

Welcome to the Peace Garden Sangha

The New Sangha Handbook

Nourishing our Practice, Deepening our Roots, Growing our Freedom

A Practice Handbook for New and Growing Sanghas

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Why Sangha?

Alone we are vulnerable, but with brothers and sisters to work with, we can support each other. We cannot go to the ocean as a drop of water – we would evaporate before reaching our destination. But if we become a river, if we go as a Sangha, we are sure to arrive at the ocean...

*You need a sangha;
you need a brother or sister, or friend to remind you what you already know.
The Dharma is in you, but it needs to be watered in order to manifest and become a reality.*

*A Sangha is a community of resistance,
resisting the speed, violence, and unwholesome ways of living
that are prevalent in our society.*

*I've been a monk for 65 years, and what I have found is that there is no religion,
no philosophy, no ideology higher than brotherhood and sisterhood.
Not even Buddhism.*

In society, much of our suffering comes from feeling disconnected from one another. Being with the Sangha can heal these feelings of isolation and separation. We practice together, share a room together, eat side by side and clean pots together. Just by participating with other practitioners in the daily activities we can experience a tangible feeling of love and acceptance.

A sangha is a garden, full of many varieties of trees and flowers. When we can look at ourselves and at others as beautiful, unique flowers and trees we can truly grow to understand and love one another.

One flower may bloom early in the spring and another flower may bloom in late summer. One tree may bear many fruits and another tree may offer cool shade. No one plant is greater, or lesser, or the same as any other plant in the garden. Each member of the sangha also has unique gifts to offer to the community.

We each have areas that need attention as well. When we can appreciate each member's contribution and see our weaknesses as potential for growth we can learn to live together harmoniously. Our practice is to see that we are a flower or a tree, and we are the whole garden as well, all interconnected.

*Supported by the Sangha Body
My practice flows easier,
Allowing me to swiftly realize
My great determination to love and understand all beings.*

– Thich Nhat Hanh

Welcome to our Sangha,

At the World Beat Sangha in San Diego, we always begin our gathering with this greeting. We developed this Guidebook for use by members of our Sangha. We are happy to offer it to you with the hope that it will help you too. By deciding to create and care for a sangha, you and your friends and neighbors have taken a beautiful step together on the path to freedom.

--Your friends on the path at the World Beat Sangha

Leap and the net will appear.

Jumping into the unknown. That's how I felt when I encountered the practice of sangha facilitation. A sense of leaping into something without knowing really what to do, what would happen.

I can still remember the uneasiness and uncertainty. *I'm not cut out for this?* Tension and trepidation. *I don't know enough!?* Self-doubt and mental dramas. *Someone else could do a better job, I'm sure of it!*

The monkey mind was certainly having a field day! The in-breath unable to exhale. The mind on a terrible loop between worry, nervousness and self-doubt.

Luckily, a sound snaps me out of my worry cycle. A mindfulness bell is invited.

Body, speech and mind in perfect oneness, I send my heart along with the sound of the bell. May the hearers awaken from forgetfulness, and transcend all anxiety and sorrow.

Oh, how I needed the bell to snap me out of my anxiety.

Breathing in and out...a bit deeper now, slowly...calming, easing, through each moment, settling, settling...

Breathe and the present moment appears.

Leap and the net of sangha appears.



Dearest Friend,

Thank you for leaping ☺ and helping to facilitate and offer a space of precious practice for our beloved Sangha. With a calming invitation of the bell, grounding guidance for sitting and walking, nourishing words shared, a heartfelt song or just simply resting in the sweet silence of the present moment, I offer a lotus of gratitude to you for creating these conditions for many to experience the gift of Dharma practice in community. It is a most generous act and sangha members and friends appreciate it so. Helping in the role of facilitator for the sangha helped me to trust myself, my practice and the sangha. I leapt and a beautiful net appeared.

*"The gift of Dharma surpasses all gifts."
~Dhammapada 354*

Breathing in...

I feel the support of the sangha of my breath, my body, my ancestors and all the positive elements which are part of this moment

Breathing out...

I am supported by dharma sisters, brothers and friends present today, walking in the direction of harmony and freedom

Breathing in...

I am supported by the guidance of this practice book, all Dharmas and wholesome teachings I am learning about and practicing.

Breathing out...

I place my trust in the sangha and release worries, anxieties and tensions

Breathing in...

I trust this breath, this moment, the collective sangha energy

Breathing out...

I release my sense of separation and take refuge in the Sangha

Breathing in...

I feel the solidity of Mother Earth

Breathing out...

I open dharma doors sourced from my true joy, insight and healing

Breathing in...

I feel safe, respected and seen
I share from the totality of my being
I bring my full, complete self to this moment
I am beautiful,
I am *buddhaful*,
I am myself in this ocean of mindfulness
This is my offering.

Breathing out...

I am cultivating spaciousness, clarity and inner freedom

For the benefit of myself and the sangha

Breathing in...

I have arrived, I am home

Breathing out...

we have arrived, we are home

Thank you again for your practice of sangha facilitation, helping us all to arrive.

