



THE LOTUS BUD

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Right view

The first practice of the Noble Eightfold path is Right View. Right View is, first of all, a deep understanding of the Four Noble Truths - our suffering, the making of our suffering, the fact that our suffering can be transformed, and the path of transformation.

The Buddha said that Right View is to have faith and confidence that there are people who have been able to transform their suffering. Venerable Shariputra added that Right View is knowing which of the four kinds of nutriments that we have ingested have brought about what has come to be. Shariputra described Right View as the ability to distinguish wholesome roots (kushala mula) from unwholesome roots (akushala mula). In each of us, there are wholesome and unwholesome roots - or seeds - in the depths of our consciousness. If you are a loyal person, it is because the seed of loyalty is in you. But don't think that the seed of betrayal isn't also in you. If you live in an

environment where your seed of loyalty is watered, you will be a loyal person. But if your seed of betrayal is watered, you may betray even those you love. You'll feel guilty about it, but if the seed of betrayal in you becomes strong, you may do it. The practice of mindfulness helps us identify all the seeds in our store consciousness and water the ones that are the most wholesome. 🍵

The seed of Buddhahood, the capacity to wake up and understand things as they are, is also present in each of us. When we join our palms and bow to another person, we acknowledge the seed of Buddhahood in him or her. When we bow to a child this way, we help him or her grow up beautifully and with self-confidence. If you plant corn, corn will grow. If you plant wheat, wheat will grow. If you act in a wholesome way, you will be happy. If you act in an unwholesome way, you water the seeds of craving, anger, and violence in yourself. Right View is to recognize which seeds are wholesome and to encourage those seeds to be watered. This is called "selective touching."

We need to discuss and share with each other to deepen our understanding of this practice and the practice of the Five Mindfulness Trainings, especially the fifth, about the "foods" we ingest. [Selections from Thich Naht Hahn (1999 Broadway Press) 'The Heart of the Buddha's Teachings' (THOTBT) pp51-52].

We have an idea of happiness. We believe that only certain conditions will make us happy. But it is often our very idea of happiness that prevents us from being happy. We have to look deeply into our perceptions in order to become free of them. Then, what has been a perception becomes an insight, a realization of the path. This is neither perception nor non-perception. It is a clear vision, seeing things as they are. 🍵

Our happiness and the happiness of those around us depend on our degree of Right View. Touching reality deeply-knowing what is going on inside and outside of ourselves-is the way to liberate ourselves from the suffering that is caused by wrong perceptions.

Right View is not an ideology, a system, or even a path. It is the insight we have into the reality of life, a living insight that fills us with understanding, peace, and love. 🧘

Right View cannot be described. We can only point in the correct direction. Right View cannot even be transmitted by a teacher. A teacher can help us identify the seed of Right View that is already in our garden, and help us have the confidence to practice, to entrust that seed to the soil of our daily life. But we are the gardener. We have to learn how to water the wholesome seeds that are in us so they will bloom into the flowers of Right View. The instrument for watering wholesome seeds is mindful living - mindful breathing, mindful walking, living each moment of our day in mindfulness.

[Selections from THOTBT pp54-55].

Relatively speaking, there are right views and there are wrong views. But if we look more deeply, we see that all views are wrong views. No view can ever be the truth. It is just from one point; that is why it is called a "point of view." If we go to another point, we will see things differently and realize that our first view was not entirely right. Buddhism is not a collection of views. It is a practice to help us eliminate wrong views. The quality of our views can always be improved. From the viewpoint of ultimate reality, Right View is the absence of all views. [THOTBT p56]. 🧘

The eight practices of the Noble Eightfold Path nourish each other. As our view

becomes more "right," the other elements of the Eightfold Path in us also deepen. Right Speech is based on Right View, and it also nourishes Right View. Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration strengthen and deepen Right View. Right Action has to be based on Right View. Right Livelihood clarifies Right View. Right View is both a cause and an effect of all the other elements of the path. [THOTBT p58]. 🧘



Sitting...

Sitting meditation is like returning home to give full attention to and care for our self. Like the peaceful image of the Buddha on the altar, we too can radiate peace and stability. We sit upright with dignity, and return to our breathing. We bring our full attention to what is within and around us. We let our mind become spacious and our heart soft and kind. 🧘

Sitting meditation is very healing. We realize we can just be with whatever is within us- our pain, anger, and irritation, or our joy, love, and peace. We are with whatever is there without being carried away by it. Let it come, let it stay, then let it go. No need to push,

to oppress, or to pretend our thoughts are not there. Observe the thoughts and images of our mind with an accepting and loving eye. We are free to be still and calm despite the storms that might arise in us.

