfilled.*

To Our Loving Master

*Master goes here and there out of compassion
Bhikkhuni performs the virtues of Buddha's daughter*

Giới - Precepts are kept strictly

Hương - Fragrance flies opposing the wind.

Respectfully to Master Giới Hương on occasion of
the 40th anniversary of your monastic cultivation and preaching.

California, November 4, 2019

Genuinely,

Disciple Bhikkhuni TN Diệu An

dieuan2009@gmail.com



*Bhikkhuni Diệu An (far left) with Master Giới Hương and Nuns
Chanting on the Vesak Day in May 21 2019 at Hương Sen Temple*



*Sư cô Diệu An (thứ ba bên phải) cùng sư phụ Giới Hương
và Chư tôn đức Ni ngày tu học 20 tháng 5 năm 2019*

4.13. VENERABLE BHIKKHUNI GIỚI HƯƠNG: A PRECIOUS FLOWER IN THE BUDDHIST GARDEN

Dear Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương,

On a quiet, warm summer day, I had the good opportunity to meet Ven. TN Giới Hương (the current abbess of Hương Sen Pagoda, California and also my Dharma aunt), with disciple Rev. Viên Tiến and many Buddhists visiting my master, Master Hiếu Đức at Linh Quang Pagoda, Philadelphia City, Pennsylvania.

After paying homage to the Buddha in the main hall, Ven. Giới Hương graciously talked to each of the resident nuns and then walked around the Linh Quang Pagoda yard. Her voice and smile was as gentle as a breeze cheering up our weak, elderly group. Her steps led the group to the pretty, blooming lotus flowers in the lake. The delegation came out to visit the vegetable garden behind the temple, where Rev. Huệ Thảo had planted ten types of vegetables (such as spinach, pennywort, and bitter vegetables). Rev. Huệ Thảo cut and offered to the group lots of vegetables, which was used to prepare seven vegetable dishes. People were so happy, and they enjoyed the field trip. Afterwards, Master Hiếu Đức and Ven. Giới Hương went into the living room to discuss the Dhamma and took pictures with the group.

Before saying goodbye to Linh Quang Temple, Ven. Giới Hương left a program on spiritual tourism and the Hương Sen Newsletter (in both English and Vietnamese language) for us. Inside this program the Indian Tour was listed. I was happy to see the listing because it was a blessed final opportunity for me to go, as I am at the old age of eighty. I had dreamed of this holy place for a long time, so I felt I must visit before my time or life came to an end.

Pilgrimage to the Buddhist holy places
Namo Tathagata: Shakyamuni Buddha
Raised the torch of compassion for the right path
For humanity to aspire for enlightenment
To end reincarnation.

My son supported the finances for my travel and charity work. Lucky! I had enough time to register and obtain a visa for the trip from September 2, 2019 to October 6, 2019. The tour was fun and well organized. The three tourist groups joined together in succession sequentially, and they eagerly expressed joy and shared knowledge with one another. On the journey, each day we had a program.

Firstly, I would lead the delegation to recite the Great Dharani Mantra (Mrs. Quảng Trí and I were appointed to lead the ritual ceremony, while Ven. Giới Hương said prayers and gave blessings). Secondly, Ven. Giới Hương and Rev. Diệu Nga (studying in Nalanda University) introduced the history of the visited place and invited members to join the Dharma talk to shorten the journey. Mr. Tịnh Bình was elected as the head of the Dharma for Q & A (question and answer). Mr. Chanh Hao was the head of the arts program, while Rev. Diệu Nga was the speaker for the delegation. Finally, the talented MC Ven. Giới Hương always gave summaries and keywords (that were easy to remember) and provided the difficult answers to the group. Ven. Giới Hương's method was very useful and pedagogical, making the day pass quickly; each of us learned a lot from her and others.

Before we enter the final destination
The holy land of the Sakyadhita Buddha
Ven. Giới Hương introduced Buddhist history

Buddhists feel more respect and emotion
Lifetime of gratitude for the Buddha, who sacrificed his own happiness
Renounced the worldly life of luxury
Overcame the obstacles of danger in the dark jungle
To find the way to enlightenment
Leaving desire behind to reach liberation.

Ven. Giới Hương took the delegation to visit Delhi University, where she spent ten years studying to graduate with a PhD in Buddhist Studies (1995–2005). The pilgrimage gave financial offerings and gifts (instant noodles and dry vegetarian food) to young student monks and nuns. She expressed her desire to create a bridge to help the monks and nuns in her capacity: Hương Sen Temple (which is large, with ten acres) would be a nunnery to serve the nuns. From this, in the future, the essence of the Dharma from nuns and monks would spread everywhere. The great applause echoed in the hall at hearing her lecture.

Ven. Giới Hương also set up a charitable program for 150 poor families at the Indo-Sri Lankan Temple, Sarnath. The charity work was also very successful and very emotional. Due to the compassion and kindness of Ven. Giới Hương, pilgrims came from afar to show up. The villagers were happy to receive gifts as their treasures and had a warm lunch with full smiles on their faces.

During the tour, I also got a chance to share the same room with Ven. Giới Hương. She was busy with many activities of filming, taking pictures, taking diary notes, and so forth. In the evening, she just took a short break and stayed up late to arrange tomorrow's program, compose her introduction, write her diary with her laptop, prepare to welcome the next delegations, contact the tourist company, perform Buddhist works in the US and Vietnam, and so on. She was passionate about working tirelessly and thoughtfully, and with full enthusiasm took care of the team, including accommodations, vehicles, transportation, the spiritual food of Dharma, and meals. It is fortunate to have such a dedicated leader. She is not only an outstanding leader but also has a Dharma store in her head. She has diligently researched, composed, and translated over forty valuable Vietnamese and English works. The pilgrimage team also had the opportunity to enjoy more than ten volumes of Buddhist music from Hương Sen Pagoda using her poems (played on her cellular phone). The nice lyrics, bass echo, and golden voices of the singers made the group feel very poetic, meditative, and entertained.

Master Giới Hương is a truly precious flower adorning and adding color to the Buddhist garden so that Buddhist followers can enjoy its beauty even more.

Venerable Giới Hương, the Tathagata's disciple
Propagating Dharma to transmit the Buddha's salvation
To clear mankind's dark ignorance
Make life more peaceful
The fragrance of compassion spreads into boundless space
People of good intentions
Our garden is fresh and evergreen.

*Linh Quang Temple in Philadelphia,
End of Fall in the Pig Year, 2019*

Respectfully,

Sadini Diệu Hoa

chinhnuong5000@gmail.com



*Rev. Diệu Hoa (left) and Ven. Giới Hương (right)
At Bodhgaya, Bihar, India, on September 12 2019*



Rev. Diệu Hoa (far left) with Dr. Thera Siri Sumedha and group



Rev. Diệu Hoa (third from left) with group in front of Phổ Tế Temple, Phổ Đà Mountain, China on September 10 2019

4.14. VIRTUES OF OUR MASTER

Namo Sakyamuni Buddha.

Dear Master Thích Nữ Giới Hương,

I recall how on a beautiful day a long time ago, my friends and I went to Pháp Quang Temple (whose new name is Hương Sen) in Vĩnh Lộc A Commune, Bình Chánh, HCM City to pray. At that time, two nuns, Viên Bảo and Như Đức, instructed us on how to chant and how to walk while reciting Buddha's name for a long time. Then a master came from America and gave a lecture, which I understood to be the truth of Buddhism. The Buddha guided sentient beings to understand that they should try to practice and grow in compassion and wisdom. Such beings no longer accept the ego-delusion and will be liberated and free from reincarnation.

On June 6 of the lunar calendar in 2011, Master opened the ceremony for people to take refuge in the Three Jewels. My friends and I registered to take the precepts and from then we become disciples of Master. Practicing for a while, we realized that Master is a respectful master who holds a PhD degree and has good virtue. My master's name is Venerable Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Giới Hương.

Since then, each time (usually the last three months of the year) Master came back to Vietnam and taught us to study mindfulness so that we can live peacefully with our family and do goodness in the Pure Land here. I consider life to be precious, so I should not lose myself in the bad clouds of anger or despair. I have to live optimistically, awaken to the miracle of life, and live each day to its fullest true meaning.



Since then, I have come to understand that mindfulness is a source of energy that helps me overcome the darkness of ignorance and enter the light of the truth of the Buddha-dharma. From now on, I vow to turn to the Dharma wheel to practice and repay our master's teachings.

Vĩnh Lộc A, November 24, 2019

Truthfully,

Viên Bảo Khải



*Viên Bảo Khải touched two hands (back row left second)
on the Taking Refuge the Three Jewel Ceremony at Hương Sen Temple (Việt Nam) in 2011*

4.15. WISHING TO LISTEN TO MASTER'S TEACHING

Namo Sakyamuni Buddha.

Dear Master Thích Nữ Giới Hương,

The day you came to my house to visit my mother-in-law, Viên Bảo Trân, I was able to see my revered Master and to hear your compassionate words, so close and natural to Buddhists. My family regards you as very precious.

Since the day you had me take refuge in 2011, every year (usually the last three months) you come back to Vietnam to teach, but I seldom meet you because I am also busy working away from home often. Now it is a pleasure to have a long talk with you. I am also very happy to understand that while studying abroad in the United States, you established Hương Sen Pagoda in California and that in Vietnam, there is Pháp Quang Pagoda (now named by you as the second Hương Sen). We wish that you regularly return to Hương Sen in Vietnam so that we can be close and listen to your insightful teachings. We wish this very much! We will serve you with great devotion and support.

These words are from my honest feelings. Please, compassionate Master, prove and actualize them.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Vĩnh Lộc A, November 24, 2019

Yours respectfully,

Viên Bảo Luật

(Husband of Viên Bảo Sen

and a Manager decorating the stage for Vesak)



The refuge ceremony Hương Sen Temple (Viet nam) in 2011



*From Right: Viên Bảo Luật, Viên Bảo Sen,
Viên Bảo Trân, and Viên Bảo Hiền, in 2019*

4.16. THREE JEWELS REFUGES FOR VILLAGERS IN THE 6TH HAMLET, VĨNH LỘC A COMMUNE

Namo Sakyamuni Buddha.

Dear Master Thích Nữ Giới Hương,

Lunar June 6, 2011 was very beautiful, and people in the 6th Hamlet, Vĩnh Lộc A Commune were very excited because we heard Bhikkhuni Viên Bảo and Nun Nhu Duc announce that Master Giới Hương, abbess of Pháp Quang Pagoda (now Hương Sen temple) from America, will lead Buddhists in the hamlet to take refuge and will give each of us a string of beads to wear when reciting the Buddha's name and grey attire to wear during the chant. One by one, we invited each other quickly, so that the whole village, including the elderly and young, registered more than 150 people.

We vividly remember the impressive days in our lives. Particularly, Viên Bảo Trân also remembers the title of the discourse, "The Falling Leaf" (you preached very well and recommended that we should overcome adversity and move forward, like a dry leaf always emerging on the water even after much water pours on top). At that time, you were very smart and generous in a bright yellow robe, reading the precepts for us. We respectfully kneeled to listen to your warm, steady voice as below:

Life is an immense ocean of suffering, without limit. If we do not have the Buddha merit, we do not have knowledge for liberation. If we want to transform suffering, we must take refuge in the Three Jewels (Buddha-Dharma-Sangha) as your firm base. If we want to break away from the cycle of rebirth, we should preserve the five precepts for laypeople.

Buddha-Dharma-Sangha is a compassionate boat to traverse the ocean of suffering, the light for a nighttime journey, the first step for rebirth in human and heavenly realms as well as for attaining enlightenment. Therefore, the sutras teach: "If sentient beings want to eliminate suffering and enjoy peace and happiness, then they should take refuge in the Three Jewels. If anyone abides in the pure tranquility for a moment, he/she will enjoy the eternal, peaceful Nirvana forever.

Most of the villagers are Buddhist beginners, so Master and the nuns advised us to come to the temple often to learn the Dharma and practice chanting and fasting. About one month passed, and we heard that Master had to return to America to take care of the temple there. You are a thin female nun who has two temples in two countries to take care of, and you must fly halfway across the earth. How hard you work! We love, feel sorry for, and miss you, even more.

Every year you spend the last three months back in Vietnam to teach at Vietnam Buddhist University at Lê Minh Xuân, HCMC. You have to take the bus (number 71 to Lonely Buddha Temple, which is near the university) as transportation to teach every day. We often waited for you to return after 5 pm to offer some vegetarian food (lotus leaf salad, mushroom porridge, sticky rice, pancakes, sweets, and so on). Viên Bảo Trân, who was the chief cook of Hương Sen Temple (founded by you) and Tường Quang Temple (under Venerable Hạnh Quán), and many other temples. . . We always remember your solemn and dignified figure, passing the precepts down to all the villagers in the 6th Hamlet, Vĩnh Lộc A including us (Viên Bảo Trân and Viên Bảo Sen).

We wish you can come back to Vietnam more often to guide us and to let us offer vegetarian food as well as listen to the respected Master's warm voice.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Vĩnh Lộc A, November 24, 2019

Head bowed respectfully,

Viên Bảo Trân (mother) và Viên Bảo Sen



*Viên Bảo Sen reading the speech in the Taking Refuge Ceremony
in Hương Sen Temple (Bình Chánh) in 2011*



Master Giới Hương offer a grey attire and bead to each Buddhist, in 2011



Master Giới Hương and Viên Bảo Sen

4.17. TWO WORDS: "DEAR MASTER!"

*I call you two words, "Dear Master!"
Feel my soul filled with emotion
You were like a cool breeze to dispel the heat
Cooling my whole heart sky.*

Fleeting time has quietly passed; eighteen years have passed since the day I was very fortunate to meet you at the Pháp Quang Temple (now it is called Hương Sen Temple).

Dear Teacher! In October of that lunar year (2001), I went back and forth to Pháp Quang Temple to admire your tranquil, dignified figure, which appeared and disappeared in the main hall. I stood outside to enjoy that moment for a long time; after you disappeared inside, I went home with that image of an elegant, grey-robed nun.

That afternoon, I ventured to the temple but did not dare to enter. At that time, I did not understand anything about Buddhism. Seeing me sneak around, you came out to lead me, "a small being," in.

You delightedly asked about my family and neighbors and guided me in the daily ritual of prayers. At that time, you were prostrating at every word of the Lotus Sutra. Although I didn't know anything about the Dharma, I could follow and understand it very well. That night, I could not sleep and closed my eyes, and then I heard your Dharma words far and near. I felt happy in my heart and thought that you have awakened the Buddha-Dharma nature in my mind already. Thank you for everything.

*Since I have you, our life is bright
The bright sky is clear inside me.*



From then on, every afternoon I returned to Pháp Quang Temple and accompanied you to reverently prostrate at each word of the Lotus Sutra and recite the afternoon course. I was so excited that in just three days, I memorized the Great Compassionate Darani Mantra and other prayer rituals. The reason is that I copied it into a small book to take with me wherever I go, to learn it by heart.

That year, we Buddhists celebrated the New Year with you at Pháp Quang in Vietnam; we were very happy. We liked to work with you because each person was specifically and clearly assigned, in your organized plans. Close to you, we felt peaceful and free due to your compassionate energy spreading around us.

Then what was predestined came, and you went to India to study, and after that, you went to America to settle down. We stayed in Pháp Quang to recite with Rev. Viên Hoàng.

Although we are far away from you, we always turn to you, diligently reciting Buddha's name and doing good deeds every day, so that we will be more and more steadfast in our faith.

You know, the more we miss you, the more diligently we maintain the sutras and keep the precepts, so that today, my family of four people have all taken refuge in the Three Jewels.

My family lives in harmony and shares sadness and joy every day as a model Buddhist family. Our all-day schedule includes early morning listening to the Dharma and observing the precepts, without killing. As for me, I keep two chanting sessions of Śūraṅgama Mantra and the Pure Land every day.

By understanding the Buddha Dharma and the teachings from our teacher Giới Hương, Viên Lan and Viên Huy have joined the Buddhist Young Association's activities and always lead a good, ideal life for the sake of everyone.

Dear Master! Viên Huy has now become a teacher at Vĩnh Lộc Elementary School, while Viên Lan has become a medical secretary.

I would like to thank to you, Master, and everyone in this life for helping us along the long, difficult journey.

This year, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of cultivation and service of Master Thích Nữ Giới Hương, I would like to share many of our beautiful memories. It is predestined and the biggest mark of my life. I will diligently practice observing the precepts, so that one day, I can cultivate the mind, take it as my possession, and later go into the ideal of renunciation and liberation, to repay Master's beneficence for giving me my first Dharma words:

*Thanks for your compassionate fire,
Transfer wisdom to come over the edge of birth and death
Sincere respect with all our heart,
May Master attain liberation soon.*

In closing, I wish that Master Thích Nữ Giới Hương and your nun disciples have good health, save beings, and achieve Buddhahood. You are always the lofty compassionate tree whose shade protects us.

Namo Joy Bodhisattva.

Bình Chánh - HCM City, November 24, 2019

Best regards,

Viên Diệu_Phạm Thị Thanh Nhung

lanthao1805@gmail.com





Viên Diệu (second row central carry a gift) in Hương Sen Temple (Bình Chánh) in 2016



Part V

THE GRATITUDE OF TEACHER

5.1. TO OUR DEAR TEACHER - DR. VENERABLE TN GIỚI HƯƠNG

Just remember the day I started to enter into the Buddhist University, now it is the fourth semester. Recalling the day when I registered the Course I of English Dharma Class which was taught by Venerable Giới Hương, is now near the end of the class. On the occasion of “*Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service - Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*” we write a couple of lines of respect to you as a deep appreciation from our A1 class to you.

Every person we meet in this life is a precious guest of our lives. If people like us, they will give us warmth and sincerity. If people don't like us, we will give them tolerance and generosity. Therefore, positive or negative is also the benefactor of our life. In life, we always meet the joys and sorrows, unite and separation, merging and dissolving, prosperity and failure are the general laws of the creation. From there, we look at ourselves on the Dharma path and the conditions of encounters. Although there are different personalities, such as cheerful, quiet, smart, quick-witted people, who can also live and work together in a place. Likewise, we are those from the North and the South, each of us seems to have a good relationship in the class A1 (course XII), is taught by you. Even it is a short time only 3 months in Vietnam, you don't mind to come over the long-distance from USA to Vietnam for us. Every year, you are back to the beloved Buddhist University to teach us and other classes. We met in few courses, but the big thanks are always still in our hearts.

Your 40 year-journey through the Dharma with so many sorrows and joys, so that it is today, you can propagate the Dharma both in the your homeland and foreign country. Whether life will be successful or challenged, we wish you always healthy and peaceful to spread dharma to human beings.

It was predestined to meet each other, not only just as your students, we would like to express hundreds of thousands of thanks which were never enough. We promise to practice diligently and wish all the auspicious goodness to you. Below are a few commemorative images of the class to you.

Nunnery at Buddhist University, November 24, 2019

Truthfully,

**Thích Nữ Liên Khôi and Monastic Students
at the course XII of English Dharma Class**

lienkhoid2810@gmail.com



Venerable Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Giới Hương (standing left with a leaf hat), Thích Nữ Liên Khôi (fifth right)



Whole class A1



5.2. FAILURE: A MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Not everyone can succeed in education. You may not have imagined that one day, you could leave school (there could be an excuse or you may be forced to leave). The resulting feeling would inevitably be depression, but you are neither the first nor the last to face this struggle about a university plan that does not proceed as desired. That situation could have just happened: you feel lost and a failure and just isolate yourself in room, avoiding contact with others. Even as such, you should encourage yourself, however, by reflecting that there are many famous entrepreneurs out there enjoying their business, owners and employees who have not graduated from college or university but still create a fulfilling path in life. We ourselves overcome many obstacles to stand up as successes. This is the reason I chose this topic, "Failure: a Measure of Success."

Despair is a state of no-mind that does not want to pursue a goal because of difficulty, pressure, or spiritual accidents.

1. FAILURE HAS A VALUE

Avoid thinking that you can succeed without having the experience of failure. This will train your mind to think that failure is the precursor to success.

Every time you stumble, you will take a big step on the path of exploring your potential. Failure has another value: the ability to make you stronger and more resilient. So never be afraid of failure. You will never get close to victory if you don't experience a setback. Every time you stumble or fail, remember one thing: you're getting closer to your potential dreams. Learn to stand up after failures.

In today's society, we see that there are some schools, classes, companies, and colleges in which students do not have good enough grades become depressed under family pressure (autistic people living in the dark shadows) and finally kill themselves.

Dr. Sam Collin (the author of *Radio Heaven: One Woman's Journey to Grace*) said that we should appreciate failures and see them as necessary stepping stones to success. Even this female author also advises her readers as well as the audience to try losing a job once. You would gain vivid insights and experiences that you would never have gained if you were never unemployed. This motivates you to find what you really want, the work you really love.

Here are six things you can do to help your mood recover faster and get your life back on track:

2. DO NOT LET FAILURE MAKE YOU LOSE FAITH

Most people don't know how to get up after a setback because they've lost faith in themselves. There is a big difference if someone says, "I have failed" instead of "I am a failure." The person who fails will always learn how to learn lessons from his failure and keep moving forward. Failure does not change the person's will. On the contrary, if someone claims, "I am a failure," then he will not have hope for the good.

There is a folk sentence: "Failure is the mother of success." Success and failure: these two aspects seem to be opposites, but they always are in balance. Knowing to rise after failure is a kind of success, and after success, if one lets it slip away easily, the result is failure. Therefore, train yourself to think of failure as a sign of success.

If you have doubts about your ability and worry you about to fail, it's time to stop doubting. Making mistakes is like breathing in or out: if you are alive, you will never be able to avoid mistakes. Therefore, learn how to live with it and keep moving forward.

3. LET FAILURE SHOW YOU ERRORS

Sometimes failure will signal that it's time to change your direction. If you keep going, you will hit your head against the wall. So maybe it's time to go back and find a way out. If you follow a turn, it may be the main road. Regardless of successive failures, as long as you keep your dreams and desire burning, keep moving forward.

If you continue to fail but still want to stand up and continue, then let failure guide you. When the doors close before you, don't stand in one place wondering why you can't open any doors. Take a look around and find another open door. Maybe a door is opening right next to you without you noticing.

