



## **International Young Bodhisattva Program: For Spiritual Resurgence & Social Transformation**

31 October – 13 November 2023

Buddhist Hongshi College, Taoyuan, Taiwan

A collaboration of Buddhist Hongshi College &  
The International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB)

### **The Crises Facing Our World**

In many countries, enduring peace and social justice remain elusive due to capitalism, authoritarianism, and the dominance of the corporate sector and non-democratic governments. The ecological consequences of human consumption and a profit-driven ideology have fueled greed, competition, oppression, and exploitation. Structural violence has led to poverty, ecological crises, discrimination, and conflicts. Imbalanced development and societal divisions hinder the potential of the young generation. Buddhist thinkers and activists propose compassionate alternatives. The timeless teachings of the Buddha hold the potential to guide humanity towards a peaceful and sustainable world.

### **What Can Buddhist Thinkers and Social Activists Do?**

Buddhist thinkers and social activists propose alternative views and practices rooted in compassion and non-violence to counter the negative outcomes of Third World development. The Buddha's teachings passed down for over 2,500 years, remain relevant. Across Asia, these teachings are applied through various means, including Dhammic socialism, Meritism, critical thinking, and discourses on Gross National Happiness. Initiatives like the Samdrup Jonghkar Initiative, Buddhist models of leadership, and peace and ecological actions by Buddhist movements demonstrate the strength and international recognition of socially engaged Buddhism. Youth play a vital role in achieving genuine peace and social justice, utilizing their potential to bring about lasting change guided by the timeless teachings of the Buddha.

### **The International Young Bodhisattva Program**

The International Young Bodhisattva Program (31 October - 13 November 2023) established by INEB, in conjunction with Buddhist Hongshi College, aims to develop young people's confidence, capacity, and commitment to social and spiritual transformation. It is an exposure program for youth to learn about social engagement - centred on values of lovingkindness and compassion—in Asia, particularly in the context of Taiwan.

### **Who Would Benefit From This Program?**

Whether you were born in a Buddhist family, came to Buddhism on your own, or do not identify as a Buddhist at all, this program is designed to strengthen your understanding of the roots of “dukkha” or “suffering” in our modern societies, as well as potential ways to address them.

Applicants should:

- Possess strong English language capacity.
- Be around 20-40 years of age.
- Demonstrate interest in Buddhism/spirituality/personal & societal transformation/social engagement & change.
- Be open to learning with others.

### **What Will You Learn from Taiwan & this Program?**

The content is based on a three-mode learning process involving intellectual, spiritual and physical practice. Sessions will include panels, discussions, community-building activities, meditation practice, as well site visits to understand opportunities and challenges for social engagement in Taiwan and the role played by Buddhists and other activists. Participants will learn from the teachings of the Buddha Dharma's Four Noble Truths to develop an analysis of societal structures and institutional sources of power and use various tools to critically examine and investigate conditions in their lives and communities. Participants will also build connections and a network of kalyanamitta (comprised of other youth and elders, teachers, and resource people) from across Asia and other parts of the world. Participants will also visit a select number of civil society organizations, government agencies, and Buddhist institutions in Taiwan that demonstrate how the island offers examples of pioneering work on the environment, gender and sexuality, democracy and free speech, and chaplaincy and palliative care. Finally, participants will be asked to conduct mapping exercises on social engagement in their countries and create action plans to consider what contributions they can bring home and how they can foster future leadership in their communities.

### **Tentative Content**

- What is Engaged Buddhism?
- Community Agreements & Community Building
- Analysis of "Social Dukkha" and Power & Structural Inequality
- What makes Buddhism and Social Engagement in Taiwan Unique?
- Storytelling & Creative Expression
- Meditation & Nature Walks
- Buddhist Health & Exercise
- Site Visits:
  - Dharma Drum Mountain
  - Tzu Chi Recycling Center
  - Tzu Chi Hospital
  - Buddha Education Foundation
  - Xiang-Kuang Mountain Temple
  - Dongyan Shan National Forest
  - Buddhist Art at the National Palace Museum
  - Museum of World Religions
  - Taipei's Little Myanmar
  - Night Markets

### **Requirements for Selected Participants**

- Expenses for own airfare and visa (costs of room, board, and programming are covered)

- Full, active attendance, including in the 7 Oct pre-departure briefing
- Two presentations
  - To prepare before arrival: Introduction to your work and/or country context (5 min)
  - To prepare during the program: Final creative presentation about what being a bodhisattva means to you and how you can nurture more bodhisattvas in your country (5 min). To be accompanied by a 1-page written report. Examples include: social media campaigns, photostory, videos, theatre, poems, songs, podcast

### **Program Timeline**

Application Deadline	- 20th August 2023
Shortlist for Interviews Notified	- 30th August 2023
Interviews	- 1st – 10th September 2023
Selected Participants Notified	- 12th September 2023
Deadline to Confirm Attendance-	15th September 2023
Begin Visa Process	- 15th September 2023
Logistics Information Sent	- 25th September 2023
Online Pre-Departure Briefing	- 7th October 2023
Arrival at Hongshi College	- 31st October 2023

### **On Completion of this Program, Participants Will:**

- Possess a wider understanding of Taiwan and of the potential for engaged Buddhism.
- Identify ways to bring Bodhisattva intent and motivation into their communities.
- Initiate plans to nurture future Bodhisattvas in their local area.
- Develop foundational tools and frameworks to analyze social structures and address dukkha on the personal and societal levels.
- Build a network of companions and teachers with shared values to support them in their goals.
- Gain more confidence in their naturally inquisitive heart-minds.
- Demonstrate a greater ability to critically think about and question structures that impede the development of Bodhicitta.

APPLY HERE

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdAME72eKs1YUCVZ5dFh9PIqppSqhe3zgnHL3kgqsAw5DI3Wg/viewform?usp=pp\\_url](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdAME72eKs1YUCVZ5dFh9PIqppSqhe3zgnHL3kgqsAw5DI3Wg/viewform?usp=pp_url)