



Applicant Name, Sangha, and Location: _____

Overview

After announcing your intention to Aspire as per the Charter of the Order of Interbeing, the attached forms implement the Aspirancy process. An Aspirant to the Core Community of the Order of Interbeing (OI) is on the Bodhisattva path. Bodhisattvas appreciate the help of all teachers and mentors. To promote consistency in mentoring and ensure that mentors and aspirants are supported, the North American Plum Village Dharma Teachers Council asks that everyone in North America who is pursuing formal acceptance as an Order of Interbeing aspirant use this form. A Dharma Teacher who has received Lamp Transmission in the Plum Village lineage must participate in the mentoring Order of Interbeing Core Community Aspirants. The Dharma Teacher may participate through personal mentoring, as part of a mentoring team, or as the supervising teacher for Order of Interbeing mentors. The Dharma Teacher may be lay or monastic. However, lay aspirants are typically mentored by lay Dharma Teachers. It is most beneficial if the Aspirant, Mentor, and Dharma Teacher are in the same geographic region so that they can practice together in person, at least on occasion. Aspirants should arrange to practice in person with their Dharma Teacher mentor at least once or twice a year while mentoring.

This application assists your local Sangha and supporting Dharma Teacher as they begin formal mentoring with you. In deciding whether conditions are ripe for formal acceptance and mentoring to begin, your mentoring Dharma Teacher will use this form and consult with your sangha and any other OI Mentors as appropriate.

On subsequent pages of this document you will find:

- **Pre-Aspiration Checklist:** Lists some basic requirements to become an Order of Interbeing aspirant. Helps you know if you are ready to enter into the Aspirancy process.

- **Sangha and Mentoring Team page:** Seeks information from you and signatures from your Sangha, your mentor(s), and the Dharma Teacher who will supervise your mentoring as part of a team or as the primary mentor. When the page is signed by all, your Aspirancy is “official.”
- **Aspirant’s Personal Information Page:** Seeks basic information about you and your Sangha practice, aids communication and understanding.
- **Questions for Reflection:** To be completed before applying for Aspirancy status. Usually revisited during mentoring and in various ways throughout your time with the Order.
- **Application Letter:** As part of your formal paperwork, please write a letter to Thầy, asking to be formally accepted as his student and a Tiep Hien Order Aspirant. Please add your letter to this packet.

Letter Suggestions and Process: When writing your letter to Thay, please remember that formal communication in Vietnam and in the Monastic Community begins with a greeting and well wishes. Monastics do not jump directly into business as is our Western lay custom. Ideally, your letter to Thay would be one page with a brief spiritual history and a clear statement of your aspiration in practice. Please address your letter to Thay. He may read it in person or a monastic or lay Dharma Teacher may read it on Thay’s behalf.

Please remember to write the identifying information at the top of each page as indicated. Please include the same information on any added pages and to each page of your letter. Pages can become separated.



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Pre-Aspiration Checklist

Checklist to help all determine your readiness for formal Aspiration.

- I practice regularly with my local sangha.
- I formally received The Five Mindfulness Trainings one or more years ago from Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh or a Tiep Hien Dharma Teacher.
- I am aware that by aspiring I am committing to practice 60 days of mindfulness each year; to study, practice, and observe the 14 Mindfulness Trainings; to regularly recite the trainings, and to actively participate in and support my Sangha.
- I recite the Five Mindfulness Trainings at least monthly.
- I study, practice, and observe all five mindfulness trainings.
- I have a daily practice that includes meditation.
- I am alcohol- and recreational chemical-free and will remain so.
- I have the support of my partner for becoming an Aspirant.
- I am familiar with the Order and the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings and the Charter of the Order as reflected in the book *Interbeing* and use and study the book.
- I have begun to observe regular Days of Mindfulness.
- I am working with the reflection questions that are to be written as part of this application.
- I have identified a Dharma Teacher or a qualified OI Member(s) who is/are willing to serve as mentor(s). [See Appendix A on p. 7 for mentor qualifications.]
- A Tiep Hien Dharma Teacher has agreed to support my Aspirancy and work with my mentor(s). [This is necessary when the mentor is not a Dharma Teacher. See p. 7.]

Notes and Comments as per the Checklist

Making Comments or Notes is Optional



Applicant Name, Sangha, and Location: _____

Sangha and Mentoring Team Information and Signature Form

My local sangha is: _____
and is described with contact information on page 4.

