



# THE LOTUS BUD

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## *Call me by my true names*

Do not say that I'll depart tomorrow  
because even today I still arrive.

Look deeply: I arrive in every second  
to be a bud on a spring branch,  
to be a tiny bird, with wings still fragile,  
learning to sing in my new nest,  
to be a caterpillar in the heart of a flower,  
to be a jewel hiding itself in a stone.

I still arrive, in order to laugh and to cry,  
in order to fear and to hope.  
The rhythm of my heart is the birth and  
death of all that are alive.

I am the mayfly metamorphosing on the  
surface of the river,  
and I am the bird which, when spring  
comes, arrives in time  
to eat the mayfly.

I am the frog swimming happily in the clear  
pond,  
and I am also the grass-snake who,  
approaching in silence,  
feeds itself on the frog. 🍵

I am the child in Uganda, all skin and  
bones,  
my legs as thin as bamboo sticks,  
and I am the arms merchant, selling  
deadly weapons to Uganda.

I am the twelve-year-old girl, refugee on  
a small boat,  
who throws herself into the ocean after  
being raped by a sea pirate,  
and I am the pirate, my heart not yet  
capable of seeing and loving. 🍵



I am a member of the politburo, with  
plenty of power in my  
hands,  
and I am the man who has to pay his  
"debt of blood" to, my  
people,  
dying slowly in a forced labor camp.

My joy is like spring, so warm it makes  
flowers bloom in all  
walks of life.  
My pain is like a river of tears, so full it  
fills the four oceans. 🍵

Please call me by my true names,  
so I can hear all my cries and laughs at  
once,  
so I can see that my joy and pain are  
one.

Please call me by my true names,  
so I can wake up,  
and so the door of my heart can be  
left open,  
the door of compassion. 🍵

*Thich Nhat Hanh*

*See Thay's commentary on the next page*

### *Thay talks about his poem "Call me by my true names"*

In Plum Village, where I live in France, we receive many letters from the refugee camps in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines, hundreds each week. It is very painful to read them, but we have to do it, we have to be in contact. We try our best to help, but the suffering is enormous, and sometimes we are discouraged. It is said that half the boat people die in the ocean. Only half arrive at the shores in Southeast Asia, and even then they may not be safe. 🙏

There are many young girls, boat people, who are raped by sea pirates. Even though the United Nations and many countries try to help the government of Thailand prevent that kind of piracy, sea pirates continue to inflict much suffering on the refugees. One day we received a letter telling us about a young girl on a small boat who was raped by a Thai pirate. She was only twelve, and she jumped into the ocean and drowned herself.

When you first learn of something like that, you get angry at the pirate. You naturally take the side of the girl. As you look more deeply you will see it differently. If you take the side of the little girl, then it is easy. You only have to take a gun and shoot the pirate. But we cannot do that. In my meditation I saw that if I had been born in the

village of the pirate and raised in the same conditions as he was, there is a great likelihood that I would become a pirate. I saw that many babies are born along the Gulf of Siam, hundreds every day, and if we educators, social workers, politicians, and others do not do something about the situation, in twenty-five years a number of them will become sea pirates. That is certain. If you or I were born today in those fishing villages, we may become sea pirates in twenty-five years. If you take a gun and shoot the pirate, all of us are to some extent responsible for this state of affairs. 🙏

After a long meditation, I wrote this poem. In it, there are three people: the twelve-year-old girl, the pirate, and me. Can we look at each other and recognize ourselves in each other? The title of the poem is "Please Call Me by My True Names," because I have so many names. When I hear one of the of these names, I have to say, "Yes." 🙏

From: *Peace is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life* by Thich Nhat Hanh

## *What is Interbeing?*

**Interbeing** is a relatively new term coined by Thích to describe the essential interconnectedness of the universe. It challenges us to look beyond the world of concepts and opposites. If we look deeply into the nature of our universe we can see all things as profoundly interdependent. In traditional Buddhism this was originally called *dependent co-arising*. At the heart of this understanding is the realisation that we have no separate self, that everything is empty of a separate self in a universe which is in a constant state of flux and change. The interdependent nature of all phenomena is central to many Buddhist teachings.

