



THE LOTUS BUD

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Dear Sangha,

Practicing Patience

In this edition of *The Lotus Bud* we explore the quality of patience. We often hear the phrase 'patience is a virtue' from within the Christian tradition in western culture. But patience is also a Buddhist practice of considerable significance, and a 'cousin' of both 'right diligence' and 'right mindfulness'.

Patience is both a practice and the fruit of practice in that we practice to be more patient through mindfulness and develop more patience as we calm our mind. As They says: Patience is the mark of true love. A father has to be patient in order to show his love for his son or daughter. A mother, a son, and a daughter also. If you want to love, you must learn to be patient. If you are not patient, you cannot help the other person. 🧘

In our practice we seek transformation and healing, but as Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us:



Image by ArranET

"...changes need time, we cannot make things happen on our desired schedule. Some things are completely beyond our ability to change. We can't make a flower bloom when we want it to. In some cases, it might not bloom at all. But we can set the best possible conditions to support its happening. So we fertilize the soil & provide water & sunshine. Then we must wait, patiently and without expectations." (From 'Taming the Tiger Within') 🧘

Shantideva devotes 133 paragraphs to Patience in the *Bodhisattvas Way of Life*, the first two of which are:

Whatever wholesome deeds, such as venerating the Buddhas and generosity, that have been amassed over a thousand aeons, will all be destroyed by one moment of anger. There is no transgression like hatred, and no fortitude like patience, thus I should strive in various ways to meditate on patience. 🧘

Patience as love

The most important practice for preventing war is to stay in touch with what is refreshing, healing, and joyful inside us and all around us. If we practice walking mindfully, being in touch with the earth, the air, the trees, and ourselves, we can heal ourselves, and our entire society will also be healed. If the whole nation would practice watering seeds of joy and peace and not just seeds of anger and violence, the elements of war in all of us will be transformed. 🧘

We must prepare ourselves, whether we have one minute, ten years, or one thousand years. If we don't have time, there is no use in discussing peace - you cannot practice peace without time. If you have one minute, please use that minute to breathe in and out calmly and plant the seeds of peace and understanding in yourself. If you have ten years, please use the ten years to prevent the next war. If you have a thousand years, please use the time to prevent the destruction of the planet.

Transformation is possible, but it takes time. There are already seeds of peace in those we call 'hawks', but they need us to water their seeds of peace and understanding or else their seeds of anger and aggression will continue to dominate them. Do not feel discouraged. Just by your way of looking at things and doing things, you influence others. Approach everyone with love and patience, and try to water the positive seeds in them. We have to help each other, being skilful, kind, and understanding. 🧘 *Thich Nhat Hanh - Love in Action: writings on non-violent social change*

Thay answers a question...

Q: How do you maintain mindfulness in a busy work environment? At times it seems there is not even enough time to breathe mindfully.

A: This is not a personal problem only; this is a problem of the whole civilization. That is why we have to practice not only as individuals; we have to practice as a society. We have to make a revolution in the way we organize our society and our daily life, so we will be able to enjoy the work we do every day. Meanwhile, we can incorporate a number of things that we have learned in this retreat in order to lessen our stress. When you drive around the city and come to a red light or a stop sign, you can just sit back and make use of these twenty or thirty seconds to relax - to breathe in, breathe out, and enjoy arriving in the present moment. There are many things like that we can do. Years ago I was in Montreal on the way to a retreat, and I noticed that the license plates said *Je me souviens* - 'I remember' I did not know what they wanted to remember, but to me it means that I remember to breathe and to smile. So I told a friend who was driving the car that I had a gift for the sangha in Montreal: every time you see *Je me souviens*, you remember to breathe and smile and go back to the present moment. Many of our friends in the Montreal sangha have been practicing that for more than ten years. 🧘

I think we can enjoy the red light; we can also enjoy the stop sign. Every time we see it we profit: instead of being angry at the red light, of being burned by impatience, we just practice breathing in, breathing out, smiling. That helps a lot. And when you hear the telephone ringing you can consider it to be the sound of the mindfulness bell. You practice telephone meditation. Every time you hear the telephone ringing you stay exactly where you are. You breathe in and breathe out and enjoy your breathing. Listen, listen - this wonderful sound brings you back to your true home. Then when you hear the second ring you stand up and you go to the telephone with dignity. That means in the style of walking meditation. You know that you can afford to do that, because if the other person has something really important to tell you, she will not hang up before the third ring. That is what we call telephone meditation. We use the sound as the bell of mindfulness.

And waiting at the bus stop you might like to try mindful breathing, and waiting in line to go into a bank, you can always practice mindful breathing. Walking from one building to another building, why don't you use walking meditation, because that improves the quality of our life. That brings more peace and serenity, and the quality of the work we do will be improved just by that kind of practice. So it is possible to integrate the practice into our daily life. We just need a little bit of creative imagination to do so. 🧘

www.sinc.sunysb.edu/Clubs/buddhism/dailylife/thayq-a.html

Finding patience

Any time we want life to be different than it is, we are caught in impatience. We lose our sense of humor; and self-pity, despair, and blame seep into the heart. In Buddhism patience has three essential aspects: gentle forbearance, calm endurance of hardship, and acceptance of the truth.

Gentle forbearance

The first aspect of patience is gentle forbearance. We may be the exhausted parent of a child who is having a fit over some baffling homework; perhaps patience in this case means taking a few deep breaths instead of yelling in frustration. Or we may be on the verge of making a brilliant retort to a coworker, but we hold our tongue rather than say something hurtful. Even though our impatience is triggered, we can tap into the deeper reservoir of our motivation not to do harm. Gentle forbearance may feel difficult - even contrived - because it doesn't constitute true acceptance of how things are. But it is nonetheless a critical aspect of patience because it helps us restrain ourselves long enough to determine the most skillful action for the moment. 🍵

Endurance of hardship

The second aspect of patience is the calm endurance of hardship. The Buddha said that the world rests on suffering. But endurance of suffering doesn't mean doing nothing to alleviate it. Patience isn't passive; its motivated by an acceptance of

and compassion for suffering rather a desire to eradicate it. When we feel impatient with our relationships, our work, or our spiritual practice, we need to realize that we are resisting how things are. A sense of humor and curiosity about our lives can also help us confront impatience.

Acceptance of the truth

The third aspect of patience, acceptance of the truth, means that we accept our experience as it is - with all its suffering - rather than how we want it to be. We recognize that because our experience is continually changing, we don't need it to be different than it is. This acceptance of 'things as they are' requires profound wisdom and compassion, which take a long time to evolve; we must therefore develop a long-enduring mind that will enable us to understand time from a radically new perspective. As we come to this understanding, we gain the strength to be present for the long haul, and we are less likely to get caught in being overly insistent, frustrated, and demanding. By accepting the agreeable and disagreeable aspects of life, we are no longer limited by our longing for life to be different than it is. We have all the time in the world, in the spaciousness of every moment. 🍵

*Excerpt from 'Finding Patience'
by Michele McDonald*

<http://stillwatersanghamn.wordpress.com/2012/06/12/finding-patience/>



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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Notices...

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

All welcome.



How to contribute

Email to: cbarker@uow.edu.au

Post to: Chris Barker, Faculty of Arts, Uni of Wollongong, 2500

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
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Beaufort VIC 3733
streammpc@gmail.com www.plumvillageasia.org