



As Western Buddhist leaders, we unreservedly condemn the recently imposed policy of separating immigrant children from their parents at the US-Mexican border.

Over the past few weeks, thousands of children have been inhumanely taken from their parents by US Customs and Border Protection, in a policy that has been condemned by the United Nations and many international human rights observers. Indeed, no other country has a policy of separating families who intend to seek asylum.

Whatever the legal status of those attempting to enter the US, separating children from their parents is a contravention of basic human rights. Parents seeking asylum make long, dangerous and arduous journeys in an attempt to find safety and well-being for their precious children. Ripping these vulnerable children from their parents is cruel, inhumane, and against the principles of compassion and mercy espoused by all religious traditions. From a Buddhist perspective, it is the close bond between parents and children that nurtures not only the physical well-being of children, but their psychological health and their moral formation.

Separating children from their parents and holding them in detention inflicts terrible and needless trauma and stress on young children that hampers and damages their development, causing long-term damage. This policy being employed on United States soil is morally unconscionable. That such egregious actions be employed as a deterrent for families seeking entry and/or asylum in the U.S. – using the sacred bond between innocent youth and their parents – is unjustifiable on any level. We suggest that our current defenders of this policy visit some of these border crossings and child detention centers so they can experience for themselves the present effects of their decisions. It is difficult to conceive that anyone having compassion for our world's children and their families, and who witnesses such pain and anguish for themselves could continue to uphold such a practice.

As people of faith and conscience, we feel that it is important that we speak out clearly in defense of basic human rights at this time, calling for an immediate end to this heartless practice. In doing so, we join the voices of many religious leaders and congregations that have unreservedly condemned this policy of separation. This policy is a serious violation of the rights of the child and must be stopped today.

Signed:

Rev. Tenku Ruff
Soto Zen Buddhist Association, President

Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi
Buddhist Global Relief, Chair
Buddhist Association of the United States, President

Rev. Shugen Arnold
Zen Mountain Monastery, Abbot
Zen Center of NYC

Rev. Linda Ruth Cutts
San Francisco Zen Center, Central Abbess

James Lynch
Buddhist Council of New York, President

Rev. angel Kyodo williams
newDharma Community, Spiritual Director, USA
Buddhist Action Coalition, Co-Founding Organizer, New York

Rev. Kosen Gregory Snyder
Brooklyn Zen Center, Senior Teacher
Buddhist Action Coalition, Co-Founding Organizer, New York

Rev. Zenshin Greg Fain
Tassajara Zen Mountain Center, Head of Practice

Rev. Wendy Egyoku Nakao
Zen Center of Los Angeles, Abbot

Rev. Shinchi Linda Galijan
San Francisco Zen Center, President

Sharon Salzberg
Insight Meditation Society
Barre, MA

Rev. Hoka Chris Fortin
Everyday Zen Foundation, Dharma Heart Zen

Rev. Shosan Victoria Austin
San Francisco Zen Center

Rev. Zenki Mary Mocine
Vallejo Zen Center, Abbess

Rev. Jokai David Blackwell
Yokoji Zen Mountain Center, Vice-Abbot

Rev. Myozan Kodo Kilroy
Irish Buddhist Union, President

Eihei Peter Levitt
Salt Spring Zen Circle, Founder

Rev. Kanzan Bruce Fortin
Occidental Laguna Sangha

Rev James Myoun Ford
Blue Cliff Zen Sangha

Rev. Myogen Kathryn Stark
Sonoma Valley Zen Group

Rev. Koshin Christine Palmer
Marin Zen Meditation

Rev. Anne Seisen Saunders
Sweetwater Zen Center
National City, CA

Rev. Melissa Myozen Blacker
Boundless Way Zen Temple
Worcester, MA

Rev. Josh Jiun Bartok
Greater Boston Zen Center

Rev. Renshin Bunce
Beginner's Mind Zen
San Mateo CA

Frank Ostaseski
Metta Institute, Sausalito CA

Eugene Cash
Spirit Rock Meditation Center, Teachers Council, Woodacre, CA
San Francisco Insight, Founder, San Francisco CA

Larry Yang
Spirit Rock Meditation Center, Teachers Council, Woodacre, CA
East Bay Meditation Center, Co-Founding Teacher, Oakland CA
Insight Community of the Desert, Founding Teacher, Palm Springs CA