4. THE FIX IS TO KEEP YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR

When you fail, laugh out loud. When things go well, it's easy to smile, but when things get worse, it's even more important. Nothing can improve your health more than smiling. It helps you dispel fatigue and stress and makes your mistakes quickly disappear into oblivion. When you make mistakes on your quest for success, keep a playful and optimistic attitude.

5. TURNING FAILURE INTO EXPERIENCE

To succeed, cultivate the ability to learn from your mistakes. The change in cognitive processes will be a turning point, a stepping stone to help you unlock your potential. The willingness to learn from failure and the ability to overcome it are inseparable. If you stop learning, you will repeat past mistakes again and again. But things will be better if every time you stumble, you stand up and draw valuable lessons.

6. DON'T LET FAILURE FAIL YOU

When embarking on a successful journey, you will surely encounter many problems. You will give up and continue to fall, immersed in failure, or you will stand up with your own feet as quickly as possible. Many do not do so. They collapse so long that they feel just lying there and collapsing is more comfortable than having to stand up. After stumbling, try to stand up with the strength of your own feet. Learn from your mistakes and quickly return to the journey.

7. FAILURE IS A MEASURE OF GROWTH

Most people judge success by judging who is least likely to fail. But the most successful people on average fail seven times before succeeding. You see, the more you try, the more valuable lessons you'll learn from failure and the more you become successful.

Every time you stumble, look back on your progress. Do not be discouraged because maybe after many failures, success can come to you right afterward. It creates development and progress. That is the meaning of standing up after failures and avoiding unnecessary turns.

What helps you cope with failure better is to look ahead. When struggling with failure, always think of a bright future. We all make mistakes, but it is important that we know how to overcome them.

Failure is an indication that you need to explore other opportunities. This is sometimes true, and most success is the result of resilience. Most famous successful people have faced obstacles before becoming winners. They won because they didn't let the failures cause them to falter and lose their courage. Everyone easily fails, but the value of success is in perseverance.

Dear Venerable Master Giới Hương,

The above lecture was given by student monk Thiện Hiệp in the Practice Preaching the Dharma

course on the morning of November 30, 2019. It was scored and praised by Venerable Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Giới Hương. She chose it for the collected writings of *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service— Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương in English and Vietnamese*. It is an honor for me and the whole class. On the occasion of Teacher's Day (November 20) and the fortieth anniversary of her studies and Dharma propagation, all of the students of the Dharma Class, Course XII, wish her good health, peace of mind, and success in doing the Buddha's work, for the sake of many beings. We are grateful that:

*Ferryman lifts his passengers all the time
On the river bringing many people through
Suddenly one day looking in the water
Sees his hair is frosted white.^[1]*

The ferryman carries passengers to the river. He lives with the wish to propagate the Dharma to benefit sentient beings and is also the torchbearer who shows the way for the next generations. We would like to pray for our Buddhist work in the collection *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service* to be fulfilled. We promise that we will continue to spread the Dharma in the future as ferrymen, the torchbearers for the future of Buddhism, and we will not betray the expectations of Ven. Teacher Giới Hương and other beloved teachers.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Vietnam Buddhist University, HCM City, November 30, 2019

Respectfully,

**Preaching Dharma Class, Course XII
and Rev. Thiện Hiệp**
thienhiiep728@gmail.com

1. Người Đưa Đò của nhà giáo Nguyễn Khuê.
<http://khoavanhoc-ngonngu.edu.vn/sang-tac/nguoi-dua-do>



Venerable Teacher Thích Nữ Giới Hương and student monk Thiện Hiệp



Preaching the Dharma class, Course XII

5.3. TAKE PEOPLE ACROSS THE RIVER

Namo Sakyamuni Buddha!

Dear Venerable Teacher Bhikkhuni Giới Hương,

Today, on the occasion of Vietnamese Teachers' Day (November 20), a celebration of humanity, all of the students, full of affection, have a couple of lines of love to send to you, our beloved teachers.

Our dear teachers!

We have heard that,
One life, one river
Those who stand waiting at the bank
Want to cross the river, must use a ferry.
In life, in many ways, we rely on the ferryman
Working hard under sun and rain
The boat of knowledge teacher brought to many students
Crossing the river sends back a smile.
A special love we would like to dispatch to our dear teacher.
A rustic boat—white, fogged hair
Forever follow us throughout the ten directions, thousand days
That river is still here
Teacher carries the student ferry continuously over the river..^[1]

Teachers are the ones who paint splendid and beautiful lines in the painting of human civilization. Teachers are quiet boatmen, with their enthusiasm and love, but they have quietly overcome difficulties in time and space to come to us, to this university to share knowledge and mentor us.

In the early morning, when even the sun has not yet woken up, somewhere a teacher is turning the wheel. Unlike many other vehicles, it is a spiritual vehicle for a sacred and noble mission, full of love and warmth, carrying people who are always sacrificing for the next generation. Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương has chosen to wear the simple monastic costumes over the years, always desiring to hold chalk to write on blackboards, in exchange for valuable lessons, beautiful feelings for us. Amid late mists and cold, rainy evenings, she silently and quietly sent her care to us. How far the road is, the foggy glass screen, how dear and respectable she is! That image makes us bow our heads silently, praying that our teacher will be happy, healthy, and peaceful.

Please shorten the long distance
So my teacher can promptly sip scented tea
Please shorten the long distance
So my master can have a little time to watch the sunrise..^[2]

Your great grace, we will not write on wood because the dusty wind will cause the marks to fade. We also did not engrave it on stone because the waves of time will surely make the moss grow green. We choose for ourselves how to write in our own lives, writing in our own lives with an invisible ink

1. "Ferryman (Người Lái Đò)," Thảo Nguyên, <https://baomoi.com/20-11-nhung-bai-tho-tang-thay-co-hay-va-y-nghia-nhat/c/20777745.epi>. Translated into English by Bhikkhuni Giới Hương.

2. "My Teacher," unknown author. Translated into English by Bhikkhuni Giới Hương.

that only people who are connected and bonded together can see. We also don't forget to add colors of gratitude and love.

Our dear teacher!

Still the same river, the same old boat, but now boasting a nostalgic color, we did not want to be apart. Our hearts are choked up, we want to be bathed in this moment forever as adults wanting to be children again, to be taught forever, to be loved, and to be cared for a while in this priceless space.

Everything in the world will fade with time, but we still strongly believe that there are sentiments which, once lingering in people's minds, will not easily fade even though time sweeps away everything.

Life must have laws of meeting and separation; we know that even if we hold on, we can't hold back time, but we have the right to slow down to immerse ourselves in this moment, to be in this space be a little longer.

Far from tomorrow, we each take steps, each of us choosing our own direction. We understand well that a monastic is a person walking on his or her own path, forgetting personal interests for the sake of many. But there certainly will be sad nights, times of weakness, when being far away, we will think of our teachers once more to feel the love and warmth our devoted teachers have for us.

Spring, summer, autumn, winter comes and goes again, but the image of the teachers on the podium, next to the green board and white chalk, will always be in the hearts of each student.

We pray that the Buddhas, the great Bodhisattvas, the noble Sangha bless the teachers to always have good health, be successful in life, and be peaceful under the light of the Three Jewels.

Masters, you are important components of our life! All of the student monks and nuns of the Dharma English Course present this to you on the occasion of Teachers' Day (November 20) and also contribute to your Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service.

Namo Sakyamuni Buddha!

Vietnam Buddhist University, HCM City, November 20, 2019

Respectfully,

Nun student Diệu Ngọc

and all of the students of English Course, Course XII

nguyenthitrucl2492@gmail.com



The Buddhism in English Course, Course XII

5.4. REMEMBERING OUR DEAR TEACHER WITH GRATITUDE

In the morning, the sky is clear and cool. At the nunnery of Vietnam Buddhist University, Campus 2, I suddenly recall past memories. Just over three years ago: I still remember the image of a mature, gentle, venerable nun (Venerable Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Giới Hương), a slender figure with a gentle, sweet voice. You walked into the A2 English class, our Dharma English Course with a pretty smile, how charming! On that day, we were first-year students, you taught Buddhism Through English Reading, part I. As fresh students, we were surprised by and interested in your teaching method, which was very new, both traditional and modern. You conveyed the knowledge in a subtle and fun way; for example, sometimes you gave quizzes (reviewing the grammar) to earn credit for final exam points. This teaching method very vividly encouraged students to be active, pay attention to the lesson, and be creative in doing homework. You really gave monks and nuns the motivation, energy, and strong belief to learn English well.

Although I have just met you for the first time, I feel so close and dear, as if we have met in a previous life. In my mind, I feel that you are an accomplished teacher, a senior Dharma sister who goes ahead with wholehearted enthusiasm to guide young and younger generations on the path of studying Buddhism. Although our time together was very short, you still spent your entire time sharing, consulting, and responding to our aspirations. With the young, innocent monastic students, you are always willing to share your own experience with studying. How did you strive to learn? How did you find scholarships for foreign universities? You have overcome challenges to achieve a good doctorate in Buddhology, a bachelor's in American literature, and moreover, you have become abbess of a few temples. What should a Tathagata's disciple do for the sake of many? You also introduced us to the website addresses of prestigious universities in foreign countries such as the US, UK, India, China, and so on. At that time, in my mind, I thought: "Oh! this is the first time we met you, why did you understand our desire to study abroad like that? Surely, you must be a person who has experience practicing and a sharp eye, right?" You looked into the eyes of the young students and understood what they needed and what they should do to prepare for the future.

After giving the exam and finishing the course, you set out to return to the United States to continue your journey preaching Buddhism in the United States. You have just become the abbess of Hương Sen Temple in Vietnam, but also are the abbess of Hương Sen Temple in the United States. You often make charitable donations to help poor people and young students to create favorable conditions for them to study well. Before that, I also had the thought of striving to study abroad. And now, you have given me more spiritual aspiration, which arises in me due to predestined conditions. I wish that I could qualify to go to the United States to study and have the opportunity to visit and stay with you. I dream to have the opportunity to learn many good things from you, Venerable TN Giới Hương, the energetic and passionate bhikkhuni professor.

It was surprising! In September 2019, good predestined conditions returned to the final year of the English course, and our students were delighted to meet and learn from the revered professor of three years ago: Professor Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, who is simple and sincere. And you taught us about the subject of Vietnamese-English and English-Vietnamese bilingual translation (Bilingual Translation, course from September to December 2019). We were very happy to be able to study and listen to your teachings on a different subject matter, a different view, and new knowledge.

I don't know what else to say. With all my heart, I respectfully thank you for your meaningful,

golden teachings. I wish for your body and mind to be always peaceful, for you to always encounter auspicious conditions on the path of spreading the Dharma in the homeland and abroad. We are always grateful to you and vow to try to practice well in order to live up to being worthy of the aspirations of our teachers, relatives, and dear lay Buddhists.

In the end, I wish for you all the best and for your dreams to come true.

See you again, revered teacher, in America! Your little nun student.

Vietnam Buddhist University, HCM City, November 27, 2019

Genuinely,

Bhikkhuni Thọ Liên

Class A2 Dharma English Course

thichnutholien@gmail.com

thichnutholien2@gmail.com



Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương (middle of upper row, with glasses)

Author Thọ Liên (second from left, yellow robe)

5.5. THE SERMON ON EMPTINESS

Dear Venerable Giới Hương - Our respectable Teacher,

We are members from the leading group of Đức Tâm Buddhist Youth Association who received your lecture on the theme of "Emptiness in the Vajrayāna, Mantrayāna" on November 11, 2019 at Diêu Giác Pagoda, Second District, HCM City. To fully comprehending the doctrine of emptiness is not easy, but more or less through your excellent lecture, we also realized it is the ultimate direction of liberation.

We would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge this meaningful sermon in verses and respectfully offer it to your book of collected writings: "Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service - Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương", we know that our knowledge is still limited, hope you will receive our sincere heart regardless to words:

THE SERMON ON EMPTINESS

*Thank you for helping us comprehend "the EMPTINESS nature"
Vajrayāna, Buddhist scripture penetrates into the heart
The six senses of selfishness obscure the eyes
Five aggregates, Dependent origination worldly illusion.
Clear mirror without stand reflects nothing
The Bodhi without tree is inherently voided.
Overlooking all phenomena due to the doctrine of cause-effect
The permanent nature is inherently empty,*

(Minh Đạo)

We would like to learn more with you in order that I and other members become more confident on the path of practice and theory.

We wish our teachers, peace of mind and remember to come back to Vietnam regularly to teach us.

Diêu Giác Pagoda, District 2, HCM City, November 12, 2019

Respectfully,

Đức Tâm Buddhist Youth Association and Minh Đạo

datnguyenduc75@gmail.com



Ven. Giới Hương (centre) with Đức Tâm Buddhist Youth Association

5.6. CHALK DUST ON HANDS

*There is a job with full of chalk dust
We call it the noblest profession
There is a job without plant trees in the soil
But giving life the fragrant flowers.^[1]*

(“There Is Such a Job” [Có một nghề như thế] -Đình Văn Nhã)

Boat-driving and planting people (teaching career) are considered the most noble profession, but few people dare to choose, because once you choose, you have to sacrifice a lot. Even we use many golden words, pearls and precious objects, we cannot fully express our gratitude and respect to teachers.

The wish of Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and other teachers are to see students who can accomplish the "learn method" and "practice method", and then join their hands and shoulders to share the responsibilities of the great monastics, the Tathagata's messengers in turning the dharma wheels.

We monks and nuns as a whole, would like to pay homage at the feet of religious teachers, to show our deep gratitude to you. We inscribe in our heart your noble sacrifice, which is the big motivation for us to overcome all difficulties as well as apply the words of Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and another teachers to transform the body and mind for the make of many.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Vietnam Buddhist University, November 20, 2019

Honestly,

Bhikkuni Liên Phát

Course13 – Pali Translation Class



1. *There is a such job (Có một nghề như thế). Emeritus Professor Đình Văn Nhã. Translated English*
<https://bigschool.vn/nhac-si-di-tim-tac-gia-bai-tho-co-mot-nghe-nhu-the-va-ca-khuc-moi-ra-doi>



*Ven. Giới Hương and monastic students
of Course 13 – Pali Translation Class in November 20 2019*

5.7. BUILD A BRIDGE

We often hear:

*If you want to cross over, you must build a bridge
If you want your children to be good at letters,
They should love their teachers.^[1]*
(“Build a Bridge [Bắc Cầu Kiều],” Lê Hoa)

This verse speaks of the important role of the teacher. The tradition revering teachers and religion is deeply embedded in the minds of Vietnamese people. The tradition is even more pronounced in monastic life:

*Thanks to teaching, we can have an insightful life
Forever hard to repay the debt of gratitude to masters.^[2]*

Masters are teachers who are always devoted and work hard for future generations, unafraid of severe weather such as heat, cold, rain, etc. Masters, who regularly come to class to transmit the Buddha's teachings to us with the aim of assisting us to understand the Dharma, maintain the light of liberation over the years.

On the occasion of Teachers' Day on November 20, 2019, and also the occasion of Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương celebrating forty years of study and service in Buddhism, we have the opportunity to express our gratitude to her. We know that phenomena in the world are impermanent and changing, but there is one exception to that rule: that is, liberating wisdom.

We earnestly pray for Venerable Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Giới Hương and our other masters to attain wisdom early to guide us to the ultimate destination on the path to enlightenment.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Vietnam Buddhist University, November 20, 2019

Best regards,

Bhikkhu Đồng Thành

Course 13, Pali Translation class



1. “Build a Bridge (Bắc Cầu Kiều),” Lê Hoa. Translated from Vietnamese into English by Bhikkhuni Giới Hương. Please visit: <http://www.khoavanhoc.edu.vn/index.php/nghiencuu-dangian/1502-mu-n-sang-thi-b-c-c-u-ki-u>.
2. Folk verse in Buddhism, unknown author, Please visit, http://www.duocsu.org/008tsds_5/572ts_31.html.

5.8. GRATEFUL TO THE MASTERS ON TEACHER'S DAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2019

Vietnamese Teachers' Day, November 20, is an extremely important traditional day for ethics. As the folk verse goes, “When drinking water, think of its source” or “When eating fruit, think of the gardeners’ labor.” Gratitude is the sign of a noble soul, and of course, an indispensable debt carried by any student, especially the monks and nuns at the Buddhist University.

Not only do we have a debt to teachers, but we also have a debt to ancestors and parents, all the people who gave us lessons on knowledge, virtue, liberation, and the morals necessary for being human.

On the occasion of Teacher’s Day and the anniversary marked by *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service—Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*, we have the opportunity to express our feelings and gratitude to you; we remember your lessons and teachings, which are considered as a page in our life.

Under the light of the compassion and wisdom of the most venerable teachers, which move us so much, we demonstrate our gratitude with several respectful words as below:

Today, November 20, 2019 is Teacher's Day. In this present moment, we remember our Lord Sakyamuni Buddha with all his noble qualities and greatness in transmitting the teachings. And today, we are again learning and tenderly nurturing spiritual growth through the Sangha, including our venerable senior teachers, monastic masters, and Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương. We pray that we endeavor to cultivate diligently, to continue our teachers’ example, experiences, and virtues in order to "continue handing down to the next generation.

With joy and emotion, when thinking of the virtues of these masters, we respectfully send to you our deep gratitude and three devoted bows.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Vietnam Buddhist University, November 20, 2019

With metta,

Nun Student Thánh Thảo

Course 13, Pali Translation class



5.9. HALF A WORD IS ALSO THANKS TO TEACHERS

*Even half a word is also thanks to teachers
Although half a word is also deeply thanking
In the future, there will be engagement in life
His words are beads of enlightenment.^[1]*

Although the time Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương stood in front of our class was short, the method she shared is a meaningful handbook to help us in study and practice. The ancient people always confirmed: "Without a teacher, how you can become good?", i.e., no matter how good a student is, without a teacher, the student would be like a blind man walking in the dark night, unable to see the light of his life.

We dedicatedly offer a few sincere words to our teacher, Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, on her fortieth anniversary of study and service in Buddhism.

We wish that she will always have good health to continue transmitting spiritual words and cultivation to us.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Vietnam Buddhist University, December 3, 2019

Honestly,

Bhikkhuni Nguyễn Trí

Course 13, Pali Translation class



Master Ven. Giới Hương and monastic class on Teacher's Day

1. Ca dao Nửa chữ cũng Thầy - Ân danh.

Mời xem: <https://123mua.com.vn/blog/nhung-bai-tho-luc-bat-ve-thay-co-hap-dan-nhat-moi-thoi-dai>

5.10. SHOW ME THE WAY TO TURN

*We are born to parents
We gain attainment through friends.*

(Vietnamese Proverb)

This is a true proverb in life, but for Buddhist monastics, it is still not enough. The important factor in the guidance for a renunciant is the merit from spiritual teachers.

*On a long, dark journey
Crossing many misty roads and corners
Walking in confusion without direction
Teacher standing there with a light at the alley
Clarity shows me the way back.*

(Unknown Author)

You and other teachers sacrifice your time and health (forgetting eating, reducing sleep, staying late...) for the love of young student generations who need the right guidance on the Dharma path, because sometimes we feel that:

*Standing in the middle of two paths
So which path to choose, or let it flow away.*

(“Miss the Field [Nhớ đồng],” the great poet Tố Hữu)

You have given us sincere advice as a compass to show us the way. That grace is indescribable in words. We just promise ourselves to try to study, cultivate, and take you as a good example, and we will continue your unfinished works in the Sangha.

On the occasion of the collecting writings *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service—Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*, we would like to offer you a few words of gratitude and wish you good health, peace, and happiness, depending on destiny to accomplish all your dreams in life.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Vietnam Buddhist University, December 3, 2019

Respectfully,

Nun Student Huệ Hòa

Course 13, Pali Translation class



Flowers for Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương November 20, Teacher's Day

5.11. CHALK DUST IS THE FLOWER

*Dear Teacher, chalk dust is the flower
Give me the lesson, the song
Every time the chalk dust drops.
Like thousands of snowflakes, bright the brown cloth.^[1]*

Dear Venerable Thích Nữ Giới Hương,

November is about over—it's cold, return home like the leaves of the sala tree. The insentient trees know traceability and know to go back to where they were nurtured. November 20 is also a traditional day for students to reflect on the person who supported their intellect. In that spirit, we turn to you, Venerable Thích Nữ Giới Hương, who passed down the Buddhist scriptures of more than twenty-six centuries to us. You taught us many things, told us about the examples of our predecessors, and so forth. . . But still there are some things left unsaid, as below:

*There is also a moon
But there are some things of which you did not tell
The nights you sit to compose lessons
Under the midnight moonlight
Teacher! Why did you not say
You endure rain to come to class
Morning and afternoon, you are always besides the students.*

(“There are Some Things of Which You Did Not Tell
[Những Điều Thầy Chưa Kể],” Trần Thanh Sơn)^[2]

Language neither describes nor summarizes all our feelings, but we still want to use the means of words to express deepest gratitude to you, the teacher who brought us the wisdom of liberation. May the Three Jewels bless you with good health, a long life, and great wisdom so that we can receive the torch of the Buddha's lineage from you. We know that the most precious gift we can give you is our diligent study, our application of the teachings in life, and much effort in cultivation to be worthy of being Buddha's disciples and your small students.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Vietnam Buddhist University, December 3, 2019

With metta,

Student Nun Nguyễn Hiền
Course 13, Pali Translation class

1. Unknown author taking some ideas from “Chalk Dust (Bụi phấn),” musician Vũ Hoàng, poet Lê Văn Lộc, <https://giaoducthoidai.vn/goc-nhin/nguoi-thay-nguon-cam-hung-sang-tao-bat-tan-4048383-b.html>. Translated from Vietnamese into English by Bhikkhuni Giới Hương.

2. “There Are Some Things of Which You Did Not Tell [Những Điều Thầy Chưa Kể],” Trần Thanh Sơn, https://lyric.karaoke.com/15633/nhung_dieu_thay_chua_ke.html. Translated from Vietnamese into English by Bhikkhuni Giới Hương.



Nun students at Vietnam Buddhist University

5.12. PERSON HOLDING A PEN TO TEACH

A person holding a pen to teach is the one who works hard, is diligent, noble and respected. Because the teacher not only brings knowledge but also brings spiritual value, guiding people back to their true nature. The teacher is an intellectual torch that ignites the knowledge lamp, self-effort, and other-effort for us.

