

**ARISE Sangha**  
Awakening Through Race, Intersectionality, and Social Equity  
Report to North American Dharma Teachers Sangha, March 2018  
*“Creating Inclusive Community”*

Dear Beloved Community,

We are at a pivotal moment in our Mahasangha life. With deep awareness that we are Thay’s continuation, this is a tremendous opportunity to reflect and to shape our Mahasangha future. Imagine attending a Sangha, a daylong, or retreat where the participants reflect our diverse society? How can we re-imagine and re-construct decision-making processes and current structures so that future Sangha leaders, OI members and teachers in our Beloved Community reflect our society? How do we awaken together?

Last March 2017, ARISE presented to the Dharma Teacher Caretaking Council a set of recommendations prepared by the ARISE People of Color (POC) subgroup. We strongly encourage the review of these recommendations and that action be taken upon these recommendations. We are grateful for activities many of you have undertaken, individually and collectively, to advance the work of white awareness and to understand race, power and privilege. We believe that this work is absolutely critical for the future of our Mahasangha. In a recent survey of the U.S. Order of Interbeing members, 84% identified as White European heritage, among other findings.

To help move matters forward, we offer these inquiries:

- How do you see yourself, the Dharma Teachers body as a whole, and the Dharma Teacher Council helping ARISE fulfill its mission? (See Mission and Aspirations below.)
- How have you, the Dharma Teachers body as a whole, and the Dharma Teacher Council been working to address inclusion and intersectionality\* in our mahasangha?
- Are there ways that ARISE can help you, the Dharma Teachers body as a whole, and the Dharma Teacher Council in the work of inclusion and intersectionality?

In order to assist our collective work, we welcome your questions, responses, and support. We would be most grateful if we could hear from you by June 1, 2018. You can e-mail us at [connect@arisesangha.org](mailto:connect@arisesangha.org)

ARISE is grateful for the recent fundraising partnership with Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation: Giving Tuesday campaign to address the under-representation of people of color and low-income people in our Sanghas.

**Our Vision states:** We aspire to engage the Plum Village community worldwide in the work of healing the wounds of racial injustice and social inequity, beginning with looking deeply within ourselves. We seek a worldwide Manyfold Community that is consciously and committedly engaged in the work of transformation and healing of racial injustice and social inequity. In so doing, we aspire to nourish and protect Beloved Community in our Manyfold Community and beyond.

**Our Core Mission includes engaging in a process of understanding and building Beloved Community by:**

- Creating safe and loving spaces for people of color to heal from the trauma of racial injustice and inequity;
- Creating safe and loving spaces for white allies of people of color to engage in looking deeply, understanding and healing from implicit bias and other forms of discrimination;
- Creating safe and loving spaces for white allies to understand the systemic legacy of racial inequity and to provide opportunities for learning and practice;
- Creating safe and loving spaces for people of color and white allies to come together to look deeply and engage in healing together;
- Looking deeply at and addressing the under-representation of people of color and low-income people in our individual Sanghas and the collective Sangha.

**Our Aspirations are to:**

- 1) co-create a network within our sangha communities for practitioners who are interested in racial justice and racial and social equity issues;
- 2) encourage the sharing of resources and share information on articles, teachings, and practices on racial justice and racial and social equity;
- 3) co-create a sacred, courageous space for discussion and exchange on mindfulness and racial justice and racial and

social equity issues;

4) encourage diversity and inclusion in leadership within the mahasangha sangha and Order of Interbeing (OI) leadership; 5) Serve as a resource for sanghas and practice communities in the Plum Village tradition and beyond, sharing ideas and facilitating ARISE presentations at retreats, regular sangha gatherings, and other events.

## 2017 Activities

### January

- ARISE Sharing offered at Mariposa Retreat, Ukiah, CA
- ARISE Sharing offered at No. California Sangha Facilitators Day of Mindfulness
- Women's March – participated and partnered with Sanghas across the U.S.

### February

- Update Letter to Order of Interbeing Community--Vision, Purpose, Activities

### March

- Deer Park Order of Interbeing Retreat -Engaged Practice session: Intersectionality
- ARISE POC Subgroup recommendations presented to Dharma Teacher CTC

### April

- Grant submitted to Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation for ARISE Coordinator position
- Blue Cliff Order of Interbeing Retreat - ARISE focus

### June

- Rose Apple -ARISE White Awareness Retreat, with 6 monastics, 7 Dharma teachers, and various OI members

### July

- Demographic Survey distributed to U.S. Order of Interbeing members

### August

- Order of Interbeing Process: Letter to New York Dharma Teachers
- ARISE offering at Earthholder Retreat

### September

- ARISE members served as Seed Friends to Many Streams, One Source Retreat - Monastic Tour, 2017

### November

- Fundraising partnership with Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation: Giving Tuesday campaign for ARISE-related projects supporting POC in the practice of mindfulness
- [Website](#) updated
- [Facebook Page](#) updated
- White Awareness Days of Mindfulness
  - for Mindfulness Practice Community of Greater Boston, November 2017
  - for Cambridge Insight Meditation Center, scheduled for June 2018
  - for Berkshire Mountain Laurel Sangha, scheduled for October 2018

### November-December

- Online White Awareness Series (Sr. Ocean and AJ Johnston)

### December

- ARISE [Coordinator position](#) posted

We know that as a Dharma Teacher, you are committed to liberation of all beings from suffering. Since racism has been such a source of separation and suffering, our practice and our Teacher call us to embrace the work of creating a diverse and inclusive community. We stand ready to assist your efforts and welcome your ideas, experience, and energy toward this deep aspiration we all share. Please feel free to contact any of us, and visit the ARISE website for lots of resources.

**In gratitude, ARISE Core Group members:** *Antoinette Gonzalez, Brian Kimmel/Chan Lien Dinh, Jo-Ann Rosen, John Bell, Jon Salunga, Kaira-Jewel Lingo, Lyn Fine, Marisela Gomez, Minh-Chau Le, Sister Ocean, Sister Peace, Valerie Brown, Victoria Mausisa*

\*Intersectionality – refers to how different forms of discrimination can combine, interact and overlap. Different forms of discrimination include [gender](#), [race](#), [class](#), [ability](#), [sexual orientation](#), [religion](#), [caste](#), [age](#), nationality and others. The term, intersectionality, was developed by Kimberle Crenshaw and can be used to understand how systemic injustice and social inequity occur on a multi-dimensional basis.