

# THE LOTUS BUD

Newsletter of the Lotus Buds Sangha  
Issue No 1 August 2008



## WELCOME TO THE LOTUS BUD

Welcome to the first edition of *THE LOTUS BUD* a new publication of the Lotus Buds Sangha. The newsletter has been generated from within the “Wednesday Group” that meets at the Buddhist Library in Camperdown, Sydney but we hope it will be of interest to all the members of the wider Sydney Sangha and to any one interested in joining us in the practices of mindful living.

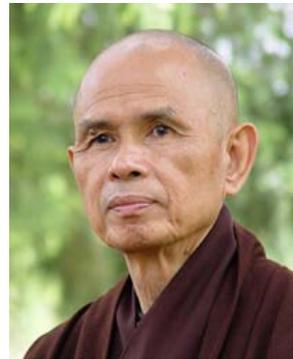
Our purpose in producing this bulletin is to offer support to the Sangha by providing information about our activities, words to nurture our practice and above all a space for members to share their experiences. We plan to publish news of upcoming events, accounts of past activities, guidance from Thich Nhat Hanh and other senior practitioners and most importantly your contributions.

In this our first edition we have modest ambitions but we hope that from small acorns an Oak tree can grow. So please consider sharing with us an account of your experiences on the path. Supporting each other and learning from every single member of the Sangha in this way is a means for us to grow personally and as a community.

In the meantime, we hope there is something of value for you in this first copy of *The Lotus Bud*.

## WHO WE ARE

*The Lotus Buds Sangha* is a community inspired by the Buddhist teachings of Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh (pictured below).



We aspire to live fully in each moment for the peace and happiness of ourselves and all beings. We meet regularly to observe the art of mindful living and to foster a supportive community of practitioners.

We meet at 7:30 each Wednesday at Buddhist Library, Church Street, Camperdown, Sydney.

## *My Practice of Gratitude*

Generating thoughts of gratitude is another way of practising mindfulness, opening my heart and developing the positive emotions of happiness, joy, and love within myself. The practice of gratitude helps to remind me that I am not here by myself; I am here in relationship with everyone and everything. It helps me feel connected to others. I have found this practice to be very healing.

Everything has the potential for developing gratitude. I listen to the birds outside and give thanks for the blessings of nature. If there is a clear blue sky I give thanks for the beautiful day. If it is raining I give thanks for the rain that gives life to the plants and fills up the dams for our drinking water. If it is windy I give thanks for the wind that clears away the pollution and brings us fresh air.



This practice of generating thoughts of gratitude is something I often do at the beginning of my sitting meditation. As I settle myself I look around and give thanks for all that I have around me. Once I start this practice I am always surprised at how much I have to be thankful for. I am thankful for the soft carpet that I sit on and all the people who worked on the production of the carpet so that I can be warm and comfortable. I am thankful for the clothes I am wearing and all those who

have worked in factories and shops so that I have the opportunity to buy clothes for myself. I am thankful to all the truck drivers who have transported them to make them available to me.



Most of all I find it very healing to develop thoughts of gratitude for the people closest to me in my day-to-day life: my family and friends. When I practise mindfulness and am truly present with my loved ones it is easier to notice all the little things they do for me. I realise how important it is to tell them how special they are and how much I appreciate them and enjoy being with them. I don't think I do it enough.

Once I began the practice of generating gratitude I noticed the wonderful interconnectedness that I have with all things living and non-living. I realized that I could be happy because there is a sun in our universe, a moon and the stars that shine at night, clouds that sweep across the sky and bring us rain. If they didn't exist we wouldn't be here. One day in meditation I had a vision of my life as a tapestry. I could see all the threads woven together and representing the interdependence of all my experiences. As the vision continued to unfold the tapestry became huge and covered the earth. I couldn't find myself at all. There was only the interdependence of all life. It was the tapestry of Life itself.

*~ Coral Miles*

## *Mindfulness*

Mindfulness is the energy of being aware and awake to the present moment. It is the continuous practice of touching life deeply in every moment of daily life. To be mindful is to be truly alive, present and at one with those around you and with what you are doing. We bring our body and mind into harmony while we wash the dishes, drive the car or take our morning shower.

Mindfulness involves deliberately and purposefully placing ones attention on the present moment in a non-judgmental fashion. When walking we are aware that we are walking. When sitting we are aware that we are sitting. Awareness of the breath is the anchor by which we stay mindfully in the present.

## *Breathing*

Our breathing is a stable solid ground that we can take refuge in. Regardless of our internal weather- our thoughts, emotions and perceptions- our breathing is always with us like a faithful friend. Whenever we feel carried away, or sunken in a deep emotion, or scattered in worries and projects, we return to our breathing to collect and anchor our

mind. We feel the flow of air coming in and going out of our nose. We feel how light and natural, how calm and peaceful our breathing functions. At any time, while we are walking, gardening, or typing, we can return to this peaceful source of life. We may like to recite:

***“Breathing in I know that I am breathing in.***

***Breathing out I know that I am breathing out.”***

We do not need to control our breath. Feel the breath as it actually is. It may be long or short, deep or shallow. With our awareness it will naturally become slower and deeper. Conscious breathing is the key to uniting body and mind and bringing the energy of mindfulness into each moment of our life.



### ***HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE LOTUS BUD***

If you have something you would like to contribute to *The Lotus Bud* please offer it to Chris Barker in the following ways:

- \* In person at the Wednesday night group
- \* By e-mail to: [cbarker@uow.edu.au](mailto:cbarker@uow.edu.au)
- \* By post to: Chris Barker, Faculty of Arts, University of Wollongong, NSW 2500

Please write an account of your practice, a poem, pass on news or anything else that inspires you. Contributions can be short or long but need to be under 500 words.

## *About Thich Naht Hanh*

The Most Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh (Thây), our spiritual teacher, is a Vietnamese Buddhist monk, a poet, a scholar, and a peace activist. His life long efforts to generate peace and reconciliation moved Martin Luther King, Jr. to nominate him for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1967. He founded the Van Hanh Buddhist University in Saigon and the School for Youths of Social Services in Vietnam. When not travelling the world to teach “The Art of Mindful Living”, he teaches, writes, and gardens in Plum Village, France, a Buddhist monastery for monks and nuns and a mindfulness practice centre for lay people



**Our Main Activities** See: <http://www.lotusbudsangha.org/>

### **Mindfulness Meditation Class**

Every Wednesday night of the week we welcome all to come join us for a dharma talk and meditation practice at the Buddhist Library.

### **Mindfulness Days - monthly**

Once a month we offer a day of mindful practice and contemplation. The day normally consists of chanting sitting meditation, outdoor walking meditation (If weather permits), a dharma talk and lunch.

### **Mindfulness Trainings Recitation Days - second monthly**

As well as integrating meditation and Mindful Living in our days, our dedicated members take on further commitments and vows by upholding the 5 Mindfulness Trainings and/or the 14 Mindfulness Trainings.

### ***What's On in AUGUST***

*Mindfulness Meditation on Wednesday Nights – current theme is Cultivating the Mind of Love.*  
7:30. Buddhist Library, 90 Church Street, Camperdown Sydney.

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> August:** *Rose Ceremony – a day of mindfulness devoted to our parents beginning at 9am at the Buddhist Library, Camperdown*

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> August:** *Five Mindfulness Trainings Recitation. For details of the time and venue and see <http://www.lotusbudsangha.org/>*