Dear Venerable Giới Hương,

Today, November 20 is the New Year for the education department. Having joy the delight atmosphere with full of gratitude and respect, we would like to express our deep gratitude to you (Venerable Thích Nữ Giới Hương) for your dedication holding a pen to teach, devoting your strength, mind, and energy for the education. You train the talented monk/nun generations so that in the future there will be able to shoulder the mission promoting the Dharma. That right from the moment the sangha was founded, the Buddha entrusted:

"We will go to Sena village. Those who want to go to the places you like you can go as it, but not for two people to go in one place. Teach and explain Dharma in your best ability for the sake of many."^[1]

You and other Masters have taken up the Buddha's works in service of human life and actual the Bodhisattva conduct in the spirit of bringing Buddhism into life and developed to a new level.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Vietnam Buddhist University, November 20, 2019

Best regards,

Monk Student Duy Tuệ

Course 13 - Pali translation Class

1. *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta: Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion. Samyutta Nikàya V, Chapter 12, part II, Dharmacakrapravartana Sūtra. translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.*
<https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn56/sn56.011.than.html>



Offering a gift to Venerable Giới Hương at the last day of the course December 03 2019

5.13. GIVING LOVE TO LIFE

*Forty years is a span of a lifetime
Spending time, full of studying and theory
Ten years learning in India
Working hard for many semesters
The world is joyful or sad, you remain tranquil
Refuge in Buddhism for liberation
May Venerable Giới Hương always be happy and peaceful
Leaving a legacy of love for generations.*

Offered to Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương for the book of collected writings,
Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service—Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương.
Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Vietnam Buddhist University, December 3, 2019

Respectfully,

Monk Student Quảng Nguyên

Course 13, The Art of Speech and Presentation



Listening to a lecture

5.14. LIGHTING THE WISDOM LAMP

*Deeply thanking the teachers for lighting the wisdom lamp
Reclaiming morals for the next thousand years, our spirit noble.*

Sincerely offered to Ven. Thích Nữ Giới Hương
on her *Forty-Year Anniversary Of Studies And Service In Buddhism.*

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Vietnam Buddhist University, December 3, 2019

Bowing three times,

Bhikkhuni Tuệ Thanh

Course 13, The Art of Speech and Presentation



5.15. PAYING HOMAGE TO MASTER

*Paying homage to Master, who has great wisdom
Teaching us the way to salvation
Transforming potential bad habits
Now awakening to leave behind negative behaviors.*

*Paying homage to Master with gratitude for the Dharma
Holy appearance and dignified person
Every time I admire and contemplate you
Inner peace arises.*

*Paying homage to Master, who has great virtue
Teaching me how to understand and love
Coming to face life's challenges
I keep tranquil, no matter how negative or positive.*

*Paying homage to Master for transmitting the wisdom lamp
Leading a life pure and simple
Searching for and researching the Tathagata's Dharma
Teaching disciples the significant practice and doctrine.*

For dear Dharma Master, Venerable Thích Nữ Giới Hương, who lights the lamp of wisdom for younger generations.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Vietnam Buddhist University, December 3, 2019

Best regards,

Nun Student Huệ Cảnh

Course 13, The Art of Speech and Presentation



Teacher Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương (right) and Rev. Huệ Cảnh (left)



Art of Speech and Presentation class

5.16. A HUMAN LIFE: A RIVER

A life: a river

Who are the people waiting for us on the shore

To cross the river, we need a boat

Life has many directions, thanks to the boat driver.

(A Boat Driver [Người lái đò], Poet Thảo Nguyên)^[1]

Every day, teachers are not afraid of rain and sun and come to the classroom to pass down knowledge and experience so that we can follow in the steps of the previous generation to maintain the spirit of propagating the Dharma. If there were no previous generations such as Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương or other teachers, we would lose the way. Teachers are the lighthouse at sea in the middle of a stormy winter night for us. We endeavor to study, acquire knowledge, practice their teachings, and always remember to demonstrate our gratitude for their teaching and mentoring.

Fragrant flowers, owing to proper conditions

Good and talented people know how to attain.

We would like to wish that all of our teachers and especially Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương be healthy, peaceful, and successful on their spiritual path so that they can transmit more knowledge and be a virtuous model for us.

The boat turned on the waterway,

Sadness and joy are left behind.

Although we make small mistakes when we are not good, not positive, not hard-working, your generosity is still vast, so that we can still enjoy your loving care.

Respectfully presented to Venerable Thích Nữ Giới Hương.

Vietnam Buddhist University, December 3, 2019

Honestly,

Monk Student Hiếu Thiện

Course 13, The Art of Speech and Presentation

1. "A Boat Driver (Người lái đò)," Poet Thảo Nguyên. Translated into English by Bhikkhuni Giới Hương. Please visit: <https://giaoduc.net.vn/giao-duc-24h/thay-co-va-nhung-chuyen-do-mai-miet-sang-song-post152051.gd>.

5.17. WITHOUT LEARNING OR KNOWLEDGE

The Buddha repeatedly taught that "speech is the clearest expression of thought," i.e., language and writing are manifestations of human social development. Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and other teachers have used words, pens, and chalk as a means to convey the Buddha's teachings to monastic students. The Vietnamese people have a folk saying:

*If you want to cross over, you must build a bridge
If you want your children to be good at letters, they should respect their teachers.*

("Build a Bridge" [Bắc Cầu Kiều], Lê Hoa)^[1]

The traditions of this country have encouraged people to respect masters. Although secular thought regards this more broadly, according to Buddhist concepts the teacher-student relationship is also highly appreciated by the Buddha, as typically mentioned in the Sigālovāda Sutta:^[2]

"A student should serve their teacher as the southern quarter in five ways: by rising for them, by serving them, by listening well, by looking after them, and by carefully learning their profession. Teachers served by their students in these five ways show compassion to them in five ways. They make sure they're well trained and well educated. They clearly explain all the knowledge of the profession. They introduce them to their friends and colleagues. They provide protection in every region. Teachers served by their students in these five ways show compassion to them in these five ways. And that's how the southern quarter is covered, kept safe and free of peril."

Confucius also confirmed, "People without learning have no knowledge." Therefore, to create a bridge leading to the final shore of knowledge, one must rely on learning, wherein the element of the teachers' guidance cannot be ignored and teaching and learning must be balance.

No words of praise or sentences can express the extent of gratitude more than our efforts to pay it forward through education. Our actions and responsibility in maintaining a teaching and learning career for the sake of sources of knowledge are unremitting; this is our real wish for our teachers.

Words are merely empty because they will dissipate in the clouds; only our sincere mind is remembered often, as Kim Trọng uttered:

*Keep your golden body safe
But a moment belongs to another, how sad for a person far away.*

("Kim Vân Kiều Story" [Kim Vân Kiều Truyện], Nguyễn Du)^[3]

Respectfully presented to Venerable Thích Nữ Giới Hương.

Vietnam Buddhist University, December 3, 2019

Respectfully,

Bhikkhu Nhuận Lạc

Course 13, The Art of Speech and Presentation

1. "Respect the Teacher" (Yêu kính Thầy), Lê Hoa. Quoted from *The Proverbs of Family Relationship*, Chính trị quốc gia Publishing House, 2004. Translated into English by Bhikkhuni Giới Hương.

Please visit: <https://www.thivien.net/Muon-sang-thi-bac-cau-kiieu/poem>.

<http://www.khoavanhoc.edu.vn/index.php/nghiencuu-dangian/1502-mu-n-sang-thi-b-c-u-ki-u>.

2. *Dīgha Nikāya 31, Sigālovāda Sutta*. English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.

Please visit: <https://suttacentral.net/dn31/en/sujato>.

3. "Kim Vân Kiều Truyện" (Kim Vân Kiều Story), Nguyễn Du.

Please visit: <https://www.giaoduc.edu.vn/nhung-loi-dan-do-nhau-tham-dam-nuoc-mat.htm>.



Venerable Thích Nữ Giới Hương explains a sermon on blackboard

5.18. THE TEACHER-SHIP

*The teacher-ship is like the morning light
Turn my bright future on
The teacher-ship is like a great mountain
Let me see many magic words.*

*The teacher-ship is like a stream
Transforming thousands of kinds of suffering
The teacher-ship is like thousands of oceans
Let me understand deep love.*

*The teacher-ship is as silent as the sky
Help me comprehend your compassion stream
The teacher-ship is like a late-night light
Let me dispel long-standing ignorance.*

*The teacher-ship is everlasting, forever
Help me be warm despite the sea of misery
The teacher-ship always gives love
Let me keep up progress amid heavy karma.*

*The teacher-ship is like a high peak
Support me to realize the love from your heart
The teacher-ship is as tall as Meru^[1] Mountain
Let me diligently repay your gratitude.*

*Vietnam Buddhist University, December 3, 2019
Respectfully offered to Venerable Thích Nữ Giới Hương
and all teachers.*

Monk student Viên Quang
Course 13, The Art of Speech and Presentation

1. Meru Mountain is a sacred mountain with five peaks, mentioned in the cosmology of Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. It is considered the center of all physical, metaphysical, and spiritual universes.



5.19. A WONDERFUL MORNING WITH VENERABLE GIỚI HƯƠNG

On a beautiful day, Tuesday, December 3, 2019, we were fortunate to have Ven. Giới Hương come to our classroom to teach as a visiting lecturer. Although we only learned from and met with Ven. Giới Hương for three hours, she left in our hearts a feeling of infinite respect because she was dedicated to transmitting her own knowledge and experience after many years of studying abroad. It really helps us, the young monastic students, who can receive and understand the Buddha's teaching in the easiest way. We are impressed with her, a person with a weak female figure but having a manner and soul as strong as those of a great hero, a role model our class can reflect upon for inspiration. How can we mold ourselves after her? As we mature, we can learn from her conduct, enthusiastically bringing the fire of wisdom to pass on to the following generations. The ancients have the saying, "When bamboo is old, shoots sprout." Buddhism will flourish or not depending on the future generation of young monks and nuns, who must have sufficient virtue and wisdom to shoulder the role of Buddhist missionaries and their activities.

Regarding this matter, we should improve ourselves. If there were neither teachings nor the advice to be diligent from predecessors, then where would our young monks and nuns go, without definite directions or guidance in the future?

Therefore, on behalf of more than 300 monks and nuns of the thirteenth term, we would like to express our gratitude to the highly qualified nun, Venerable Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Giới Hương, for passing on the Dharma lamp to us. Her image lingered in my heart and really nurtured our aspirations in education. In particular, she inspired me, a young nun, to have the strong will to continue to make steps towards the distant wide sky by studying abroad, with the aim of attaining fresh inspiration from foreign countries. We promise to put forth more effort toward fulfilling our educational and monastic careers so as to be able to inherit your great teachings, which we received on a particular "wonderful morning."

Last but not least, we wish you good health so that you can promote the Dharma domestically and abroad: may you always be a stable pillar for young nuns, motivating us to reach the heights of Buddhism, so that later we can "serve the Dharma and the nation" and deserve to be daughters of Sakyamuni Buddha, shouldering our livelihood in which "preaching is a duty, service is an ambition." Once again, we are very grateful to you.

Vietnam Buddhist University, December 3, 2019
Respectfully presented to Venerable Thích Nữ Giới Hương
Honestly,

Student Nun Nhật Nghi^[1]
Tnnhatngghi90@gmail.com
General Course 13, The Art of Speech and Presentation

1. Bhikkhuni Nhật Nghi gave you a lift from class to the bus station on December 3, 2019. I was happy to have the good opportunity to talk with you during this short trip.



Bhikkhuni Nhật Nghi (second from left) and her nun classmates

5.20. A CAREER PLANTING HUMAN SEEDS

Over the course of a human life, everyone has at least played the roles of student and teachers many times, and many people have spent a lifetime teaching.

The teacher-student relationship here is not only limited to the academic category, but also includes general social life. Confucianism has the phrase, "A letter is thanks to teachers, half of a letter is also thanks to teachers," i.e., people who teach a word or half of a word are considered as teachers. Also, "teachers" include those who lift up the dream for us to reach the end of the path or a part of the way (if we had the opportunity to meet once) to further encourage us on the path of scholarly success. According to this meaning, Vietnam has the saying: "Learning from the teacher is not equal to learning from friends" (this means friends can also be considered as teachers).

Owing to these things, we become more aware of the position and role of the teacher. In religion, our teachers are masters and fellow practitioners. On Teacher's Day, surely everyone has that feeling when thinking about enlightened people who bring us the lamp of knowledge for us to pass through the dark banks of ignorance. To repay that debt, we usually express ourselves through our actions and words. There are many different wishes and expressions of gratitude to teachers, but I myself find it very mechanical to repeat those wishes to teachers. Why don't we use pure Vietnamese language to express our feelings of respecting teachers?

Since then, on every occasion of November 20, we often wish for our teachers good health and constant faith on their path of being boatman on the river of knowledge, because sometimes young students are playful and mischievous, disturbing and discouraging the will of the professors to preach. With that wish, we also try to correct and rectify ourselves, to improve ourselves more and more, so that every day the teachers coming to class will see us mature on the path of knowledge.

To teachers, perhaps the highest and most meaningful gift is taking on the career of becoming a teacher and planting seeds in people. We will follow after the master to produce good results in life and carry on your educated career by planting seeds in human beings.

Vietnam Buddhist University, December 3, 2019
Respectfully gifted to Venerable Thích No Giới Hương
With Regards,

Bhikkhuni Quảng Hiền
Course 13, The Art of Speech and Presentation



Flowers for Venerable Bikkhuni Giới Hương on Teacher's Day, November 11, 2018

5.21. FAITH IN THE NEXT GENERATION

The *saha* realm is full of suffering, and the Buddha appeared to bring peace to gods and humans. He pointed out the path of practice, transforming the misery of sentient beings. But the Buddha entered nirvana long ago and the arahants are also gone; only the teachings that the Buddha left behind remain on this earth. Therefore, the monastic masters have studied, practiced, and then passed on teachings to us though all of their experience.

In order for Buddhism to exist in this world, masters make efforts to guide young students who are following in the footsteps of the Buddha but do not understand the teachings exactly, directing them to the way of liberation.

Having realized that importance, we know their great merits. We will try to study well, practice diligently, and equip ourselves firmly with virtue and knowledge, in order to continue the lineage of the predecessors who put faith in the next generation.

Vietnam Buddhist University, December 3, 2019
Respectfully presented to Venerable Thích Nữ Giới Hương
Best regards,

Monk Student Minh Nguyễn
Course 13, The Art of Speech and Presentation



Venerable Giới Hương on the stage on the 35th Anniversary of Vietnam Buddhist University, HCM City

5.22. THE ENERGY SOURCE OF LOVE

Although it has been 2,600 years since the Buddha attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree and turned the first Dharma wheel at the Deer Garden in Sarnath, his message of compassion and wisdom still resounds today. That is because:

*Paying homage to Sangha, the noble teacher
Replaces Buddha to spread Dharma,
Depending on conditions, converting people without desire
As dignified teachers leading beings.^[1]*

Understanding the importance and responsibility of the Sangha, Venerable Thích Nữ Giới Hương has continued to be on the path of commitment and service in Buddhism. Regarding her forty-year journey in monastic studies and spreading the Dharma, I would like to respectfully send a few commemorative lines on the day she came to our class on bilingual Vietnamese-English translation.

Although we have met and learned under Venerable Giới Hương for only ten lessons, each time I went to class, I experienced very warm feelings. That warmth came from the peaceful figure on the podium and from the heart of a teacher, a mother who always wishes to pass all her knowledge to her young pupils and children. That warmth lies in the silent sacrifice of her crossing more than half of the earth's circumference to fly from the USA to Vietnam to be with us. I felt even more moved when I sat in the nun's room hearing the high-pitched echoes of her voice in the classroom during the heat at noon. Dear master, your mindful walk, compassionate eyes, sweet voice, and enthusiasm are good characteristics that will inspire us to firmly trust and remember the path we are choosing to take:

*Carry the burden of life and religion on our shoulders
And include the sadness of life and death.*

In the Discourse on the Analysis of Offerings^[2] (Dakkhinaṅgāyaṇasutta 142), the Buddha taught,

When someone has enabled you to be free of doubt regarding suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation, it's not easy to repay them by bowing down to them, rising up for them, greeting them with joined palms, and observing proper etiquette for them; or by providing them with robes, alms-food, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick.

As Buddha's disciples, we always bear in mind gratitude and paying it forward, but really, there is no reward commensurate to the immense merit of our teachers. And now, only our cultivation and learning are the greatest expressions of gratitude to the masters. We silently pray, may the Three Jewels bless you with good health to be a "silent ferrywoman" who takes us to the new shore of knowledge, the "sermon without words" that awakens our wandering souls in the ocean of misery.

Respectfully grateful from the bottom of our hearts!

Although our words are rudimentary and rough, we just wanted the chance to express our

1. Những Vấn Thơ về Tôn Sư. Ấn danh.

<https://phatgiao.org.vn/nen-tang-co-ban-cua-nguoi-tu-d39358.html>

<http://hanhchon.blogspot.com/2012/05/nhung-van-tho-ve-ton-su.html>

2. Trung Bộ Kinh. 142. Kinh Phân Biệt Cúng Đường. Hòa Thượng Thích Minh Châu dịch Việt.

gratitude to you. Once again, we wish you good health. Thank you for bringing us fresh new knowledge and spreading the energy source of love to us.

Vietnam Buddhist University, December 3, 2019
Respectfully offered to Venerable Thích Nữ Giới Hương
Genuinely,

Bhikkhuni Thuận Huy
Course 12, Dharma English class A1
thuanhuy1886@gmail.com



Venerable Giới Hương (second from right) and student nuns cutting vegetables in the kitchen of institute

5.23. A SILENT FERRYWOMAN

Even when the Buddha was alive, he determined the importance of education. The Buddha frequently declared his realization and introduced the pure life to all sentient beings. After the first sixty monk disciples attained Arhatship, he advised them as follows.

The Buddha taught his disciples: “O Bhikkhus! . . . go on the road for the benefit of many, for the happiness of the majority, for the sake of being close to the world, for the sake and the happiness of heaven and people, but don't go two people in the same direction, one by one, spread the Dharma . . . Raise the banner of the wise, teach the noble teaching, bring goodness to other people; yes, you have completed the task.”^[1]

Aware of this, Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương did not mind overcoming difficulties, hardships, and challenges to give hearty guidance to the following generations. Forty years of practice, nearly thirty years abroad, ten years in India and sixteen years of studying in the US—for what? In order to receive knowledge and train in moral precepts to benefit life and religion. You always taught, “To convert others, we must first have the ability, and then wisdom.” Although you have only taught us for two semesters, we deeply sense your values, effort, sincerity, and endless sacrifices for the cause of “planting seeds in people.”

You not only gave us Buddhist knowledge but also shared your life experience and guided us on the right path for the sake of our well-being. Teacher, a silent ferrywoman, gives much to us without expecting us to “repay” and “return.” You only hope is to equip us with a small piece of spiritual luggage to help us firmly enter life and successfully fulfill the mission of a disciple “taking the Tathagata’s duty, engaging in Tathagata’s works.” It helps to exalt the Dharma and brings wonderful methods to everyone who can eliminate suffering.

On the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of your study and teaching, we have the opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to you, our second mother. Your meaningful guidance is like rain dispelling the summer heat, like the spring sunshine ending the winter cold, opening our eyes to a new horizon of Dharma practices, so that we can use our bodies and speech to solemnly adorn the Dharma-kaya and become noble exemplars for human beings. Thank you, Teacher, for reminding us to return to our own original vow. Thank you, Teacher, for bringing us fresh knowledge and valuable mental tools. We now know the responsibilities and duties needed to act on our mission.

By the way, as young students, we sometimes let our mind drift and did not pay attention to the words of the masters and benefactors; today, let us repent. We will try our best and take advantage of the blessings while staying at the dormitory of Vietnam Buddhist University in order to learn and take wisdom as the main objective to adorn ourselves. We hope that one day, we will help you in the work of public teaching and bringing Buddhism into life.

We are indebted to you—a silent boatwoman!

May you always be peaceful, have good health, and live in the protection and glory of the Buddhas in the ten directions. We wish for you always to be full of mind-wisdom-strength so that you can continue to contribute more to this great educational cause and we can follow you with our practice and studies, up to great heights. At the end, we offer Master four simple, sincere sentences:

1. *Mahāvagga – Đại Phẩm, Luật tạng, chương Trọng yếu, tụng phẩm thứ 2, đoạn 32. Xem bản dịch tiếng Việt của Indacanda Nguyệt Thiên, <http://www.budsas.org/uni/u-luat-daipham/dp-00.htm>.*

*A disciple of Tathagata preaches as a messenger
A female master is outstanding in the world
Giới (Precepts) are pure and the mind is noble
Hương (Fragrance) of the lotus spreads far to convert beings.*

Vietnam Buddhist University, December 9, 2019
Respectfully offered to Venerable Thích Nữ Giới Hương
Best regards,

Nun Student Hạnh Liên
Course 13, The Art of Speech and Presentation
hanhlien233@gmail.com



Venerable TN Giới Hương and Rev. Hạnh Liên in class on December 3, 2019

Part VI

THE PERVASIVE LOVE

6.1. FROM THE DAWN IN INDIA

More than ten years ago, I, Thông Đạo, went to Kim Quang Pagoda in Sacramento to worship the Buddha. Luckily, I found volume 1 of *Ban Mai Xứ Ấn* (Dawn in India) at the table of free books, CDs, DVDs, and tapes. When I got home and read it, I realized that it was a ten-year diary journey (1995–2005) in India of a nun student, Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Giới Hương.

At first, I paid attention to the pages about the four Buddhist sacred places, where the Buddha was born, attained enlightenment, turned the wheel of Dharma, and entered nirvana. With soft, smooth words narrating a gentle story, a bit witty, and providing many valuable documents about the stories, history, landscapes, and life in Buddha's land, the author helped the Buddhist devotees who have not had a chance to go on pilgrimage look forward to a spiritual experience in the Buddha's land, like her. After reading the table of contents, I felt interested in each chapter's title; she skillfully shares the happy, sad, difficult, or favorable feelings of an international student. These experiences are very useful for those who plan to study in India; in particular, **she details the master's and PhD programs as well as the topic of the thesis.** Thereby, the reader more and more admires the efforts of the monks and nuns, especially regarding the ancient languages of Sanskrit, Pali, and Chinese. Monastics put a lot of effort in gaining wisdom and morality to become worthy of receiving the doctorate degree of Buddhist Studies in hand.