A lotus for you,
Jon S.
Calm Ocean of the Heart

"Even if a person throws the rinsings of a bowl or a cup into a village pool or pond, thinking, 'May whatever animals live here feed on this,' that would be a source of merit." —Anguttara Nikaya 3.57



World Beat Sangha

How We Practice Mindfulness Together

General:

Our Sangha is a community of people practicing mindful living together in order to bring about and to maintain awareness. Our gatherings are an opportunity for practicing together joyfully. Aware that our speech and actions can help our brothers and sisters practice more deeply, we hold ourselves to a high standard of mindfulness. We practice with sincerity and respect for the teachings and practice as they have been transmitted to us by our teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh and his students. We are also open to teachings of mindfulness where ever they may come from if they are wholesome and beneficial to us.

Getting Ready:

We are invited to arrive 10-15 minutes early so that we can approach the hall with mindfulness and without hurry. This way, we all participate in the creation of our Sacred Practice Space. We will joyfully support the facilitator in setting up the hall or bringing down the cushions.

We are invited to turn off our cell phones or their ringers. If we need to leave them on in case of emergency, we will put them on vibrate mode. If necessary, we will mindfully walk outside before taking the call so that the practitioners inside can continue to concentrate.

Comfort:

Our meeting place has a hardwood floor and provides chairs. We are invited to bring our own mats and cushions or benches if we want to sit on the floor. We are asked to leave our street footwear outside the circle.

If someone has environmental sensitivities, they will let the facilitator know and we will refrain from burning incense or scented candles.

A sangha gathering is not a time to suffer, so comfort is important. We are all encouraged to take responsibility for our own well-being and to communicate our needs to the facilitator of the meeting within consideration for others.

Sitting Meditation:

By 5:00 pm we will all have taken our seats, so that everyone is ready and comfortable when the bell is invited. If we are late for sitting meditation, we will try to join the group without disruption or will sit just outside the group until the next transition (bell). If our legs or feet fall asleep or begin to hurt during the sitting, we are free to adjust our position quietly by following our breathing. Aware of how our movements affect our fellow practitioners, we remain as still as we can comfortably be.

Contributions (Dana):

Following the Buddhist tradition of practicing generosity, called *dana*, we are invited to give to the sangha whenever we meet. This can be in the form of donating time, volunteering to bring flowers, or other contributions. Of course, any amount will be joyfully accepted. Dana is used to sustain the sangha such as supporting the website, off-site rentals and for other incidental costs as well as causes the sangha agrees to support. We also invite everyone to bring something that has meaning for them each time to place in the center of our circle as our altar for that gathering.

Dharma Sharing:

During Dharma sharing, we practice loving speech and deep listening. It is a special time for us to share our experiences, our joys, our difficulties and our questions relating to the practice of mindfulness. By learning to speak out about our happiness and our difficulties,

we contribute to the collective insight and understanding of the sangha.

Dharma sharing is not a time to engage in theoretical or abstract conversations about theories or texts but rather, we will only speak directly from our own experiences. We will refrain from characterizing the experiences of others, giving unsolicited advice, or inserting ourselves into their stories. By avoiding such “cross-talk,” we honor and safeguard each individual’s sharing. We will remember not to spread news that we do not know to be certain and not to criticize or condemn things of which we are not sure. We will refrain from uttering words that can cause division or discord.

By practicing deep listening while others are speaking, we help create a calm and receptive environment. Mindful of our own inner dialog, if we refrain from agreeing, disagreeing or wanting to respond, we can choose to come back to being present with the person speaking. By being witness to sangha members, we support healing, joy, and spiritual growth of the individual and ourselves.

Whatever is shared during Dharma sharing is confidential. If a friend shares about a difficulty he or she is facing, we will respect that he or she may or may not wish to talk about this individually outside of the Dharma discussion time.

If someone is not speaking loudly enough, we will refrain from interrupting them to ask for them to speak louder knowing that the sharing is for them to speak more that it is for us to hear.

Recitations

The World Beat Sangha regularly recites the Five and Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings of the Plum Village Tradition as well as the Seven Trainings of the Mind toward Diversity.

Cultivation of Diversity

Our sangha seeks to cultivate the deep and rich diversity, in all aspects, that is found in our community. We aspire to make all people who seek to practice feel welcome and supported and to help them succeed on their path of practice. We seek to take actions to eliminate barriers, whether they are physical, economic, cultural, or attitudinal to the practice. As sangha members we all seek to diversify our relationships, commit to open-mindedness toward other points of view, examine our own beliefs and actions, and increase the compassion in how we live our lives and understand each other.

Young Practitioners

Young practitioners are always welcome to practice with the full sangha. When arranged in advance, the sangha will attempt to designate two adults to share time with children during sangha gatherings so that their parents can receive the benefits of practicing with the sangha. Young practitioners are invited to stay with the sangha through walking meditation and then go with their caretakers for an activity while their parents practice.

Suggestions and Concerns:

We are all invited to direct any suggestions and concerns regarding our sangha, our meetings and our practice toward the facilitator (bell master) on that particular day.

We may also choose to submit our suggestions and concerns in writing by putting them inside an envelope and depositing the note either inside the Dana box or the bell. All written notes will be forwarded to the CTC caretaker. Caretakers can also be reached by sending an e-mail to earthlover@sbcgobal.net

Enjoy Your Practice.

*You need a sangha;
you need a brother or sister, or friend to remind
you what you already know. The Dharma is in
you, but it needs to be watered in order to
manifest and become a reality.*

– Thich Nhat Hanh

Taking Refuge

Taking refuge in the Buddha in myself, I aspire to help all people recognize their own awakened nature.