Local Endorsement

The person(s) authorized to formally endorse my
Aspirancy on behalf of my local sangha is/are :

Print name(s) on line above*

Person(s) named sign and date on line above

Identify this person's formal sangha role on line above. Please Print.

Telephone, address, and email for the person signing
above is: _____

* If your sangha process unfolds with multiple signatures you may
attach a signature page with the information requested above.

If another person is required by the local sangha to
endorse or sign off on your Aspirancy, please provide
the same information for this person below.

Print name on line above

Person named sign and date on line above

Identify this person's formal sangha role on line above. Please Print.

Telephone, address, and email for the person signing
above is: _____

Mentor

The OI Member(s) who is/are qualified to mentor and
has/have agreed to be my mentor(s) is/are:

Print name on line above

Print "True" Name, Ordination Date & Sangha on line above please.
.....

Print name on line above if more than one mentor

Print "True" Name, Ordination Date & Sangha on line above please.
.....

Print "True" Name, Ordination Date & Sangha on line above please.

Print "True" Name, Ordination Date & Sangha on line above please.

The senior mentor who will speak for the team
should complete the information below.

Print name on line above

Print location address on line above

Phone number(s) where you can be reached on line above please

email Address on line above please

Sign and Date on line above please

Participating/Supervising Dharma Teacher

I agree to accept the Applicant for Tiep Hien
Aspirancy and to support his/her mentors and his/her
practice as an Aspirant.

Tiep Hien Dharma Teacher, Sign and Date on line above please

Print name on line above

Print "True" Name, Ordination Date & Sangha on line above please.

Print Lamp Transmission date and location above please.



Applicant Name, Sangha, and Location: _____

Applicant's Personal and Practice Information

Personal Information (Please Print)

Name: _____

Residence Address w Postal Code: _____

Best "Snail Mail" Address if not your residence:

email: _____

Best Phone: _____

Five Mindfulness Trainings

Date Received: _____

Place Received: _____

Transmitting Teacher: _____

Lineage Name (__ of the Heart or __ of the Source):

Sangha with which I currently practice:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

eMail: _____

Website: _____

I have been practicing with this sangha for
___ years and ___ months.

Previous Sangha Practice

Please list the names and contact information for other sanghas with which you have practiced, including the location, tradition, and length to time you practiced with each. Include any formal or informal roles you may have taken on. Add pages if necessary.

Previous Aspirancy, and Personal Challenges

1) Previous Aspirancy — If you have previously applied to be, or have previously been an Aspirant, please explain when and where you were an Aspirant, and how and why that Aspirancy and mentoring ended or was suspended including all relevant names, locations, and contact information.

2) Personal Challenges — Often personal challenges motivate us toward practice as well as provide significant challenges for our personal and sangha practice. If you have struggled with such a challenge (abuse, addiction, mental health, and legal issues being prime examples), please either describe the condition, circumstances, and how you have practiced with such a challenge(s) OR indicate you would rather discuss this personally with the Dharma Teacher and take steps to arrange a time and place to do so.



Pre-Aspirant and Aspirant Questions for Reflection

Overview

Please use these questions to more deeply examine and communicate your Aspiration. Remember that looking deeply at these questions is a practice. There are no “correct” answers. They are for reflection and practice, to help you get clarity about your own spiritual path, and to help open up dialog with your mentor(s). Please type responses you share with your mentor(s).

Questions

1. **Motivation.** What motivates me to wish to receive the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings and thus join the Core Community of the Tiep Hien Order — the Order of Interbeing?

2. **Timing.** Why have I decided to state my desire to enter the aspiration process at this time?

3. **Practice.** How has my practice of mindfulness, expanding my capacity for understanding, love, and compassion, helped me to transform my own “ill-being”

— (e.g. anxiety, anger, fear, depression, regrets, craving, heedlessness, despair, distractedness?

— specific relationships and past and current experiences of “ill-being.”)?

— What are the challenges in the practice for me at this time?

— Where do I meet resistance, discomfort, and fear?

4. **Commitment.** I understand that the basic commitment of this undertaking is serving the Sangha.

— What gifts do I enjoy bringing to the Sangha?

— How will I make time and energy available to take responsibility for cultivating the well-being of the Sangha(s) of which I am a part?

— What barriers do I experience or anticipate in serving the sangha?