In the next part of her book, I was most impressed at the fact that Ven. Giới Hương volunteered to donate her body after death to the Medicine University in Ho Chi Minh City so that students can have flesh for observing a surgery on a body. This raised thoughts in me about donating some parts of my body, such as the eyes, kidney, and heart to those in need after my death. In addition, she also reported lovely, exciting, and touching details about student life in India on holidays, Vietnamese New Year, lectures, and discussions on dissertations.

The section about "wonderful scenes" is very interesting, showing that the author has been active as a good writer and journalist since the time she was still in school.

Later, I read more about *Ban Mai Xứ Ấn*, volumes 2 and 3. I liked the most her narration about the Sakyadhita World Buddhist Conference of Women. I came to know the first conference was held in Bodhgaya, India (1987), the second in Bangkok, Thailand (1991), the third in Colombo, Sri Lanka (1993), the fourth in Lek, Ladakh (1995), the fifth in Phnom Penh, Cambodia (1997), the sixth in Lumbini, Nepal (2000), the seventh in Taipei, Taiwan (2002), the eighth in Seoul, South Korea (2004), and so forth. The purpose of these conferences is to exchange experiences and support the practice of the daughters of the Buddha, including ordained and lay women. Starting from the Grand Master Gotami (Kiều Đàm Di), who was the first Buddhist nun to be ordained and the founder of the nuns' Sangha in the Buddha's time, nuns have had the chance to cultivate and realize the four saintly positions of srota-āpanna, sakradāgamin, anāgamin, and arhat and also propagate the Dharma, as the monks can.

In particular, she recorded great events such as in 2000, when sixty-five venerable nuns and monks from Vietnam and fifty monastic students in India held a conference and the Buddha's enlightenment ceremony in Bodhgaya. The panelists were those who had participated in the collection of sixty-six articles entitled, "Nature and the Path of Enlightenment and Issues of the Age," which was edited and published by the Most Venerable Trí Quảng, Ven. Huân Diệu, and Rev. Nhật Từ. On this occasion, Most Venerable Trí Quảng and the Sangha set up an offering ceremony at the Vietnam Temple of Ven. Huyền Diệu. Nearly 200 monks and nuns participated, including forty visiting foreign monks from Thailand, Burma, India, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Tibet, Korea, China, Taiwan, Sikkim, Japan, and Vietnam (living elsewhere, of foreign nationality).

In general, through the three volumes of *Ban Mai Xứ Ấn*, I grew to respect Ven. Giới Hương very much, although I did not yet have an opportunity to meet and talk with her. At the beginning of 2019, I met her in San Jose at a ceremony that many Zen masters and Buddhist friends attended. I came to say hello and pay my respects.

Recently, I have been translating the 500 honorable titles of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva from Vietnamese into English with the view to introduce it to young Vietnamese people who are not good at Vietnamese. I also would like to introduce English readers to this wonderful scripture, which was compiled by a great Vietnamese monk (although he was anonymous). I asked Ven. Giới Hương to edit the grammar; she was happy to help and did it quickly. Hopefully, this transliteration meets the predestined conditions to be published quickly and smoothly.

Visiting the Bảo Anh Lạc Bookcase in the website of Hương Sen Temple, I came to learn more about her missionary merit in the United States. In the Buddhist Sangha, we need many monks and nuns who are good at English, just like her, to guide young people to learn and practice the Dharma so that we all together contribute to American multicultural society.

On the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương's study and service in the Dharma, I wish her good health, peace of mind, bright wisdom, and rapid attainment of Buddhahood.

Beginning of the year 2020, Đại Bảo Trang Nghiêm Pagoda
Best regards,

Samanera Thông Đạo (seventy-one years old)
tpho1996@gmail.com



From left: Samanera Thông Đạo, the Most Venerable Thái Siêu, Rev. Nhật Thành, and Buddhists in a one-day retreat at Đại Bảo Trang Nghiêm Pagoda in 2018

6.2. VENERABLE BHIKKHUNI GIỚI HƯƠNG: A GOOD DAUGHTER OF THE TATHAGATA

Having practiced for ten years in India, Ven. Giới Hương graduated with a PhD in Buddhism from Delhi University in 2003. In 2005, she came to the United States to settle. In 2010, she founded Hương Sen Pagoda in Perris City, Southern California. And in 2013, I had the good fortune to meet her at the Third Buddhist Studies Course in North America, which was held in San Diego, California. Since then, I have visited Hương Sen Pagoda three times, attending her lectures and going to Buddhist monuments with her. She was accepted to be an English translator of our book *Overseas Vietnamese Temples*, volume 2, printed by Hương Quê Publishing House (USA) in 2017. Every year, she often goes to the Vietnam Buddhist University in HCM City to teach young student monks and nuns for a semester. Her main subject is the English Course on Buddhism, while I teach Buddhist Fine Art and Architecture in Vietnam. Especially, on December 15, 2019, I (General Secretary) represented the Global Vietworld Record Organization awarded her the certificate: "A Vietnamese-American Female Doctorate for writing and translating many Buddhist publications" at Fellowship Buddhist Conference, Anaheim, California.

Ven. Giới Hương is staying in Perris City, Southern California while I am living in Hayward City, Northern California; therefore, there are not many occasions on which we can meet. On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of her monastic ordination, I would like to select 120 images to include in 10 categories for her to keep and also recognize her extraordinary efforts and perseverance. She studied in India and the United States; built and developed two temples in Vietnam and the United States; wrote and translated around forty Buddhist books; composed eleven volumes of Buddhist music from her poems; gave lectures across the United States and other countries. . . How admirable! So respectable! So, as in the title of this article, I would like to ask permission from her and the readers to call her a good daughter of the Buddha!

The pictures in **10 categories** below are meant to describe her wishes and strongpoints, albeit only partially:

1. Introducing Hương Sen Temple and her Bảo Anh Lạc Bookshelf (containing forty-one of her compilations and translations and eleven musical compositions).
2. She attended and lectured at the 3rd North American Buddhist Studies Course in San Diego, California, from August 8 to 12, 2013.
3. Her photos at Vietnam Buddhist University in Ho Chi Minh City.
4. She preached Dharma and did walking meditation at Phật Bảo Temple, Des Plaines, Illinois on August 29, 2015.
5. She attended the Vu Lan ceremony and gave a lecture at Phước Hậu Pagoda, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, on August 30, 2015.
6. She attended the Vu Lan Ceremony and taught at An Lạc Temple, San Jose, California, on August 27, 2017.
7. Ven. Giới Hương attended the Di Mẫu Kiều Đàm Di Memorial Ceremony and met with the nuns at An Lạc Temple, San Jose, California, on August 31, 2019.
8. She visited Lotus Flower (Padmasambhava) Temple, hosted by Venerable Thích Tuệ Uy at Big Bear Mountain, California, on January 21, 2019.
9. Her pictures of the snow scene in Big Bear City, California, January 21, 2019.

10. Ven. Giới Hương with the Record: "A Vietnamese-American Female Doctorate for writing and translating many Buddhist publications" of the Global Vietworld Record Organization at Fellowship Buddhist Conference, Anaheim, California on December 15th 2019.

The photos are probably not very nice but show all of my respect to her and you! We wish Ven. Giới Hương and your/her nun disciples peace and success in your Buddhist affairs!

Hayward, December 24, 2019

Genuinely,

Professor and Journalist Võ Văn Tường

vvtuong04@yahoo.com

OVERSEA VIETNAM TEMPLES
VÕ VĂN TƯỜNG—TỪ HIẾU CÔN

Hương Quê Publishing House, USA

Volume 2, 2017

English Translator: VENERABLE BHIKKHUNI GIỚI HƯƠNG

Venerable Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Giới Hương, aka Sunyata Pham, was born in 1963 in Bình Tuy and ordained at the age of fifteen. In 1994, she graduated with a bachelor's degree in Sài Gòn. She studied in India for ten years, graduating with a PhD in Buddhist Philosophy from Delhi University in 2003. In 2005, she settled in the United States. In 2015, she graduated with a bachelor of arts degree from University of California, Riverside and is currently pursuing a master of arts degree at the university. She founded Bảo Anh Lạc Bookshelf and wrote and translated over forty bilingual works in English and Vietnamese. Further, she released eleven Buddhist music albums from 2004 to the present (please see Bảo Anh Lạc Bookshelf: www.Huongsentemple.com). She has participated in correspondence, lectures, and meditation instructions for American and Asian prisoners in prisons. She often exchanges Buddhist culture with Americans at universities, churches, public places, etc. She is also a lecturer for the English Course in Buddhism at Vietnam Buddhist University.

She has twelve renunciant disciples in the US and Vietnam. More than one thousand Vietnamese-Americans and Americans have taken refuge under her to become Buddhist followers. In 2000, she established Hương Sen Pagoda, Bình Chánh, Sài Gòn (Vietnam), and in 2010, she established and became the abbess of Hương Sen Pagoda, Perris City, California (United States).



Hường Sen Temple



Bảo Anh Lạc Bookshelf



Prof. Võ Văn Tường and Bhikkhuni Giới Hương at Vietnam Buddhist University and Padmasambhava Temple



The Record: "A Vietnamese-American Female Doctorate for writing and translating many Buddhist publications" of the Global Vietworld Record Organization at Fellowship Buddhist Conference, Anaheim, California in December 15th 2019



Prof. Võ Văn Tường, Ven. Giới Hương, Rev. Liên Hiếu, Rev. Viên Tiễn, and Ven. Hạnh Quang on the ceremony to receive the Record At Fellowship Buddhist Conference, Anaheim, California in December 15th 2019.



Prof. Võ Văn Tường and Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương

6.3. UNIVERSE FOREVER SPEAKS DHARMA

*I always listen to Dharma
Sometimes in pretty sunlight, sometimes in rain
The dancing wind, the blooming flowers all speak Dharma,
Expressing both impermanence and permanence.*

*I still always listen to Dharma
From dawn till the afternoon sun,
Birds of all kinds singing many songs,
Deeply contemplating, listening to sermons.*

*I still often hear Dharma as a play
Inadvertently Dharma is preached, neither full nor lacking
It depends on predestined conditions to appear instead of words,
The boundless phenomena is wonderful.*

*Who has heard Dharma before
Realizing we are the same "Dharma body" as one,
The universe forever speaks Dharma,
The **saha** world learns Dharma to be freed from samsara!*

CONGRATULATIONS TO HƯƠNG SEN

*Hương Sen (lotus fragrance) celebrates the festival
Build the magnificent main hall,
Create a library for the sake of many
Buddha's disciples inherited since then.*

Respectfully presented to Hương Sen Temple
and Bhikkhuni Venerable Giới Hương.
Spring of the Mouse, January 14, 2020
With metta,

Đặng Nguyên Phả, Mật Nghiêm
Chairman of Đuốc Tuệ Buddhist Association^[1]
duoctue@gmail.com

1. Mật Nghiêm, 88 year-old man, every day walking two miles [more than three kilometers], still composing Buddhist lyrics and supreme philosophical writings. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương wrote down this poems as she talked with him on cell phone.

Đuốc Tuệ is a prestigious Buddhist lay association in Southern California that has been supporting "service for life and commitment for Buddhism" for twenty years, starting its activity since 2000 under chairman Mật Nghiêm (Đặng Nguyên Phả) and other members, such as Mr. Minh Trí (Dr. Quyển), Minh Đức (Bách), Tâm Cát (Quân), Minh Ngọc, Tâm Nguyên Trí, Thanh Niệm (Cẩn), and so forth. Every month, the association organizes a Dharma talk and invites famous monks, nuns, and lay Buddhists to give lectures at the Sangha Center in Huntington Beach, California.

Please visit the website: duoctue.online



Mr. Mật Nghiêm (stand) introduce Ven. Bikkhuni Giới Hương (sit) to give a lecture on “Universe and Buddhism” at Đuốc Tuệ Sangha Center on February 16 2020



Mr. Mật Nghiêm attended the First Fullmoon Festival at Hương Sen Temple with Ven. Giới Hương and nun disciples February 9 2020



Mr. Mật Nghiêm (far right), Ven. Thông Hải, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, Mrs. Ngọc Bảo, and Journalist Nguyễn Giác at Đuốc Tuệ Conference, December 16, 2012



Mr. Mật Nghiêm (fourth on right, opposite Bhikkhuni Giới Hương), Hương Sen's nuns, and the committee of the Đuốc Tuệ Association at a restaurant after a lecture, May 2019



The Sangha Hall of Đuốc Tuệ Buddhist Association



Mr. Mật Nghiêm (standing), Mr. Tâm Cát (Quân), and Mr. Đh Minh Trí (Dr. Quyền)

6.4. SONGS FROM THE TEMPLE

I am remembering 2010, when Venerable Bhikkhunī Giới Hương from Wisconsin came to California to settle down, build a temple and study. Because she attended the summer retreat at Bảo Quang Temple in Santa Ana when I often performed music cultural activities for the temple, and composed songs for the Most Venerable Quảng Thanh, she knew me. Afterwards, you asked me to compose music and up to the present 2020, I have composed five music albums with your Buddhist poems. They are:

1. Đào Xuân Lộng Ý Kinh (*The Buddha Teachings Reflected in Cherry Flowers*) in 2013.
2. Tiếng Hát Già Lam (*Songs from the Temple*) in 2015
3. Karaoke Hoa Ưu Đàm Đã Nở (*An Udumbara Flower is Blooming*) in 2015
4. Hương Sen Ca (*Hương Sen's Songs*) in 2018
5. Gọi Nắng Xuân Về (*Call the Spring Sunlight*) in 2020

Ten years have passed already. I came to know that March 22, 2020 is the date release of the my eleventh disk, *Gọi Nắng Xuân Về (Call the Spring Sunlight)* of Hương Sen Temple.

That is also the date for the celebration of Ven. Hương's many years of Dharma service. A new anthology, *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service - Venerable Bhikkhunī Giới Hương*, will be offered to the public.

As a Buddhist musician, I respect and admire the talent of Venerable Giới Hương who understands the effectiveness of music in sharing the Dharma.

In the United States, many people are busy and stressed, having no time to go to temples or listen to Dharma. Each song is a brief sermon with beautiful lyrics and melodious sounds of singing, encouraging the listener to be more serene, more inspired. The teachings in the lyrics make Buddhism more accessible to all.

On this occasion, we wish you and your nuns health and success in your new building project. May you compose more songs to help people feel loved in life. May your songs help people to understand the Dharma and contribute to enriching the Buddhist music culture overseas.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

The Rat Spring, March 3, 2020
Genuinely,

Musician Nam Hưng
nam_hung2007@yahoo.com



Musician Nam Hưng performing on the stage, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương standing (right corner), 2016



Musician Nam Hương and Bhikkhuni Giới Hương on the night of the release of the first album, Đào Xuân Lộng Ý Kinh (The Buddha Teachings Reflected in Cherry Flowers), 2013



Music Album 1 of Hương Sen Temple: The Buddha Teachings Reflected in Cherry Flowers



Music Album 6 of Hương Sen Temple: Songs from the Temple

Producers: Hương Sen Buddhist Temple & Nam Hung Century Music
Recording: Báo Khang, Lương Phát, Bùi Xuân Nguyễn Phong, Nam Hung
Arrangement: Nam Hung, Nguyễn Hữu Ý
Studio: Báo Khang, Lương Phát, Bùi Xuân Nguyễn Phong / Sài Gòn, Việt Nam
Nam Hung / Westminster, CA, USA
Graphic Design: Tiến Tân Quang
Mixing: Báo Khang, Lương Phát, Bùi Xuân Nguyễn Phong, Nam Hung
Mastering: Nam Hung
Xin chân thành cảm tạ các ca sĩ góp mặt trong CD Album "Gọi Nắng Xuân Về" Vol 11
Chùa Hương Sen, California, Hoa Kỳ. (Vol 11 Nam Hung Century Music)

Mọi Liên Lạc:
Hương Sen Buddhist Temple
19865 Seaton Avenue, Perris, CA 92570, USA. Tel: 951-657-7272, Cell: 951-616-8620
Email: huongsentemple@gmail.com, thichnugohuong@yahoo.com
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/chuahuongsen>
Web: www.huongsentemple.com
Nam Hung Century Music USA
PO BOX 12068, Westminster, CA 92685, USA. Tel/Cell: 714-657-5267
Email: nam_hung2011@yahoo.com
Nhãn Dạy: Piano - Electronic Keyboard - Guitar - Drum - Voice - Nhạc Lý - Sáng Tác - Hòa Âm

Độc Quyền Sản Xuất Và Phát Hành:
Hương Sen Buddhist Temple
19865 Seaton Avenue, Perris, CA 92570, USA. Tel: 951-657-7272, Cell: 951-616-8620
Email: huongsentemple@gmail.com, thichnugohuong@yahoo.com
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/chuahuongsen>
Web: www.huongsentemple.com
Nam Hung
PO BOX 12068, Westminster, CA 92685, USA. Tel/Cell: 714-657-5267
Email: nam_hung2011@yahoo.com



Music Album 11 of Hương Sen Temple: Call the Spring Sunlight

6.5. CONGRATULATORY LETTER TO VENERABLE BHIKKHUNI THÍCH NỮ GIỚI HƯƠNG

California, November 2019

On the occasion of Hương Sen Temple's publication of the collected writings: "Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service—Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương," I write this letter to congratulate her.

As a journalist and a Buddhist learner, I and many other reporters have observed and supported the activities of the Southern California community, including the propagation activities of Venerable Thich Nu Giới Hương and Hương Sen Temple. The temple has emerged prominently in many ways to become a reliable place where Buddhist can study and find support.

I have observed her since the first day she raised funds in Orange County to build Hương Sen Temple—it was October 2010. The first temple address was on Fir Avenue, Moreno Valley, a town in Riverside County, California. This place was far away and seemed to encounter some inconveniences; so later, she moved the temple to a new location at 19865 Seaton Avenue, Perris, CA 92570, USA. I also remembered that the first time she opened a website for Hương Sen Temple, the technology had problems. The old website had to be removed, and now the new URL is: <http://www.huongsentemple.com>. This shows how there are so many challenges, like water flowing through a rough channel, but her willingness to spread Buddhism for the sake of the many is still solid.

Regarding my case, I am rather busy and have not had the opportunity to visit Hương Sen Temple (about a one-hour drive from the Việt Báo editorial office). In 2018, I received news from Upāsaka Mật Nghiêm-Đặng Nguyễn Phả, chairman of Đuốc Tuệ Buddhist Studies Association, who was about to offer 120 boxes of Buddhist books to Hương Sen Temple Library. I interviewed him directly to invite compatriots living near the temple to read them at Hương Sen Temple. It was around the middle of 2018, and the library had not been completed yet.

And in fact, up to now, Hương Sen Temple does not have enough of a budget to build all of the rooms in the original drawings. A number of artists, including musician Nam Hưng, are on the program to help Venerable Thích Nữ Giới Hương organize an upcoming concert on Sunday, March 22, 2020, at Seafood World Restaurant in Westminster to raise funds to build the steel main hall (this means that Hương Sen Temple does not have much budget). However, it can also be seen as a unique record: Hương Sen Temple will be the only overseas temple made with steel.

However, as is rarely seen in the world, Venerable Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Giới Hương has for many years without a complaint continuously taught Buddhism: preaching to the community, writing poems to compose music, writing English-Vietnamese books on many Buddhist subjects, holding short-term Buddhist courses at Hương Sen Temple, and regularly traveling to other places, including some overseas and Vietnamese temples to give lectures and retreat instructions. She also teaches English classes at a Buddhist university in Vietnam for the last few months of every year.

On this occasion, I would like to offer her a poem:

*Propagating with compassion
Caring for the suffering of the six realms
This world is infinite sadness
Guide them to the other shore.*

I would like to congratulate her sincerely on the occasion of the publication of: *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service—Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*.

Westminster, California, December 10 2019

Regardsfully,

Việt Newspaper Editor cum writer

Nguyễn Giác - Phan Tấn Hải

(nguyengiac@yahoo.com)



*Four speakers at Đuốc Tuệ Buddhist Studies Association in 2014:
The most Venerable Thông Hải, Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương,
Mrs. Bảo Ngọc, and journalist cum writer Nguyễn Giác*

6.6. AT THAT PLACE...

*Somewhere famous in a foreign land
Sala flowers suddenly sprouted Sandal wood branch
Rhododendron flowers fragrant ten directions
Prajna incense becomes the scent of liberation.*

*In that place, fragrance of the compassionate radiating
There is a nun who is favor in literature
Again engage in religious activities,
In order to lead sentient beings to leave misery behind.*

*Since the time of leaving her cherish temple
Imitating her Master – Hải Triều Âm
Sow the seed, spread compassionate shade
For human beings to live peacefully.*

*Vowed to follow Manjushri Bodhisattva
Enrolled in the University of Arts,
Study life and religion to get along,
Nurture the knowledge of a nun.*

*Ten years as the bird in far place
The place of Buddha, in Delhi University,
Getting a Ph.D. degree is amazing,
Leaving the land of Buddha, came to the United States to live.*

*In that place, a Nunnery is established
There is a nun propagating for the benefits of beings,
Forty years in creating good deeds
With Mind, Compassion, and Wisdom.*

At that place, there was an affluent **Hương Sen** Temple,
There is a great Buddhist nun, **Thích Nữ Giới Hương**...

*Hamburg – Germany, December 12 2019
Truthfully,*

Tùy Anh (Phù Vân)

Editor of Viên Giác Buddhist Magazine
vongatuong@yahoo. de

Celebrating the 40 years of study and service in Buddhism
of Ven. Thích Nữ Giới Hương.



The most Venerable Thich Nhu Điển, abbot of Viên Giác Pagoda in Hannover, visiting the Phù Vân family in Hamburg

6.7. A WORD OF “DUYÊN” (PREDESTINED)

My Indian pilgrimage started from a word, “*duyên*” (predestined), because my heart (Tịnh Bình) and my wife (Quảng Trí) in Connecticut always prayed that we wanted to make a pilgrimage to the Buddha’s land. At the websites www.huongsentemple.com and thuvienhoasen.org (Lotus Library), there were announcements of the organization of three pilgrimage groups to five Buddhist countries, of which the second delegation to India was headed by Venerable Giới Hương, abbess of Hương Sen Temple in Southern California, Perris, so we made contact and registered.