When we recite the Five Mindfulness Trainings or chant the sutras, we practice taking refuge in the three jewels. We practice Touching the Earth to also show our gratitude to the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. Taking refuge is the recognition and the determination to head towards what is most beautiful, truthful, and good. Taking refuge is also the awareness that one has the capacity to understand and love.

The Buddha is the one who shows us the way in this life. The Buddha is the historical person who lived 2600 years ago and all of our ancestral teachers who connect us to the Buddha. The Buddha is also the awakened nature in all beings. Each element in the universe that is showing us the way of love and understanding, is the Buddha. The open look of a child and the ray of sunshine causing the flower to unfold her beauty also contain the awakened nature.

The Dharma is the teachings of love and understanding. The Dharma is the teachings of the historical Buddha and his descendants in the form of discourses, the commentaries and precepts that show us the path leading to peace and deep insight, love and understanding. The Dharma is all the elements in our world and in our consciousness that guide us on the path of liberation. The living Dharma is contained in every corner of the universe. The floating cloud is silently preaching about freedom and the falling leaf is giving us a dharma talk on the practice of letting go. Every time you breathe mindfully, walk mindfully or look at another person with the eye of understanding and compassion, you are giving a silent dharma talk.

The Sangha is the community that lives in harmony and awareness. Your teachers, your friends and yourself are all elements of your Sangha. A path in the forest might be a member of your Sangha as well, supporting you on the path of transformation. You can share your joys and your difficulties with your Sangha. You can let go and relax into the warmth and strength of your Sangha. The Sangha is a river, flowing and bending with flexibility, responding to the environment in which it is situated. Taking refuge in the Sangha, we join in the stream of life, flowing and becoming one with all of our sisters and brothers in the practice. In the setting of a Sangha, you find the practice easier and much more enjoyable.

SAMPLE COMMENTS FOR BELL MASTER/FACILITATOR

Opening and welcome

Welcome everyone to today's gathering of the World Beat Sangha.

Our Tradition: In this circle we practice mindfulness, peaceful living, and meditation in the Plum Village tradition of Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh. Often, he is referred to as "Thay" or teacher, in Vietnamese. Thay has developed the practice of 'Engaged Buddhism' although we welcome any practices or cultural traditions that are healthy and wholesome.

What is a sangha and what do we do:

- If you aren't familiar with the term sangha, it means a community of friends practicing mindfulness and mindful living in order to bring about and to maintain awareness.
- At the World Beat Sangha we have a chance for all of us busy and committed people with a lot on our minds, to come together in community with mindfulness and awareness, to stop, to be quiet, to calm down, to let go—together.
- We come to the sangha to take care of ourselves in a safe place and in community with others who share our practice.

Reassure New People: Our sangha is made people of all ages and all kinds of experience at all levels of practice. You don't need to be a Buddhist to practice. You don't need to be anything—just a real human being. Everyone can practice because everyone can breathe. If you are new, or this is your first time ever doing something like this, we welcome you and we will all benefit from your presence. Don't worry, there are no rules to break and nothing to do wrong. In fact, there is nothing to do! You are lucky to have what we call a 'beginners mind' and many of us work hard to cultivate our beginners mind.

For the next hour we have will give ourselves a gift of this time to stop and take care of ourselves. This time is our chance to stop running, to stop 'doing', to clear our minds and dwell in the present moment.

There is nothing to do, nowhere to go, it is our opportunity to put down our projects, our calendars, to let go of our worries, our fears, our deadlines and just 'be'. Be with your mind, be with your body, be with your ancestors, be truly here.

Review bowing and the bell: There are a couple things that we do to help with our gathering.

- You will notice that many of us will put our hands together and bow before speaking or to acknowledge each other. This is to say that "the being in me recognized the being in you" or "the Buddha nature in me sees the Buddha nature in you". You don't have to do this if you are uncomfortable. We also offer a lotus when we are done to let everyone know we have finished.

- We use the bell to mark the beginnings and endings of things in our meetings. We say we ‘invite’ the bell—like you would invite a friend—to bring our attention to the present moment. We invite the bell as an invitation to come back to ourselves. We always begin by coming back to our breath for three sounds of the bell and we end with two sounds.

Review the schedule (Sample)

1. Opening (5 minutes)
2. Introductions (15 minutes)
 - Say our names, if we have been here before or meditated before
 - Internal weather report or
 - Share something that brought us joy today or
 - Share something that is on our mind or
 - What is our intention for the next hour
3. Sitting Meditation (20 minutes)
 - Give basic instruction if there are new members
 - 3 points of contact
 - Eyes closed or half-open
 - Upright and relaxed
 - Hands relaxed
 - Shift position if you need to—no suffering
 - Chair or cushion
 - Three bells to start-- Offer a Guided for 10 minutes
 - Then silent sit for 15-20
 - Two bells to end.
4. OFFERING OF TEACHINGS (several choices)
 - a. Teaching by Thay- A video clip, podcast or other teaching by Thay or
 - b. Reading of a book or talk of Thay and/or
 - c. Recitation of 5, Diversity, or 14 Mindfulness Trainings or
 - d. Walking Meditation
5. Dharma Sharing (20- 30 min)

So let’s begin by settling ourselves with three sounds of the bell—go back to your breath, enjoy your breath, and offer some gratitude to yourself for taking the step to nourish yourself today.

CLOSING

We are building community in many ways here at the WBC. Please leave us with your email or other contact info so that we can share our schedule of events with you.

We hope that through the practice of mindfulness and meditation we can bring our collective peaceful energy. We meet everyone Sunday so we hope to see you again.

