



# THE LOTUS BUD

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## *Dear Sangha,*

In this edition of *The Lotus Bud* we explore ideas about what They calls the 'historical' and 'ultimate' dimensions. The concept of the historical is easy to understand- we live it, it is our day to day experience- but what is meant by 'the ultimate dimension' that is beyond birth and death? We can at least say that the ultimate is an experience (of timeless peace and calm) and not a concept and that it is not 'elsewhere' but rather resides in the very here and now. The practices by which we seek to establish ourselves in the present moment are also the practices that help us touch the ultimate or eternal. 🙏

In fact, we might say that the ultimate dimension is the 'eternal now', a term used by Christian theologian Paul Tillich to capture that sense of the infinite beyond time, the ultimate that is eternal. Here we can perhaps see how the 'Living Buddha' and the 'Living Christ' walk hand in hand and that words like Nirvana and the Kingdom of God are only concepts that are 'pointing at the moon'. The historical, the ultimate, the present and the eternal are all thing, one moment. 🙏

These are not easy or everyday ideas to contemplate and so we encourage you to read them

carefully- perhaps more than once - and to look deeply into their meaning. 🙏

*Chris / True Dwelling of the Mind*



Image by Leland Francisco

## *The historical and ultimate dimensions*

We look upon reality in our daily lives through the historical dimension, but we can also look upon the same reality in the ultimate dimension. Reality can be manifested in the historical dimension, or it can be manifested in the ultimate dimension. We are similar. We have our daily and historical concerns, but each of us also has our ultimate concerns.

When we look for God or nirvana or the deepest kind of peace, we are concerned about the ultimate. We are not only concerned with the facts of daily life-fame, profit, or our position in society and our projects-but we are also concerned about our true nature. To meditate deeply is to begin to fulfill our ultimate concern. 🧘

### *Waves are water*

When you look at the surface of the ocean, you can see waves coming up and going down. You can describe these waves in terms of high or low, big or small, more vigorous or less vigorous, more beautiful or less beautiful. You can describe a wave in terms of beginning and end, birth and death. That can be compared to the historical dimension. In the historical dimension, we are concerned with birth and death, more powerful, less powerful, more beautiful, less beautiful, beginning and end and so on.

Looking deeply, we can also see that the waves are at the same time water. A wave may like to seek its own true nature. The wave might suffer from fear, from complexes. A wave may say, "I am not as big as the other waves," "I am oppressed," "I am not as beautiful as the other waves," "I have been born and I have to die." The wave may suffer from these things, these ideas. But if the wave bends down and touches her true nature she will realize that she is water. Then her fear and complexes will disappear. 🧘

Water is free from the birth and death of a wave. Water is free from high and low, more beautiful and less beautiful. You can talk in terms of more beautiful or less beautiful, high or low, only in terms of waves. As far as water is concerned, all these concepts are invalid.

No death. No fear

Our true nature is the nature of no birth and no death. We do not have to go anywhere in order to touch our true nature. The wave does not have to look for water because she is water. We do not have to look for God, we do not have to look for our ultimate dimension or nirvana, because we are nirvana, we are God. 🧘

You are what you are looking for. You are already what you want to become. You can say to the wave, "My dearest wave, you are water. You don't have to go and seek water.



Your nature is the nature of non-discrimination, of no birth, of no death, of no being and of no non-being."

Practice like a wave. Take the time to look deeply into yourself and recognize that your nature is the nature of no-birth and no-death. You can break through to freedom and fearlessness this way. This method of practice will help us to live without fear, and it will help us to die peacefully without regret.

If you practice well, you will be capable of looking at the cloud, the rose, the pebble or your child with the kind of eyes the Buddha has transmitted to us. You will touch the no-birth, no-death, no-coming, no-going nature of reality. This can liberate you from your fear, from your anxiety and your sorrow. Then you can truly have the kind of peace that will make you strong and stable, smiling as events happen. Living this way will allow you to help many people around you. 🧘

*Extract from Thay's book No Death, No Fear  
[Online source](#)*

## The eternal now

It is our destiny and the destiny of everything in our world that we must come to an end.....But as men we are aware of the eternal to which we belong and from which we are estranged by the bondage of time.

The mystery of the future and the mystery of the past are united in the mystery of the present. Our time, the time we have, is the time in which we have "presence." But how can we have "presence"? Is not the present moment gone when we think of it? Is not the present the ever-moving boundary line between past and future? But a moving boundary is not a place to stand upon. 🧘

The mystery is that we *have* a present; and even more, that we have *our* future also because we anticipate it in 'the present; and that we have *our* past also, because we remember it in the present. In the present our future and our past are *ours*. But there is no "present" if we think of the never-ending flux of time. The riddle of the present is the deepest of all the riddles of time. Again, there is no answer except from that which comprises all time and lies beyond it -- the eternal. Whenever we say "now" or "today," we stop the flux of time for us. We accept the present and do not care that it is gone in the moment that we accept it. We live in it and it is renewed for us in every new present." This is possible because every moment of time reaches into the eternal. It is the eternal that stops the flux of time for us. It is the eternal "now" which provides for us a temporal "now."

We live so long as "it is still today" -- in the words of the letter to the Hebrews. Not everybody, and nobody all the time, is aware of this "eternal now" in the temporal "now." But sometimes it breaks powerfully into our consciousness and gives us the certainty of the eternal, of a dimension of time which cuts into time and gives us our time. 🧘

People who are never aware of this dimension lose the possibility of resting in the present. As the letter to the Hebrews describes it, they never enter into the divine rest. They are held by the past and cannot separate themselves from it, or they escape towards the future, unable to rest in the present. They have not entered the eternal rest which stops the flux of time and gives us the blessing of the present. Perhaps this is the most conspicuous characteristic of our period, especially in the western world and particularly in this country. It lacks the courage to accept "presence" because it has lost the dimension of the eternal.

There is *one* power that surpasses the all-consuming power of time -- the eternal: He Who was and is and is to come, the beginning and the end. He gives us forgiveness for what has passed. He gives us courage for what is to come. He gives us rest in His eternal Presence. 🧘

**Paul Tillich**  
[Online source](#)

*Paul Tillich was a Christian Theologian and Professor of Philosophical Theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, then University Professor at Harvard University*



## 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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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 sources for articles in this issue:

<http://terebeck.hu/zen/mesterek/Thich%20Nhat%20Hanh%20-%20No%20Death,%20No%20Fear.pdf>

<http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=1630&C=1607>