Through the website www.huongsentemple.com, we learned that Ven. TN Giới Hương is a smart nun (as seen in her education) who meticulously and strictly practiced according to the tradition of the late Most Venerable Hải Triều Âm, a well-known nun in Vietnam. Thus, we were excited to join.

The delegation consisted of twenty-one people from many states of the United States visiting the Kuan Yin Bodhisattva at Putou Mountain, China and then the Indian Buddhist holy places. Due to the skillful arrangement of the leader, the trip ran smoothly; people enjoyed good health, food, and transportation, and recited sutras, listened to Dharma talks every day, recited Buddha's name, and listened to the history of relics. She also called on all three delegations to make charitable contributions to a primary school in Kushinagar, where Buddha entered nirvana, and distributed basic supplies and food to 150 poor families at the monastery of Venerable Dr. Sumedha in Sarnath. With kindness, Venerable Dr. Sumedha personally took our delegation to visit the Deer Park, Sarnath, explained some history at special places, and gave souvenirs to our group before we left for the United States. After visiting the four holy Buddhist places, there was another memorable highlight: our delegation visited and presented gifts to twenty-seven Vietnamese monks and nuns studying at New Delhi University under the organization of Venerable Dr. Thích Hạnh Chánh, chairman of the Student Council of Buddhist Studies. We know that with the merit from this offering, our group will reap many favorable conditions to generate merit and wisdom because these student monastics are sowing the seeds of Buddha's awareness. Through this meaningful visit, we learned that in the past, Ven. TN Giới Hương also attended Delhi University for ten years (1995–2005), at the same time as Venerable Hạnh Chánh, but he stayed in Delhi to teach, while Venerable Giới Hương continued to study in the United States.

Here Ven. TN Giới Hương’s heart and aspirations were clearly expressed: she does not forget her beloved old university and the difficulty experienced by the next generation of monastics, so she sometimes organizes a pilgrimage to India also for the purpose of visiting and encouraging the spirit of the student monastics in a Buddhist relationship. At the same time, she shares experiences of studying at a US university in a bachelor's program in literature and preaching in the United States. She was willing to guide and support the accommodations for them, especially nuns who after graduating in India wanted to study in America following her lead.

Going back to the journey, the patience of the personnel, climate, environment, food, work force, and the loving kindness of Ven. Giới Hương extremely impressed us. This is a silent, powerful manifestation of Ven. Giới Hương’s deep practice and great vow for the sake of future generations. Therefore, she has a plan to build a nunnery at Hương Sen Temple in order to train future nuns who can succeed their predecessors, promote the teachings, and bring the light of the Buddha's wisdom outside the scope of the Vietnamese Buddhist community.

Venerable Giới Hương guides enlightenment to serve human life in many ways, such as writing books, composing poems, making music, giving lectures here and there, including for inmates at US

prisons, and teaching Buddhist classes in English at Vietnam Buddhist University in HCMC. With a clear, modern roadmap, she is a source of spiritual strength for many nuns in the world and in their homeland, who vow to follow in her footsteps. We are extremely grateful to Ven. Giới Hương for working hard to organize the pilgrimage to the land of the Buddha, visiting the four holy places related to the life of Buddha (birth, enlightenment, turning the wheel of Dharma, and entering nirvana), so that we could experience the sacred relics as mentioned in the Buddhist scriptures and generate strong faith in the Triple Gem. In addition, during the pilgrimage, for fifteen days except for when we slept, we were engaged in ten wholesome deeds depending on predestined conditions, using the circumstances to give rise to good deeds (*bodhicitta*) such as donating alms, keeping precepts, practicing mindfulness (*vedanānupassanā*), chanting, doing walking meditation, and being close to respectable monks and nuns, especially listening to Ven. Giới Hương's teachings on long-distance trips often. We had many opportunities to share our experiences in practice and study with other groups in the transitional days in China. We were very happy with the good things that we had personally and the whole team in general had done. At the same time, we did not forget to dedicate these merits to our parents and children to be happy and to have the good predestination to generate wisdom and happiness in life, and we also often reminded each other to confess if we committed mistakes during the pilgrimage process.

When we took up a pen to record our journey starting with the word “*duyên*” (predestined) with Venerable Giới Hương, gentle joy arose and infused our mind. The memory of theory and practice sessions on the bus thoroughly taught by Venerable Giới Hương, as seen in her scholarly knowledge of both traditions, Theravada and Mahayana. As a result, we have a greater understanding of the ideology, common denominator, and special difference in practical aspects between the two traditions in general. We promise to try our best to study and follow the example of Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, and according to our humble ability, we will contribute to support her aspiration to build a Buddhist institute in Perris, Southern California.

Connecticut, November 30, 2019

Best regards,

Mrs. Quảng Trí and Mr. Tịnh Bình
 parasan.gate@gmail.com



At Indo-Sri Lanka Temple, Varanasi



Left: Chánh Hào, Ven. Giới Hương, Rev. Diệu Nga, Rev. Diệu Hoa, Mrs. Quảng Trí, and Mr. Tịnh Bình with two Tibetan nuns

6.8. STEPS OF A SAGE

*Fluttering robes wandering in a mendicant life
Peaceful eyes looking at the vanity of secular life
Handing over the golden wisdom words
Offering people sage inspiration.*

*Anonymous, step by step, with flowers and grass
A bowl contains compliments or criticisms
Transcendence between the humble souls
Seeing the truth, we will be filled with compassion.*

Offered to Venerable Thích Nữ Giới Hương for *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service—Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*. Respectfully, we pay tribute to a person who has renounced everything: Venerable Giới Hương and dharma friends far and near.

Mùa mưa Bà Rịa, Vũng Tàu, ngày 15/11/2019

Truthfully,

Tuệ Thiên (Lê Bá Bôn)
lebabon04@gmail.com



6.9. A TRUE MASTER: VENERABLE DR. THÍCH NỮ GIỚI HƯƠNG

Nguyễn Hà, Senior Editor, *Mỹ-Việt Magazine*



Senior Editor Nguyễn Hà

I came to know the famous nun, Dr. Thích Nữ Giới Hương, as a person who has pursued the study of the sutras and the profound doctrines of the Great Enlightenment One, through many of her valuable religious books and through the Buddhist work opportunities given to many other brothers and sisters. I was entrusted with a few small jobs to help Hương Sen Temple. I have thus realized that Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương is a true master, brave, honest, and persistent, with a superior creative intelligence, a compassionate soul, and an abundant love for Buddhism, literature, and lyrics.

Perhaps a part of Bhikkhuni Giới Hương's outstanding, quintessential, smart manner comes from being one of the closest disciples of Master Hải Triều Âm, who was a famous, virtuous nun that knew how to train disciples. Building upon that base with her own efforts, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương manifested naturally throughout her journey, from the time she was a young nun until she became the abbess of Hương Sen Temple, located in a remote place in a foreign country.

On the homepage of Hương Sen Temple, Perris, California, one can read her biography, as follows:



Dr. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương

Dr. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương (world name *Śūnyatā Phạm00000*) was born in 1963 in Bình Tuy, Vietnam and ordained at the age of fifteen under the great master, the Most Venerable Bhikkhuni Hải Triều Âm. In 1994, she received a bachelor's degree in literature from Saigon University. She studied in India for ten years and in 2003, graduated with a PhD in Buddhist philosophy from the University of Delhi, India. In 2005, she settled down in the United States, and in 2015, she earned a second bachelor's degree in literature at the University of Riverside, California.

Currently, she is pursuing a degree in the Master of Arts program at the University of California, Riverside and works as a lecturer at the Vietnam Buddhist University in HCM City. She favors quietly reflecting on Dharma, and that leads her to write, as well as translate, Buddhist books and lyrics for music albums on her Bảo Anh Lạc Bookshelf.

In 2000, she established Hương Sen Temple in Bình Chánh, Saigon, Vietnam. In 2010, she founded Hương Sen Temple in Perris, California, USA, where she serves as abbess.

BẢO ANH LẠC BOOKSHELF

1. Bodhisattva and Śūnyatā in the Early and Developed Buddhist Traditions
2. Bồ-tát và Tánh Không Trong Kinh Tạng Pali và Đại Thừa
3. Ban Mai Xứ Ấn (*The Dawn in India*), (3 vols)
4. Vườn Nai – Chiếc Nôi Phật Giáo (*Deer Park–The Cradle of Buddhism*)
5. Xá Lợi Của Đức Phật (*The Buddha's Relic*), Tham Weng Yew, translated into English by Dr. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương
6. Quy Y Tam Bảo và Năm Giới (*Take Refuge in Three Gems and Keep the Five Precepts*)
7. Vòng Luân Hồi (*The Cycle of Life*)
8. Hoa Tuyết Milwaukee (*Snowflake in Milwaukee*)
9. Luân Hồi trong Lăng Kính Lăng Nghiêm (*The Cycle of Life in Śūraṅgama Sūtra*)
10. Nghi Thức Hộ Niệm Cầu Siêu (*The Ritual for the Deceased*)
11. Quan Âm Quảng Trần (*The Commentary of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva*)
12. Sen Nở Nơi Chốn Tù Tù (*Lotus in the Prison*), many authors, translated into English by Dr. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương
13. Nữ Tu và Tù Nhân Hoa Kỳ (*A Nun and American Inmates*), (2 vols)
14. Nếp Sống Tỉnh Thức của Đức Đạt Lai Lạt Ma Thứ XIV (*The Awakened Mind of the 14th Dalai Lama*), (2 vols)
15. A-Hàm, Mưa pháp chuyển hóa phiền não (*Agama – A Dharma Rain transforms the Defilement*), (2 vols)
16. Góp Từng Hạt Nắng Perris (*Collection of Sunlight in Perris*)
17. Pháp Ngữ của Kinh Kim Cang (*The Key Words of Vajracchedikā-Prajñāpāramitā-Sūtra*)
18. Tập Thơ Nhạc Nắng Lăng Nghiêm (*Songs and Poems of Śūraṅgama Sunlight*)
19. Chùa Việt Nam Hải Ngoại (*Overseas Vietnamese Buddhist Temples*), Vol 2, Võ Văn Tường & Từ Hiếu Côn, translated into English by Dr. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương
20. Việt Nam Danh Lam Cổ Tự (*The Famous Ancient Buddhist Temples in Vietnam*), Võ Văn Tường, Translated into English by Dr. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương
21. Rebirth Views in the Śūraṅgama Sūtra
22. The Commentary of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva
23. Phật Giáo-Một Bậc Đạo Sư, Nhiều Truyền Thống (*Buddhism: One Teacher Many Traditions*), Bhikṣu Tenzin Gyatso the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Bhikṣunī Thubten Chodron. Translated into Vietnamese by Dr. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương
24. Nét Bút Nơi Song Cửa (*Reflections at the Temple Window*)

25. Bản Tin Hương Sen (Newsletters), Bilingual Language: Vietnamese-English
26. Máy Nghe (Hương Sen Digital Mp3 Radio Speaker)
27. Phóng Sự về Chùa Hương Sen (*Introduction on Huong Sen Temple*)
28. Famous Words in Vietnamese-English: Danh Ngôn Nuôi Dưỡng Nhân Cách -*Good Sentences Nurture a Good Manner* collected by Thích Nữ Giới Hương
29. Hương Sen, Thơ và Nhạc, Nguyễn Hiền Đức -*Lotus Fragrance, Poem and Music*, Nguyễn Hiền Đức, English Interpreter: Thích Nữ Giới Hương
30. Cách Chuẩn Bị Chết và Giúp Người Sắp Chết-Quan Điểm Phật Giáo-*Preparing for Death and Helping the Dying – A Buddhist Perspective*, Sangye Khadro, English Interpreter: Thích Nữ Giới Hương
31. The Key Words in Vajracchedikā Sūtra
32. Văn Hóa Đặc Sắc của Nước Nhật Bản -*Exploring the Unique Culture of Japan* (Bilingual Language)
33. Take Refuge in the Three Gems and Keep the Five Precepts
34. Sống An Lạc dù Đời không Đẹp như Mơ -*Live Peacefully though Life is not Beautiful as a Dream* (Bilingual Language)
35. Sārnātha—The Cradle of Buddhism in the Archeological View
36. Hãy Nói Lời Yêu Thương -*Words of Love and Understanding* (Bilingual Language)
37. Văn Hóa Cổ Kim qua Hành Hương Chiêm Bái -*The Ancient-Present Culture in Pilgrim* (Bilingual Language)
38. Cycle of Life
39. Nghệ Thuật Biết Sống -*Art of Living* (Bilingual Language)
40. Tuyển Tập Ni Giới trong Thời Hiện Đại – *The Contributions of Buddhist Nuns in Modern Times* (Bilingual Language)
41. Tuyển Tập 40 Năm Tu Học & Hoàng Pháp của Ni sư Giới Hương - *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service - Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương* (Bilingual Language)

BUDDHIST MUSIC ALBUMS

from Poems of Thích Nữ Giới Hương

1. Đào Xuân Lộng Ý Kinh (*The Buddha Teachings Reflect in Cherry Flowers*)
2. Niềm Tin Tam Bảo (*Trust in Three Gems*)
3. Trăng Tròn Nghìn Năm Đón Chờ Ai (*Who is the Full Moon Waiting for over a Thousand Years?*)
4. Ánh Trăng Phật Pháp (*Moonlight of Dharma-Buddha*)
5. Bình Minh Tỉnh Thức (*Awakened Mind at the Dawn; Piano Variations for Meditation*)
6. Tiếng Hát Già Lam (*Songs from the Temple*)
7. Cảnh Đẹp Chùa Xưa (*The Magnificent Ancient Buddhist Temple*)
8. Hương Sen Ca (*Huong Sen's Songs*)
9. Karaoke Hoa Ưu Đàm Đã Nở (*An Udumbara Flower is Blooming*)
10. Về Chùa Vui Tu (*Happily Go to Temple for Spiritual Practices*)
11. Gọi Nắng Xuân Về (*Call the Spring Sunlight on*)

Please read Bảo Anh Lạc Bookshelf at our website: www.huongsentemple.com.

With many direct meetings with Venerable Giới Hương, I and many other members of the Construction Committee of Hương Sen Temple have undertaken many daily activities, cultural events, technology, fundraising, making audiotapes, newspaper, books, pilgrimage reports, etc. . . Everyone

recognizes that she is a versatile person who works and works regardless of difficulties, never wasting money or time. She works hard and acts as if she is afraid she cannot work anymore or will not have more time, especially in creating sutras, books, literature, and poems. She wrote books, created poems, seated in front of the computer night and day, cold or hot, almost forgetting herself with a spirit of selfless sacrifice, wholeheartedly devoting her brain and mortal body for the sake of Dharma and sentient beings.



Master Giới Hương and nun disciples doing manual labor

How many times we have witnessed her with a rudimentary leaf hat over her head, bearing scorching heat or cold winds in the semi-desert, together with nuns in the temple digging soil, moving bricks, leveling soil in the parking lot, and clearing the grass in the wilderness around the temple. And if we do not see her doing field labor with her hands and feet like that or somewhere in the small temple, then when we walk into a narrow, simple room, we can see her attentively facing the computer keyboard, completing pages still in progress. Her strengths and perspectives can be seen in her writing; recently, she has been honored to receive the title, "Vietnamese-American female doctor writing and translating many Buddhist publications" from the Global Vietworld Record Organization at Liên Hữu Buddhist Conference, Anaheim, California on December 15, 2019.



Certification of the Global Vietnamese Record Organization

Venerable Dr. Thích Nữ Giới Hương is a beautiful and pure figure, not only through her devotion to the Dharma but also as a good example for living life. A very true and good teacher, she is invaluable for all of us. Mortal people, whether living in a spiritual temple or in ordinary life, can consider her as a role model worthy of receiving a simple poem with four sentences from the writer, as below:

*Wisdom bright in four directions,
Giới Hương expresses an awakened literature that travels anywhere
The insight reaches its great peak
Penetrating heaven, touching earth, the Dharma blooming flowers.*

As a senior editor who has worked on cultural and artistic activities in newspaper for many years, I have a couple of times in the overseas media thought of taking action on a film or at least a book describing Venerable Dr. Giới Hương's life: exemplary yet arduous, a very poetic awakening journey. However, to this day, we have not received her agreement. We hope that for the common good of the masses, especially for providing educational guidance to future generations, Venerable Giới Hương will approve this meaningful offer.

I hope so!

California, late winter, 2019
Best regards,
Nguyễn Hà
Senior Editor My- Viet Magazine
nguyenhacali@gmail.com



*Senior Editor Nguyễn Hà (far right), Ven. Giới Hương,
Architect Phát, and Buddhist construction committee
April 12, 2018*

6.10. A VERSE WITHOUT TITLE

*Such a long time ago she ordained
Loving father and missing mother, yet cutting her hair
There is Hương Sen Shore to the West
Return back to stand at Giới Hương border.*

*Passing over a river to enjoy life's scents
Let a boat follow the wind to play in True Emptiness
The tides erase the steps
Suddenly she reaches the Suchness Shore.*

*This mind is only one
Giới Hương abides in brown cloth
Pressing a hand to the cherry bud blossoming
Inclining towards Pure Land, the four directions became wonderful.*

*A smile emerges at this lotus
Compassion like holy water pours out softly
The shadow glimmers at the ocean's floor
Look, but no ego's shadow falls*

*The world is a fleeting illusion
Let the boat go once you stand at the other side
She reaches the fourth meditative state
The morning star rises for her manifest-body.*

Respectfully offered to Venerable Thích Nữ Giới Hương for *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service*—Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương. May the Buddha bless her and her disciple nuns at Hương Sen Temple for success on their path.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Virginia, November 20, 2019

Genuinely,

Lê Huy Trú

tle8464953@aol.com

PHOTO

It has been a long time since we used a trick mirror to look at our delusional nature, the most beautiful of the three realms and our own joy.

I'm looking for me, too.

I come to me without informing me.

I go away from me without say goodbye

Seeing the image, I thought I had changed

But I am always as I am.

6.11. OUR RELATIONSHIPS

Reading swiftly the history of Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương on the website huongsentemple.com, I got the feeling of something familiar, yet not exactly.

She was born in Bình Tuy district, Bình Thuận province.

Oh, she is a disciple of Master Hải Triều Âm, who is a great Bodhisattva.

Yes, it was a place that haunted me during my childhood, when my father was the director of a country bank on the dry land of the sandy sea that is called Hòa Đa, not far from Phan Rí Cửa. A narrow road runs through the lonely town of the Kinh and Chăm people, who lived there silently during wartime.

Sometimes I attended middle school (without having attended primary school) in Phan Rí, but I often stayed at home to take care of my younger brother or went to the market to help with errands for my mother. At night, I slept in the kitchen, separated from the upper house by a narrow covered corridor. By the bamboo hammock, there was a dimly lit kerosene lamp, enough for me to see the curls on each letter. I tried to cram in knowledge and brainstorm using my sister's math problems, which she brought home from school. Because I had no basic or continuous education, I faced a lot of difficulties, but I did not know whom to ask for instructions. Late at night, my mother came down, and when she saw me lighting a lamp to self-study, she immediately picked up the kitchen stick, smacked my head, and scolded, "You eat food more than I can feed you, and now why do you consume more of my kerosene?"

So, the land brings a little bit of the sea breeze, and year-round there seems to be sadness under the shadow of the tamarind tree. My youth was spent with bitterness spreading on the gravel, from Huế to the south. Every two years, my family moved in the province, like a caterpillar slowly moving to a stop. I found a temple in which to hide. I went between temple and house often, like a shuttle. At home, it was not settled, and the temple also was not secure. The last time my family moved to Phan Thiết, my destiny pushed me out of my family: my life became one of wandering.

Three o'clock in the morning, after stirring the milk bottle for my young sibling, I wrote a few words to say goodbye to my family. I frantically headed for the train station. The rusted iron bridge was protruding on both sides of the rock, and I watched the gloomy light reflected on the water surface, the river leading to the seaport, each fishing boat undulating. Looking at the city to say goodbye to my family, a little longing to see my young siblings arose. Craggy rocks lay on my path; my hot blood was enough to spare my life, or will it spread out to sea, and after that, must I choose a meaningless death? No, I cannot end my life in the darkness, there is light in the future! I climbed the railing fence and hid in the toilet whenever I saw the ticket clerk.

I felt hungry and thirsty in all of the coming days. With distress and yet courage, I gave a cold look at busy passengers eating and drinking. Downtown was too strange, with colored lights, cars, music, and people more fashionable than in my hometown. The train station located at Bến Thành Market was the last destination. I hugged my clothes and hat, bewildered, watching the scene of higher society.

Suddenly, I heard a voice: "Where are you going?" I turned to look at the tall man.

"I don't know where to go."

“I’ll wait to see the owner of the bus, I’ll ask for the bus cleaner. Give me your clothes as a deposit, and we will have dinner. Tomorrow morning, I will get money from the bus owner, and I will redeem you.”

A few hours passed, and the figure of the tall man and hope of enjoying a plate of rice or a loaf of bread disappeared before midnight, which desperately covered me like darkness falling on the life of an unfamiliar child. A white-shirted police officer took me to the market to search for my clothes, let me stay overnight in the garrison, and called my home, but no one would accept me. There was one place that cheerfully accepted me: the orphanage in Gò Vấp. A nun took my name and then sent me straight to the orphanage branch in Thủ Đức.

Although my family was poor, I had my younger siblings to have fun with; the pagoda was gloomy and serene, but there were also two chanting periods to transform sorrow. Where else could I have the first experiences of life as a ten-year-old child? It was buried in the mass of collective orphanages, where every corner was gathered in the center. In the field, a few cows grazed on grass—they did not know their shepherd was lonely and without a future!

Causes were created, grace comes, fruit will mature. Ms. Chánh Thọ, a leader of the Youth Buddhist Association, visited the orphanage and asked me, “Where are you? The way you touched both hands to greet me, yet you are an orphan or a miserable child. I know you are not a Christian like the ones here.”

“Yes, sister, I escaped from my family to become a novice of Ngũ Hành Sơn Temple at the age of eight.”

“I will send you to the temple.”