The important thing is to generate peace in yourself and to share it with others....

Outline for comments

Create your own outline for your facilitation.

Welcome

Our Teacher and Our Tradition:

What is a sangha and what do we do:

Reassure New People:

Review bowing and the bell:

Review the schedule:

Closing

Dana (opt)

Contact info

Final Sharing of the practice

INTRODUCTORY GUIDANCE FOR SANGHA ACTIVITIES

The following pages offer some guidance that a facilitator can use to introduce different practices.

Inviting the Bell

Our bell is a beloved sangha member and a good friend on the road of practice. The Sound of the Bell is the voice of the Buddha calling us home. Home to our body. Home to our life. Home to the present moment.

We “invite” the bell. We do not use the word “strike” because it sounds violent. “Invite” is something very respectful and very peaceful. We use the bell inviter to invite the bell.

Establishing a ritual relationship with the bell can help us a lot. Our quality of mind is also very important so we need to settle and calm our own minds before we invite our friend to sound.

We sit up-right and beautifully and breathe three breaths before picking up the bell. Our breath is the bell of mindfulness that is always with us. Then we join our palms at the level of our heart. When we sit at the bell we are the bell master. We need to join our body and mind in a state of reverence. We bow to the bell – which is the Buddha. We pick up the bell with both hands and rest the bell on the raised palm of our hand at the level of our heart – like a lotus. We then recite the Gatha silently or aloud:

My body, speech and mind in perfect oneness

I send my heart along with the sound of the bell.

May the hearer awake from forgetfulness and transcend all anxiety and sorrow.

We then “wake-up” the sound of the bell with a small tap-holding the inviter against the bell. This tells us all that the sound of the bell is coming. Then follow one in breath and out breath.

We invite the bell with our next out breath, lower the inviter and follow our breath three times – breathing with the bell.

We say silently to ourselves, “Listen, Listen, This wonderful sound calls me back to my true home.”

We then invite the bell a second time, lower the inviter and breathe three breaths with the bell.

Then a third time, we bow and gently set the bell down.

Conscious Breathing

Breathing in I go back to the island within myself.

Our breathing is a stable solid ground that we can take refuge in. Regardless of our internal weather- our thoughts, emotions and perceptions- our breathing is always with us like a faithful friend. Whenever we feel carried away, or sunken in a deep emotion, or scattered in worries and projects, we return to our breathing to collect and anchor our mind.

We feel the flow of air coming in and going out of our nose. We feel how light and natural, how calm and peaceful our breathing functions. At any time, while we are walking, gardening, or typing, we can return to this peaceful source of life.

We may like to recite:

*“Breathing in I know that I am breathing in.
Breathing out I know that I am breathing out.”*

We do not need to control our breath. Feel the breath as it actually is. It may be long or short, deep or shallow. With our awareness it will naturally become slower and deeper. Conscious breathing is the key to uniting body and mind and bringing the energy of mindfulness into each moment of our life.



World Beat Sangha, *Sitting for Bat Nha*, 2009

Sitting Meditation

We sit in order to become a real person. To be really alive. To be home.

Sitting meditation is very healing. We realize we can just be with whatever is within us- our pain, anger, and irritation, or our joy, love, and peace. We are with whatever is there without being carried away by it. Let it come, let it stay, then let it go.

No need to push, to oppress, or to pretend our thoughts are not there. Observe the thoughts and images of our mind with an accepting and loving eye.

Stopping is the first important step when we sit down. When our body has stopped moving, it gives our mind a chance to calm down too. Then we can be free to be still and calm despite the storms that might arise in us.

Mechanics:

- Try to find 3 points of contact on a cushion, bench, or chair.
- Sit upright and straight but relaxed.
- Relax your hands where ever they feel comfortable.
- Close your eyes gently, or leave them half-open if you are tired.
- If our legs or feet fall asleep or begin to hurt during the sitting, we are free to adjust our position quietly.
- In the beginning, just feel where you feel your breath— maybe in your stomach, nose, or elsewhere and just rest your mind there.
- We can maintain our concentration by following our breathing and slowly, and attentively change our posture.

*Sitting quietly, doing nothing,
the Spring comes and the grass grows,
by itself.*

Breathing

From the **Wake Up Together Handbook!** www.wkup.org

Welcome to one of our most basic practices called Mindful Breathing. It is, simply put, being aware of your in-breath and out-breath.

At first, we can be mindful of 3 in- and out-breaths and gradually build our awareness and concentration over more breaths, and over a longer period of time.

I find for myself that my breath is the most reliable and portable tool that I always have to hand when I am overwhelmed by strong emotions.

My breath is my favorite anchor that I turn to when I need to find my center and reestablish solidity. When I feel a rush of anxiety or boiling rage escalating inside, I resort to calming myself with mindful breathing. One of my favorite exercises is:

In - Out

Deep - Slow

Calm - Ease

Smile - Release

Present Moment - Wonderful Moment

The most important thing is to enjoy and not control your breath. It's okay if it's short or long or deep or shallow. With time and practice it will naturally become deeper and slower.

*Every time you feel lost, alienated, or cut off from life,
or from the world, every time you feel despair, anger, or instability, practice going home.
Mindfulbreathing is the vehicle that you use to go back to your true home.*

- Thích Nhất Hạnh, From Taming the Tiger Within

Sitting Meditation

Sitting Meditation is a time to be still. In Plum Village we have a song called *Happiness is Here and Now*. One line goes, "No where to go, nothing to do."