Oren Jay Sofer
Spirit Rock Meditation Center, Teachers Council, Woodacre, CA

Rev. Gesshin Greenwood
Blue Cliff Zen Sangha

Rev. Teijo R Munnich
Great Tree Zen Women's Temple, Abbess
Alexander NC

Joryu Harris
Treetop Zen Center

Rev. Myo-O Habermas-Scher
Dharma Dance Sangha
Minneapolis, MN

Phoebe van Woerden
Pine Mountain Buddhist Temple, Head Monk
Ozena Valley CA

Andrea Fella
Spirit Rock Meditation Center, Teachers Council, Woodacre, CA
Insight Meditation Center, Teacher, Redwood City, CA

Barbara Salaam Wegmüller
Spiegel Sangha
Zen Peacemakers Switzerland

Beth Sternlieb
InsightLA
Santa Monica, CA

Anne Cushman
Spirit Rock Meditation Center

Erin Treat
Vallecitos Mountain Retreat Center, Guiding Teacher, Vallecitos NM
Spirit Rock Meditation Center, Teachers Council, Woodacre, CA
Durango Dharma Center, Resident Teacher, Durango CO

Rev. Patricia Dai-En Bennage
Mt. Equity Zendo, Jihoji, Abbess Emerita
Lewisburg, Pa

Rev. Eido Frances Carney
Olympia Zen Center
Olympia, Washington

Rev. Kenshin Catherine Cascade
Bird Haven Zendo
Cheshire, Oregon

Roland Wegmueller
Spiegel Sangha
Zen Peacemakers Switzerland

Rev. Mark Lancaster
Generous Heart Sangha
Bainbridge Island, Wa

Dr. Bonnie Duran
Spirit Rock Meditation Center, Teachers Council, Woodacre, CA
Indigenous Wellness Research Institute
University of Washington, Seattle

Rev. Taigen Dan Leighton
Ancient Dragon Zen Gate
Chicago, Illinois

Rev. Kojun Dana Lederhos
Upright Noble Zen
Anchorage, Alaska

Dr. Jack Kornfield
Spirit Rock Meditation Center
Woodacre California

Rev. Grace Schireson
Central Valley Zen
Stanford, California

Rafe Jnan Martin
Endless Path Zendo
Rochester, New York

Rev. Eugene Bush
Santa Cruz Zen Center
Arcata Zen Group, California

Rev. Jiko Nakade
Daifukuji Soto Mission
Kona, Hawai'i

Rev. Jisen Coghlan
Boise Zen Center
Boise, Idaho

Rev. Myō Denis Lahey
Hartford Street Zen Center, Abbot

San Francisco, California

Jeffrey Bon Soeng Kitzes
Kwan Um School of Zen
Oakland, California

Rev. Dr. Douglas San'un Phillips
Empty Sky Sangha
West Cornwall CT/ Lexington MA

Nikki Mirghafori
Spirit Rock Meditation Center, Teachers Council, Woodacre, CA
Insight Meditation Center, Redwood City, CA

Kittisaro & Thanissara
Sacred Mountain Sangha, Guiding Teachers, Sebastopol, CA
Spirit Rock Meditation Center, Teachers Council, Woodacre, CA
Insight Meditation Society, Core Teachers, Barre, MA
Dharmagiri Sacred Mountain Retreat, Guiding Teachers, S.Africa

Paul Gyodo Agostinelli
Eon Zen Center
Boulder, CO

Arlene Lueck
San Francisco Zen Center
San Francisco, California

Tim Sampson
Calgary Soto Zen
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Rev. Daigaku Rumme
Confluence Zen Center
St. Louis, MO

Rev. Colin Gipson
San Antonio Zen Center
San Antonio, Texas

Rev. Ben Connelly
Minnesota Zen Meditation Center
Minneapolis, MN

Rev. Ryuzen Robby Pellett
One Pine Hall
Seattle WA

Barry Magid
Ordinary Mind Zendo
New York, NY

Robert Chodo Campbell
New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care, Guiding Teacher

Koshin Paley Ellison
New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care, Guiding Teacher

Dosho Port and Tetsugan Zummach
Nebraska Zen Center, Teachers
Omaha, NE

Myoshin Kate McCandless and Shinmon Michael Newton
Mountain Rain Zen Community, Co-guiding teachers
Vancouver, BC Canada