The temple was deep in the alley of the stranger Saigon City, free from my mother’s strict eye. The Huong River of my grandma’s hometown, known for the gentle, silky-grey áo dài (dress). The warm temple bell sounded, but my soul was soaring in the sky. I grew like sprouting grass, thirsty to go to school, but the temple did not have the conditions to support that. At that time, Buddhism was engaged in movements on the streets, and my dream of learning grew distant. The monastics who had support from their masters could join school, but a boy like me who stayed in the temple without knowing about my master, how could I have had such good conditions? However, luckily, the temple respected Ms. Chánh Thọ, a leader in the Youth Buddhist Association, and accepted my stay, but they did not choose a teacher to take care of me. I also did not care for it; it was enough for me to have a peaceful and safe place. I was proud enough to be wearing old Buddhist clothes with many holes, like a longterm public laborer, with the two cute hair pads of a young novice. When Bồ Đề School at Cầu Muối District opened, every day I walked from Tân Định to attend the basic Buddhist class for youth. There is a saying, “Money means nothing, but all spending is only solved by money.” The administrators reminded me of payment for school fees, so I had to leave school due to being penniless.

In 1966, the Buddhist movement was continuously happening, the monks who participated were all exiled, so once again, we wandered. Everyone looked for his/her living on the land to take refuge. Several monks went to study abroad, the number of whom could be counted on the fingers. The battle was chaos, and the people were scattered.

After the day of reunification, it was also time for me to leave the home of the Three Jewels. I spent ten years of hard labor at the age twenty-eight in prison. I had never held a shovel at the temple

in twenty-eight years. A thirty-eight-year-old person suffering from the cold and hard work in the deep forest without relatives, friends, teachers, or students to visit; like wild grass, I still flourished in the middle of the wilderness without knowing what sin I had committed. Perhaps in past lives I unjustly imprisoned animals!

After I was released from the prison, the temple did not dare to keep me because society was still unsettled. When night fell, it was time for policemen to suddenly conduct inspections at midnight. Life always has a spectacular turnaround. There was a single woman who opened her arms to take care of me in her home after her parents died early. She worked as a laborer whose wages were not enough to pay for breakfast. To make a living, every early morning, I borrowed a bicycle to transport oil cakes to a pagoda in Nhà Bè District to make soy sauce. I also earned money by pumping gas into lighters. The sidewalks become a familiar address that was six kilometers away from home; every day, I sat to enjoy lunch with a can of salted rice and beans. Life began to stabilize and proceeded in order, like the daily life of a buffalo.

Writing genes began to rise in me well, although I did not have basic education. Before 1975, I constantly wrote for many magazines, such as Khởi Hành, Tiên Tuyến, Phổ Thông, Phương Đông of Priest Hoàng Sỹ Quý, and so on. I purchased an old computer and got used to manipulating it. I started to write for Giao Điểm and websites; sometimes I received an invitation to write presentations. Strangely, the news companies in society offered big salaries, but I failed to write for them, while newspapers of the “temple” sometimes did not have enough money for gasoline, but I felt happy because at least I still had the sacred communication cord, like a kite that did not stray from its destination. Therefore, my form is secular but my heart is supersecular. I have written thousands of articles in all Dharma genres, which might show my deep gratitude to the Three Gems, where once upon a time in my life I had taken refuge at the temple!

Now I have received an invitation to write for Hương Sen Temple in USA. I feel something strange yet still familiar. Perhaps the words “Hương Sen” used to affect me somewhere? And Giới Hương is definitely different from Ven. Bhikkhuni Hương Nhũ. And the letters of venerable bhikkhuni nuns are very much familiar to me. There are some scholar nuns, such as Venerable Bhikkhuni Trí Hải, who was the only one at that time among the nuns gaining a high degree and serving Buddhism. Since 1990, the number of Mahayana and mendicant nuns gaining high academic qualifications are too many to count, and among them is Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương. To compare the ages of Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and me: the gap is too far, how can I get used to her? To compare our education, I am the type with muddy hands who earns a living by sweat, while she has attained a social position and is a university teacher. To compare our location, I am in central Vietnam, while she is in America. Although we are far from each other, we meet in cyberspace in a Dharma relationship. . . Well, life is not lacking in strange things! It is a strange thing that we have been in the six realms without being face to face and now we have a connection! Are we predestined to have a literary relationship or Dharma brotherhood? Only the Buddhas can clearly see the flow of karma. For the Most Venerable Hải Triều Âm, in 1967, Minh Mẫn was present in Đại Ninh. During the time she had not yet come, Bhikkhunis Phùng Thăng and Phùng Khánh left Vạn Hạnh to stay in Đại Ninh for a while. Their retreat on the slopes of Pongour Waterfall was occupied by a Christian pastor, because they returned to Saigon in 1970 and worked under the Most Venerable Thích Quảng Độ.

Anyway, regardless of my many questions, I must start to write. I walked slowly into the land of Hương Sen to enjoy the scent of the lotus variety for offering to the Buddha. I respect Venerable

Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, who has strong ambition, holds in her hands a PhD degree gained at a young age, and continues to learn forever, expanding knowledge for the sake of Buddhist culture and passing on to the following generations. It is to repay the debt of gratitude to the Buddha and other beings. It is also her vow since the time she became a nun, as the patriarch taught: “Phù xuất gia giả, phát túc siêu phương, tâm hình dị tục, thiệu long Thánh chủng, chấn nhiếp ma quân, dụng báo tứ ân, bạt tế tam hữu.” This means once we became monastics whose appearance is different from secular people, we must remember our ideal to spread Buddhism, transform evil, repay the four debts, and save the three worlds.” That is her ideal, and her service to Buddhism has continued for more than forty years in this world!

Saigon, the end of 2019

Yours respectfully,

Buddhist Journalist Minh Mẫn

cusiminhman@gmail.com



6.12. SONGS GO INTO HEARTS

For a long time, we have not had the chance to visit Venerable Giới Hương and her nuns. First of all, I would like to wish her and her nun disciples good health and peaceful minds. We had a chance to attend the Vu Lan ceremony and inauguration of the great bell. The ten acres of land are majestic. I imagine when the project is completed, the temple scene will be spacious and beautiful. You are a noble and virtuous nun, who had a predestined relationship with the Buddhas, so the beautiful view is brought by you. I pray that all of the projects of Hương Sen Temple will be completed smoothly and quickly.

On this occasion of writing for *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service—Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương*, we would like to send our gratitude to musicians Nam Hưng and many other musicians, such as Hoàng Quang Huế, Nguyễn Tuấn, Khánh Hoàng, Khánh Hải, Võ Tá Hân, Nguyễn Hà, Hoàng Y Vũ, Uy Thi Ca, Giác An, etc., who volunteered to convert poems by Ven. Giới Hương into songs so that we have many pieces of wonderful music, **songs that go into people's hearts**. When singing, Thúy Anh seemed to receive every musician's stream, every line of poetry went into my heart, so absorbed in rhyme and tunes. . . . Thúy Anh thought that the audience at the vegetarian banquet who enjoyed the music album of Hương Sen Pagoda was also penetrated by the emotional vibrations to feel love and admire Buddhist music more. We also thank musicians who put eleven volumes of Hương Sen Pagoda's music on Youtube, so that anyone who loves music can read the lyrics, sing along, and enjoy each song to its fullest.

We would like to send our warm regards to musicians, singers, and relatives, especially to the highly talented young Venerable Giới Hương. We hope to receive more of your contributions to Buddhist lyrics. Wherever we go, we prefer to sing the songs of Hương Sen Pagoda. Looking forward to seeing you again early in the Spring of the Mouse Year 2020.

Santa Ana, Tâm Hương Entertainment Group

December 20, 2019

Respectfully,

Singer Thúy Anh

nguyenatam@yahoo.com



*Left: Singer Thúy Anh, Ven. Giới Hương, Singer Lâm Dung,
Singer Minh Phương at the vegetarian banquet of Hương Sen Pagoda in 2017*

6.13. UNDER THE TEMPLE VERANDA LISTEN TO THE CHANTING

*Under the temple veranda, it is tranquil
Open sutra page: (Quy Nguyên) Return Source Assembly
Four directions transport the mystical wonder without pause
The marvelous mind still meditates naturally
The Insightful Sword being fearless
Compassion Cloud, Scent Water penetrating perfection,
The most delicious milk taste at Tào Khê Road
Pure honesty spreading throughout great heaven!*

Respectfully to Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, on the occasion of your forty years of study and propagation.

Plano, Texas, December 22, 2019

With metta,

Musician Khánh Hoàng
lekhoang50@gmail.com



6.14. SILA FRAGRANCE, MEDITATIVE FRAGRANCE, WISDOM FRAGRANCE

*Awakening and delusion circles
The five faculties, the five powers being spent
Continuously learn without stopping
Ghosts give the way, demons provide directions,
Mind is misty and the way unclear.*

*Lucky to meet an insightful master!
Opening the curtain of ignorance, reveal the true mind
Oh my Buddha declared from afar
Buddha in mind, then delusion has naturally left
Gate, Gate, Para Gate, Para sam Gate
Bodhiswaha.*

*Which scent among the flowers smells best?
Sila Fragrance, Meditative Fragrance, Wisdom Fragrance
Flowers blooming, realize Buddha nature, transform ignorance
Gate, Gate, Para Gate, Para sam Gate.*

*Which scent among the flowers smells best?
Sila Fragrance, Meditative Fragrance, Wisdom Fragrance
Thousand branches of lotus flowers, Emptiness looks for
Gate, Gate, Para Gate, Para sam Gate.*

*Now we pray to follow your steps
Sprinkling the compassionate stream onto our mind
Pouring how much to cover all parts
Birth-death cycle becomes without incarnation
Bodhiswaha, Bodhiswaha.*

To my dear Master Sư Phụ Giới Hương for your collected writings: *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service–Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương.*



Philadelphia, December 18, 2019
Bowing three times,
Mrs. Loan Anh Small
Buddhist name: Diệu Liên
loananhsmall@yahoo.com

6.15. THE WAY BACK TO THE OLD HOMETOWN

Dear Venerable Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, Head of Hương Sen Temple, USA,

I remember that eight years ago, the Unified Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation in Australia and New Zealand organized the sixth Về Nguồn (Return the Source) Ceremony at Pháp Hoa Temple in Adelaide, South Australia. You attended, and then Venerable Thích Tâm Phương and Venerable Thích Nguyên Tạng, abbot of Quảng Đức Monastery in Melbourne, invited you to visit and give a Dharma talk at the one-day retreat, which is often held monthly at the temple.

That time I had an opportunity to greet and guide you to your room for rest. Unfortunately, when you were giving lectures, I was busy working in the kitchen, so I couldn't attend.

In 2020, you ask me to check the Vietnamese dictation for your collection. Wow! I have had an opportunity to read more than 100 articles, including literature and poems of venerable monks and nuns, monastic students and lay Buddhists from many places to make a collection called *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service - Venerable Bhikkhunī Giới Hương*. These writings are simple and sincere without flowery gimmicks and they convey to the readers your noble conduct in the monastic life for over forty years.

The Saṅgha's compliments, the monastic students' and lay people's admiration made me notice and generate respect to you. The resilient will, strong energy and devoted belief hidden in a small physique are the factors that make Venerable Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, the Tathagata's daughter, possess all the virtues of compassion-wisdom-power.

We know your past journey was very arduous and difficult, but thanks to continuous efforts and diligence, you have overcome to achieve success today. I suddenly feel ashamed with mixed regret for my case, because it has been more than twenty years, and I have not been ordained as I wished. So, I must choose a way to practice as a upāsikā (lay female Buddhist).

Quy Sơn Patriarch reminded Buddhists to "Keep mindfulness inside as the merit. Avoid arguing outside as the moral." It seems that I can only perform the second part of the sentence, while I fail to follow the first practical part, so that I really feel sad! I remember Master Nguyên Tạng said, "Cultivators consider wisdom as a main career," but over the years, I have not devoted myself to it. Thinking about the remaining time of my life, I'm really worried. How many leaves of knowledge in the teachings of the Tathagata will I collect? The way to the old hometown will surely be far away!

*Miles back to the old hometown
I can not imagine the hardship
Luckily, the wise have opened my mind
Understand the true core of Mahayana.*

*Everything has been illusory for a long time
Gossip and ego are changed like sunshine and rain,
Please remember the advice,
Keeping mindfulness inside as the merit without laziness.*

In this year 2020, Quảng Đức Monastery will hold the twelfth Về Nguồn (Return Source)

Ceremony as well as the thirtieth Anniversary of Quảng Đức Monastery Establishment. According to the plan, that the ceremony will be from October 15 to 18, 2020. I hope that you will come to Australia to attend the ceremony, giving Buddhists here a Dharma talk, so that our practice can be enriched.

I pray to the Buddhas to bless your Dharma body. May it be peaceful and always be a shining torch to fuel our small light, so that we can take steps on the way back to the old spiritual hometown.

Melbourne, Australia, Winter Season

January 14, 2020

Best regards,

Lay Buddhist Thanh Phi

thanhphi1955@gmail.com



*Venerable Tâm Phương, Venerable Nguyễn Tạng, Bhikkhunī Giới Hương
and the Buddhists of a one-day retreat at Quảng Đức Monastery, Australia, 2012*



Thanh Phi arranging flowers at Quảng Đức Monastery in Vu Lan season 2019

6.16. A POETIC NUN

In the past, I was fortunate to make music from Venerable Thích Nữ Giới Hương's poems and perform the album *Dharma Moonlight* and the Youtube video *Memory of the World-honored One...* I have many deep impressions of her, a person who has always strived to cultivate and dedicate herself for the sake of religion and society.

I really admire her for her spirit of studying, deepening her knowledge (holding bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees), and constantly researching.

She also spent a lot of time teaching abroad as well as in Vietnam, so that the community very much welcomes her.

In addition, her Bảo Anh Lạc's Bookshelf with forty-one works is very valuable for Buddhists and Buddhist researchers now and in the future.

Moreover, her gift of poetry has turned into hundreds of emotional compositions upholding the ultimate truth of the Tathagata. This is the reason why I call her "a poetic nun."

Since then, dozens of DVD albums with beautiful lyrics and images have touched the hearts of Buddhist music lovers and strongly encouraged Buddhists to learn spirituality.

With the cooperation of many domestic and foreign writers, artists, and musicians, her Zen songs have been contributing to the enrichment of Vietnamese Buddhist music, with more and more flavors and echos.

I have not had much chance to work directly with her, but once I was face to face, I immediately felt that she was very gentle. Though she has a serious appearance, she has a very liberal and peaceful soul. . .

I thought she is among the monks and nuns who have enough talent, intelligence, and virtue to contribute to building and bringing Vietnamese Buddhism to a higher level in this new period of development.

With these few subjective feelings from an eighty-one-year-old teacher, writer, philosopher cum musician, I sincerely congratulate Venerable Thích Nữ Giới Hương, whose body and mind are often peaceful with the taste of Zen Dharma. She continues to bring her holy career of "forty years of practice and propagation" to develop to the glorious peak of "Enlightened Spring."

Looking forward!

The end of the year, Saigon, November 26, 2019

Yours sincerely,

Musician Uy Thi Ca
uythica@yahoo.com



*Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and Musician Uy Thi Ca
at the musician's house on November 11, 2019*

MEMORY OF THE WORLD-HONORED ONE

Music and lyrics: Thích Nữ Giới Hương and Uy Thi Ca

*(offered to Buddhist followers for a pilgrimage to Indian Buddhist holy places)
(slowly, solemnly, following the humming)*

Today from four directions
We return to India to pay homage to the Blessed One
We dedicate ourselves to the Buddha as an honest Father
A sincere mind at the burning incense.

The Father's example shines forever
Practice forgiving and loving
Diligently cultivate to transform from reincarnation
Thanks to Father, the delusion in life is ended.

Returning to India, I am grateful to Father
How many hardships Father experienced
Going to find the truth
Wind, fog, rain, and sun without interference.

Although Father has passed away
We follow Father's steps
The lotus is always pink and fresh
Offering its incense for life.

Dear Lord exalted
Master of celestial and human beings
My life according to the Dharma
Return to take refuge in the Tathagata's shade.

Please watch on Youtube: **Memory of the World-Honored One** (*Tưởng Nhớ Đấng Thế Tôn*)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JuWhHb841Ic>

Composers: Thích Nữ Giới Hương and Uy Thi Ca

Sound: Giác An

Mix: Đức Luân

Singers: Hiếu Ngọc and Nguyễn Quốc Thắng

Slideshow: Hải Quang

Artists in Youtube video: Dr. Sumedha, Ven. Giới Hương, Rev. Diệu Nga, Rev. Diệu Hoa,

Mr. Tịnh Bình, Mrs. Quảng Trí, and Mr. Chánh Hảo

6.17. BEST WISHES FROM GERMANY

I am (Chi Phạm) is an ex-student of the Southeast Asia Department at University of California, Riverside, and studied the same University and faculty with Master Giới Hương (2014-2016). I went to visit Huong Sen Pagoda and took refuge under Master Giới Hương who gave me the Buddhist name Viên Bảo Chuyên (means the precious complete diligence). After graduation, I returned to Vietnam to teach, get married and has a daughter (see picture below).

Life seems to stop there, but the diligence like my Buddhist name which makes me excited to strive to learn. With the blessings of the Buddhas, I got a Postdoctoral scholarship at the University of Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany, and the surprising and remarkable thing is that my daughter also followed me to Germany too. My life is really blessings since I was lucky to meet you and Huong Sen Temple.

Dear Master, on the occasion, Hương Sen Temple made the collection of writings: "Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service - Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương," I and Lâm Anh wish you good health and peace of mind in the glory of the Buddhas. Buddha.

Our wishes in German are below:

Ich bin dankbar, dass ich Sie kennengelernt habe.

Ich wünsche Ihnen Gesundheit, Frieden und Wohlstand.

Hamburg University, February 5 2020

Yours respectfully,

Chi Phạm – Viên Bảo Chuyên

chiphamvvh@gmail.com



Viên Bảo Chuyên and her daughter, Hà Tô Lâm Anh (born in 2017)



*Viên Bảo Chuyên and other students of the University of Hamburg
visited a Buddhist Pagoda in Hamburg city*

6.18. NUNS AT A COUNTRYSIDE TEMPLE

As usual, at the end of every year, I send New Year's greetings to the monks and nuns whom I know and respect.

This year too, on the 29th day of the last month of the lunar year, I emailed New Year's wishes to Ven. Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Giới Hương, whom I have had the good fortune to know for two years already . . . and this morning, when I turned on the computer, I saw your email inviting me to attend a retreat and the first full moon day and also to write two articles for the writing collections on nuns living abroad and the 40th anniversary of your studies and service in Buddhism. It is true that I had difficulty writing about this because I don't know much about the nuns' Sangha abroad, but about Ven. Giới Hương herself, I will make an attempt.

It is not easy to write about a renunciant, especially one who is a nun . . . and it is even more difficult to write about you, someone rather famous and respected by our Buddhist Youth Association, lay Buddhists, intellectuals, as well as monastics, domestic and abroad.

Due to the modern technical satellites of Google, YouTube and websites, your activities include writing books, building temples, converting nuns and lay Buddhists, and giving sermons at monasteries, prisons, schools, churches, and so forth . . . with the aim of conveying Sakyamuni Buddha's teachings, Vietnamese Buddhism, and culture to the locals (in USA, France, Germany, etc.).

Therefore, any idea I have for writing about you would probably be something redundant and difficult. Redundancy: Because you are a person of the masses, both domestic and foreign Buddhists know about you. So now if I write more about you, it is just repeating what Buddhists already know. Difficult: You are so great; I'm just afraid that I won't say everything about you. That's a bad thing because I have only been fortunate to know you for two years.

But never mind, I will try to write about you.

Time has passed—exactly two years from the day I came to know you, when you instructed us at the retreat and I attended Vesak (Buddha's Birthday) at Hương Sen Temple on the Buddhist calendar year 2562 (Christian calendar year 2018). Now I would like to recall that time when I was fortunate to meet you.

As I have said, you did not know me before, but I had been fortunate to meet you many times at the Buddha's Birthday seasons in Miles Square Park, which were organized by the United Buddhist Sangha Overseas. I also visited Hương Sen Temple once with my friend a few years ago. That day, I remember emotion arose at first sight, inspiring me to write a poem, which I have not yet sent to you.

Most recently, we were overjoyed when we heard that you agreed to teach us, the Buddhist Youth Association, through an online course with the outstanding topic “Buddhist Thoughts in India.”

And today, on the Buddhist calendar year 2562 at Hương Sen Temple, I am coming back to study and attend Vesak. It is an opportunity for me to have the good fortune to meet you and the nuns in the temple to share sadness-happiness, the practice of concern in Buddhism, as well as to learn more about the activities of Hương Sen Temple. You are an abbess of a temple that every Buddhist near and far calls by a simple, lovely name, "countryside temple." It was an interesting meeting for us.

As soon as I got off the bus, I took a walk around the temple to breathe the fresh air of the countryside and to admire the temple scenery. Wow! My first impression was that the scenery was so calm and soothing, and I thought a countryside temple is very different from a suburban pagoda.

HƯƠNG SEN TEMPLE

To Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương

*A quiet afternoon to see sunlight
The blue mountain tinged with mist
Sound from falling leaves, trees calling wind
Hương Sen radiates a fresh fragrance.*

*The landscape blends with nature
Come here to find some peace
Away from town, a tumultuous life
Release the soul to the spiritual, original place.*

*Travelers come here to visit the Buddha Hall
Forgetting all things in mundane daily life
Return here to look for a bit of serenity
Trying to get away from disturbing objects.*

*Stop thinking of sadness
Let illusion fall away, find calm
Buddhists far and near look forward
To find happiness in the meditative way.*

*Hương Sen, May 26, 2018
Vesak, Buddha Calendar 2562
Tâm Tường – Lê Đình Cát*

The temple is located in a large, beautiful place convenient for the Buddhist Youth Association's camps and for long-term monastic training courses. It is still rudimentary and in the first phase of building, which results in lack of means and accommodations. What to do when you are a nun? So, we are waiting for a wonderful blessing from the celestial beings.

Deep in thought about it, suddenly, I remembered that I had to go greet you. I hurried to the main hall, and luckily you were talking with Buddhists there. Unexpectedly, you were so young, more than I imagined. I listened to your voice on teachings online and read about your background on websites, so I thought you had to be over sixty years old to have had enough time to make such significant contributions. Despite this being the first time we met, our interaction felt close and friendly. It seemed like we had known each other for a long time. After asking about your health and talking with you, I excused myself to have a late dinner.

While I was having dinner, you came down and talked with me . . .

You smilingly said, “Tâm Tường, you probably know that this is a nunnery and you are the only male Buddhist this time.”

