



# THE LOTUS BUD

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Dear Sangha,

At a time in which we welcome monastics in our tradition to Australia and witness the setting up of the United Buddhist Church in Australia we devote this month's magazine to some thoughts on the development of our tradition. Many of the more long standing members of our Sangha you will know this history already but many newer members may not. We begin however with reflections on recent events surrounding the Bat Nha monastery in Vietnam which is simultaneously 'history' and teaching. We hope you enjoy the magazine. A Lotus to you all. 🙏

*From the editors*

## *Bat Nha – A Koan*

*Do not look for what you want to see,  
That would be futile.  
Do not look for anything.  
But allow the insight to have a chance  
to come by itself,  
That insight will help liberate you.*

*(Thich Hanh)*

Bat Nha is a monastery in the central highlands of Vietnam, a community of monks and nuns persecuted and dispersed by the Vietnamese Government. Thich Nhat Hanh has described this as the great crisis of Vietnamese Buddhism at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. 🙏

On the Plum Village website [www.plumvillage.org](http://www.plumvillage.org) you can read Bat Nha – A Koan. Please take the time to read it if you have not already. It is a rich sutra on the essence and practice of Buddhist insight in life's most difficult situations.

Thich Nhat Hanh first visited Australia in the 1980's and from that time local



practicing communities developed. Many Australians tasted sweet relief for themselves in the writings and teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh. The teachings the Buddha, which first came to Vietnam in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century, were expressed in a way that resonated with Australians and many in the western world.

Here local sanghas of lay practitioners continued to grow. Coming together to learn ways to meditate, ways to calm the personal difficulties they faced in their lives. Lay friends visited Plum Village

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in France while others benefited from regular visits of Plum Village monastics who lead retreats in Australia. Some Australian friends who had attended days of mindfulness or a retreat were inspired to take the monastic vow and join the Plum Village community. Just last Tuesday a group of eight lay friends came together on the Northern Beaches for the first meeting of the Dharma Boat Sangha. When conditions are favourable, flowers will blossom. 🙏

*the path is neither simply straight nor winding ... it is made up of many winding paths in every instant... TNH*

Nhap Luu Temple is located near Ballarat in Victoria, a rural property of 70 odd acres, which has been donated to Plum Village. It has basic housing facilities - there is no town water or electricity. The free translation of Nhap Luu is "stream enterer" however Sister Chan Khong has referred to Nhap Luu as Gum Leaf Village! Nuns from Plum Village with Australian citizenship have been staying at Nhap Luu for several months and lay friends from around Australia have attended in retreat or days of mindfulness.

Here in Australia, one way we can help the monastics dispersed from Bat Nha in Vietnam is to assist in establishing the Nhap Luu monastic centre. Already work is being done to apply for a number of visa on religious grounds. 🙏

Conditions are favourable, the time is ripe. Members of Australian lay communities have already begun making contributions and thinking of ways to raise funds to help with the necessary costs of establishing monks and nuns in Nhap Luu temple. However we do need more. Donations by electronic funds transfer can be made to the following account:

Account - Unified Buddhist Church Aust  
BSB - 633000  
Account Number - 137099818

Please include your name with the transaction. If you send an email with the details of your donation to [aaentalix@gmail.com](mailto:aaentalix@gmail.com) we will send you a receipt. 🙏

Peaceful steps,  
*John Barclay*



## Our tradition

### *The Origins of the Tradition*

Our teacher the Most Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh (Thầy) founded the Unified Buddhist Church in France in 1969, during the Vietnam war. Thich Nhat Hanh is a Vietnamese Buddhist monk, a poet, and scholar. His life long efforts to generate peace and reconciliation moved Martin Luther King, Jr. to nominate him for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1967. 🙏

Thầy, as we call our teacher, founded the Van Hanh Buddhist University in Saigon and the School for Youths of Social Services in Vietnam. The School of Youth Social Service was a grass-roots relief organization that rebuilt bombed villages, set up schools and medical centres, resettled homeless families, and organized agricultural cooperatives. Despite government denunciation of his activity, Nhat Hanh also founded a publishing house, and an influential peace activist magazine in Vietnam.

