



THE LOTUS BUD

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Dear Sangha,

As December comes upon us we are moving towards Christmas, a time traditionally associated with the idea of peace.

As Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us peace in the world is built upon peace within oneself.

And peace in oneself is a matter of moment by moment attention, peace is every step. We begin then with an account of walking for peace followed by a reminder to us all of walking meditation as a practice.

Walking meditation is a form of 'nowhere to go and nothing to do' that can bring us to a calm and still place in our hearts.

Our final poem then explores the idea of being still and peaceful in a busy world. 🍵

Peace in oneself, peace in the world

On October 8th, 2005, the renowned Buddhist teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh, led over 3000 people in a silent, mindful Peacewalk around MacArthur Park, Los Angeles. It was a beautiful demonstration of embodied peace. Thay, or "teacher", as his students refer to him, called upon us to:

"walk in such a way that each step we make becomes a realization of peace; each step becomes a prayer for peace and harmony... walk together in silence with no banners and no pickets... not a petition addressed to anyone, nor a demonstration against anyone... walk to unite our hearts, to nurture our togetherness and to dissipate fear and separation... learn together that wrong perceptions of self and others are at the foundation of separation, fear, hate and violence, and that togetherness and collaboration is possible." 🍵

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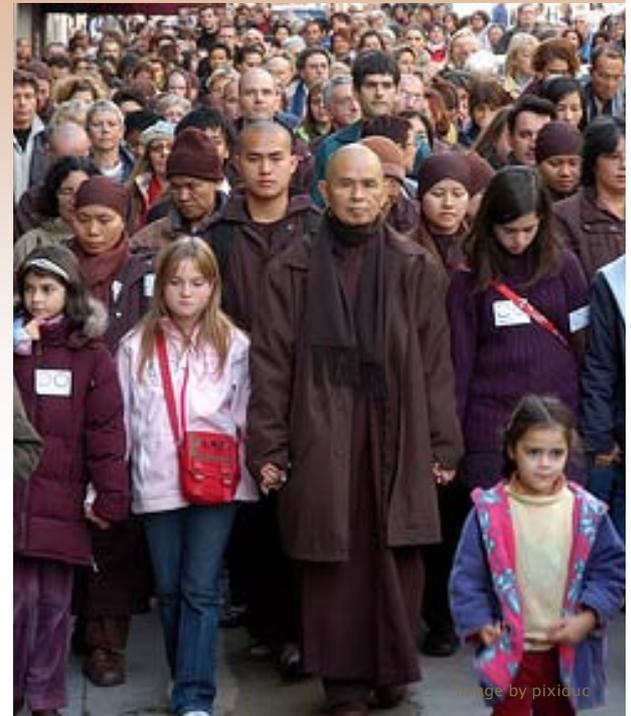


image by pixiduc

That walk initiated **Peace Is Every Step (PES)**. PES is a community of peace and mindfulness which has taken up the task of sponsoring Peacewalks on a regular basis.



Reverence for life

The First Mindfulness Training is the practice of *ahimsa* or reverence for life and is the foundational principle for non-violent action in Engaged Buddhism. It reads:

Aware of the suffering created by fanaticism and intolerance, we are determined not to be idolatrous about or bound to any doctrine, theory, or ideology, even Buddhist ones. We are committed to seeing the Buddhist

teachings as a guiding means that help us learn to look deeply and develop understanding and compassion. They are not doctrines to fight, kill, or die for. We understand that fanaticism in its many forms is the result of perceiving things in a dualistic or discriminative manner. We will train ourselves to look at everything with openness and the insight of interbeing in order to transform dogmatism and violence in ourselves and the world.

Once we become aware of suffering, we can then be moved to compassion for ourselves and others as we see that we are all mutually caught in the web of worldly pain. According to Thay, "We undertake to cultivate compassion and use it as a source of energy for the protection of life - to remove suffering and transform it." 🍵

We may have a tendency to define *ahimsa* as simply a failure to kill or support killing, but the principle extends further, into our qualities of mind and heart.