“Yes, I know. When I received your invitation via email and later on the phone, I thought about this matter and felt a bit embarrassed, but we are Buddhist disciples. I keep mindfulness and stay in a separate area, so I accepted your invitation without hesitation.”

“That's good! Well, it's very late. We have two more days to talk. Now, you should go to bed because you have to get up early in the morning to attend the early morning chant (Surangama Mantra) with the nuns.”

You called inside, “Oh, where is Rev. Viên Tiến? Did you arrange a room for Tâm Tường yet?”

From the main hall, there was a northern-sounding "yes," and then a nun came down to greet and guide me.

“Please follow me.”

I bent down to carry the luggage bag, but she took it before I could and said, “Let me carry it for you.”

Walking along two mobile homes on the side of the pagoda, Rev. Viên Tiến directed me to a good room. At first glance, I knew that this room was occupied, so I turned to her. She understood what I meant. She explained, “This is a lady's room. During festivals when a large number of Buddhists come to attend, we must evacuate and yield to visitors. Please don't hesitate. And this time, you may be the priority because you are alone in this room, which often serves as a double room.”

“Yes, Tâm Tường thanks you. Oh, then where will the owners of this room sleep?”

“We go to in the main hall. We just spreading a mattress, and that is large enough for many people.”

“That inconveniences you. Let me go to sleep in the main hall.”

“No. It is not like that. You are older and there are many ladies.”

“Oh, I will follow your arrangements for me. Thank you.”

“Good night! Tomorrow morning Viên Tiến will wake you up early to join the morning prayer.”

“Yes, thank you . . . oh, but Rev. Viên Tiến, just now you said that you still go to school?”

“Yes, we all go to school . . . you know? Rev. Liên Hiếu is studying in a master's program while I am learning ESL (English as a second language).”

“Wow! I really admire all of you. By the way, remember to wake me up.”

“Yes, take rest. There is a big sound from the great bell to wake you up.”

“Really, it is okay.”

I was probably tired and just had a tooth extracted a few days before, so my tooth hurt. I was also thinking about the immeasurable hearts of the young nuns who kindly yield their rooms for visitors every time the pagoda has ceremonies or retreats. Nuns need to prepare everything, such as welcoming visitors, transportation, meals, sleep, and so on. How compassionate you and the other nuns are! Due to such thoughts, I could not sleep. Suddenly the wonderful bell from afar echoed—the nuns hit the bell every morning, a sound I hadn't heard for a long time downtown. It was surprising and interesting for me, the author of this article, a senior leader in the Buddhist Youth Association for many years and also someone who has attended many monastic training courses.

But this time, I enjoyed a good feeling in the countryside as I listened to the sacred bell on this tranquil morning, a sound that has been imprinted in my heart. Suddenly, fresh emotion arose . . . (perhaps because I was the only male Buddhist in this nunnery, or because it is a wonderful bell for inspiring lost souls to quickly come back to this quiet place of Zen in order to cultivate and improve their minds and avoid bad karma). The bell woke up all the people in the temple so they could prepare for their assigned duties for the two main ceremonies (that day was the retreat, and the next day was Buddha's Birthday).

Through your teachings, I woke up early that morning to recite the Surangama Mantra, and after that enjoyed a good breakfast with the nuns.

After breakfast, each of us took care of his or her job, such as cleaning the yard, decorating the temple, setting tables, and arranging sutras and books to prepare for the retreat.

At 8 am, everyone gathered at the main hall to listen to your lecture about the meaning of the fasting day.

In your lecture, you explained to the group about the effectiveness of reciting the Great Compassion Dharani Mantra and attending the retreat day, which the Buddha's disciples consider a gift offered to the Buddha on his birthday.

During the break, I took advantage of the time to explore the life of the nuns in the temple so that I could contribute more vivid descriptions of the activities in this article.

After conversation with the nuns, I came to know that Hương Sen Temple was founded in 2013 in this remote Perris; there are not many Vietnamese Buddhists there, so there were shortages in many areas.

The morning after the Buddha's Bath ceremony was completed, I took a walk in and around the temple to observe and gather information for my report about the two days of practice and Vesak at Hương Sen Pagoda. The visiting room in the center of the building is used as a main hall. Although it is narrow, thanks to the nuns' skilled hands, it looks very solemn and sacred. On the left side is a small kitchen, and outside there are two prefabricated mobile homes, each having three rough, rudimentary rooms for guests.

A special thing about Hương Sen Temple is that the nuns (disciples of Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương) are all studying. On top of the monastic duties of reciting and praying at the temple every day and night, the nuns also go to school, so they are rather knowledgeable and have high educational degrees. For example, one is studying in a master's program while another is gaining a doctorate. How precious they are! This is something about the abbess and the nuns that I greatly admired.

Another particular point I realized is that even when the nuns are working hard, they have innocent, kindly smiles on their faces. Truly, whatever the time, space or environment, the Buddha's disciples are ready to take on and fulfill the responsibilities and duties they have vowed to undertake. The monastics are usually trying to cultivate and learn to transmit the Buddha's teachings to the human world in order to help everyone who can understand the method of Buddhism to transform their misery. That is the will and the ideal of the Buddha's disciples, especially the monks and nuns.

After I had a good sleep, suddenly the bell resounded in the vast sky to wake all the Buddhists in the temple so they could prepare for work and get ready for the main ceremony.

I got out of bed and went out to enjoy the fresh morning air in the hills of the countryside. Somewhere, birds called to each other, their cries resounding in a corner of the sky, breaking the silence of the desolate mountains . . . Oh! Morning in the suburbs is peaceful and interesting. I was walking while watching the sun slowly emerge at the mountaintop in front of the temple. Then I went back to the room

to wash my face and then to chant and attend Vesak. And that day, right in Hương Huong Sen Temple, I was honored to be asked by you to be the MC for the Buddha's birthday ceremony. I was so surprised and happy to be able to take on this important responsibility for the ceremony.

These are all memories of the year 2018 for me to write about in “You and the Nuns in a Countryside Temple.” You are highly motivated and knowledgeable about both the mundane and supermundane. You are kind and friendly with all kinds of people even though you hold a high degree and are fluent in many languages. This is something very valuable for Buddhism.

Thanks to your knowledge and fluency in foreign languages, especially English, you can take part as a chaplain in prisons and public places with the aim of conveying the teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha, as well as introducing Asian culture, in particular that of Vietnam, to the overseas Vietnamese-American community or local Americans.

Every year, you go back to Vietnam to teach a Dharma English course at Vietnam Buddhist University in Saigon, sharing your knowledge and scholastic experience with young student monks and nuns in Vietnam.

Moreover, you are gifted at writing. Your Buddhist books and essays are written in English and Vietnamese. Your lyrics (which are also a practical means for preaching) bring the religion to life, with the hope that life and religion will merge together so that people can understand and cultivate a mind to end suffering. It is very exciting that you created Bảo Anh Lạc Bookshelf (please visit huongsentemple.com), in which many valuable works, including the bilingual English-Vietnamese News, are displayed.

Despite such achievements, you are always humble and in harmony with people, which is the virtue and style of a true Buddhist. You are modest in communication with the monks and nuns, the elders, but also with young renunciants as well as laypeople. To all, you have the same manners, extremely polite, gracious and generous.

I remember at the Buddha's Birthday in 2018, while you and I were both busy preparing for the opening ceremony, I praised your skill and virtue, and suddenly, I asked you some questions. Your answers were truly noble.

“Dear Venerable Giới Hương, with your potential and talent, why do you not live in the areas surrounding Orange County or Los Angeles, where there are many Vietnamese Buddhist communities? It would be convenient for supporting the finances for you to build a monastery. Why did you choose this remote area to build a temple (dry, bare land in the semi-desert area of Perris in the Riverside area)?

Ven. Giới Hương just smiled modestly and answered:

“Before answering this question, I would like to thank you because it is a surprising and interesting question that I have repeatedly asked myself. Isn't this also a coincidence showing the connection between us? You see, if I live in crowded urban places, then there would not be this predestined relationship between you and me. You came here because you like the countryside, and as a result, today we can meet here in a master-disciple relationship, right?

“Yes, that is correct, Master!”

“As nuns, we must engage in difficult and challenging works. We believe where we live and spread Buddhism is ‘predestined’ or the Buddha’s decree, so wherever we go, we must try our best to serve others. That is our purpose and the mission of propagation: bringing religion into our lives.

“You know, before coming here and setting up this temple, I thought a lot about the fact that there

are many temples in Orange county and Los Angeles that do not need me anymore. The reason this ‘semi-desert’ area was chosen is that we are the Buddha’s disciples and especially, as nuns, regardless of time and space, we will be there, wherever people need us. If I have a predestined relationship with a place or with local persons, that is the place for me to ‘abide’ to spread Buddhism. Remote areas often lack Dharma sources and Buddhist temples, so our presence would be meaningful, precious and necessary, wouldn’t it?”

“Yes, Master. That is right and reveals the mind of the Tathagata’s messenger. The Buddha is as such. But one thing that makes me worry is that the temple is too rudimentary and lacks many facilities. If you want to have a solemn temple with full accommodations, you and your nuns will have to spend a lot of time, money, labor and so forth. How do you manage when you all are female nuns with weak limbs?”

And when writing these words, I suddenly felt deep devotion and compassion for you and your nun disciples and the fellow Buddhists in that remote countryside of Hương Sen Temple.

“Yes, this is an area for American and Mexican communities, without many Vietnamese Buddhists. That’s a hard problem for the nuns and the temple in terms of maintenance and development.”

So through this article, I hope good Buddhist sponsors everywhere please support Venerable Giới Hương and the nuns so that in the future, Hương Sen will be a well-equipped nunnery for Buddhist people to visit from far and near in order to study. May the Buddha bless it.

And even if someone has the karma to talk to you once and only once, he or she would have complete respect for you owing to your three aspects of compassion-wisdom-bravery, tolerance and generosity. They would admire your way of teaching and treating your ten nun disciples, who are elders specializing in chanting, while the younger nuns, in addition to practicing, also go to college. Among them some have already graduated with masters and PhDs. In addition, lay Buddhists also come to the temple to study Buddhism (such as Tâm Tường).

Wow! I really admire Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương. You have truly practiced properly, following the motto of Buddhism to bring religion to life in a remote area so that religion and life will blend together. As a result, people will understand Buddhism and live beautiful lives, and they will discover the art of living without suffering. That is exactly the doctrine of Buddhism. It is also about people who know how to learn about Buddhism in accordance with the true meaning of Buddhism.

That is something that our Buddha’s disciples always wish to accomplish. And that is also the same heart rhythm of the Buddha’s disciples during these two days of practice and Vesak.

These are my heartfelt words to offer for the writing collection about Venerable Thích Nữ Giới Hương and Hương Sen Temple.

LOOKING IN THE DISTANCE

To Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương

*Lonely in the vast world
Watching the falling leaves
Feeling bored with life
Regardless of sun, earth . . . change the game.
Never mind gain, loss
Why keep competing?
Fame is a worldly purpose
Realizing this, there is tranquility.*

*Where to find a little peace?
Refuge. . . seclusion at the Zen door
Practice to keep the mind pure
Looking in the distance . . . sense of enlightenment has come.*

Lake Forest, Autumn in Pig Earth, 2019

Tâm Tường – Lê Đình Cát

We pray that throughout this life, you will always be Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương, humble, kindhearted, generous and diligent in transforming human beings. May you always compose good poems, write meaningful discourses and also deliver more Dharma sermons so that you and other renunciants act as messengers of the Tathagata, raising the torch of wisdom to light the path for our Buddhists. Thus, the noble images of Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and Buddhist monks and nuns will never fade in our minds . . .

And thanks especially to your noble characteristics, more and more fellow Buddhists from afar come to Hương Sen Pagoda in particular, and to Buddhism in general. They approach the temple with sincere hearts and faith in Buddhism.

Once Buddhists have gained faith and respect for monks and nuns, they will eagerly go to temples, monasteries, lecture halls often to learn about the Dharma. They will attend retreats to nurture virtue, morality and personality traits. This is because the teachings of the Buddha are the teachings of love and wisdom. “Where there is suffering, Buddhism will be there to ease the pain. Where there is Buddhism, there will be peace and happiness for sentient beings.”

In this way, the meditative door is "A Place to Find the Way Back" (Nơi Chốn Tìm Về), or rather, "The Way to the Temple" (Đường về Già Lam), where the Buddha's disciples can take refuge to cultivate and study Buddhism through sutras, verses and sermons. The monks and nuns have guided us in the Dharma for the sake of many.

The above thoughts left in my heart are useful and interesting and also spring from this place (Hương Sen Temple). I always remember the teachings of the abbess, Venerable Giới Hương. Your gentle words, the nuns' smiles, and the beloved faces of Buddhist brothers and sisters from near and far are very familiar and close to my heart. So happy we are!

Since that time, I too must attempt to achieve the aspirations and ideals in which I have chosen to engage: that is, to serve the Dharma and enthusiastically pass on what I have learned from the monks and nuns to younger people in the future so that they can propagate Buddhism and bring Dharma into life.^[1]

Early Spring of the Mouse Year

Liên Hoa Temple, Garden Grove January 2, 2020

Regardfully,

Tâm Tường – Lê đình Cát

Buddhist Youth Association Leader

catchile@yahoo.com

1. This essay is based on the article, "A Place to Find the Way Back" (Nơi Chốn Tìm Về), Tâm Tường, The Vietnamese Buddhist Cultural Magazine (Tập San VHPGVNHN).



Writer Tâm Tường



Author Tâm Tường standing on the left while Venerable Giới Hương gives a speech on the Buddha's Birthday, May 27, 2018



Tâm Tường bathing the Baby Buddha at Hương Sen Temple on May 27, 2018

6.19. A TALENTED NUN

The beloved Venerable Bhikkhunī Giới Hương,

My name is Nhật Quang and I am eighty-nine years old. I have a predestined relationship to be a local Buddhist in the same city as Hương Sen Temple for nearly ten years. I regularly go to prayer, attend retreats and ceremonies, and I also follow up the construction progress of Hương Sen Temple on their website—from small projects to large, from a small number of nun disciples to many disciples (website: huongsentemple.com). It is a rich website which has forty-one of your interesting works and many others to promote.

Venerable Hương, you are very noble, talented and virtuous. I have never seen a young nun who is so dedicated to such hard work and is so well-practiced in this spiritual realm.

Unfortunately, there are sentient beings who are busy with their family affairs and do not appreciate the value of a highly talented young nun who has descended from the celestial world to guide our human nature on the Buddhist path. Some do not yet understand the spiritual transcendent resources from this very precious sanctuary temple.

I believe that Venerable Bhikkhunī Giới Hương will succeed and overcome all difficulties to achieve the noble purpose in Dharma.

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Moreno Valley, New Year of the Rat, February 22, 2020

Truthfully,

Lay Buddhist Nhật Quang

luongvs@yahoo.com



*Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, Nuns and Nhật Quang (second right)
during a retreat at Hương Sen Temple, May 26, 2018*



Nhật Quang reading the thank-you speech at the Vu Lan ceremony on August 24, 2017



*Nhật Quang (standing in the middle of the bell tower)
and Đức Minh, father of Ven. Abbess Giới Hương (sitting) in 2017*

6.20. GIVE A DHARMA WORD

Life is full of suffering and defilement. The human fate is endless loneliness as the great writer Herman Hess described it. Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương has done a job as a spiritual physician to relieve pain and bring coolness to people's hearts. Moreover, you and other monks and nuns of the Saṅgha who are in place of the Buddha instruct people to awaken. The ignorance, bad karma, selfishness and greed are accumulated in our deep conscious store for many lifetimes as Venerable Giới Hương expressed very clearly in her doctoral dissertation, "Bodhisattva and Emptiness." I am also trying to overcome that ignorance. I am truly indebted to you for giving me a righteous Dharma word to open up my deluded mind.

On the occasion of the Lunar New Year of the Rat, in the land abroad, I would like to pray to the Three Jewels who will bless you, the nuns and extend to all fellow Buddhists great merit to be auspicious, attain enlightenment for self-liberation and other-liberation.

Respectfully presented to the Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of her study and service in Buddhism.

Namo the Penetrating Perfect Hearing Nature Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva.

The Gold Leaf, Springfield City, Virginia, February 20, 2020

Three bows,

Đức Trần - Hoằng Cần

tranduc22@hotmail.com



*From right: Hoằng Cần, Quảng Lượng, Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương,
Rev. Viên An and Patrick Hưng in 2016*



Ven. Bhikkhuni Giới Hương (right) and Hoàng Căn at Hoàng Căn's house on June 16, 2016



Left: Hoàng Căn, Quảng Lượng, Bhikkhuni Giới Hương and Rev. Viên An at Thiện Đức Buddhist Place, Virginia, in 2016

6.21. THE HAPPINESS

Namo Amitabha Buddha.

Dear Venerable Bhikkhunī Giới Hương,

I am Thanh Mai, an eighty-year old female Buddhist. I am old and often sick, but I am cherished by monks and nuns from many temples in Southern California, who often visit me to teach Buddhism and encourage me to recite the Buddha's name. Whenever I am healthy, my children, Thanh Đàm and Thiện Châu, take me to the temples immediately (because this is my happiness), such as Bát Nhã Pagoda, Phật Tổ Temple, Huệ Nghiêm Pagoda, Hoa Nghiêm Pagoda, Hương Sen Pagoda, Khánh Anh Pagoda . . . for practicing and praying. My family is happy to see me to live in the great love and blessings of the monks and nuns. This is a happiness the Dhammapada described:

Happy is the arising of a Buddha;
 Happy is the exposition of the Ariya Dhamma;
 Happy is the harmony amongst the Saṅgha;
 Happy is the practice of those in harmony.

Dhammapada, Verse 194^[1]

To be a human is difficult and to receive your loving care and encouragement is priceless. I remember on the Buddha's birthday in 2018, when I went to Hương Sen Pagoda, I was encouraged and comforted by the Most Venerable Nguyễn Thanh, Ven. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương and all the Buddhist nuns, as well as Buddhist followers of Hương Sen Pagoda, which touched me with gratitude. It transformed me with more vitality, making me overcome the serious disease in my body. How special that I could forget!

Today we visited Hương Sen Pagoda and we heard that on March 22, 2020, there will be a celebration of Bhikkhunī Giới Hương's many years of service in the Dharma. A collection of writings, *Forty Years in the Dharma: A Life of Study and Service - Venerable Bhikkhunī Giới Hương* will be offered to the public. Today is the last day to submit my writing; tomorrow the collected writings for gifts will be printed. So I made up a simple poem and a few sincere words to offer to you with all my heart. My writing will be the last one to end the book. It is a great pleasure and great joy for me to be present with the monks and nuns in this anniversary collection. Wow! It has also been a good predestined relationship for me with Hương Sen Pagoda.

Today we congratulate Ven. Bhikkhunī Giới Hương, who spent forty years working hard and studying for the sake of many.

Hương Sen fragrance far
 Pure living among mud
Giới Hương meditation wisdom available
 Spread all over the four directions.

A Rainy Day in Long Beach, California, March 1, 2020

Faithfully,

Thanh Mai

1. *Dhammapada, Verse 194, translated into English by the Most Venerable Narada, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1963, 1971.*
<https://thuvienhoasen.org/a10361/07-pham-a-la-han-the-worthy-90-99>



From left: Thiện Châu, Thanh Mai, Ven. Giới Hương and Thanh Đàm at Hương Sen Temple, March 1, 2020