After visiting the U.S. and Europe in 1966 on a peace mission, he was banned from returning to Vietnam in 1966 and set up his base in France which eventually become Plum Village. The Unified Buddhist Church established Sweet Potatoes Community in 1975, Plum Village in 1982, the Dharma Cloud Temple and the Dharma Nectar Temple in 1988, and the Adornment of Loving Kindness

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Temple in 1995 which are the constitutive elements of the Plum Village Sangha.

When not travelling the world to teach "The Art of Mindful Living", Thay teaches, writes, and gardens in Plum Village, France, a Buddhist monastery for monks and nuns and a mindfulness practice centre for lay people.

### *The Lotus Buds Sangha Australia*

In late 1986, Thich Nhat Hanh was invited by the Buddhist Peace Fellowship (Sydney) and Bodhi farm to lead retreats in Australia. During his visit in Sydney, the local Vietnamese community of Buddhism was able to come together in a way that united representatives from a variety of pre existing temples. Subsequently many of those who had attended Thich Nhat Hanh's retreat

founded the Lotus Buds sangha in Australia. Many of these people were refugees from Vietnam and some had known Thich Nhat Hanh in that context. 🙏

To begin with the Lotus Buds Sangha was a small community of mainly Vietnamese practitioners. However they were able to acquire some land (a100 acres about 170km northwest of Sydney) and build a meditation hall for retreats. The community has seen considerable expansion since 1986 and expanded out of the Vietnamese community into the broader population so that the umbrella of the Lotus Buds sangha in Sydney includes sub groups in central Sydney, Western Sydney, North Sydney, South Sydney and the Blue Mountains. These groups are both Vietnamese-Australian and Anglo-Australian in composition. These groups meet on a weekly basis for meditation practice and organise longer 'mindfulness days' and 4 day retreats.

The Sangha has also contributed to the wider community. Members of the Sangha have given talks to schools and universities, groups of psychologists and therapists and run meditation groups for young people. They have also been involved in charitable fund raising efforts. For example, money has been collected for the Fred Hollows Foundation, a wheelchair project for Cambodian war victims, a project providing grain for farmers in Vietnam following flooding, providing paper and pens for children in rural areas so they can attend United Nations education program in Vietnam.

Since there are now also Sanghas in Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide the community as a whole is taking the step of uniting under the pan-Australian umbrella organisation of the United Buddhist Church (Australia). 🙏

*Chris (True Dwelling of the Mind)*

## *Thay on Equanimity*

The fourth element of true love is upeksha, which means equanimity, non-attachment, nondiscrimination, even-mindedness, or letting go. Upa means 'over', and iksh means 'to look'. You climb the mountain to be able to look over the whole situation, not bound by one side or the other. If your love has attachment, discrimination, prejudice, or clinging in it, it is not true love. People who do not understand Buddhism sometimes think upeksha means indifference, but true equanimity is neither cold nor indifferent. 🙏

If you have more than one child, they are all your children. Upeksha does not mean that you don't love. You love in a way that all your children receive your love, without discrimination.



Without upeksha, your love may become possessive. A summer breeze can be very refreshing; but if we try to put it in a tin can so we can have it entirely for ourselves, the breeze will die. Our beloved is the same. He is like a cloud, a breeze, a flower. If you imprison him in a tin can, he will die. Yet many people do just that. They rob their loved one of his liberty, until he can no longer be himself. True love allows you to preserve your freedom and the freedom of your beloved. That is upeksha. 🙏

*Thich Nhat Hanh  
Teachings On Love*



## 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  
[barclaviohn0@gmail.com](mailto:barclaviohn0@gmail.com)

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

Blue Mountains - ?  
[???](#)

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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[www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com), creative

## 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.**

## Coming events...

**One for the Diary**  
There will be a retreat attended by  
Monastics in October  
Details to be announced.

## 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.

## 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.