

Deer Park/Plum Village Peepal# Pilgrimage February 2025:

In the Footsteps of the Buddha - A Pilgrimage retreat through India and Nepal led by the Plum Village Monastics of Deer Park Monastery and Dharmacharya Shantum Seth

February 9 – February 22, 2025

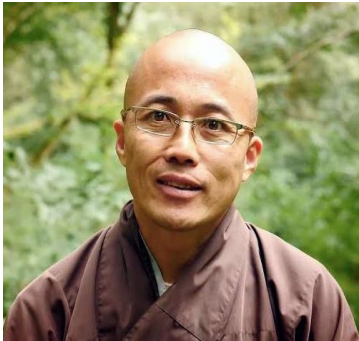
#Peepal (Ficus religiosa) is the species of tree under which the Buddha awakened in Bodh Gaya

Sponsorship: For every 6 people who sign up for the pilgrimage, one monastic is sponsored free on the pilgrimage. You are also welcome to independently sponsor a monastic to come on the pilgrimage.

• TEACHER BIOGRAPHY

The pilgrimage will be led by the monastics of Deer Park and Dharmacharya Shantum Seth

Monastics of Deer Park Monastery/Plum Village



Brother Chân Pháp Dung was ordained on February 4th 1998 as a member of the “Apple” family at Plum Village France. He received full bhikshu ordination on December 18th 2001, and received the Lamp Transmission from Thầy and became a Dharma Teacher in 2004. He is the former abbot of Deer Park Monastery in California from 2001 to 2010.

He was born in Vietnam in 1969, came to the US when he was nine years old. He received a professional BA in Architecture from the University of Southern California, and worked as an architect/designer for four years before becoming a monk. He enjoys playing, learning and sharing mindfulness with children of all ages. Br. Pháp Dung helped to establish Deer Park Monastery and other US centres, creating meditation programs and retreats for children, teens, families, and young adults, as well as planning its halls and infrastructures. He has led mindfulness retreats in North and South America, China, Hong Kong, India, Bhutan and Germany. He is most inspired by meditation as a method of examining and cultivating the mind, of the individual and of the collective; and by community building as a method to heal and develop society.

Given Br. Pháp Dung’s passion for restoring connection with mother earth, he is involved in the Happy Farm (combining organic farming, community living, and the mindfulness practice in Upper Hamlet), and represented Plum Village at the pivotal COP21 climate conference in Paris. Throughout the year, he is involved in supporting Wake Up Schools (bringing mindfulness practice and well-being into education), Wake Up Hubs (creating sustainable, ethical, healthy, alternative non-sectarian urban practice centers for young people), and Wake Up retreats around the world. In the US, Br. Pháp Dung has offered mindfulness workshops for organisations such as Google, Facebook, Salesforce, and the World Bank. Br. Pháp Dung is happiest when he is immersed in nature. He loves writing, drawing, singing, swimming, drinking tea, and performing rituals of the native American people.



Dharmacharya Shantum Seth is an ordained teacher who was ‘Transmitted the Lamp’ by Thich Nhat Hanh in 2001. He is the foremost expert on sites associated with the Buddha and has been leading pilgrimages since 1988. He worked with the United Nations on volunteering, peace, and social development for more than 15 years, and has been a Senior Advisor to the World Bank and the Government of India on pilgrimage tourism. He has co-authored books such as *Walking with the Buddha*, *Volunteers against Conflict* and been a consultant for films like BBC-Discovery’s *Life of the Buddha* and BBC-PBS’s *The Story of India*.

At each pilgrimage site along the way, Shantum will tell stories of the Buddha’s life and offer teachings to help us understand the Buddha as a human being, the drama of his life and the significance of what he taught. We will schedule time for daily sitting and walking meditation, regular discussions, and contemplative time for ourselves. The creation of a traveling sangha will be an important aspect of this trip, giving the journey a greater cohesiveness and building a sense of support for those seeking to deepen their practice.

DAILY SCHEDULE & SPECIAL EXCURSIONS

Our retreat schedule will include daily sitting and walking meditation, often starting with a morning meditation at one of the Buddhist sites. This will be followed by breakfast at the hotel, after which we’ll visit one of the Buddhist sites listed in the itinerary. Shantum will offer a detailed talk on that site in the context of the Buddha’s life and teachings, and what was happening in the area many centuries ago, while also making it relevant to our times. Pilgrims will have some time at the site to walk around, after which we will have lunch. We’ll rest after lunch, after which we may visit another site associated with the Buddha or go to a village, school, home and meet with interesting people etc. We return to the hotel by evening in time for dinner. The monastics will lead us in many of the practices.

On the days we travel, the itinerary will vary slightly, and there will be some flexibility depending on the size, needs, and interest of the group.