



# THE LOTUS BUD

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## Dear Sangha

In this edition of *The Lotus Bud* we explore the concept of Buddha Nature in conjunction with our core practices. We begin with an exploration of the idea of Buddha Nature by a Lama from the Tibetan tradition. His account of this universal Buddhist teaching chimes with the teachings of Thay as expressed in his gatha 'Let the Buddha Breathe'.

Buddha nature may sound like an exotic or difficult idea, but essentially it refers to the ultimate dimension of peace and stillness that we seek in our core mindfulness practices.

Every now and again it is a good idea to remind ourselves of those practices and the reasons why we do them.



## Buddha nature

The most magic Buddhist teaching is buddha nature. When we talk about this, we have to explain what the words buddha nature mean. The Sanskrit word that buddha nature is translated from is *tathagatagarbha*. *Tathagata* means buddha and *garbha* means nature or essence. It is the essence of enlightenment. It is the essence of all beings. 🙏

This quality is realized by some, but others have not realized it. But it doesn't matter. This quality is within us. We do not need to seek it outside somewhere. Some realize it, but others have not practiced enough and have not seen it.


The true nature of the awakened mind has always been pure from beginningless time. It always will be pure. It cannot be destroyed. The question is why we still have ignorance, anger, hatred, depression, and so forth. The true buddha nature is like a light. But due to our

ignorance, attachments and anger arise, so we do not see this light. These afflictions are only temporary in nature. If you believe they are permanent, you cannot be free of them. So study and practice are needed. 🙏

The essence of enlightened mind is like space. Space has always been there. When we fly above the clouds, the blue space is always there, isn't it? But we do not always see it. The reason practice is required is like dispelling clouds. Clouds are only there temporarily, but they obscure the blue sky. Within ourselves is this buddha nature, the essence of the Buddha's enlightened mind. But we do not see it without practice. It is important to be introduced to it, so we see the true awakened mind. We always look outside ourselves. But our ability to see outside is limited.


Rather than looking outside, we should look inside ourselves and open another eye that sees much more than outside.

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You will see something amazing that you have never seen before. By resting naturally without accepting or rejecting, you will see your true nature. So this is the reason for practicing. 


Buddhism talks of conventional and ultimate truth. Ultimate truth is within ourselves, the buddha nature. Buddhism says skillful means and wisdom are like the two wings of a bird. They are not outside, but within ourselves. That is the teaching of the sutras.

Because of the temporary afflictive emotions, buddha nature is covered. To see buddha nature in some cases is not difficult, but in other cases it is. Once you see your buddha nature, you should not make the mistake of not practicing. The most important practice is mindfulness practice. If you do not know how to do this you cannot keep the awareness of buddha nature all the time. When you are mindful of buddha nature the temporary afflictive emotions dissipate like mist. Our fundamental nature has always been pure. It is like a flower that is potentially present in a seed. But just having a seed is not enough. It must be planted and cultivated. If it is not cultivated correctly, the seed will not be transformed into a flower.

The fundamental nature, buddha nature, is like a seed that must be cultivated. Cultivation requires meditation practice. 

So what is the result of seeing the buddha nature? Once you see it, the result is loving kindness and compassion. There is no other result. Everyone is seen as equal and respected equally, because others also have

the same clear light quality. Love and compassion are within ourselves but temporarily covered by afflictive emotions like clouds. Calm abiding meditation is important for seeing buddha nature. Once everything is calmed, the heart opens. If the mind is not calmed it is hard to see the true nature.

This true nature is always loving kindness and compassion. So therefore everyone possesses buddha nature, even our enemies. 

*This is an edited extract from a talk given by Lama Gursam (August 12, 2006).*

*The full text can be found at:  
[http://lamagursam.org/buddha\\_nature.html](http://lamagursam.org/buddha_nature.html)*

In 'A Pebble for Your Pocket' Thay tells the story of a young monk who wonders who the buddha is and where he lives. "I explained to him that the Buddha is not far away from us. I told him that the Buddha is inside each one of us. Being a Buddha is being aware of what is inside of us and around us at every moment. Buddha is the love and understanding that we each carry in our hearts..."