I think sitting meditation is when we can stop and be in our body. We can feel happy. Sitting meditation is a designated time for us; it is "my time."

When our body has stopped moving, it gives our mind a chance to calm down also. Practicing sitting meditation we want to unite our body and mind. This desire to feel our body, to be in our body, to understand our body, to fully embrace our body and to heal our body is an act of love.

It takes determination to settle into our body and to become aware of this world within us. When our body is at ease and comfortable, it does not take effort to sit like a mountain - to sit solidly and in freedom.

But I think we all know that when we are unhappy or we have strong emotions, whether pleasant or unpleasant, it is a challenge to be still. What allows us to be able to sit still and be calm is to follow our breathing.

This exercise of being aware of our in- and out- breath brings the light of awareness to shine forth onto these strong emotions. When we understand something, or want to understand something, it is much easier for us to be present for it, unconditionally.

Mindfulness of our breath is an anchor that grounds us to our Mother Earth. It keeps us in place even when the winds of thoughts and feelings are blowing forcefully. Training ourselves to be mindful of our breath is like making a best friend. When we have a best friend, we connect more openly with other people, because we have someone to take refuge in - someone we believe understands us well. If our best friend is friends with someone else, then we too can be friends with him or her and at the least manage to hang out with him or her. That someone else, our "next friend" we meet on this path, is our body. Once we have made friends with our body, then it is easier and we have more confidence in making friends with our mind.

Sitting to relax, to enjoy, to understand: As our practice deepens sitting meditation can become like sitting and having a good cup of coffee or juice with a long time dear friend. You are just sitting and enjoying each others' company and listening wholeheartedly without any judgment. You are there simply in order to understand, so you can be there for your friend. It is like that with sitting meditation as we get to know our body and mind. We want to sit so we can understand and know how to live our life more fully and happily without regrets. Since we are sitting with our best friend the breath, we feel secure and blessed to have someone so faithful by our side.

We do not need to be afraid of "not being enough" because we understand ourselves, and our limits and our potential. We know we have weaknesses but we know our faithful friend will be by our side and shed light on these areas as is needed throughout our life, so we can take it easy. This awareness of "being enough" is a great insight that can only come when we stop and care for ourselves, not allowing ourselves to be caught and carried away by the mainstream of society. We learn to live wisely from our understanding and wish to love life.

Bite-size sitting sessions: We do not need to sit for long. If we can sit peacefully and joyfully for 5-10 minutes in the morning, that is enough to water the seed of stopping and of coming back to ourselves. We can also sit for 5-10 minutes, breathing in and out in the evening before crashing on our bed to knock out for the night. Sitting for short periods like that is enough for us to be more aware of our actions of body, speech, and mind in order for us to develop and grow into a beautiful human being.

Joy of meditation as nourishment

--From Blooming of a Lotus

Breathing in, I know I am breathing in
Breathing out, I know I am breathing
out

In
Out (bell)

(5-10 breaths depending on time allowed) (half-sound)

Breathing in, my breath goes deep
Breathing out, my breath goes slow

Deep
Slow (bell)

(5-10 breaths depending on time allowed) (half-sound)

Breathing in, I feel calm
Breathing out, I feel ease

Calm
Ease
(BELL)

(5-10 breaths depending on time allowed) (half-sound)

Breathing in, I smile
Breathing out, I release

Smile
Release
(BELL)

Breathing in, I see myself as a flower.
Breathing out, I feel fresh
Flower
Fresh

Breathing in, I see myself as a
mountain
Breathing out, I feel solid
Mountain
Solid
(BELL)

Breathing in, I see myself as still water
Breathing out, I reflect all that is.
Still water
Reflecting
(BELL)

Breathing in, I see myself as space
Breathing out, I feel free
Space
Free
(BELL)

Dwelling in the present moment
I know it is a wonderful moment
Present moment
Wonderful moment.
(BELL)

Meditation for Stopping and Deep Looking

The two wings of meditation are stopping and looking deeply.

Breathing in, I am aware that I am breathing **in**.

Breathing out, I am aware that I am breathing **out**.

Breathing in, my breathe goes **deep**.

Breathing out, my breath goes **slow**

Breathing in, I **calm** my body.

Breathing out, I feel at **ease**.

Breathing in, I **smile**.

Breathing out, I **release** all tension.

Breathing in, I relax my mind

Breathing out, I smile to my relaxed mind

Breathing in, I quiet my mind and let go of thoughts, worries, judgments

Breathing out, I smile to my quiet mind

Breathing in, I see myself in this moment, sitting quietly, doing nothing

Breathing out, my mind is free

Breathing in, I feel light

Breathing out, I feel free

Breathing in, I am in touch with the emptiness of my mind

Breathing out, I smile to my empty mind

Breathing in, I see my fear about the future

Breathing out, I let it go

Breathing in, I see my worries, my irritation, my concerns, my exhilarations

Breathing out, I let them go.

Breathing in, I am enjoying this present moment

Breathing out, I know this is a wonderful moment

Facilitating Dharma Sharing

Provide an overview to the sangha regarding Dharma sharing. Try to include the following points but speak in your own words rather than treat this as a script. It is more valuable for all to hear your own perspective on Dharma Sharing.