5. **Relationships.** How am I experiencing my relationships with my family, my Sangha family and with OI members?

— Are there those with whom I feel in conflict or would like to be in better harmony?

— How am I practicing to transform these relationships and “resolve all conflicts however small”?

— Are there those with whom I need to practice Beginning Anew?

— Are there those with whom I would like to practice more and get to know better?

— How can I initiate this relationship building?

6. **Consuming.** How am I working with mindful consumption?

— Have I released my use of, and any craving for, alcohol and recreational drugs?

— Am I attentive to my consumption not only of edible foods, but also of media and electronic devices?

— How have the Mindfulness Trainings supported me?

— How do I nurture myself and others?

— With which Mindfulness Trainings do I most need to practice?

— How will I proceed to initiate the needed practice?

7. **Plum Village Tradition.** How long and in what context have I been practicing within Thây’s tradition? (For example, local Sangha, retreats at one of our monasteries, other retreats, readings.)

— What areas of study would most assist me on the path?

— Am I familiar with the body of Thây’s work reflected in his books? Sutra translations? practices?

— Which books, sutras, and practices might I particularly wish to incorporate into my practice?

— What is my plan for doing this?

8. Root Spiritual Tradition. What was my root spiritual tradition and what is my relationship with it?

— How do I now relate to it (or them)?

— How do I integrate these roots with Thầy's tradition in ways that are mutually enriching?

9. Other Tradition(s). If I have had experience with other meditative traditions, how long was that experience and what prompted my transition to Thầy's practice?

— How have I reconciled any difficulties from this past?

— How do I incorporate the helpful elements from these practices into my current path?

10. Engaging Practice. How do I now use the practice of mindfulness in the context of my workplace and livelihood?

— How could I do this even more?

11. Exploring Concerns. What are my questions and concerns about my practice, the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings, and joining the Core Community of the Order of Interbeing?

12. Personal Questions. The following additional questions are particularly relevant for me to pursue. (Please share how you have been working with them.)



Mentoring Qualifications
Aspirant Application: Appendix A

Mentor qualification in our sangha has a long history of experimentation and evolution. We have arrived at a point where we can now bring all this experimentation and evolution together into a coherent and comprehensive system.

Our basic goal in mentoring has always been to support each other in deepening our practice and strengthening our Sanghas. A mentor's practice needs to be fresh and alive to mentor an aspirant effectively. To support both mentors and aspirants, the North American Dharma Teacher Caretaking Council has integrated our order's past extensive experience into the following qualification statement for mentors. The underlying requirement for mentoring is that a Dharma Teacher must be involved as part of mentoring, as set forth in the aspirant application.

There are three situations which qualify one to mentor. To accept an Order of Interbeing Aspirant for mentoring, one must:

1. Be a Dharma Teacher.

OR

2. Have been Ordained as a Core Community Member of the Tiep Hien Order (OI) for at least five years, during which time the Mentor has been consistently practicing with a Tiep Hien Sangha *and* have the agreement of a Dharma Teacher to provide support, assistance, and as necessary, supervision for mentoring this Aspirant.

OR

3. Have been Ordained as a Core Community Member of the Tiep Hien Order (OI) for at least one year with extensive previous OI Sangha and personal practice experience, *and* have the agreement of a supporting Dharma Teacher to supervise the Mentor and actively participate with both the Mentor and the Aspirant during the Aspirancy process. This would assume not less than significant quarterly contact among the Dharma Teacher, Mentor(s), and Aspirant, and personally practicing together in a formal setting of at least one day's duration (Retreat or Structured Mindfulness Day led by a/the Dharma Teacher) at least two (and preferably more) times during the Aspirancy.

It is the responsibility of the Dharma Teacher involved with team mentoring to assure that any formal Mentor who is not a Dharma Teacher is qualified for the role before signing off on the Aspirancy.

We also recognize that Mentoring is a maha sangha process. Dharma Teachers and OI Mentors are not the only resources to support the mentoring process. Sangha members who practice regularly with the aspirant, other Dharma teachers, and every Order member in the region may be useful support for the aspirancy. The mentoring team is encouraged to use all resources to develop and encourage deepening practice in this process.

Mentor Qualifications Revised February 16, 2012

Mentor Qualifications Finalized April 10, 2012

Entire Document Approved by DTS CTC November 7, 2012