Anywhere you see love and understanding there is Buddha. Anyone can be a Buddha. Do not imagine that the Buddha is a statue or someone who has a fancy halo around his head or wears a yellow robe. A Buddha is a person who is aware of what is going on inside and around him or her and has a lot of understanding and compassion. Whether a Buddha is a man or a woman, young or not so young, a Buddha is always very pleasant and fresh."


## *Let the Buddha breathe*

*Let the Buddha breathe  
Let the Buddha walk  
I don't have to breathe  
I don't have to walk*

*The Buddha is breathing  
The Buddha is walking  
I enjoy the breathing  
I enjoy the walking*

*Buddha is the breathing  
Buddha is the walking  
I am the breathing  
I am the walking*

*There is only breathing  
There is only walking  
There is no breather  
There is no walker*


*Peace is while breathing  
Joy is while walking  
Peace is breathing  
Joy is walking* 

Thich Nhat Hanh



# Uncovering Buddha Nature with Plum Village

In looking for our Buddha Nature it is a good idea to return to the basics of our practice. Sometimes we can become so familiar with talking about mindfulness or sitting meditation that we can become stale. It can be wise to look anew at our practices with a beginners mind. So here with the help of the Plum Village web site [www.plumvillage.org/practice.html](http://www.plumvillage.org/practice.html) we represent the basics of our practice.


It is said that in a beginners mind there are many possibilities; in a trained mind there are few. So while you may well know these practices well, we invite you to consider and practice them afresh as if you had never encountered them before. 

## *The Art of Mindful Living*

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.

## *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 - walking, gardening, or typing, we can return to this peaceful source of life. 

## *Sitting Meditation*

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.


## *Gathas*

Gathas are short verses that help us practice mindfulness in our daily activities. A gatha can open and deepen our experience of simple acts which we often take for granted. When we focus our mind on a gatha, we return to ourselves and become more aware of each action.

When the gatha ends, we continue our activity with heightened awareness. The gatha brings our mind and body together. With a calm and clear mind, fully aware of the activities of our body, we are less likely to get into a car accident. Gathas are nourishment for our mind, giving us peace, calmness and joy which we can share with others. They help us to bring the uninterrupted practice of meditation into every part of our day. There are many gathas available in our Chanting Book. 

## *Walking Meditation*

Wherever we walk, we can practice meditation. This means that we know that we are walking. We walk just for walking. We walk with freedom and solidity, no longer in a hurry. We are present with each step. And when we wish to talk we stop our movement and give our full attention to the other person, to our words and to listening. Let us walk as a free person and feel our steps get lighter. Let us enjoy every step we make. Each step is nourishing and healing. As we walk, imprint our gratitude and our love on the earth. We may like to use a gatha as we walk. Taking two or three steps for each in-breath and each out-breath,

Breathing in "I have arrived";  
Breathing out "I am home"  
Breathing in "In the here";  
Breathing out "In the now"  
Breathing in "I am solid";  
Breathing out "I am free"  
Breathing in "In the ultimate";  
Breathing out "I dwell" 

## 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

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## Notices...

**Wednesday night** Lotus Bud Sangha at the Buddhist library in Camperdown All welcome.


### Mindfulness Day

Sunday 20 Nov, 9.30am - 3pm.  
1 The Avenue Hurlstone Park.  
Bring a veg plate to share.  
RSVP John 9559 8805



## 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.

Mindfulness Days at Nhap Luu (Entering the Stream) Meditation Centre  
221 Maria's Lane  
Beaufort VIC 3733  
[streammpc@gmail.com](mailto:streammpc@gmail.com) [www.plu.mvillageasia.org](http://www.plu.mvillageasia.org)

Ian Roberts is a neighbour of Nhap Luu and a member of the Present Moment Sangha Melbourne 03 5349 2729