



# THE LOTUS BUD

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## *Dear Sangha,*

Welcome to the 50<sup>th</sup> edition of *The Lotus Bud*, which had its very first edition in August 2008. We are reminded on the occasion of the fiftieth birthday of *The Lotus Bud* of Thay's teachings about birth and death that lead him to suggest we talk not of birthdays but of continuation days. 🍵

May *The Lotus Bud* continue... and may we take this occasion to remind readers that we welcome your contributions and would encourage you to write something for the magazine so that we can share our experiences and understandings in the context of community.

We are also reminded when thinking of birth and death that we are alive right now and that as Thay has said: 'Our true home is not in the past. Our true home is not in the future. Our true home is in the here and the now. Life is

available only in the here and the now, and it is our true home.'

Mindfulness is the energy that helps us recognize the conditions of happiness that are already present in our lives. You don't have to wait ten years to experience this happiness. It is present in every moment of your daily life. There are those of us who are alive but don't know it. But when you breathe in, and you are aware of your in-breath, you touch the miracle of being alive. 🍵

*Happy  
Continuation  
Day!*

## *On birth*

To be born - what does it mean? In our minds, to be born means that from nothing you suddenly become something, from no one, you suddenly become someone; but looking deeply you don't see anything like that. From nothing, how could something become something? A sheet of paper, before it was born as a sheet of paper, was it nothing? Or was it something already.

The sheet of paper, before it was born, was the sunshine, the cloud, and the tree. The moment of its birth was only a moment of transformation, of continuation. So that is not exactly the moment of birth. The moment of your birth is only a moment of continuation, because before you were born, you have already been there. From nothing, you can never become something. From no one, you can never become someone. 🍵

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That is why, instead of singing "happy birthday to you", we should sing "happy continuation day to you". Also, at the moment of our so-called death, we can sing the same: happy continuation to you. You continue in other forms. But you don't need this moment to come in order for you to continue.

When I look at myself, I see very clearly that I have begun my continuation a long time ago. If you look at me a little more deeply, you will find out that I am not only here, I am elsewhere, like an electron, which is at the same time here, and there. If you get in touch with my disciples, my students, you recognize my presence in them. If you pick up a book or a tape in a distant city, you know that I am there. So I am not really only here. I am everywhere. I have gone into many directions. It is very difficult for you to identify my presence if you don't practice looking deeply. And it is impossible for me to die. I will continue for a long time. And I am in you. You cannot reduce me into nothingness. My practice, my being, my insight, my suffering, my happiness, have gone very far, so far that I have no means to know. I am now in my own country giving Dharma talks, doing sitting meditation with other people. I am now in a distant prison, because there are prisoners who are practicing sitting meditation and walking meditation using my books. I am in China, I am in Japan, I am in Russia. So it is not easy to identify my presence, if you don't know how to practice looking deeply. 🙏

*(Dharma Talk given by Thich Nhat Hanh on July 28, 1998 in Plum Village, France)*

## On death

Death is a very necessary condition of birth. With no death, there is no birth. They inter-are and happen in every moment to the experienced meditator. For instance a cloud may have died many times, into rain, streams, water. The cloud may want to wave to itself on earth! Rain is a continuation of the cloud. With a meditation practitioner nothing can hide itself. When I drink tea, it's very pleasant to be aware I am drinking cloud.

When you are parents, you die and are reborn as your children. 'You are my continuation, I love you.' The Buddha told us how to ensure a beautiful continuation – a compassionate thought, a beautiful thought. Forgiveness is our continuation. If anger, separation and hate arise, then we will not ensure a beautiful continuation. When we pronounce a word that is compassionate, good and beautiful that is our continuation. 🙏

When a cloud is polluted, the rain is polluted. So purifying thoughts, word and action creates a beautiful continuation. We can see the effects of our speech in our children. My disciples are my continuation – both monastic and lay. I want to transmit loving speech, action and thought. This is called karma in Buddhism.

This body of mine will disintegrate but my karma will continue – karma means action. My karma is already in the world. My continuation is everywhere in the world.

