



THE LOTUS BUD

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Dear Sangha,

*“Great Doubt, Great Awakening;
small doubt, small awakening;
no doubt, no awakening.”*

*attributed to Rinzai Zen teacher
Hakuin Ekaku (1686-1769)*

When we first bring home a new baby we often feel that we don't know what to do. We may have read a 'baby book'. We may have heard the advice of our friends and parents. But still we feel uncertain. We are in a situation of 'not-knowing'. Nonetheless, when our baby cries we pick her up and hold her in our arms. When our baby needs his nappy changed we change it. Somehow we know when our baby is hungry and we feed her. If danger threatened our child we would try to protect him even at the cost of our own lives. We may feel that don't know what to do to care for our new baby and yet we take the necessary action because we feel that our baby

and us are an inseparable one and we approach our baby with openness.

In this edition of *The Lotus Bud* we are following up the theme of not-knowing that was featured in edition No. 58 and exploring how openness and not-knowing can lead to deep listening to the cries of the world and with it compassionate action because we see that we are a part of the oneness of life. 🙏

Cultivating our bodhisattva qualities

Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva represents great love, great compassion, and deep listening. When you manifest these qualities, you become the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara. Avalokiteshvara vows to listen deeply in order to help relieve the suffering in the world. To listen deeply, you must be one hundred percent present. Listening with all your attention, you release the past and the future, and focus entirely on the other person. We have this ability, but we seldom use it. We

are usually lost in the past or the future and listening with just half an ear. The practice is to be present and to listen with one hundred percent of ourselves. Even when we listen, we may have a notion, a "pre-judice," about the other person and what she is saying. Our habit energy is to judge whether what she says is correct or not. Then, when she speaks, it isn't her words we hear, only our judgment. We must learn to be space. Space can hold everything. If we are like a wall, impenetrable, whatever the other person says will just bounce back to her, and she won't feel relief. We have to empty ourselves of preconceived ideas in order to be present in the heart of the other, in her fears and difficulties. 🙏

A philosopher came to visit a Zen master. While the master was preparing tea, the philosopher talked endlessly, showing the master how much he knew. When the tea was ready, the master poured it into the

philosopher's cup, and he continued pouring even after the cup was full. The tea was flowing all over the table, and the philosopher yelled, "Stop!" The master smiled and said, "Your mind is also overflowing. How can you receive anything from me?"

The aim of deep listening is understanding. When someone is suffering, if she can find one person with the willingness and capacity to sit quietly beside her and listen, that is a great encouragement. Whether what she says is easy to hear or shocking, we don't reject it. We train ourselves to listen in order to understand.

These days everyone is running so quickly. We sit in a silent meal, but we might be still running. Whether we are sitting, walking, standing, or eating, we have to learn to stop. Bodhisattva Manjushri knows how to stop—in order to see deeply into the heart of things and into the hearts of those around him. We have to learn to stop our mind in order to look deeply. 🙏

As Avalokiteshvara, we learn to listen without prejudice. As Manjushri, we learn to look without judging. To understand the suffering of the Palestinians, for example, Israelis have to learn to look in the way a Palestinian looks. To understand the Israelis, Palestinians must learn to understand an Israeli—his suffering and his fear. After looking deeply in that way, we see that both sides suffer, that each person has anger and fear. If we continue to punish each other, we will not go far.



It is better to take the other person's hand and work together toward a solution that is beneficial for both sides. In our Sanghas, if we notice two members who are unable to look at each other, we have the responsibility to help them communicate by practicing stopping and looking deeply, without prejudice.

When we look deeply, we see and understand the roots of suffering. When we are angry, we say that the other person is at fault, but by looking deeply, we come to understand her suffering, her difficulties, and her fears. 🙏

Thich Nhat Hanh
[Online source 1](#)

The oneness of life

One prominent Buddhist story tells of Avalokiteśvara vowing never to rest until (s)he had freed all sentient beings from samsara.

Despite strenuous effort, (s)he realizes that still many unhappy beings were yet to be saved. After struggling to comprehend the needs of so many, his/her head splits into pieces. Buddha, seeing her/his plight, gives him/her eleven heads with which to hear the cries of the suffering. Upon hearing these cries and comprehending them, Avalokiteśvara attempts to reach out to all those who needed aid, but found that her/his two arms shattered into pieces. Once more, Buddha comes to his/her aid and invests her/him with a thousand arms with which to aid the suffering multitudes. In each arm is that which is needed at the moment, a hammer, a bible, a handkerchief, etc. etc. 🙏

When we experience the oneness of life we manifest not only as many heads and arms but as all the phenomena of the universe and we contain all the phenomena of the universe.

I'm Buddhist, but as you know, I'm also Jewish. The Hebrew word for peace is shalom. Many people know that word, but what they may not know is that the root of shalom is shalem, which means whole. To make something shalem, to make peace, is to make whole. There is a Jewish mystical

tradition that at the time of the Creation, God's light filled a cup, but that the light was so strong that it shattered the cup into fragments scattered throughout the universe? (sounds like Avalokiteśvara, eh?).

And the role of the righteous person, the mensch, is to bring the fragments back and connect them together to restore the cup? That's what I mean by peace. For me, peace means whole. The Hebrew Oseh Shalom is peacemaker, as in the verse "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall inherit the Earth." They shall work to restore the fragments into a whole.

And in Zen, as you know, our practice is to experience that wholeness, the oneness and interconnectedness of life and, in my opinion, to serve all of our aspects. 🧘

Bernie Glassman
[Online source 2](#)



Tiep Hien: The Order of Interbeing

The word Tiep means "to be in touch with" and "continuation." Hien means "realizing" and "making it here and now." According to Thich Nhat Hanh, "to be in touch with" means to be in touch with reality, the reality of the world and of the mind. "Continuation" means to extend and continue the way of enlightenment. "Hien" or realization, means not to be caught by dogma or doctrine. "Making it here and now" means that love, compassion and understanding must be real in our lives. "Making it here and now" means that only the present moment is real. 🧘

Thich Nhat Hanh has translated Tiep Hien as "Interbeing," a word based on a Chinese term in the Avatamsaka Sutra. For Westerners, then, the Order is called "The Order of Interbeing." Its name points to the absence of a separate self identity and thus to the interconnectedness, interdependence, and interpenetration of all beings.

There are four principles that guide the Order:

non-attachment to views, which Thich Nhat Hanh has called the most important teaching of Buddhism; direct experimentation or direct realization, through practice that brings about insight; appropriateness, reflecting the needs of the people and the realities of society and the world; and skillful means, or ways in which people can practice that are appropriate to their particular circumstances.

Thich Nhat Hanh composed *Please Call Me By My True Names* during a time of intense suffering. In this poem, he exemplifies the spirit of interbeing, making no moral distinction between human oppressor and the tormented, or creature or plant. Suffering is experienced by all. And we ourselves are not apart from the suffering of others. The poem reads in part:

*I am the twelve-year-old girl,
refugee on a small boat,
who throws herself into the ocean
after being raped by a sea pirate.
And I am the pirate,
my heart not yet capable
of seeing and loving.* 🧘


Human suffering and the suffering of creatures and plants are not divided into greater or lesser categories. Victims of violence and hatred suffer. So also do the perpetrators of violence. Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us that we are not separate from any being who suffers. Compassion is the door that opens when we recognize that we are the mayfly and the bird that eats the mayfly; we are the frog and the snake that eats the frog. We are the sea pirate; and we are the young girl being raped by the sea pirate. 🧘

(edited extract from 'Interbeing: Precepts and Practices of an Applied Ecology' by Joan Halifax and Marty Peale. [Online source 3](#)

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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www.lotusbudsangha.org

Online sources for articles in this issue

<http://www.mindfulnessbell.org/wp/2013/08/dharma-talk-cultivating-our-bodhisattva-qualities/> 2/10

<http://zenpeacemakers.org/2014/02/just-another-opinion-on-the-oneness-of-life-man/>

<http://www.upaya.org/dox/Interbeing.pdf>


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 ?

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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)
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