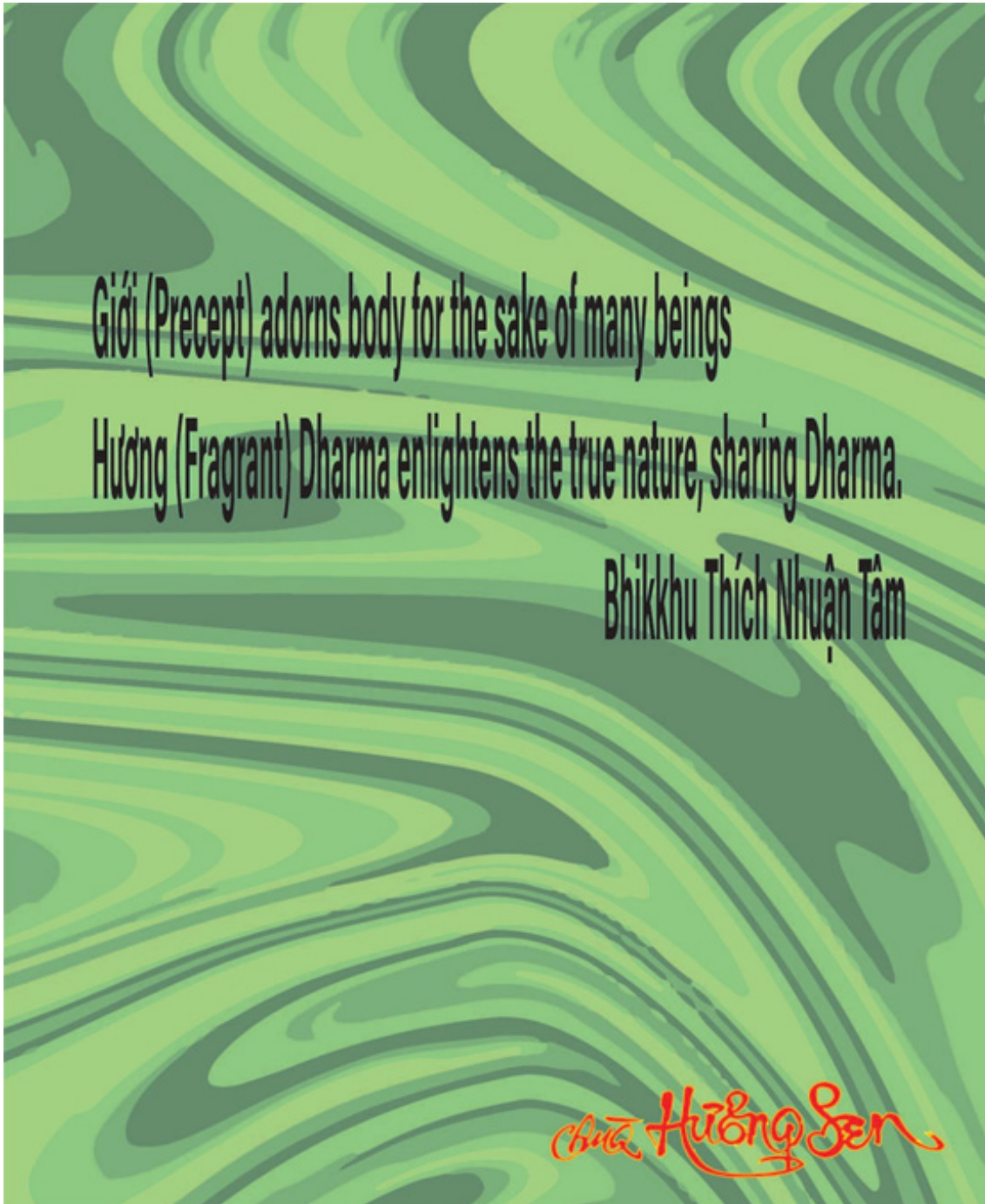


Part VII

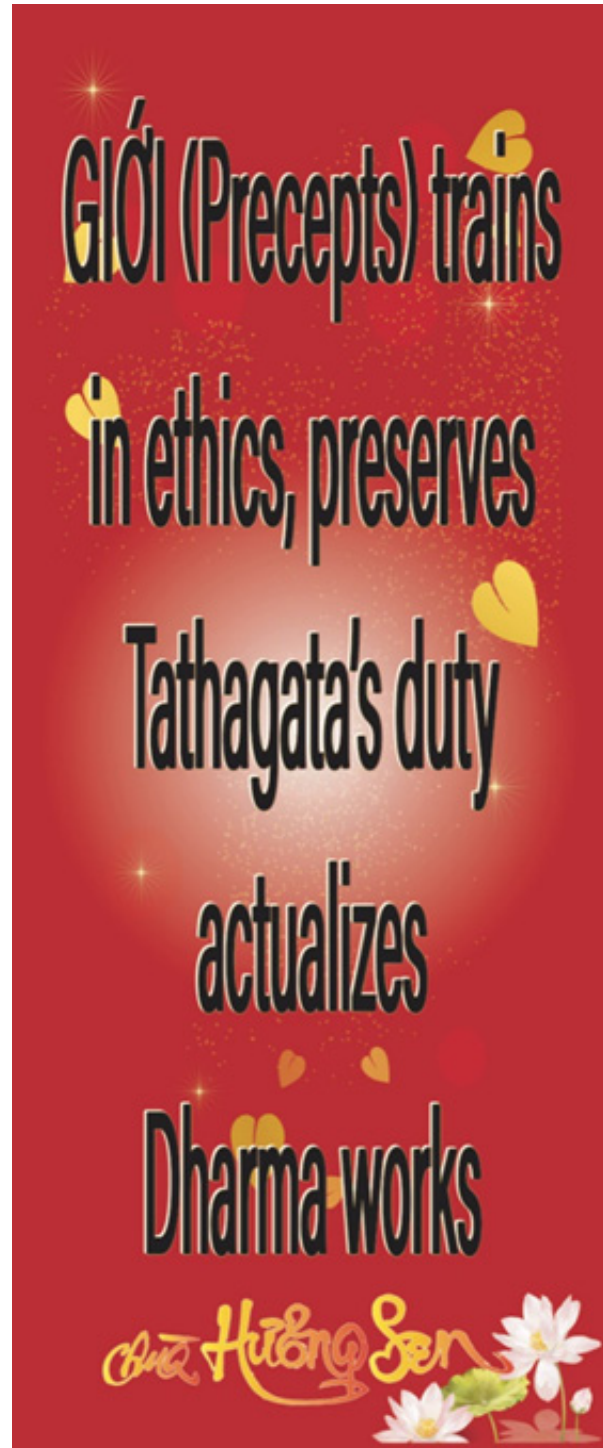
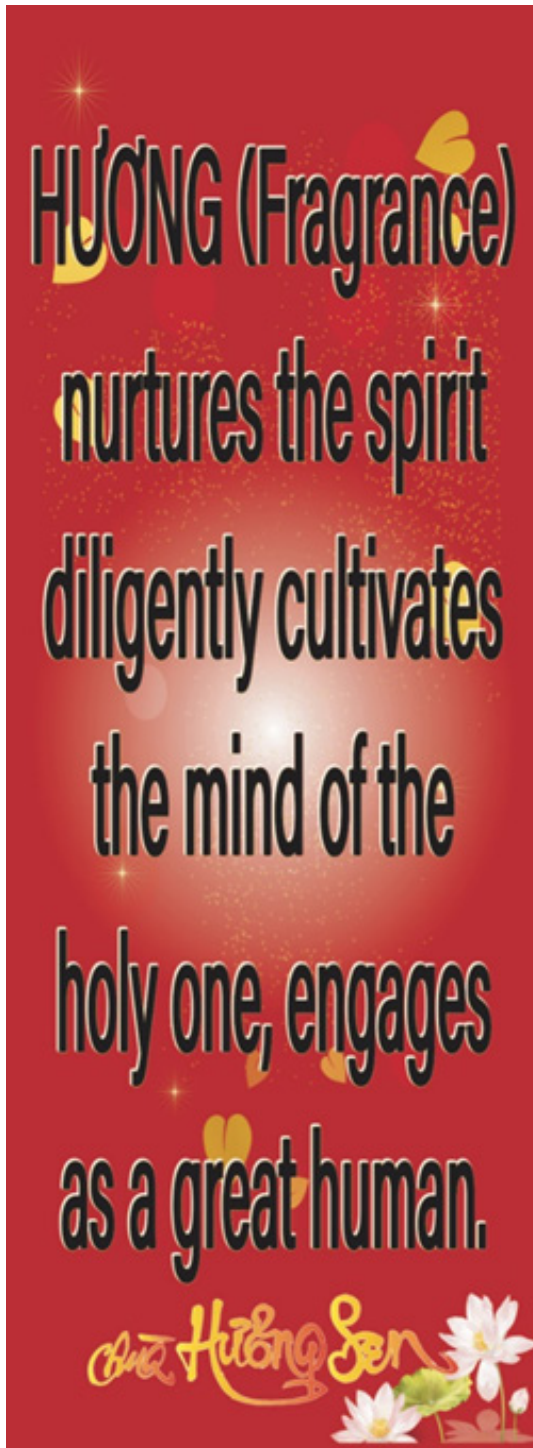
CALLIGRAPHY

7. CALLIGRAPHY

7.1. THE DHARMA FRAGRANCE - Bhikkhu Thích Nhuận Tâm



7.2. THE PRAJNA FRAGRANCE - Bhikkhunī Thích Nữ Tuệ Liên



7.3. FRAGRANCE NURTURES THE SPIRIT - Bhikkhuni Thích Nữ Tuệ Liên

GIỚI (Precepts)
builds meditation-wisdom
offers HƯƠNG Prajna
blooming Dharma flowers

Bh. Hương Sen

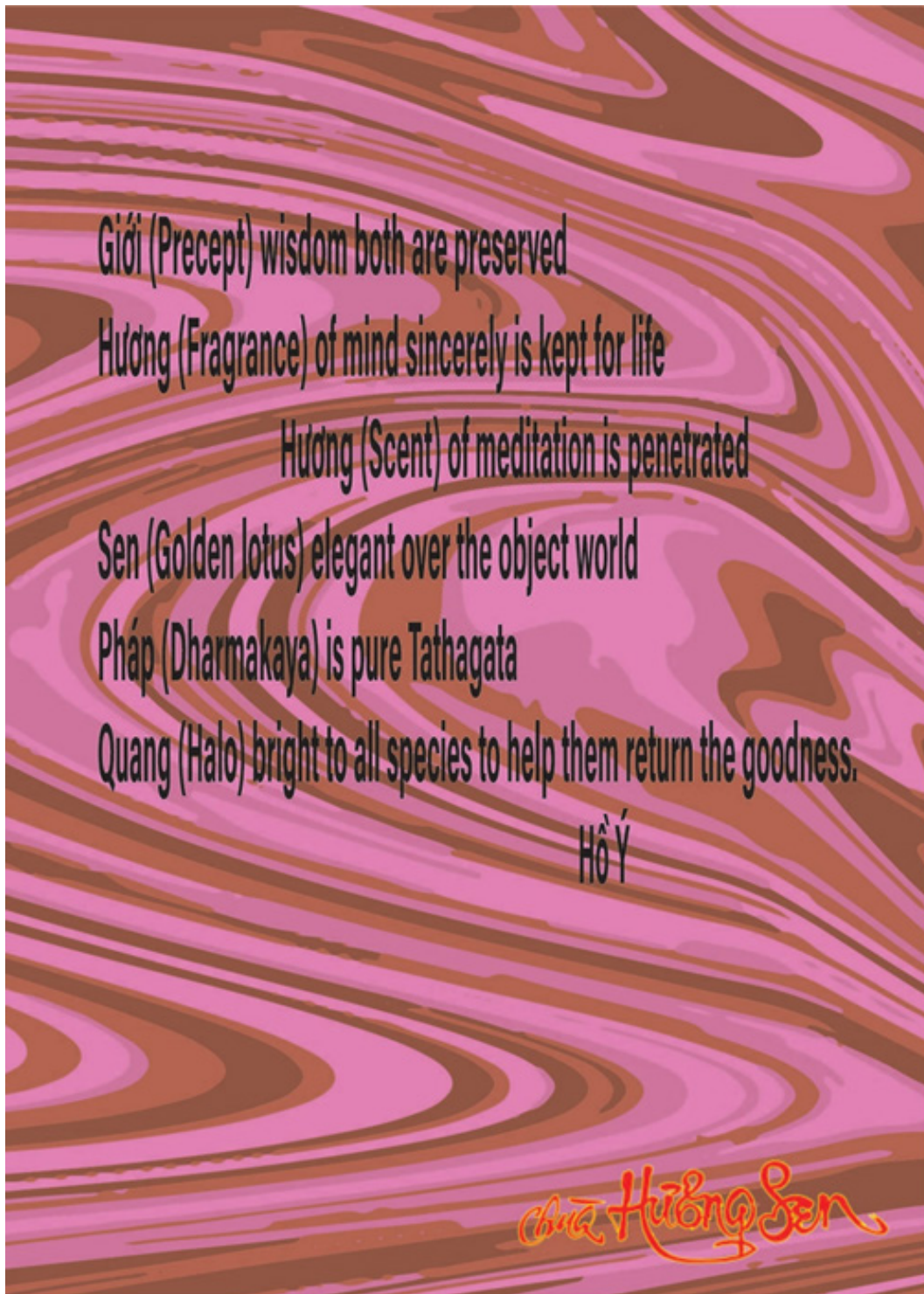
HƯƠNG (Fragrance)
displays conduct, preserves
GIỚI Precepts, Bhikkhuni
protecting the spiritual body.

Bh. Hương Sen

7.4. FRAGRANCE TO MOUNTAINS AND HILLS - HỒ Ý



7.5. THE GOLDEN ELEGANT LOTUS - HỒ Ý



7.6. REALIZE THE TRUE MIND - An Lạc Pháp Buddhist Youth Association



7.7. THE AWAKENED LIGHT – Diệu Bích, Diệu Ngọc & Diệu Sen



7.8. PHÁP QUANG RADIATES!- Chơn Tâm Tuyết & Tâm Hậu

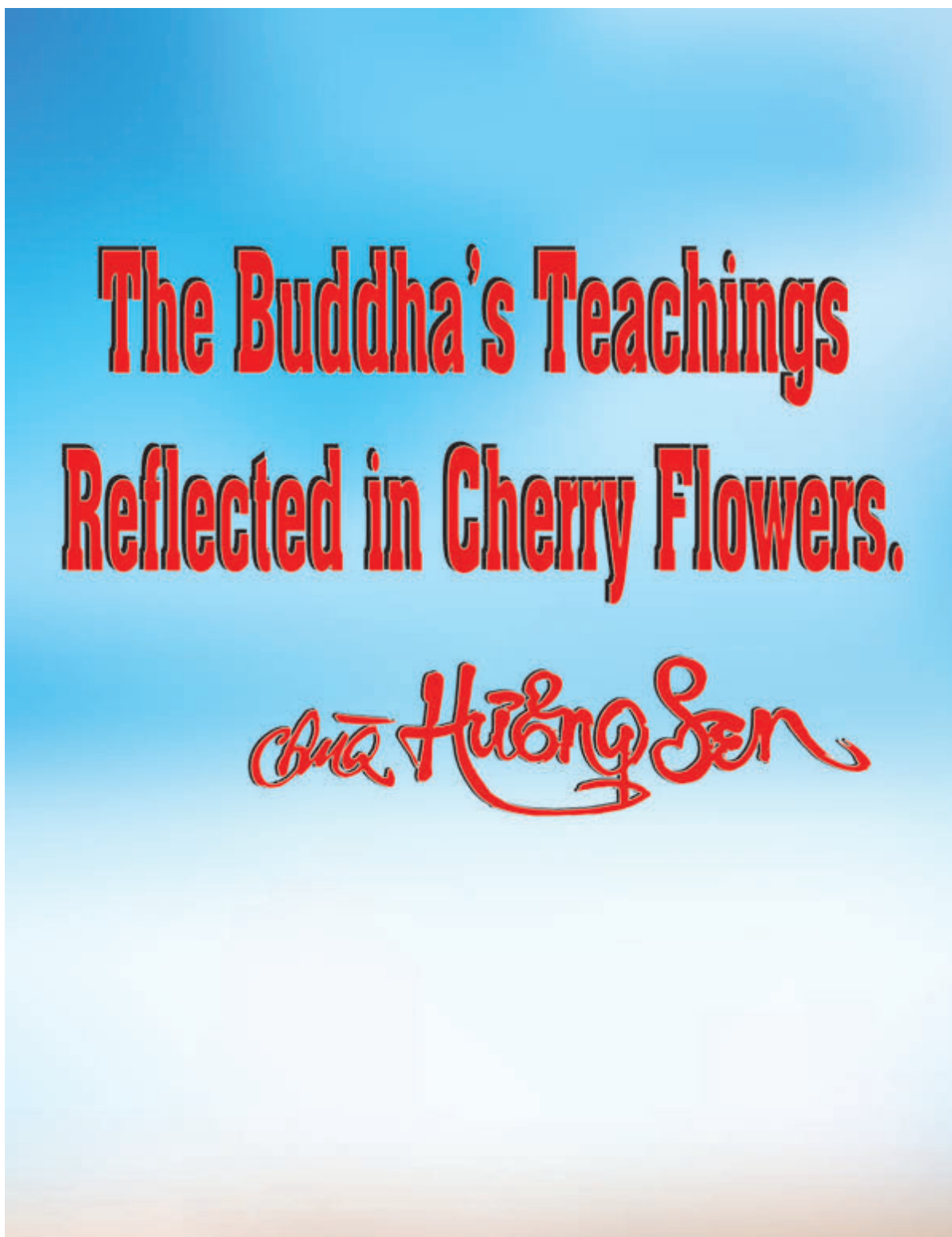


7.9. TRUST IN THE THREE GEMS – Diệu Ngọc, Chân Thiện & Viên Bảo Nhẫn



7.10. THE BUDDHA'S TEACHINGS REFLECTED IN CHERRY FLOWERS

Giác Nguyệt, Nguyễn Hạnh & Phương Anh

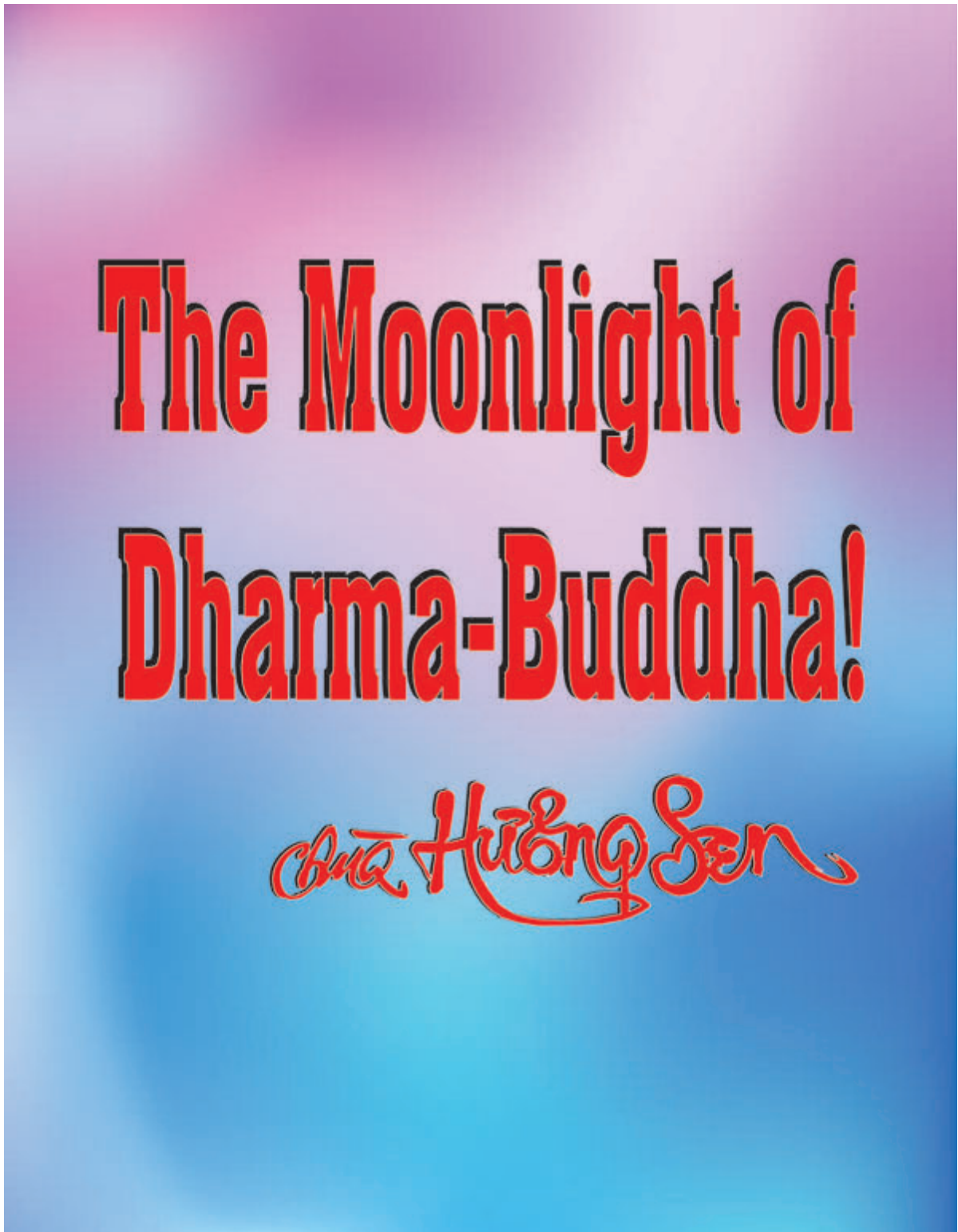


7.11. WHO IS THE FULL MOON WAITING FOR OVER A THOUSAND YEARS?

Viên Bảo Lê & Viên Bảo Tuyên



7.12. THE MOONLIGHT OF DHARMA-BUDDHA! - Tony, Ann, Thị Cảnh, Tuyết & Oanh



7.13. THE COMPASSIONATE STREAM FROM HƯƠNG SEN! - Diệu Linh & Thiện Đạt



7.14. LISTEN TO YOUR INNER MIND!- Thiện Giác & Ngô Ngọc



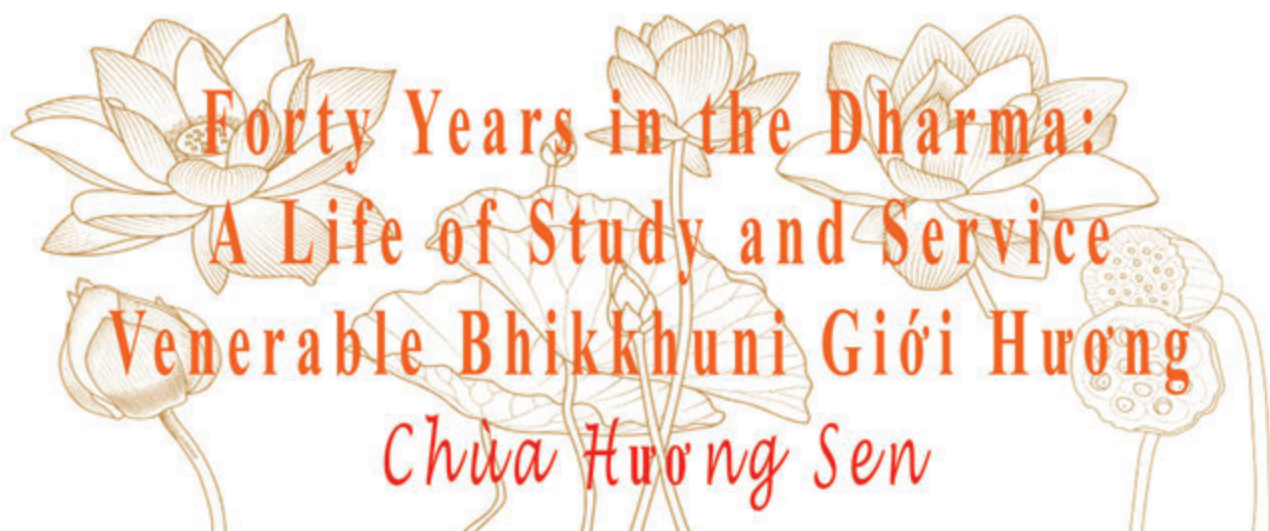
7.15. THE GIFT OF DHARMA!-Tịnh Thu, Xuân, Nguyễn & Tâm Hậu



7.16. COME AND GO IN FREEDOM - Thích Nữ Giới Hương







Forty Years in the Dharma:
A Life of Study and Service
Venerable Bhikkhuni Giới Hương
Chùa Hương Sen



Proposed Future Master Plan of Huong Sen Buddhist Temple - 2020

Architect: Francis Phat Ong, TPA Architects

Perspective Renderer: Huynh Nhat Truong

HUONG SEN BUDDHIST TEMPLE

19865 Seaton Avenue, Perris, CA 92570, USA

Tel: 951-657-7272 • Cell: 951-616-8620

Email: huongsentemple@gmail.com • thichnugioihuong@yahoo.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/huongsentemple>

Web: www.huongsentemple.com