- Dharma sharing is an opportunity for each of us to share our personal practice. We can share what has been a challenge, what has worked well or we can ask a question to the group to get guidance in our practice.
- When we would like to share just place your hands together in front of you to form a lotus. Our two hands coming together signify our mind and body being unified. It also signifies the Buddha nature in me bowing to the Buddha nature in you. Bow to the group to ask permission to share. The group will form their hands and bow back to give you permission to share.
- We should speak from our heart. Focus on what we are experiencing with the practice. It's not a time to talk about a theory or an article or book we've recently read.
- Share your first-person experience with the practice – using “I” statements rather than “you” or “we”.
- Take your time to share your full thought - but try to be considerate of the time by making sure that there is enough time for everyone to share. Say what you want to say with a mind toward conciseness if there are many that need to share. This will allow all a chance to share.
- When you are done sharing, form your hands and bow to the group. The group will form their hands and bow back to thank you for your sharing.
- It is wonderful if the group can breathe 3 times before the next sharing.
- Dharma sharing is equally about deep sharing and deep listening.
- Practice Deep Listening by being fully present for the person that is sharing. Focus on understanding them rather than on constructing your own thoughts or preparing your own sharing.
- If moved by what someone has shared then in your sharing you can share your own personal experience on the subject. It is better to share your own experience than to try to give advice to someone else.
- Share to the group as a whole rather than directing your sharing at one person.
- If you have already shared once please let others share before you volunteer to share again.
- Since we practice deep sharing from the heart we do not always know what we will say. We speak freely to the group and may not want to be reminded of what we said or discuss it further afterwards. To support each other in this practice please let what is said here remain here. If you want to share about “your experience” at Dharma sharing with another that is fine, but please practice confidentiality.

If there are more than 12 people in the sangha, the group should be split into two groups for Dharma Sharing. This will allow more time for individual sharings and will make it easier for those to share that are normally quiet in large groups. Ask another facilitator to lead a group and invite the group to meet in the separate room.

Gather your group into a small circle and invite everyone to sit comfortably. Invite the bell. Enjoy three breaths and then say that we are now beginning our Dharma Sharing.

Sit in silence and wait for individuals to offer to share. Don't be concerned with long silences. Sometimes a long silence will draw-out someone to share that normally wouldn't.

If there is strong emotion rising during sharing – invite the bell and invite the group to enjoy three breaths.

At 5-10 minutes before the end of sharing invite the group to allow those that have not shared yet to have a chance to share. Remind everyone that sharing is voluntary and one should not feel pressured to share. Deep Listening is as valuable as sharing.

Close the Dharma Sharing by inviting the sound of the bell three times, pausing for three breaths after each sound of the bell.

Some possible topics or questions to reflect on:

- What are the conditions for our happiness and joy?
- What really brings contentment in our lives?
- What do I 'feed' myself every day that waters my unwholesome seeds?
- What can I do to nourish my seeds of happiness, joy and gratitude?
- Do my thoughts relate mostly to the future, the past, or the present?
- What stories do I keep telling myself about interactions, person, and situations? Do these make me a happier person?
- Do I listen deeply to others? Do I listen deeply to myself?
- What things are easy for me to put effort into? Why?
- Are there obstacles or hindrances to growing and deepening my practice?
- Do I reflect on all my conditions of happiness every day? How often?
- What 'habits' do I have that I rely on to cover up my unhappiness, anxiety, suffering, worries?
- *(add your own reflection questions here)*
-
-

The Practice of Dharma Sharing (previously Dharma Discussion):

Some helpful words for facilitators

Excerpt from *How to Enjoy Your Stay in Plum Village: A Guide to the Practices & Activities*

- By the monks and nuns of Plum Village

Dharma sharing is an opportunity to benefit from each others' insights and experience of the practice. It is a special time for us to share our experiences, our joys, our difficulties and our questions relating to the practice of mindfulness. By practicing deep listening while others are speaking, we help create a calm and receptive environment. By learning to speak out about our happiness and our difficulties in the practice, we contribute to the collective insight and understanding of the Sangha.

Please base our sharing on our own experience of the practice rather than about abstract ideas and theoretical topics. We may realize that many of us share similar difficulties and aspirations. Sitting, listening and sharing together, we recognize our true connection to one another.

Please remember that whatever is shared during the Dharma sharing time is confidential. If a friend shares about a difficulty he or she is facing, respect that he or she may or may not wish to talk about this individually outside of the Dharma sharing time.

Excerpt from *Stepping Into Freedom: An Introduction to Buddhist Monastic Training*

- By Thich Nhat Hanh

During Dharma sharings, practice deep listening in order to understand and learn from others' viewpoints or insights. If you have something to contribute to the discussion that will help others in their practice, share it, but do not speak just to show off your knowledge or challenge someone else's point of view. Do not browbeat others to show that you are more intelligent than they are. The aim of a Dharma sharing is to learn collectively from everyone's insights and experience. If you are having difficulty with some aspect of practice, ask for help. If someone offers a helpful comment, join your palms in gratitude.

When you are facilitator, if the group is small and includes some newcomers, allow time for everyone to introduce himself or herself. Then make some brief introductory remarks. If the discussion becomes theoretical, bring everyone back to the discussion topic. When necessary, gently remind people to base their comments on their experience of the practice. Invite those who have not shared to do so if they wish. From time to time, the group's bell master should invite the bell of mindfulness. This will raise the quality of the Dharma sharing. Before concluding, thank all the participants.

