

Thich Chuc Thanh, a Buddhist monk who serves at the Dong Hung Temple in Virginia Beach, wrote a poem and dedicated it to local Vietnam veterans as part of a retreat the temple hosted in early May. Local musician Narissa Bond crafted a song from the English translation of the poem and performed it at the event. Find the poem below.

Listening to the inviting sounds of mother earth and sky

I sit here listening to the inviting sounds of mother earth and sky,
Looking deeply into it, so that I see the miracle of manifestations.
That the love of all past generations runs through my whole body,
With a realization that soldiers protected me from injury.
Now sitting here in the mist of fragrant incense,
Observing my body is like watching dew in the morning vanish.
Knowing what is true happiness, so that I don't blame anyone now.

I sit here listening to the inviting sounds of mother earth and sky,
Meditating with joy and happiness in a peaceful environment.
Although my body is weak and still has many scars,
I celebrate that I am still here at this very moment.

I sit here listening to the inviting sounds of mother earth and sky,
Breathing in all goodness to heal sickness,
Then sharing this great fortune with all beings, especially those
Who lost their lives in the battlefields of the past!
Who couldn't come home to see their families,
Or revisit old friends from their hometowns.

I sit here listening to the inviting sounds of mother earth and sky,
Appreciating these very precious moments.
Practicing the path leading to awakening quest,
Understanding that I still have many good conditions,
To serve life and to treasure loving-kindness for both sides of the war.

I sit here listening to the inviting sounds of mother earth and sky,
Contemplating this practice that shines in all walks of life.
Each step brings peace and joy into my true home,
Where I can see the beauty of my country,
And to all of my brothers and sisters on earth,
Repairing and strengthening all lives
With a renewed effort of love and peace!

Virginia Beach
April 17, 17
T. Chúc Thanh