



# THE LOTUS BUD

Magazine of Mindful Living ~ Issue No 57, January/February 2014

## *Dear Sangha,*

As this is the first edition of *The Lotus Bud* in 2014 and the 'new year' is a time when in Australia we traditionally consider our intentions and aspirations for the coming year we have taken the notion of beginning anew as our theme. In particular, we consider Thay's message that while we can all begin anew at any time, it is not enough just to want to begin anew, but rather we must learn the skills of mindful living in order to be able to do so. We wish you a skilful and happy new year. 🙏

## *Beginning anew with skilfulness*

When we know how to begin anew we get a lot more energy, joy and aspiration that can help us transform what is negative in us, and help us have more joy, more capacity to transform the situation around us. There are people who may say, "I am too old to begin again." That is because they have not seen the true nature of life, of the practice of Beginning Anew. We can practice Beginning Anew at any moment of our lives.

Because we are human beings, we cannot avoid making mistakes. We might have caused someone else to suffer, we might have offended our beloved ones, and we feel regret. But it is always possible for us to begin anew, and to transform all these kinds of mistakes. Without making mistakes there is no way to learn, in order to be a better person, to learn how to be tolerant, to be compassionate, to

be loving, to be accepting. That is why mistakes play a role in our training, in our learning, and we should not get caught in the prison of culpability just because we have made some mistakes in our life. 🙏

If you can learn from your mistakes, then you have already transformed the garbage into a flower, for your own joy, for the joy of your ancestors, for the joy of the future generations, and also for the joy of the person who was the victim of your ignorance and your lack of skillfulness. Very often we have done that out of our unskillfulness, not because we wanted to harm that person, or we wanted to destroy the person, or because we wanted him or her to suffer. We were unskillful, that is all.

You have to be artful in your practice. Walking, eating, breathing, talking, working, you should learn the art of

*continued over page...*



mindful living, because if you are a good artist, you will be able to create a lot of happiness and joy around you and inside of you; but if you have only your goodwill, if you count only on your goodwill, that will not be enough. All of us have to learn the art of living.

If in the past you did something unskillful, it is because of many conditions: you did not have a father that could help you at that moment; you did not have a mother or a teacher to help you in that moment to be more skillful than you were; and the seed of that lack of skillfulness has been transmitted to you by many generations. You were not able to recognise that seed in you; you made a mistake; you did unskillful things. It means that all of your ancestors did it together with you at that moment. Looking from the insight of non-self, you see that everyone was doing the unskillful thing that you did, with you. You have to see it, and the essential is that you are free from the notion of self. 🙏

I said before that if we have not made any mistakes, there is no way for us to learn. So that is why to look deeply, and to see the nature of the act, the nature of interbeing of the act in the light of non-self, we see that that is a kind of act, that is a kind of speech that has created suffering. That moment when you see it, when you



recognise it, that is enlightenment, because enlightenment is always enlightenment of something, or about something. The moment when you see that this is the lack of skillfulness on your part and on the part of many ancestors who have transmitted the seed to you, then that is already enlightenment, that is already meditation, that is already deep looking. And out of that enlightenment you are motivated by a desire that you would not like to do that again.

So that desire, that aspiration is a strong energy, a strong energy that can make you alive, that can help you to protect yourself, to protect all the future generations within you, and that insight is very liberating. And if you know that you are not going to do the same thing again, you are already free, and your ancestors are also free, and there is no need to be caught in your feeling of culpability. 🙏

(Edited version of a talk given by Thay in Plum Village 1998. <http://plumvillage.org/>)

# New Year Prayer

*This prayer was offered by the Plum Village fourfold sangha as part of the midnight ceremony to mark the dawn of the New Year 2014.*

Dear Beloved Father Sun – Bodhisattva Mahavairocana Tathagata,

Dear Beloved Mother Earth – Bodhisattva Mahagaia,

Dear Beloved Ancestors, both Spiritual and Genetic,

We present ourselves before you at this solemn moment of the New Year to express our gratitude and deep aspiration as a spiritual family. 🙏

Dear Father Sun, your infinite light is the nourishing source of all species. You are our Sun, a great Buddha, a great Bodhisattva, our Great Tathagata Sun, our source of limitless light and life. You are not only in the sky but you are also ever-present in Mother Earth and in us. Just as our life depends on our heart, so too does our life depend on you. We bow our heads this evening with gratitude for your radiant non-discrimination and gift of life.