Further notes:

The facilitator can encourage everyone to take a sufficient amount of time that he or she needs to share. But the facilitator should also remind the group to be aware of others' desire to share as well. When time is limited, and there is a large group, advise individuals not to share more than once, except when everyone has already had an opportunity to speak.

Sometime it can be nice to close dharma sharing with a practice song, and then end with three sounds of the bell. The facilitator may like to invite the group to bow to each other, in gratitude for their support in the practice.

Note: These suggestions are by no means rules for Dharma sharing. They are merely helpful suggestions and guidelines. Some of them may or may not apply based upon the situation and circumstances of the Sangha's practice session.

~Enjoy your practice....☺

WALKING MEDITATION



I have arrived. I am home.

Whenever we are not standing, sitting or lying down, we are moving. We can learn to move and to walk with awareness. We do not need to rush. We have arrived with each step in the present moment; we can step in the Pure Land or in the Kingdom of God. When we are walking from one side of the room to the other or from one building to another, we can be aware of the contact of our feet with the earth and of our in and out breath. As we breathe in we can say "in," as we breathe out we can say "out" silently. We are aware that we are alive with each step, not carried away by our thoughts and emotions. We can train to practice walking meditation all day long. It is a wonderful practice which we can do anywhere and at any time; therefore, it has the capacity to transform our everyday life.

Wherever we walk, we can practice meditation. This means that we know that we are walking. We walk just for walking. We walk with freedom and solidity, no longer in a hurry. We are present with each step. And when we wish to talk we stop our movement and give our full attention to the other person, to our words and to listening.

Walking in this way should not be a privilege. We should be able to do it in every moment. Look around and see how vast life is, the trees, the white clouds, the limitless sky. Listen to the birds. Feel the fresh breeze. Life is all around and we are alive and healthy and capable of walking in peace.

Let us walk as a free person and feel our steps get lighter. Let us enjoy every step we make. Each step is nourishing and healing. As we walk, imprint our gratitude and our love on the earth.

We may like to use a gatha as we walk. Taking two or three steps for each in-breath and each out-breath,
Breathing in "I have arrived"; Breathing out "I am home"

Breathing in "In the here"; Breathing out "In the now"

Breathing in "I am solid"; Breathing out "I am free"

Breathing in "In the ultimate"; Breathing out "I dwell"

--From the Deer Park Website

The Practice of Walking Meditation – Sister Jewell

Learn a song: I'm breathing in, I'm breathing out. My breath grows deep. My breath grows slow, calming, easing, smiling to life. Oh life, it's so wonderful! Oh life, it's so wonderful. In the present moment.

We have a chance to practice to walk with all of our awareness. To really enjoy just walking. Not trying to get anywhere. Not having to rush.

Aimlessness is one of the doors of liberation. Practice aimlessness by being with each step. Bring our mind back to our body and back to our steps – our left foot and right foot. Keeping our mind present with our body by also being aware of our breath. We coordinate our steps with our breathing. When we breath in we can say “in” silently for however many steps we breath in. and “out” for however many steps we breath out.

We experience our whole being stopping in each step. We rest in each step. This is not a step to get me to the next step. This is a step for the sake of this step. And I'm right in this place at this time on mother earth and I don't need to be anywhere else. I let all the weight of my body rest in this step. And then in the next step. And I enjoy the air coming into my lungs and leaving my lungs. My shoulders are relaxed and my face is relaxed because I am not trying to get anywhere. Just enjoy these steps.

It's wonderful to walk. It's wonderful to have two legs. Our feet are very sensitive and can tell us many things. Our feet can be in touch with the energy of the earth and we can give the earth our energy. Take steps on the earth with great gentleness so that with each step we are kissing mother earth. We can kiss the earth with our kindness and compassion. As a species we are treating the Earth as if we don't need it. The Earth is feeling a lot of pain.

Taking our time is a way of being non-violent. When we rush we are creating stress and a kind of violence to our environment. So taking our time is an act of peace. Walking meditation is also a practice of love. Teacher holding my hand I felt his love, his mindfulness, awareness. He was really there for me and the world.

It is a wonderful time to bring up memories of what nourished us in the past and bring that awareness into our bodies again.

We will walk at a slower pace than we usually walk. It is easiest when we are new to the practice to walk slowly. But you can do walking meditation at any speed and any where.

It can be a sense of nourishment. We will stop at times to enjoy the trees and the wind. It is a real luxury so just enjoy it.

Closings

At the end of the sangha practice, invite a small sound of the bell and have everyone stand.

First we bow to each other in sisterhood and brotherhood, then we turn to bow to the world. You may like to close your sangha gathering with a small teaching from the practice. Here are some options:

- The sangha is invited to come back to our breathing so that that collective energy of mindfulness will bring us together as an organism, flowing as a river with no more separation.
Let the whole sangha breathe as one body.
Chant as one body.
Listen as one body.
Transcending the boundaries of a delusive self, liberating from the superiority complex, the inferiority complex, and the equality complex.
- Let the merits of our practice benefit all beings and help them transform their suffering.
- We are related to each other. By taking care of you, I take care of myself. By taking care of myself, I take care of you. Happiness and Safety are not individual matters.
- Everything we are looking for is right here in the present moment.
- If we are peaceful, if we are happy, we can smile and blossom like a flower, and everyone in our family, our entire society, will benefit from our peace.

