

Bodhisattva Sangha

Newsletter



My Ten Reasons for Altruistic Home Leaving

Thân Thanh

Since 2011, I have participated in altruistic home-leaving (XGVT) twelve times, and I've just registered for this year's session from April 10 to April 21, 2025 at Pine Summit Camp in Big Bear Lake, a beautiful mountain area in Southern California. Many of my relatives and CK10 students have often asked why I am so dedicated to these short-term retreats, so today I want to share my ten personal reasons.

1. Altruism and Dedication

Altruistic means that our actions, words, and thoughts are for the benefit of others—bringing joy, alleviating suffering, and

helping untie emotional knots in their hearts. I participate in altruistic home-leaving as a temporary nun, dedicating my merits to loved ones in need of healing—those who cannot join the sangha due to illness, age, or other circumstances. I also pray for the souls of those who have passed, hoping they will be reborn in the Pure Land.

2. Learning and Self-Reflection

A Vietnamese proverb says, “When you travel a day, you learn a basketful of wisdom.” I leave home to study with Thay, practice with a sangha of like-minded individuals, and reflect on myself.

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These retreats help me recognize my bad habits and blind spots, teaching me how to transform them so I can become more pleasant, loving, and open-minded when I return to my family and community. Additionally, I get to visit beautiful places like Big Bear Lake, Joshua Tree National Park, or Koyasan in Japan, all while listening to Thay's insightful teachings.

3. Renewed Energy

Altruistic home-leaving is a short-term retreat, lasting about 10 days. When the session ends, I return home renewed—my body revitalized and my mind filled with positivity and optimism. I'm more open with the people around me, and my family members often seem kinder. As the saying goes, "absence makes the heart grow fonder."

4. Daily Renewal and Purification

My body and mind are renewed every day during XGVT. There are exercise and stretching sessions before meditation to prevent leg pain. Throughout the retreat, we are free from daily tasks such as shopping and

cooking, allowing us to enjoy nutritious vegetarian meals, attend Thay's inspiring dharma lectures, and practice or reflect with fellow sangha members.

5. Fulfillment of My Spiritual Needs

My love for learning and spiritual growth is fully nurtured. I am fortunate to have a Buddhist master who is eloquent, well-read, and knowledgeable not just in the Buddha dharma but also in fields like science, literature, art, and health. In class, I can ask him anything, and he uses skillful means to teach and guide us. Through platforms like Heart Opening TV and Radio programs, SoundCloud, YouTube, and Zoom, I can access his teachings and lessons, both in Vietnamese and English, whenever I need them.

(To be continued)

New Direction in My Life

I am a Buddhist but do not go to the temple very often. Before coming to the Compassionate Service Society. I had the opportunity to meet Buddhist Masters such as Venerables Thanh Tu, Nhat Hanh, Duc Niem, and Vien Ly, but I did not have enough affinity to study with these Masters.

In 2017, my cousin Kim Hanh invited me to the Compassionate Service Society. From then on, I began to understand and study the teachings of Master Hang Truong and I felt that his teachings were wonderful, profound, and very suitable for the life of today's society. In my mind, there was the desire to become a monk because of the noble meaning and benefits of this. However, my responsibility for my family and work did not give me a convenient opportunity to develop my mind to become a monk. Perhaps the worldly affinity was still stronger than the spiritual calling in the past, so the desire remained in my mind, not becoming a concrete action.

Last year, seeing that my responsibility to my family was fulfilled, I decided to quit my job to pursue a new direction in my life. In this direction, I rekindled the idea of



becoming a monk which I had not done in many years before. I feel the spiritual calling now more often and stronger than in worldly life. The Dharma teaching of the Master helped me broaden my perspective on the concept of practice, on the transformation of consciousness from egoism to altruism as the foundation for Buddhists to practice the Bodhisattva Path.

And so, I decided to register to participate in the XGVT program this year. I know this is a necessary transformation to help myself on the path of spirituality, I hope that studying and practicing XGVT will bring me deep inner peace, and the freedom that I have not truly felt in the years of struggling with work. With the wish to practice for others, I also want to help my family and relatives to live in compassion and wisdom.

*John Nguyen
Thân Khai Huyền Phong*

Developing Unconditional Love

I met Thay more than a year ago when he came to Houston to hold a Dharma Assembly and Mandala Ceremony. I had never studied Buddhism before, so after taking refuge in Thay, I started following my Buddhist brothers and sisters to learn more about Buddhism. Since then, I have learned a lot and realized that this life is very impermanent and how fortunate we are to have a precious human life.



So, I considered practicing something that needs to be done right now and should not wait until I have time to do so. Furthermore, through Thay's guidance, I understood that altruistic ordination is not only for myself but also helps me develop unconditional love. The more I learned, the more meaningful it became.

I often get sick, so I thought this was not only an opportunity to see my mistakes and errors, but also to repent and improve. Cultivation means to transform. The altruistic monastic course will certainly be a favorable situation and environment for me to open a new, more altruistic consciousness.

