



# THE LOTUS BUD

Magazine of Mindful Living ~ Issue No 87, March 2017

*Dear Sangha,*

**In this edition of *The Lotus Bud* we continue our exploration for our relationship with the Earth that we began in that last issue (No 86) so that *The Lotus Bud* numbers 86 and 87 form a double issue. Touching the Earth is an important practice in our tradition, it is also an attitude, a state of mind, of mindfulness. In *Touching the Earth* we are reminded that we are part of a network of life and not separate from it. In doing so we are nourished by a sense of belonging and oneness.** 

*Chris / True Dwelling of the Mind*

## *Intimate conversations with Mother Earth*

The following texts are meditations. They are contemplations. They are an intimate conversation—a living dialogue—with Mother Earth. But above all, they are a practice—a practice of looking deeply. Looking deeply, with mindfulness and concentration, will always bring insight.

There is a revolution of consciousness that needs to happen and it starts with us. We need a collective awakening in order for us, and our planet, to survive. We need to change our way of seeing. We need to look deeply in order to see our true nature and the true nature of the Earth. We need to look deeply to see that we *are* the Earth. With this insight, love will be born. Our love and understanding will heal us and heal the Earth.

You can let the following words slowly penetrate into your consciousness, where they can bring about insight, deep healing and transformation. 

These texts have been developed to be read out loud while practicing “Touching the Earth”. “Touching the Earth” is the name Thich Nhat Hanh has given to the practice of combining a contemplative text with a deep, mindful, full-body prostration on the ground. Touching the Earth is part of the daily mindfulness practice in Plum Village practice centers around the world, and is usually done after a session of sitting meditation. One person is bell master, another person reads the text out loud, and the whole community touches the earth (makes a full body prostration) at the same time after having heard the text being read. The collective energy of concentration is very powerful and has the capacity to bring healing and transformation. The practice of Touching the Earth deepens over time.

## *Beloved mother of all beings*

*I BOW MY HEAD before you as I look deeply and recognize that you are present in me and that I am a part of you. It is from you that I have been born, and you who are always present, offering me everything I need for my nourishment and growth. My mother, my father, and all my ancestors are also your children. It is your fresh air that we breathe, your clear water that we drink, your nourishing food that we eat, and your medicinal herbs that heal us when we are sick.*

*You have all the qualities of a mother. You are nothing less than the Mother of all Beings. I call you by the human name Mother, and yet I know your mothering nature is more vast and ancient than humankind. We are just one young species of your many children. All the millions of other species who live-or have lived-on Earth are also your children. You are not a person, but I know you are not less than a person either. You are a Great Being, not in the form of a human, but in the form of a planet—a living, breathing being.*

*Each species has its own language, yet as our Mother you can understand us all. That is why you can hear me today. That is why I can open my heart to you and offer you my prayer.* 🙏

*Dear Mother, wherever there is soil, water, rock or air, you are there, nourishing me and giving me life. You are present in every cell of my body. My physical body is your physical body, and just as the sun and stars are present in you, they are also present in me. You are not outside of me and I am not outside of you. You are more than just my environment. You are nothing less than myself.* 🙏

*I promise to keep the awareness alive that you are always in me, and I am always in you. I promise to be aware that your health and wellbeing is my own health and wellbeing. I know I need to keep this awareness alive in me for us both to be peaceful, happy, healthy, and strong.*

*But sometimes I forget. Lost in the confusions and worries of daily life, I forget that my body is your body, and sometimes even forget that I have a body at all. Unaware of the presence of my body and the beautiful planet around me and within me, I am unable to cherish and celebrate the precious gift of life you have given me. Dear Mother, it is my deep wish to wake up to the miracle of life. I promise to train myself to be present for myself,*



*my life and for you in every moment. I know that my true presence is the best gift I can offer you, the one I love.* 🙏

*Thich Nhat Hanh Excerpt from Love Letter to the Earth (2013)*

[Online source](#)

## The Ecological Self

We can enjoy a wider sense of identity than that prescribed by the Industrial Growth Society. It is both our birthright and our necessity for survival. Here are words from Arne Naess' ground-breaking talk introducing the concept of the ecological self.