When you look at one of my disciples walking with compassion, I know he is my continuation. I don't want to transmit my negative emotions, I want to transform them before I transmit them. The dissolution of this body is not my end. Surely I will continue after the dissolution of this body. So don't worry about my death, I am not going to die.

Let us meditate on the birth of a cloud. Does it have a birth certificate?

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the notion of birth – the notion that nothing can come from something, from no-one to someone. Is it possible for something to come from nothing? Scientifically this is not possible.

The cloud was water in an ocean, lake, river and heat from the sun gave it birth – the moment of continuation. For instance, birth – before you were born you were in your mother’s womb. The moment of birth is a moment of continuation. Is the moment of conception the start? You are half from your dad and half from your mum already, this is also a moment of continuation. When you practise meditation you can see things like that.

It is impossible for a cloud to die. It can become water, snow – it cannot become nothing. It is also impossible for us to die. Speech, action and thought continue in the future. The person who dies still continues because we are not capable of using meditators eyes. They continue in us and around us. All our ancestors are alive in us. Our ancestors are in our chromosomes.

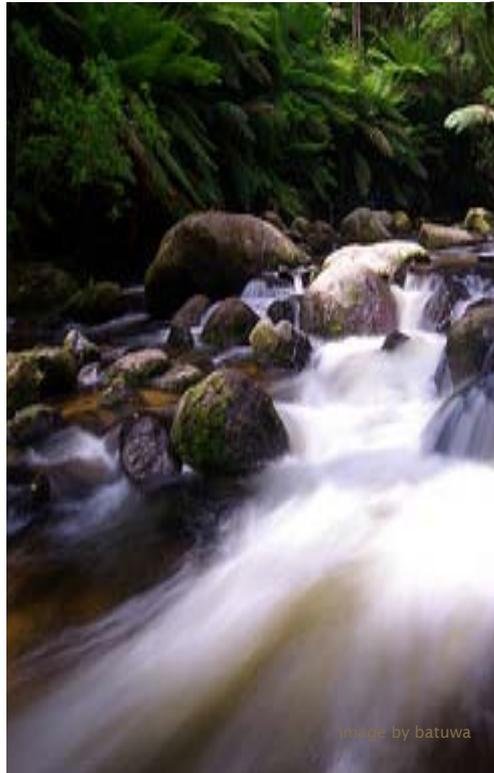
I wrote a book ‘No Death, No Fear.’ When conditions are right I manifest and when not, not. There is no coming, no going. Before she manifests we should not call her non-existing. Before manifestation you cannot call her non-being. They are a pair of opposites. 🧘

(<http://www.plumvillage.org/transcribe/7-what-happens-when-you-die.html>)

## *Breathe! You are alive*

Breathe and you know that you are alive.  
Breathe and you know that all is helping you.  
Breathe and you know that you are the world.  
Breathe and you know that the flower is breathing too.  
Breathe for yourself and you breathe for the world.  
Breathe in compassion and breathe out joy.

Breathe and be one with the air that you breathe.  
Breathe and be one with the river that flows.  
Breathe and be one with the earth that you tread.  
Breathe and be one with the fire that glows.  
Breathe and you break the thought of birth and death.  
Breathe and you see that impermanence is life.



Breathe for your joy be steady and calm.  
Breathe for your sorrow to flow away.  
Breathe to renew every cell in your blood.  
Breathe to renew the depths of consciousness.  
Breathe and you dwell in the here and now.  
Breathe and all you touch is new and real. 🧘

*Annabel Laity*

## 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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## Coming events...

### Vesak Day

Celebrate the Buddha's Birthday  
9 am - 3 pm on 26th May  
at Canley Heights.

We would love to hear from you. We want the The Lotus Bud to be a place for sharing our experiences and building the Sangha; so why not write a short piece about your experiences with mindfulness ?

Email: [cbarker@uow.edu.au](mailto:cbarker@uow.edu.au)

Post: 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.

### Meditation and monthly Mindfulness Days at Canley Heights

Southwest Sydney - 7.30pm  
Friday Night Meditation and  
Monthly Mindfulness Days.  
49 Ferngrove Rd Canley  
Heights.

Mindfulness Days at Nhap Luu  
(Entering the Stream)  
Meditation Centre  
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