Great Venerable Master THÍCH HẢI QUANG

THÍCH HẢI QUANG was our Great Venerable Master and founder of Dharma Flower Temple and Pureland Esoteric Study Center Tucson, Arizona. He is also known as Master Vô-Niệm.

He was also the sole successor and blood nephew of our founder, Late Venerable Grand Master THÍCH THIỀN TÂM.

After leaving Vietnam in 1979, he arrived in the US in 1980. Continuing the legacy of Late Venerable Grand Master THÍCH THIỀN TÂM. Following the principles of Grand Master, He is his only successor to propagating the Dharma, which was founded by Grand Master: ESOTERIC- PURELAND.

As a monk who wholeheartedly cultivates and serves the Dharma, he built many monasteries. Therefore, wherever the Master's footprint passes, that place will have Buddha's Dharma propagating widely. Even in the refugee camp, he built the QUAN-YIN Temple in Pulau-Galang, Indonesia, and the Dharma Flower temple in Pennsylvania, New Jersey USA when he lived there.

Master is also the Founder of Dharma Flower Temple in Tucson, Arizona, USA.

From 1990-2011, at Hương Vân Pagoda, master cultivated night and day according to the teaching of Grand Master Đại Ninh *(Thích Thiền Tâm)* and the ancient virtuous sage of the past… Master wanted to achieve **"Reciting the Buddha's Samadhi"** to ensure his path to Pureland.

And he has achieved his wish!

Master was a person of:

- Descendants
- Dharma descendant
- Heirs to the Dharma; he is the only successor to the dharma line from Grand Master Đại Ninh abroad.

Why was he called as such?

a) Descendant:

Master was a nephew and also the closest pupil to Grand Master from within Viet-nam and abroad.

b) **Dharma descendant:**

Master was the one and only successor to the Dharma teaching from Grand Master. He has the authorization to propagate and circulate all the Dharma books from the Grand Master *(from which Grand Master had written or translated).*

- To widen the propagation of the dharma line from within Viet-nam and abroad.

c) Heirs to the Dharma:

Master was the only one who Grand Master had authorized to annotate andexplain all of his books – especially books about Pureland and Esoteric *"Esoteric-Pureland dual practice"* from which GrandMaster had created. After Grand Master had passed, he further expanded this style of cultivation, in order to benefit those who cultivate Pureland technique.

The reason,

I, Bảo Đăng, dare to say as such, because inside a book:

"Thinking of a teacher, HẢI QUANG wrote."

(There were about 100 poems about "thinking of a teacher" written by Master Bảo-Đăng read a poem written like this:

Last night dreamt of master's visiting,
Because of me, he lectured broadly.
Two golden pens, he gave me and said:
"Annotate and explain the Dharma to save the ignorant."

The Eastern land, soon, master will leave,
To save sentient beings, sixty-eight promises achieved.
Hidden cultivation, you soon need.
Nine tiers lotus, tomorrow will come."
……..
Awaken, mixed feelings of love and sadness,
"Master had taken refuge to the West," inside tearing apart.
My cultivation is trivial, talent is marginal,
Afraid of inability to achieve the responsibility master given,
More thinking leads to more worrying,
Hundreds of concerns so despairing!
(*Taken from* **Ân Sư Ngùi-Tưởng (Thinking of a teacher)** *poem #61)*

Through the meaning of this poem, one can sees that:

- Even though the student and teacher, uncle and nephew are separated by many thousands of miles…

Although the physical bodies were apart, the hearts were not apart.
One is far away, but the mind is not far away.

Grand Master was caring and loving toward his unfortunate nephew/disciple, who had to live far away; therefore, he would come to Master by consciousness to educate Master of the sutras, dharma, and teach and guide master to prepare for the future *(to continue Grand Master's work, annotate and propagate the Esoteric-Pureland technique, to save the ignorance)* by giving master *"two golden pens."*

Maybe, Grand Master had used those *"two golden pens"* to translate and write dharma books, or maybe there is another meaning, such as:

- **To translate, write and annotate the golden jeweled teachings from Buddha, Bodhisattvas, and Virtuous Masters one must use the golden pen to be worthy.**

(This is a sign of the ultimate respect for the sutras and Buddha's Dharma.)