...and 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 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. 🧘



My practice

Image by herby.fr

Dear Sangha, I would like to share with you some of my practice routine. My routine varies but I describe the basic practice, which works for me. I have borrowed nearly all of these ideas from Thay's teachings, from the Tibetan tradition that I practiced for sometime, and from reading and talking to others. I hope that you will find it helpful.

The environment – When I enter the space for meditation I try to do everything mindfully, setting the cushions, turning on the light, walking across the room. All actions during the practice are a meditation.

I try to make the environment pleasant and calming and if I can, free from interruption; although this isn't always possible. Sometimes I meditate on the ferry and there is noise all around. But I will have success with the interruptions if I have had a regular practice in a quiet place to build my concentration and mindfulness. 🧘

Posture – I have learned that posture is very important. Sitting with a straight back on an array of cushions or sometimes on a chair allows me to sit in comfort, without too much pain in my knees or back. I find that as I practice my suppleness improves and the sitting becomes easier and I can sit for longer

periods. My head is straight with chin slightly tucked in and my hands are rested gently on my knees.

Dedication – When I am seated I dedicate the practice: “May this practice contribute to the joy, happiness and peace of all beings including myself. May it help to free us all from suffering, attachment and aversion.”

Just Sitting - The next few minutes is spent concentrating on the breath and calming my mind. “Breathing in I know I am breathing in. Breathing out I know I am breathing out”. I may spend 5 to 15 minutes or more doing this. If I'm distracted I gently let it pass and bring my mind back to my breath. 🧘

Chant - I then spend a few moments with a one syllable chant or short song. I try to focus on the resonance of the sound. I concentrate on the physical sensation of the sound as it starts in my centre and travels throughout my body, including my hands and toes. This helps me come home to myself and become aware of myself and my whole body; present here and now.

After a few more moments of sitting I will then meditate on the gatha, ‘I have arrived’. This gatha, written by Thay, helps to deepen my practice. I may spend a few minutes on each line reciting the first part on the in breath and the second part on the out breath. After reciting a line several times I will stop and quietly meditate on what the line means for me, trying to remain aware of my breath throughout.

“I have arrived, I am home” – This next line builds on an awareness of self, and of wholeness; all aspects of myself coming home. I am aware of my body; my hands, face, feet, my heart, my centre. I feel my thoughts, memories, fears, and joys come home to me now and rest. There is a sense of arrival and of coming home; of peace and dwelling. 🧘

“In the here and the now” – I become aware of my surroundings and my presence in the room, garden, beach or wherever I am. I become aware of the people with me or in nearby rooms; just aware, not travelling off with them, not following any story. I become aware of the plants; the earth; the sky and clouds. I rest in the present not in the past or the future. I just dwell in wholeness in the here and now.

“I am solid, I am free” – I imagine myself solid like a mountain or a great tree. I ground myself in the earth and enjoy my breathing and the breathing of the world around me. I allow the sounds of the breeze, the birds and the insects to pass without attachment or aversion.

“In the ultimate I dwell” – I let go of the idea of self and other. I feel the Buddha and all my spiritual and blood ancestors close to me, guiding me, in me. I feel the presence of my spiritual and blood descendants. I feel the earth, the oceans, the sky the universe and all living things dwelling with me and in me. I rest and breathe. 🧘

Andrew Condell

WHO WE ARE

The Communities of Mindful Living are inspired by the Buddhist teachings of Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh (pictured).



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. 🍵

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Our main activities

Wednesday Mindfulness Meditation at Camperdown

We welcome all to come join us for meditation practice - We meet at 7:30 pm each Wednesday at the Buddhist Library, Church St, Camperdown, Sydney.

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.

How to contribute to *The Lotus Bud*

In person at the Wednesday night group

- By e-mail to: cbarker@uow.edu.au
- By post to: Chris Barker, Faculty of Arts, Uni of Wollongong, 2500

Contributions can be short or long but need to be under 600 words.

Reading bell

As you read this magazine you have an opportunity to go back to the present moment.

You will notice a bell: 🍵
throughout the magazine.

When you come to each bell, you may like to stop reading, clear your mind and return to your breath before continuing.

Coming events...

Sunday July 20th
Half Day of Mindfulness
at 1 The Avenue, Hurlstone Park
9.30am start to 1.30am finish
(shared veg lunch)
Contact: John Barclay
ph: 9559 8805