Thich Nhat Hanh says, "It is not just by not killing with your body that you observe *ahimsa*. If in your thinking you allow the killing to go on, you also break this precept. According to the Buddha, the mind is the base of all actions. When you believe, for example, that yours is the only way for humankind and that everyone who follows another way is your enemy, millions of people could be killed because of that idea. If we see deeply into the nature of interbeing, that all things "inter-are," we will stop blaming, arguing, and killing, and we will become friends with everyone.

To practice nonviolence, we must first of all learn ways to deal peacefully with ourselves."

Thich Nhat Hanh also points out that true peace requires non-fear and courage: "True peace requires strength and practice, particularly in times of great difficulty. To some, peace and nonviolence are synonymous with passivity and weakness. In truth, practicing peace and nonviolence is far from passive. To practice peace is to actively cultivate understanding, love, and compassion, even in the face of misperception and conflict. Practicing peace, especially in times of war, requires courage." 🍵

Practice peace

The active, engaged practice of peace initiated by Thich Nhat Hanh in Vietnam has been continued and propagated in many forms. Thay's teachings have inspired a Peacewalk of Israelis and Palestinians from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, passing by Jewish and Arab towns and settlements, in silence and awareness, declaring a commitment to deep listening and non-violence.

Our practice is not to drive towards peace in the future; it is to be peace in the present moment. If we can, more and more of us every day, be true manifestations of peace on a continuous, ongoing basis regardless of circumstances or conditions, then we create the solid foundation of true peace in the world within our very hearts and minds. 🍵

Found at: http://www.yoga-losangeles.com/LA_Yoga_Peace_Article.html

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. Walking in this way should not be a privilege. We should be able to do it in every moment. Look around and see how vast life is, the trees, the white clouds, the limitless sky. Listen to the birds. Feel the fresh breeze. Life is all around and we are alive and healthy and capable of walking in peace.

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". 

Found at: <http://www.plumvillage.org/mindfulness-practice.html>

Be still...

Just for a moment.

Listen to the world around you. Feel your breath coming in and going out. Listen to your thoughts. See the details of your surroundings.

Be at peace with being still.

In this modern world, activity and movement are the default modes, if not with our bodies then at least with our minds, with our attention.

We are always on, always connected, always thinking, always talking. There is no time for stillness – and sitting in front of a frenetic computer all day, and then in front of the hyperactive television, doesn't count as stillness.

This comes at a cost: we lose that time for contemplation, for observing and listening. We lose peace. 

And worse yet: all the rushing around is often counterproductive. I know, in our society action is all-important – inaction is seen as lazy and passive and unproductive. However, sometimes too much action is worse than no action at all. You can run around crazily, all sound and fury, but get nothing done. Or you can get a lot done – but nothing important. Or you can hurt things with your actions, make things worse than if you'd stayed still.

And when we are forced to be still – because we're in line for something, or waiting at a doctor's appointment, or on a bus or train – we often get antsy, and

need to find something to do. Some of us will have our mobile devices, others will have a notebook or folder with things to do or read, others will fidget.

Being still isn't something we're used to. Take a moment to think about how you spend your days – at work, after work, getting ready for work, evenings and weekends. Are you constantly rushing around? Are you constantly reading and answering messages, checking on the news and the latest stream of information? Are you always trying to Get Lots of Things Done, ticking off tasks from your list like a machine, rushing through your schedule? 

Is this how you want to spend your life?

If so, peace be with you. If not, take a moment to be still. Don't think about what you have to do, or what you've done already. Just be in the moment. Then after a minute or two of doing that, contemplate your life, and how you'd like it to be. See your life with less movement, less doing, less rushing. See it with more stillness, more contemplation, more peace. Then be that vision.

It's pretty simple, actually: all you have to do is sit still for a little bit each day. Once you've gotten used to that, try doing less each day. Breathe when you feel yourself moving too fast. Slow down. Be present. Find happiness now, in this moment, instead of waiting for it. Savor the stillness. It's a treasure, and it's available to us, always. 

By Leo Babauta - <http://zenhabits.net/be-still/>

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.



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
221 Maria's Lane
Beaufort VIC 3733
streammpc@gmail.com www.plumvillageasia.org