And also because of Grand Master's will, *"wanting"* Master to find a hidden place to cultivate, so that his practice and wisdom can be rapidly increased *(through Grand Master's teachings in Master's dreams and with a handwritten letter from Grandmaster in 1989 – in order to have enough ability and wisdom to benefit the Buddhist dharma in general, and in particular, Pureland dharma).*

This is why in the end of 1990, before Grand Master passed away, Master entrusted all Buddhist affairs and temple to Bảo-Đăng, replacing him in charge, becoming the headmaster at the temple, and taking the place of the Abbot, so he could enter a hidden retreat indefinitely *(in a small town in the middle of the USA),* practicing *"Reciting the Buddha's Samadhi"...*

Of course, Master had made a *"promise"* that he will always support and teach Bảo-Đăng in any necessary Buddhist affairs that Bảo-Đăng has not yet thoroughly understood. To which, every year Master would return to the temple during important ceremonies such as Buddha's Birthday, the Vu-Lan Festival *(which is like a Buddhist's version of Mother's Day),* and Chinese New Year. If not, Bảo-Đăng wouldn't be able to take care of everything single handedly. So, once Bảo-Đăng was put in charge, he set off to his indefinite hidden retreat *(in a small, quiet, remote town in Middle, USA, a place where Quan Yin Bodhisattva had picked).*

In the book written by master, *"Hai-Quang Thi Tập",* Bảo-Đăng was able to read a few poems, such as:

Omaha, a small town name,
Hương-Vân pagoda, lay rest.
Everything is voided: – must chant Buddha's Name,
Amitabha six vowels: – to leave the human world.

Life, profit, name must all leave behind,
Morning wooden drum, afternoon bell, evening light incense.
Mind and heart take refuge toward retiring,
Reborn to Nine tiers lotus in Pureland.

In the end of December 1992, *(like many already know)* was the year Grand Master Đại-Ninh, aka **Vô-Nhất Great Venerable Thích Thiền Tâm** had passed away……..

That year, Master had lost the most and was most anguished – *(like many readers have read in the book, Vô-Nhất, a Venerable Buddhist Master in Modern Times.)*

Another poem written by master, in "*ẤN- SƯ Ngùi Tưởng*,"

Bảo-Đăng extracted a poem like this:

Not a good dream last night:
Outside the door, 2 people came, calling to me,
You must quickly return to the pagoda.
In a few months, Grand Master will go far away,
Hastily, I flew after them.
……..
Seeing my Master, his features are as beautiful as a flower.
Kneeling, holding onto Master I cried and begged,
Please stay because of me.
Compassionately looking at me...Master quietly spoke:
Hold back your sadness, don't yearn.
Sixty-eight earthly years now have ended.
Waving goodbye to the younglings, as I return home.
(Poem #64)

Grand Master had passed away…

Naturally, it was the saddest news and the most lost…

Although he lived far away, in a remote situation, in a distant land, far from his master, he still received the love, concern, and dharma teaching from the Grand Master- even if it was just teaching in his dreams. This proved that:

1) Master is not really lonely, nor sad, or unhappy about his fate.

And

2) Master's cultivation path in the dharma and his wisdom continued to increase without end.
This is very good indeed.
All Sutras, books about Pureland and Esoteric teaching which Grand Master had:
Translated *(or started the work)* when Grandmaster was still living.

Every book, one by one, Master Venerable THÍCH HẢI QUANG had annotated, explained in detail clearly, published and circulated these books within the country and abroad. Many more books about Pureland *(that Grand Master had compiled and translated)* got annotated and circulated widely as well.

All the books published were fully annotated and clearly explained their true meaning. No one had annotated like this to any dharma book prior and published the annotated version…In doing so, this allowed all Buddhists *(in various levels of understanding of the dharma)* to have a deeper understanding of Buddha's meaning. Because of this, those who read these books are truly happy, practicing earnestly, and following the exact true teachings of the Buddha.