Eiko Joshin Carolyn Atkinson
Everyday Dharma Zen Center
Santa Cruz, CA

Rev Dr Zen Ho Taikyo Morgans
Buddhist Council Wales, Vice Chair
Zen Association Wales
Lampeter, Ceredigion, Wales, UK

Rev. Zenshin Florence Caplow
UU Buddhist Fellowship and UUCUC
Urbana, IL

Rev Diane Eshin Rizzetto
Bay Zen Center
Oakland, CA

Dojin Sarah Emerson and Korin Charlie Pokorny
Stone Creek Zen Center
Sebastopol, CA

Rev. Petra Hubbeling
Zen Peacemakers Low Lands
The Netherlands

Edward Espe Brown
Peaceful Sea Sangha
Fairfax, CA

Rev. Myoshin Kaniumoe
'Alaneo Zendo
Hilo, Hawaii, USA

Rev. Genjo Marinello
Dai Bai Zan Cho Bo Zen Temple: Chobo-Ji
Seattle, WA, USA

Rev. Myoyu Andersen
Great Plains Zen Center
Monroe, WI

Rev. Jyoshin Clay
Dharma Rain Zen Center
Portland, OR, USA

Rev. Peg Syverson
Appamada
Austin, TX USA

Mushin Terris
Sangha Jewel Zen Center
Corvallis, OR

Benjamin Mui Pumphrey
Shenandoah Zen
Waynesboro, VA

Rev. Nomon Tim Burnett
Red Cedar Zen Community
Bellingham, WA

Rev. Daishin McCabe
Zen Fields
Ames, Iowa

Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat
Zen Studies Society and Zen Center of Syracuse, Abbot
New York, NY and Syracuse, NY

Rev. Kotoku Crivello
Deep Spring Temple, Resident Head Priest
Zen Center of Pittsburgh

Rev. Michael Shoryu Fieleke
Morning Star Sangha
Newton, MA

Rev. Dokai Georgeszen
Hokyoji Zen Practice Community
Eitzen, MN

Rev. Jisho Warner
Stone Creek Zen Center, Abiding Teacher
Sebastopol, CA

Rev. Jodo Cliff Clusin
Prairie Mountain Zen Center
Longmont, CO

Heather Sundberg
Spirit Rock Meditation Center
Mountain Stream Meditation Center, CA

Judy Roitman
Kansas Zen Center
Lawrence, KS

Matthew Brensilver
Spirit Rock Meditation Center, Teachers Council

Heiku Jaime McLeod
Treetop Zen Center, Oakland Maine

Rev. Enkyo O'Hara
Village Zendo, New York City

Rev. Domyo Burk
Bright Way Zen, Portland OR

Rev. Jisan Tova Green
San Francisco Zen Center

Pamela Weiss
Spirit Rock Meditation Center, CA

Seiso Paul Cooper
Two Rivers Zen Community, Guiding Teacher
Narrowsburg, NY

Rev. Josho Pat Phelan
Chapel Hill Zen Center, Abbess

Rev. Shodo Spring
Mountains and Waters Zen Community

Rev. Konin Cardenas
Ekan Zen Study Center

Eve Myonen Marko
Green River Zen Center

Val Meiren Szymanski
Bamboo in the Wind Zen Center, Abbess

Anka Spencer
Puerto Compasivo
Mexico

Donald Rothberg
Spirit Rock Meditation Center, Teachers Council, Woodacre, CA
East Bay Meditation Center, Oakland, California

Rev. Reirin Gumbel
Milwaukee Zen Center

Rev. Gerry Shishin Wick
Rev. Ilia Shinko Perez
Great Mountain Zen Center, Co-spiritual Directors
Berthoud, CO

Rev Joan Hogetsu Hoeberichts
Heart Circle Sangha, Abbot
Ridgewood, NJ

Seido Martin
Empty Field ~ Zen West, Guiding Teacher
Eugene & Blachly, OR

Rev. Hirosato Yoshida
Soto Mission of Hawaii, Shoboji, Resident Minister
Honolulu, Hawaii

Rev. Jundo Cohen,
Treeleaf Sangha

Ian Forsberg
Hokoji, Guiding Teacher
Arroyo Seco, NM

James Baraz
Insight Meditation Community of Berkeley
Spirit Rock Meditation Center

