



# THE LOTUS BUD

Magazine of Mindful Living ~ Issue No 68, February 2015

## Dear Sangha,

In this edition of *The Lotus Bud* we direct our attention towards the need to care for ourselves with mindfulness and self-acceptance. We too are part of the net of Indra, the oneness of life, and as Thay has said, when we care for ourselves we are more able care for others. We begin with Thay's discussion of loving ourselves, which is followed by a piece about self-acceptance from the blog 'Zen Habits', which although not explicitly of our tradition shares many of the basic tenets of Thay's teachings. 🙏

*Chris / True Dwelling of the Mind*

## Self love

*"Until we are able to love and take care of ourselves, we cannot be of much help to others."*

We begin practicing this love meditation on ourselves:

May I be peaceful, happy and light in body and spirit.

May I be safe and free from injury.

May I be free from anger, afflictions, fear and anxiety.

After that we can practice on others (he/she):

May he/she be peaceful, happy and light in body and spirit.

May he/she be safe and free from injury.

May he/she be free from anger, afflictions, fear and anxiety.

After that we can practice including our selves with others (we),

May we be peaceful, happy and light in body and spirit.

May we be safe and free from injury.

May we be free from anger, afflictions, fear and anxiety. 🙏

We begin this practice by looking deeply into the *skandha* of form, which is our body. According to the Buddha, a human being is made of five skandhas (elements, heaps or aggregates): form, feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness. We are the king, and these elements are our territory. To know the real situations within ourselves, we have to survey our own territory thoroughly, including the elements within us that are at war with each other. To bring about harmony, reconciliation, and healing within, we have to understand ourselves. Looking and listening deeply, surveying our territory, is the beginning of love meditation. 🙏

*From Teachings on Love by Thich Nhat Hanh*

## Looking deeply into the body

We begin by asking, How is my body in this moment? How was it in the past? How will it be in the future? Later, when we meditate on someone we like, someone neutral to us, someone we love and someone we hate, we also begin by looking at her physical aspects. Breathing in and out, we visualise her face; her way of walking, sitting and talking; her heart, lungs kidneys and all the organs in her body, taking as much time as we need to bring these details into awareness. But we always start with ourselves. When we see our own five skandhas clearly, understanding and love arise naturally, and we know what to do and what not to do to take better care of ourselves.

We look into our body to see whether it is at peace or suffering from illness. We look at the condition of our lungs, our heart our intestines, our kidneys, our liver, to see what the real needs of our body are. When we do, we will eat, drink and act in ways that demonstrate our love and our compassion for our body. Usually we just follow ingrained habits. But when we look deeply, we see that many of these habits harm our body and mind, so we work to transform these habits into ways conducive to good health and vitality. 🧘

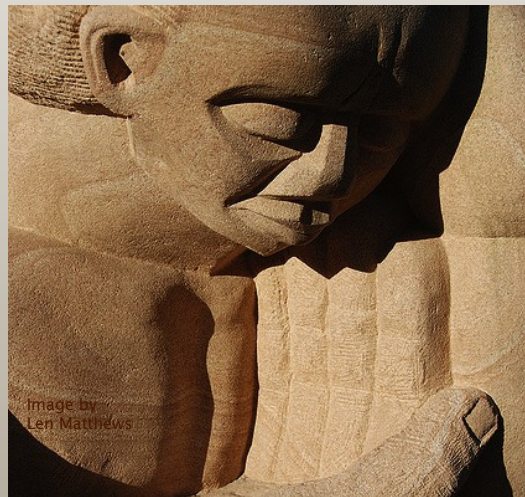
## Looking deeply into feelings

Next we observe our feelings whether they are pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. Feelings flow in us like a river, and each feeling is a drop in that river. We look into the river of our feelings and see how each

feeling came to be. We see what has been preventing us from being happy, and we do our best to prevent those things. We practice the wondrous, refreshing and healing elements that are within us and in the world. Doing so, we become stronger and better able to love ourselves and others.

## Looking deeply into perceptions —are you sure?


Then we meditate on our perceptions. The Buddha observed, The person who suffers most in this world is the person with many wrong perceptions.... And most of our perceptions are erroneous. We see a snake in the dark and we panic, but when our friend shines a light on it, we see that it is only a rope. We have to know which wrong perceptions cause us to suffer. Please calligraph the sentence, “Are you sure?” on a piece of paper and tape it to your wall. Love meditation helps us to learn to look with clarity and serenity in order to improve the way we perceive. 🧘



## Looking deeply into mental formations

Next we observe our mental formations, the ideas and tendencies within us that lead us to speak and act as we do. We practice looking deeply to discover the true nature of our mental formations how we are influenced by our individual consciousness and also by the collective consciousness of our family, ancestors and society. Unwholesome mental formations cause so much disturbance; wholesome mental formations bring about love, happiness and liberation.