For at least 2500 years, humankind has struggled with basic questions about who we are, what we are heading for, what kind of reality we are part of. Two thousand five hundred years is a short period in the lifetime of a species, and still less in the lifetime of the Earth, on whose surface we belong as mobile parts.

What I am going to say more or less in my own way, may roughly be condensed into the following six points:

1. We underestimate ourselves. I emphasize self. We tend to confuse it with the narrow ego. 🍄

2. Human nature is such that with sufficient all-sided maturity we cannot avoid "identifying" ourselves with all living beings, beautiful or ugly, big or small, sentient or not. I will elucidate my concept of identifying later.

3. Traditionally the maturity of the self develops through three stages--from ego to social self, and from social self to metaphysical self. In this conception of the process nature--our home, our immediate environment, where we belong as children--is largely ignored. I therefore tentatively introduce the concept of an ecological self.

We may be in, of and for nature from our very beginning. Society and human relations are important, but our self is richer in its constitutive relations. These relations are not only relations we have with humans and the human community, but with the larger community of all living beings.

4. The joy and meaning of life is enhanced through increased self-realization, through the fulfilment of each being's potential. Whatever the differences between beings, increased self-realization implies broadening and deepening of the self. 🍄

5. Because of an inescapable process of identification with others, with growing maturity, the self is widened and deepened. We "see our self in others". Self-realization is hindered if the self-realization of others, with whom we identify, is hindered. Love of our self will labour to overcome this obstacle by assisting in the self-realization of others according to the formula "live and let live." Thus, all that can be achieved by altruism--the dutiful, moral consideration of others-- can be achieved--and much more--through widening and deepening our self. Following Immanuel Kant's critique, we then act beautifully but neither morally nor immorally.

I have another important reason for inviting people to think in terms of deepening and widening their selves, starting with narrow ego gratification as the crudest, but inescapable starting point. It has to do with the notion usually placed as the opposite of egoism, namely the notion of altruism.

The Latin term ego has as its opposite the alter. Altruism implies that ego sacrifices its interest in favour of the other, the alter. The motivation is primarily that of duty; it is said that we ought to love others as strongly as we love our self

6. The challenge of today is to save the planet from further devastation which violates both the enlightened self-interest of humans and nonhumans, and decreases the potential of joyful existence for all.

What humankind is capable of loving from mere duty or more generally from moral exhortation is, unfortunately, very limited. From the Renaissance to the Second World War about four hundred cruel wars have been fought by Christian nations, usually for the flimsiest of reasons. It seems to me that in the future more emphasis has to be given to the conditions which naturally widen and deepen our self. With a sufficiently wide and deep sense of self, ego and alter as opposites are eliminated stage by stage as the distinctions are transcended.

Early in life, the social self is sufficiently developed so that we do not prefer to eat a big cake alone. We share the cake with our family and friends. We identify with these people sufficiently to see our joy in their joy, and to see our disappointment in theirs. Now is the time to share with all life on our maltreated earth by deepening our identification with all life-forms, with the ecosystems, and with Gaia, this fabulous old planet of ours. 🍄

Joanna Macy

[Online source](#)

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## WHO WE ARE

The Communities of Mindful Living are inspired by the Buddhist teachings of Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh.



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: [chrisbarker@inet.net.au](mailto:chrisbarker@inet.net.au)

### 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.  
85 Queen St  
Canley Heights.

Mindfulness Days at Nhap Luu (Entering the Stream)  
Meditation Centre  
221 Maria's Lane  
Beaufort VIC 3733  
[office@nhapluu.org](mailto:office@nhapluu.org)  
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### Online sources for articles in this Issue

<http://plumvillage.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Touching-the-Earth-to-Mother-Earth-10-texts.pdf>

<http://www.joannamacy.net/the-ecological-self.html>