Rev. Jill Shunzan Kaplan
Zen Heart Sangha
Woodside CA

Rev. Desmond Gando Gilna
Sacramento Zendo, CA

Sharda Rogell
Spirit Rock Insight Meditation Center, CA

Kate Lila Wheeler
Spirit Rock Meditation Center, Teacher

Barbara Joshin O'Hara
Village Zendo
New York City

Rev. Myozen Joan Amaral
Zen Center North Shore
Beverly, MA

Alexander Haley
Northeast Minneapolis Meditation Community

Gil Fronsdal
Insight Meditation Center
Redwood City, CA

Susie Harrington
Spirit Rock Meditation Center, Teachers Council
Desert Dharma, Guiding Teacher, Moab, UT

Rev. Inryu Bobbi Ponce-Barger
All Beings Zen Sangha
Washington DC

Dr. Ann Pirruccello
Vista Zen Center
Vista, CA

Rev. Joan Jiko Halifax
Upaya Zen Center, Abbot
Santa Fe, NM

DaRa Williams
Spirit Rock Meditation Center, Teachers Council
Insight Meditation Society, Guiding Teacher, Barre MA
New York Insight Meditation Center, Guiding Teacher, New York, NY

Rev. Jay Rinsen Weik
Rev. Karen Do'on Weik
Buddhist Temple of Toledo

Rev. Jeanne Dokai Dickenson
Wild River Zen Center
Nevada City, California

Rev. Hozan Alan Senauke
Berkeley Zen Center
Berkeley, California

Rev. Haju Sunim
Zen Buddhist Temple
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Rev. Eido Espe
Des Moines Zen Center

Rev Zoketsu Norman Fischer
Everyday Zen
Muir Beach CA

Rev. Gyokei Yokoyama
Long Beach Buddhist Church
Long Beach, CA

Michael Kieran
Honolulu Diamond Sangha
Honolulu, HI

Rev. Seikai Luebke
Pine Mountain Buddhist Temple
Maricopa, CA

Rev. Joan Halifax
Upaya Zen Center
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Dana DePalma
Spirit Rock Meditation Center, Teachers Council, Woodacre, CA

Rev. Toshu Neatroun
Dragon Chant Zen Center
Hume, VA

Joseph Goldstein
Insight Meditation Society
Barre, MA

Mark Coleman
Spirit Rock Meditation Center, CA

Anna Douglas, PhD
Spirit Rock Meditation Center, Co-Founding Teacher
Insight Meditation Tucson, Guiding Teacher

Edward E. Hong
Insight Meditation Society, President
Barre, MA

Ryushin Paul Haller
San Francisco Zen Center
San Francisco, CA

Rev. Steve Aishi Sarian
Three Treasures Zen Community
San Diego, CA

Joanne Friday
Rhode Island Community of Mindfulness
Wakefield, RI

Diana Winston
UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center
Spirit Rock Meditation Center

Daniel Terragno
Rocks and Clouds Zendo, Founding teacher and Spiritual Director
Sebastopol, California

John Martin
Spirit Rock Meditation Center, Teachers Council
Insight Upper Market, San Francisco, Guiding Teacher

Peter Schneider
Beginner's Mind Zen Center
Northridge, CA

Dr. J. Lee Nelson
Everyday Zen
Seattle, WA

Debra Chamberlin-Taylor
Spirit Rock Meditation Center, Teachers Council

Alexis Santos
Insight Meditation Society
Barre, MA

Ryuten Paul Rosenblum
Genrinji

Rev. Koun Franz
Zen Nova Scotia

Rev. Daijaku Kinst
Rev. Shinshu Roberts
Ocean Gate Zen Center, Capitola CA

Susan KoDo Efird
Sky Above Great Wind

Jeanne Anselmo, Dharmacharya
Community of Mindful Living, Long Island, NY

Joshin Byrnes
Upaya Zen Center, Vice-Abbot

Rev. Meido Moore
Abbot, Korinji Rinzai Zen Monastery
Reedsburg, WI

Henry Shukman
Mountain Cloud Zen Center, Head Teacher
Santa Fe, NM

Rebecca Bradshaw
Insight Meditation Society, Guiding Teacher, Barre, MA
Insight Meditation Center of Pioneer Valley, Guiding Teacher
Easthampton, MA

Narayan Helen Liebenson
Cambridge Insight Meditation Center, Guiding Teacher
Insight Meditation Society, Guiding Teacher, Barre, MA

Greg Scharf
Insight Meditation Society, Guiding Teacher, Barre, MA

Rev. Kathy Isshin Havens
Soto Zen missionary for South America
Jisui Zendo - Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil