



THE LOTUS BUD

Magazine of Mindful Living ~ Issue No 62, July 2014

I have arrived: walking with peace & presence

Peace is something we can contemplate every day. Walking meditation is one of the ways to contemplate peace, and today we are going to walk together, generating the energy of peace, solidity, and freedom. I suggest that when you breathe in, you make three steps. Bring your attention to the soles of your feet, and become aware of the contact between your foot and the ground. Bring your attention down from the level of the brain to the soles of your feet. Breathing in, we make three steps, and we may tell ourselves with each step, "I have arrived. I have arrived. I have arrived." And breathing out, we make another three steps, always mindful of the contact between our feet and the ground, and we say, "I'm home. I'm home. I'm home." 🧘

*I have arrived.
I am home.
In the here.
In the now.
I am solid.
I am free.
In the ultimate
I dwell.*

--Thich Nhat Hanh

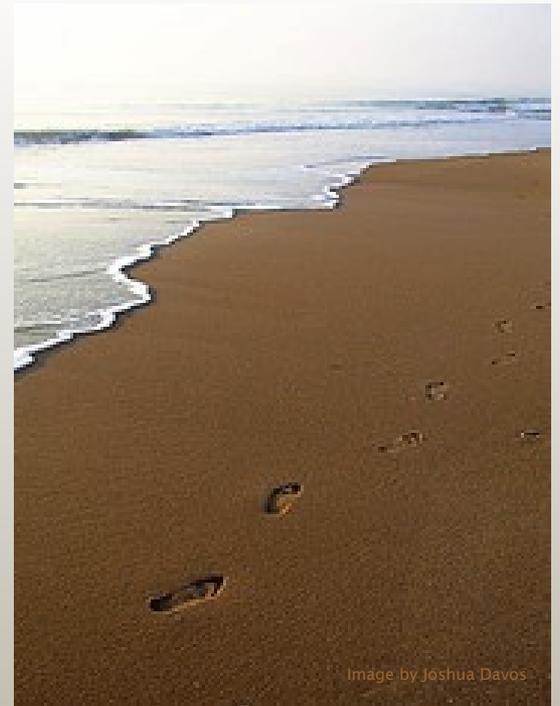


Image by Joshua Davos

continued over page...

Arrived where? Where is our home? According to the teaching and the practice of the Buddha, life is available only in the present moment, in the here and the now. And when you go back to the present moment, you have a chance to touch life, to encounter life, to become fully alive and fully present. That is why every step brings us back to the present moment, so that we can touch the wonders of life that are available. Therefore, when I say, "I have arrived," I mean I have arrived in the here and the now -- the only place, the only time where and when life is available, and that is my true home. 🙏

The Buddha said that the past is already gone, and the future is not yet here. There is only one moment for us to live, and that is the present moment. We have an appointment with life, and that appointment takes place in the present moment. If we miss the present moment, we miss our appointment with life, which is serious. In our daily life, we have a tendency to think about the past, to get caught in the sorrow and regret concerning the past, and to get caught in the fear and uncertainty about the future, so our mind is not in the present moment. That is why it is very important to learn how to go back to the present moment in order to become fully alive, fully present. Walking meditation helps us do that easily.

When I begin, I make two or three steps and I practice arriving. "I have arrived. I am home." It means, I don't want to run anymore, because I know that conditions for my happiness are already here in the present moment. Sometimes we believe that happiness is not possible in the here and the now; we need a few more conditions to be happy. So we run towards the future to get the conditions we think are missing. But by doing so we sacrifice the present moment, we sacrifice true life. Therefore, learning how to go home to the present moment is the basic practice of mindfulness. "I have arrived. I am home." My home is right here, right now. I don't want to run anymore. The habit of running may have been transmitted to me by my parents, and I may have been running all my life. Now I don't want to run anymore, I want to stop.

Walking meditation helps us learn to stop in order to be truly alive, truly present. "I have arrived. I am home." 🙏

If you walk like that with every step, the energy of mindfulness and concentration will be there to support you. And the place where you walk becomes the pure land of the Buddha or the kingdom of God. The blue sky, the beautiful vegetation, the face of a child, the flower blooming -- all these wonders belong to the kingdom of God, to the pure land of the Buddha.

We allow separation between us and those wonders of life because we allow anger, fear, grieving, and despair to stand in our way. Going home to our body by mindful breathing will help us let go of our worries, our regret and our fear, and that is the basic condition for us to get in touch with the wonders of life that are truly present in the here and the now.

We should walk in such a way that the pure land of the Buddha, the kingdom of God becomes a reality in the here and the now. There is not one day when I do not enjoy walking in the kingdom of God, in the pure land of the Buddha. Why should I deprive myself of that pleasure? I need only some energy of mindfulness, of concentration, in order to penetrate into the kingdom of God, into the pure land of the Buddha.

The kingdom of God is available to you in the here and the now. But the question is whether you are available to the kingdom. Our practice is to make ourselves ready for the kingdom so that it can manifest in the here and the now. You don't need to die in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. In fact, you have to be truly alive in order to do so. It's not too difficult. Just breathe in and bring your mind back to your body. That is the practice of mindfulness. 🙏

Thich Nhat Hanh
Online source

I have arrived: Six Umbrella Pines

When we first saw the Upper Hamlet, I liked it immediately because it was beautiful. I saw the path that we could use for our walking meditation, and I fell in love with it at first sight. However, Mr. Dezon, the landowner, did not want to sell the property. He loved that piece of land very much since he had been a farmer there for a long time. 🧘

We continued looking for land, and a few days later, on September 28, 1982, we found the Lower Hamlet and purchased it. But we still wanted to purchase the Upper Hamlet, and hoped it would become available. That year, there was a hailstorm that destroyed all the vineyards on Mr. Dezon's property. He got angry and put the land on the market for a very high price, not really intending to sell it. In spite of the increased price, we bought it because we liked the land so much.

From the winter of 1982 to the summer of 1983, we had to work a lot. In early 1983, we began to plant some trees in the Upper Hamlet. The first trees were six umbrella pine trees. The land in the Upper Hamlet was full of rocks, so we needed the help of a local farmer and his machine to dig holes for the trees. We put a little cow manure in bottom of each hole. It was raining that day, and everybody was soaked.

In those days, we called our new home Persimmon Village, the name of a practice center that the School of Youth for Social Service and the Order of Interbeing had planned on building in Vietnam. When I wrote *The Miracle of Mindfulness*, I mentioned the idea of founding a practice center called Persimmon Village. Eight years later, our vision came true. We thought of planting persimmons, but we realized it was not practical, so we planted plum trees instead. We were not horticulturists, so we did not do very well. We enjoyed more plum blossoms than plums. The name Plum Village was beautiful, so we changed from Persimmon Village to Plum Village.

Many of those first plum trees were bought with the pocket money given to us by children who came to Plum Village. The children were told that in seven years the plum trees would bear fruit, which would then be dried and sold. That money would be used to help hungry children in Vietnam and other poor countries. Many children saved their pocket money in order to buy plum trees. Sometimes the children would combine their money and the tree we planted with their money would have the names of the child sponsors. It cost thirty-five French francs to plant a baby plum tree. We planted 1,250 trees because that was the number of the original monastic Sangha at the Buddha's time. 🧘

Thich Nhat Hanh_
Online source



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

Sutherland Area - Lorraine Curtain
loricurtain@optusnet.com.au

Northern Beaches - Dharma Boat Sangha
Andrew Condell raandrops@gmail.com

Blue Mountains - Ann Morris
annmorris52@gmail.com

Newcastle - Hannah Perkins
han.perkins@gmail.com

Lismore Area - Tony Mills and Jenny Pittman
fivemountains@hotmail.com

Caboolture Qld - Joyce and Rhys Davies
rhystdavies@yahoo.com.au

All images used with permission from www.flickr.com creative commons unless otherwise stated.

www.lotusbudsangha.org

Online sources for articles in this issue

http://www.explorefaith.org/body/tnh_intro.html

<http://plumvillage.org/about/plum-village/i-have-arrived-i-am-home/>

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

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 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
www.plumvillageasia.org
0431 470 172