## Looking deeply Into consciousness

Finally we look at our consciousness. According to Buddhism, consciousness is like a field with every possible seed in it seeds of love, compassion, joy and equanimity; seeds of anger, fear, and anxiety; and seeds of mindfulness. Consciousness is the storehouse that contains all these seeds, all possibilities that might arise in our mind. When our mind is  at peace, it may be because of the desires and feelings in our store consciousness. To live in peace we have to be aware of our tendencies our habit energies so we can exercise some self-control.

This is the practice of preventative health care. We look deeply into the nature of our feelings to find their roots, to see which feelings need to be transformed, and we nourish those feelings that bring about peace joy and well-being. [Online source](#)

# Unconditional acceptance of yourself

Many of us are familiar with the idea of loving our spouses, children, or parents unconditionally — and we might even try to practice that unconditional love, though imperfectly.

But do we try to love ourselves unconditionally?

Consider whether you do any of these (I sure do):

- Criticise your body
- Feel like you need to improve at things
- Feel guilty about things you do
- Feel undisciplined, lazy, unhappy with yourself
- Not feel good enough
- Fear that you're going to fail, because you're not good enough
- See yourself as not that good looking.
- Feel bad about messing up. 🧘

For many of us, there's an underlying feeling of not being good enough, wanting to be better, wanting to be in better shape or better at things. This isn't something we think about much, but it's there, in the background.

What if we applied unconditional acceptance of who we are? What if we took a good look at ourselves, our body, our thoughts, our feelings, our actions,

and said, "You are perfectly OK. You are perfectly good"?

Would that be a whole different experience for you? Could you accept every single thing about yourself, just as you are, without feeling that it needs to be changed?

I know what many people will immediately say: "But what's wrong with wanting to improve, with seeing things that need to be improved? Doesn't feeling bad about ourselves motivate us to change?"

Yes, it can be a motivator. But feeling bad about yourself can also be an obstacle: people who feel that they are fat, for example, are more likely to eat poorly and not exercise, because they see themselves as fat. They are likely to feel bad about themselves and to comfort themselves with food, alcohol, cigarettes, TV, Internet addictions. 🧘

What if instead, you loved yourself, fat body and all? What if you loved yourself, laziness and all? What if you loved yourself, all that is ugly and incompetent and mean, along with the beauty and brilliance and kindness?

This person who loves herself (or himself) ... she's more likely to take actions that are loving. Doing some mindful yoga, or taking a walk with a friend after work, eating delicious healthy food like beans and veggies and nuts and berries and mangos and avocados, meditating,

drinking some green tea ... these are loving actions.

Acceptance isn't stagnation — you will change no matter what. You can't avoid changing. The question is whether that change comes from a place of acceptance and love, or a place of self-dislike and dissatisfaction. I vote for unconditional love. 🧘

Leo Batuata

[Online source](#)

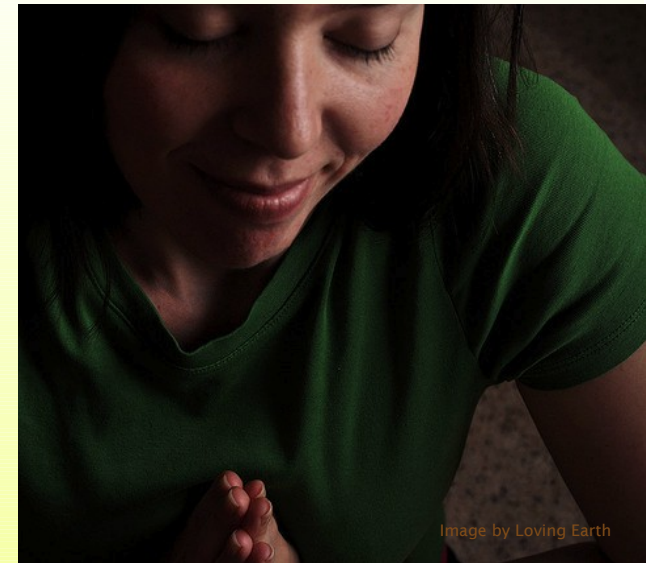


Image by Loving Earth

## 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)

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

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

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

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 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

Online source for articles in this issue:

<https://mettarefuge.wordpress.com/2010/10/25/thich-nhat-hanh-on-loving-ourself/>

<http://zenhabits.net/unconditional/>