But, how is this possible? We can attribute it all to one monk: Late Venerable Master THÍCH HẢI QUANG.

Though some people may ask, **"living in isolation, how could he understand the true meaning of the Buddha, the sutras** *(because there is no virtuous master teaching him)?"* This for sure, is not a problem because **if the heart and mind is pure, wisdom will be revealed.**

Similar to a scene:

In clear water, the moon will shine.
(In muddy water, the moon is a blur)

And in "*Hải Quang Thi-Tập*" written by Master, Bảo Đăng read a poem like this:

Often in dreams, seeing Master's guidance,
Theory, action together, wisdom will unfold.
In unfamiliar land, the path of practice must be preserved,
Through diligent cultivation, the foundation will be revealed.
The Pureland teachings should be widely embraced,
Propagate the Dharma for me, don't make mistakes.
The garden, a scenery of the Western Land,
Walking the path of the lotus will one day be attained.

Therefore, in the following years, Master, one after another, explained and compiled *(alongside personal works)* various volumes on the topic of Pure Land (Tịnh Độ) that the Patriarch had previously written, such as:

- **The Daily Practices of Western Pureland Buddhism** (700 pages) 1996
- **Đại Thừa Phật -Pháp Liễu Nghĩa Truyền Tâm-Ấn Luận** 2 Volumes (3000 pages) 1997
- **The Thirteen Patriarchs of Pureland Buddhism** (680 pages) 1998
- **Kinh Niệm Phật Ba La Mật** (600 pages) 2001
- **Thế Nào Là Xá Lợi?** (700 pages) 2004
- **The Unisha Viaja Dharani Sutra** (explain practice technique)
- **The Twelve Buddha's Names, A Repentance Ceremony to Eliminate Sins**
- **Philosophical Conversations with Buddhist Followers** 2 Volumes (600 pages each)
- **Kinh Hiền Nhân** (600 pages) 2006

Philosophical Conversations with Buddhist Followers is a compilation of many short lectures written regularly prior to the temple's ceremony. The annotations of Venerable THÍCH HẢI QUANG convey profound meanings and teachings in the scriptures, providing practical benefits for present and future Buddhist practitioners. Additionally, there are many other scriptures being translated, annotated, and compiled by Venerable Thích Hải Quang to serve as study materials for the Sangha, both in the present and in the future. The dissemination of these materials by the Dharma propagation of the organization has been ongoing. The teachings and discourses on Pureland *(along with other subjects)* by Venerable Thích Hải Quang have been recorded and widely disseminated to all places. They provide invaluable reference and study materials for novice and advanced practitioners, providing them with authentic Buddhist teachings to guard against being misled or deceived by false teachers and harmful influences. The teachings are in accordance with the traditions of Pureland and Esoteric Buddhism. Respectfully bowing our heads, thanking Master for his compassion toward Buddhist practitioners.

NAMO AMITABHA BUDDHA

For the past 28 years, Master has been strictly focused on cultivating and has had no contact with any other monks, hence he is completely isolated. Over a decade ago, Master said to his disciples,

"I won't live long; I will follow in the footsteps of the Founding Grandmaster and will pass away at the age of 68. I already know the exact date when I'll return to the Western Land. I have prepared in advance to transmit

all teachings of Buddhist doctrines and Esoteric practices to Bảo Đăng."

-"My dear disciples please strive to reform yourselves, practice the Twelve Buddha's Names Repentance daily, so that your negative karmic deeds may quickly be eliminated."

-"You must diligently practice chanting the mantras to cultivate both spiritual strength and wisdom. This will enable you to discern right from wrong and stay on the righteous path."

-"Make an earnest effort to single-mindedly recite the Buddha's name to secure your future rebirth to Pureland. Even after I return to the Buddha, all of you should continue your spiritual practice in seclusion. Brothers and sisters must respect and support each other, living in harmony, and always fulfilling their respective duties."