Dear Mother Earth, with your patience, stability, endurance and creativity you have nourished and guided us through many lifetimes. You have given birth to us and to countless, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Saints. You, our beautiful blue planet, are the Earth. Refreshing Bodhisattva-fragrant, cool, and kind. Yet for many lifetimes we have

suffered, and made you suffer, because we have been unable to see you as the Pure Land, as the very Kingdom of God: the most beautiful place in the Heavens. Despite our many mistakes, you have always forgiven us, and are always ready to open your arms and embrace us. 🙏

Because of our wrong perceptions and discrimination we have lived a life of separation, hatred, loneliness, violence and despair. We have allowed individualism to prevail, causing great damage and hardship to ourselves and to you, dear Mother Earth. We have run after fame, wealth, power, and sensual pleasures, forgetting that these pursuits can never bring us true happiness. We have become restless and distracted, running away from ourselves, our beloved ones and from you, dear Mother Earth. As a society and as a civilization we know we are going in the wrong direction.

Dear Mother Earth, Dear Father Sun and Dear Ancestors, tonight, on the occasion of the New Year 2014, we give rise to the deep aspiration to begin anew, to go in a new direction and request your forgiveness for all our mistakes. With great respect we make the deep aspiration to live mindfully each moment of our daily life. We promise to stop running away from our suffering, losing ourselves in consumption. We promise to come home to ourselves with compassion, to recognize, embrace and look deeply into our suffering. We promise to take refuge in you, dear Mother Earth, and your capacity

to nourish, heal and embrace all that is. We promise to offer our true presence to our beloved ones and not to get too busy, striving for success – even in pursuit of our dreams. We know that we can realize our dreams in every moment, and we vow to live every day of 2014 as a realization of our dream. We know that time is not money. Time is life, and time is love. We promise to live simply, to love one another with non-discrimination, to build true brotherhood and sisterhood and respect our deepest aspiration.

Dear Mother Earth, you have been calling out to us for many lifetimes, and some of us have been able to hear your pain. You have asked if you can count on us, your children, to lovingly heal and transform ourselves and the present situation. In this solemn moment of the New Year, with our palms joined and body and mind united, we promise that you can count on us. You can have faith and confidence in us.

We shall practice for you, Mother Earth, Father Sun, for all our ancestors and future generations so that joy, peace, harmony and love will always be present in this world. Please accept our offerings of incense, flowers, fruit, tea, and love. Respected Father Sun, Respected Mother Earth, Dear Ancestors, please have trust in us. 🙏

<http://plumvillage.org/>

## 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  
[barclayjohn0@gmail.com](mailto:barclayjohn0@gmail.com)

Sutherland Area - Lorraine Curtain  
[loricurtain@optusnet.com.au](mailto:loricurtain@optusnet.com.au)

Northern Beaches - Dharma Boat Sangha  
Andrew Condell [raandrops@gmail.com](mailto:raandrops@gmail.com)

Blue Mountains - Ann Morris  
[annmorris52@gmail.com](mailto:annmorris52@gmail.com)

Newcastle - Hannah Perkins  
[han.perkins@gmail.com](mailto:han.perkins@gmail.com)

Lismore Area - Tony Mills and Jenny Pittman  
[fivemountains@hotmail.com](mailto:fivemountains@hotmail.com)

Caboolture Qld - Joyce and Rhys Davies  
[rhystdavies@yahoo.com.au](mailto:rhystdavies@yahoo.com.au)

All images used with permission from [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com) creative commons unless otherwise stated.

[www.lotusbudsangha.org](http://www.lotusbudsangha.org)



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  
Sydney, Inner West

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  
221 Maria's Lane  
Beaufort VIC 3733  
[streammpc@gmail.com](mailto:streammpc@gmail.com)  
[www.plumvillageasia.org](http://www.plumvillageasia.org)  
0431 470 172