### *Experiencing interbeing*

If the above sounds theoretical and abstract, just look out of the window and gaze at the view. Breathe, and bring yourself wholly into the present moment. It is possible that you may experience yourself as part of a continuum, part of the natural world. You may lose your usual sense of any separate self. It is this experience which is wisdom. This is not philosophy: you do not need a degree to understand it! It is a wisdom grounded in everyday experience.



Image by DigiDragon

# Beginning anew

*On the withered tree the flower blooms.*

Beginning anew we wake up to now. We bring attention to whatever is we are doing, whether it be eating, sitting, talking or walking. In doing so thoughts and pains and irritations will come up. With practice they may become less or different or not a problem.

The *Dharmmapada*, verse 50, "Let none find fault in others. Let none see omissions and commissions in others. But let one see one's own acts, done and undone." For many our habit nature is to have a fault finding mind. That is our conditioning. We can begin anew with ourselves and others by changing our attitude. We may not like another's behaviour; but rather than saying anything we need to *pause* and to investigate our reactions. Generally people are doing the best they can and learning to refrain from speaking and practice deep listening and loving speech is a great gift. 🧘

When we judge others we feel our muscles tighten in our jaw, in our shoulders, in our chest and our breathing becomes shallower. Sometimes we may even cause ourselves a headache. We need to sort out the facts from the story we have told ourselves. If I think Sam spoke to me in an angry tone and then I spin that off in my own head it then becomes much bigger than Sam saying something. I now have a melodrama and I don't like Sam anymore

as he was nasty, and I might try to find some allies in my story by gossiping. This is how friendships are ruined. It is all a matter of perception. Sam may/not have been angry, we can say 'well that is Sam's issue to deal with' if there was an issue; it isn't my place to judge. We need to be present without participating in harmful action to ourselves or others. 🧘



Loving kindness practice is a wonderful meditation, when we pray for ourselves to be happy and for others also. In this mediation you come to the point where you pray for someone you dislike. The problem is that as long as you only do this it is simply wishful thinking. Especially when seen as an affirmation and not as an

aspiration, you see yourself as separate from the person for whom you are praying. Until you have real understanding and compassion for this person the words will just be hollow. For instance you may not like the way someone else behaves, but until you understand why they act in this way, and love them anyway, then you have not developed loving kindness as far as you can. Indeed, we need to look deeply at ourselves to see what our issue is. We just need to sit and feel it in our body. God made man in his image; we are all perfect just as we are.

When we wake up, heaven is available to us twenty four hours a day. We learn to appreciate what we have, even the ache in the back or the person that irritates us. Impermanence is a blessing. The ache that was there may go and the irritation will subside, we don't know what will happen but if we live long enough it will probably be replaced by another. Experience each moment just as is, nothing special, and yet very special. 🧘

*Ettianne Anshin*

## 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. 

## Contacts

Sydney, Inner West - John Barclay 9559 8805  
[barclayjohn0@gmail.com](mailto:barclayjohn0@gmail.com)

Sydney South West - Khanh Le Van 9543 7823  
[melanie\\_le\\_van@yahoo.com.au](mailto:melanie_le_van@yahoo.com.au)

Lismore Area - Tony Mills 6688 6523  
[fivemountains@hotmail.com](mailto:fivemountains@hotmail.com)

Sylvania - Coral Miles 9544 7892  
[coralmiles@iprimus.com.au](mailto:coralmiles@iprimus.com.au)

[www.lotusbudsangha.org](http://www.lotusbudsangha.org)

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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](mailto: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...

Mindfulness Day and recitation of the 14 mindfulness Trainings on May 9th  
Details to be announced.