"What is essential to continue Buddha's work belonging to the two teachings, Esoteric Pureland and all the Dharani (mantras), I have exclusively transferred to my successor (Head disciple) Bảo Đăng. In place of me, she will continue to lead and pass on the Dharani to those disciples and practitioners who have a karmic connection with Bảo Đăng and also have a connection with Esoteric Pureland. Together, diligently practice until the day Bảo Đăng passes away. Only this way, can we hope that the teachings of Esoteric Pureland will continue to exist and flourish for a longer period."

Unbelievable, Master's entrusted words, guidance, and prophecies have come true. Master passed away and returned to the Buddha before reaching the age of 68. For nearly 31 years, from the time Master set foot in the United States until the day he passed, he never stepped into a doctor's office to seek medical treatment for any illness. Even during the 9 months he stayed at the temple for hospice care, he still refused to see a doctor, despite having a medical card and free access to healthcare facilities.

On the Lunar New Year of the Rabbit (2011), Master's health showed signs of improvement. He was joyful, gentle, and warmly welcomed and exchanged New Year's greetings with his disciples. He diligently continues his daily cultivation sessions. Three months later, he still remained in good health, alert, and continued to take care of himself while maintaining his daily practice. Master even signed his name on his own picture and the cover of his *"Funeral Ceremony"* video to give to his disciples as a gift. He then recorded a video delivering his final Dharma teachings, intending to send it to all his disciples and Buddhist followers present on the day of his memorial service.

For nearly a month, Master only consumed Chú water *(Blessed water)* and did not eat anything else. Before the day of his passing, he even went outside in the temple's ground to light incense in front of every Buddha and Bodhisattva statues, hands holding the Dharani mudra and mouth chanting mantras… asking all the noble beings to love and protect Bảo Đăng, so that she may be blessed in carrying out Buddha's works, as propagating the true Dharma still faced many challenges and obstacles, with the dangers and delusion and calamity prevailing.

One the morning of June 25, 2011, after bathing with Chú water, Master put on his traditional monastic robe and added Tỳ Lô robe with Tỳ Lô scarf on his head. He sat cross-legged on a high platform in front of the Western Triple Saints Altar *(Triple Saints: Amitablha Buddha, Quan Yin Bodhisattva, and Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva)* inside the Western Grand Hall, holding his prayer beads, and reciting Buddha's name.

At 1:40pm *(on the 24th day of the fifth lunar month in the year of the rabbit)* Master raised his hand to bid farewell one last time and peacefully passed away amidst the resounding sound of chanting of Amitabha Buddha name.

Master departed in a self-composed manner, exactly as he had foretold, just as Grandmaster Đại Ninh had predicted. Likewise, Master had previously informed his disciples of the exact date and month on which he would return to the Buddha.

We, the disciples, feel deeply honored and proud to have a Master- a Venerable Teacher full of compassion and wisdom like Master. That day, his karmic connection to this world has ended, Master has departed, leaving behind his bereaved children wandering in the Dharma path, facing a life filled with challenges and sufferings.

We, the disciples, once thought:

Master would always stay with us, guiding us on the Dharma path.

Little did we know:

The Dharma Seat now lay vacant,
Dharma Flower Temple has lost the presence of our honorable Master.
Seven jeweled pond inscribed his name to the highest tier lotus,
In this realm, Master lay at peace, like a thousand autumns in slumber.

We, the disciples, humbly bow and bid farewell to our Venerable Master, paying our respects with three prostrations.

Namo Dharma Flower Buddhist Temple, the enlightenment path,
Homage to the Great Venerable Master Vô-Niệm HẢI QUANG.
also known as NIỆM PHẬT TĂNG, an enlightened Venerable Teacher.

The serene passing took place on Saturday, June 25th, 2011, at 1:40pm *(July 8, 2011 Lunar calendar).* Born in 1945 and leaving us in 2011, he devoted 38 years to monastic life.

The ceremonial farewell took place on Saturday, July 10th, 2011, at 1:10pm, at the EVERGREEN Cemetery in Tucson, Arizona, USA.