I sincerely vow to become a nun with that altruistic consciousness, leaving the everyday life out of love for all beings. I want to repay my parents and relatives and resolve creditors and karmic obstacles to help them transform. I also wish to connect with Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Please let me be a part of their enlightened network.

I vow to become a nun out of love for all beings.

Lý Băng Tâm

My Cherished Dream Comes True

Thuy Võ - Thân Khai Thí Nhâm

I grew up in a deeply devout Buddhist family. Every New Year's Day or Buddha's Birthday, my parents would take the whole family to the temple to offer our respects to the Buddha. On every full moon and new moon day, the whole family would eat vegetarian meals. This religious custom has been a part of my life, so Buddhism for me was limited to worshiping Buddha images and being vegetarian two or three days each month. Beyond that, I didn't know anything more, not even the names of many well-known Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, such as Kuan Yin and Samantabhadra.

After an incident in my family, I went to the temple to ask to shave my head. At that time, with a troubled mind, I only thought that shaving my head would make my life less miserable. However, the monk at the temple advised me not to do so, explaining that if I didn't have any vows, I shouldn't do it. And since I still worked, if people asked, I would have to find a way to explain, so it would be difficult for me when my "head-shaving" was not because I was committed to a monastic life or because I understood the noble meaning of head-shaving. I felt that the Master's advice made perfect sense,



so I gave up the idea of shaving my head to reduce suffering in life.

During the most difficult and stormy days of my life, I still knelt before Buddha and Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara to pray for me to have a strong faith in Buddhism, to show me the path to liberation. One day, a friend introduced me to the San Jose Compassionate Service Society, where I met Ms. Minh Tam. Last October, with a strange good fortune, I had the opportunity to attend the Mandala ceremony and pilgrimage in Taiwan. After days of getting to know everyone in the pilgrimage group, sincerely studying the Dharma teachings of the Master, and while sitting right in the middle of the main hall of the Dharma assembly in Taiwan, I felt as if I had found my way home, where my family is my fellow spiritual practitioners. I was deeply moved to tears by the solemnity and purity of the Mandala ceremony, by the profound power of the Great Compassion Mantra and by the Four Lotuses when the Master and everyone chanted together. I felt the warmth and mutual care of everyone during this precious pilgrimage.



My Cherished Dream Comes True

Thuy Võ - Thân Khai Thi Nhâm

Upon returning from Taiwan, I was determined to learn the mantra. And after only one month, I memorized the Great Compassion Mantra with the help and encouragement of Ms. Tam and Ms. Thao. Before that, I had tried for two years without success. Since I began practicing the Four Lotus Sutra and chanting the Great Compassion Mantra every day, I have noticed profound changes in my consciousness. My heart has grown more peaceful and optimistic. I don't know why, but I feel lighter in all relationships- from work to personal relationships. Situations that I had difficulty accepting a few months ago now become easier for me to accept. Most importantly, when I went back to the doctor, I was told that I no longer needed to take daily medication like before, but only when necessary.

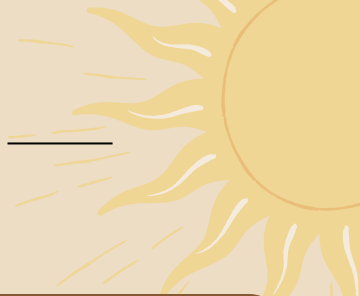
Therefore, when I learned about the XGVT program, I did not hesitate to register. Shaving my head and becoming a nun has been my long-cherished dream. I don't mind meeting

others with a shaved head in the future, because if needed, I can still wear a hat or wig. Moreover, my hair will grow back. When I was born, I didn't have much hair, so why should I fear of losing it now? I want to join XGVT because I have seen the miracle of practicing under the Master's guidance. I hope that the practice during XGVT retreat will help my heart be filled with the joy of the Dharma, and help my compassion develop without hindrance. May my consciousness become open like a lotus flower rising from the mud. I also wish that the XGVT retreat will be the foundation for my spiritual evolution, helping me to perceive the true light within my heart. With that clarity, I boldly vow altruism, to help those around me, alleviating their suffering and sadness.

In the past, when I went to the temple to worship the Buddha, I only knew how to pray for good luck and blessings for myself. But from now on, with every bow to the Buddha, I wish to share peace and serenity with others.



Contact & Information



Altruistic Home Leaving

From April 10, 2025

To April 21, 2025

at Pine Summit Camp, CA

XGVT Training Program

To receive training about the 4 lotuses dharma and meditation, please follow the link below to register.



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Anaheim, CA 92804

Email: xgvt@compassheart.com



COMPASSIONATE
SERVICE SOCIETY

Invitation to Mandala

You're invited to join the Mandala Ceremony in April 2025!

Please view the ceremony's program, timing, and location at <https://phaphoiquanam.com/>

XGVT Regional Coordinators

- 1- California - Orange County
Email: xgvt@compassheart.com
- 2- San Jose:
Email: cvu3001@gmail.com
- 3- San Diego:
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