Practice Songs

1. Breathing In, Breathing Out

Breathing in, breathing out
Breathing in, breathing out
I am blooming as a flower.
I am fresh as the dew.
I am solid as the mountain.
I am firm as the earth.
I am free.
Breathing in, breathing out
Breathing in, breathing out
I am water, reflecting
what is real, what is true.
And I feel there is space
deep inside of me
I am free, I am free, I am free.

2. The Island Within

Breathing in,
I go back to the island within
myself.
There are beautiful trees
within the island,
there are clear streams
of water, there are birds,
sunshine and fresh air.
Breathing out,
I feel safe.
I enjoy going back to my island.

3. Dear Friends

Dear friends, dear friends,
Let my tell you how I feel;
You have given me such treasures,
I love you so.

4. I Have Arrived, I Am Home

(I have arrived, I am home
in the here and in the now.) (2x)
I am solid, I am free.
I am solid, I am free.
In the ultimate, I dwell.
In the ultimate, I dwell.

5. In Out

In, out
Deep, slow
Calm, ease
Smile, release.
Present
moment,
Wonderful
moment.

6. Standing Like A Tree

Standing like a tree
with my roots down deep,
and my branches wide and open.
Come down the rain,
Come down the sun,
Return to the Earth, return to the
One...
You are so tall, your leaves are so
green
How could we live without you?...
Trees... give us shade and...
Trees... give us air to breathe...
We are one family, we
are all related...

7. No Discrimination

The sun, it shines on everyone.
(2x)
No discrimination, no
discrimination
The rain, it falls on everyone, (2x)
No discrimination, no
discrimination
My heart belongs to everyone, (2x)
No discrimination, no
discrimination

8. And When I Rise

And when I rise,
let me rise like a bird, joyfully.
And when I fall,
let me fall like a leaf, gracefully,
without regrets.
(And when I sit,
let me sit like a mountain, solidly.
And when I lay,
let me lay like a lake, calm and
still, reflecting all.)
(And when I work,
let me work like a bee, lazily.
And when I play,
let me play like the rays of the sun,
rejoicingly.)

9. No Coming, No Going

No coming, no going
No after, no before
I hold you close to me.
I release you to be so free
Because I am in you, and you are
in
me (2x)

10. Happiness

Happiness is here and now.
I have dropped my worries.
Nowhere to go, nothing to do,
no longer in a hurry.
Happiness is here and now.
I have dropped my worries.
Somewhere to go, something to
do,
but I don't need to hurry.

The Five Mindfulness Trainings

Today we will recite the 5 Mindfulness Trainings. We ask the community for spiritual support.

Please, Brothers and Sisters, listen.

The Five Mindfulness Trainings represent the Buddhist vision for a global spirituality and ethic. They are a concrete expression of the Buddha's teachings on the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path, the path of right understanding and true love, leading to healing, transformation, and happiness for ourselves and for the world. To practice the Five Mindfulness Trainings is to cultivate the insight of interbeing, or Right View, which can remove all discrimination, intolerance, anger, fear, and despair. If we live according to the Five Mindfulness Trainings, we are already on the path of a bodhisattva. Knowing we are on that path, we are not lost in confusion about our life in the present or in fears about the future.

We ask the community to listen with a serene mind. Consider the mindfulness trainings as a clear mirror in which to look at ourselves. Say yes, silently, every time you see that during the past month you have made an effort to study, practice, and observe the mindfulness training read. (bell)

Brothers and Sisters, are you ready?
Everyone: (silently) I am ready.

The First Mindfulness Training: Reverence For Life

Aware of the suffering caused by the destruction of life, I am committed to cultivating the insight of interbeing and compassion and learning ways to protect the lives of people, animals, plants, and minerals. I am determined not to kill, not to let others kill, and not to support any act of killing in the world, in my thinking, or in my way of life. Seeing that harmful actions arise from anger, fear, greed, and intolerance, which in turn come from dualistic and discriminative thinking, I will cultivate openness, non-discrimination, and non-attachment

to views in order to transform violence, fanaticism, and dogmatism in myself and in the world.

This is the 1st Mindfulness Training. Have you made an effort to study, practice, and observe it during the past month?
(Three breaths)
(Bell)

The Second Mindfulness Training: True Happiness

Aware of the suffering caused by exploitation, social injustice, stealing, and oppression, I am committed to practicing generosity in my thinking, speaking, and acting. I am determined not to steal and not to possess anything that should belong to others; and I will share my time, energy, and material resources with those who are in need. I will practice looking deeply to see that the happiness and suffering of others are not separate from my own happiness and suffering; that true happiness is not possible without understanding and compassion; and that running after wealth, fame, power and sensual pleasures can bring much suffering and despair. I am aware that happiness depends on my mental attitude and not on external conditions, and that I can live happily in the present moment simply by remembering that I already have more than enough conditions to be happy. I am committed to practicing Right Livelihood so that I can help reduce the suffering of living beings on Earth and reverse the process of global warming.

This is the 2nd Mindfulness Training. Have you made an effort to study, practice, and observe it during the past month?
(Three breaths)
(Bell)

The Third Mindfulness Training: True Love

Aware of the suffering caused by sexual misconduct, I am committed to cultivating responsibility and learning ways to protect the

safety and integrity of individuals, couples, families, and society. Knowing that sexual desire is not love, and that sexual activity motivated by craving always harms myself as well as others, I am determined not to engage in sexual relations without true love and a deep, long-term commitment made known to my family and friends. I will do everything in my power to protect children from sexual abuse and to prevent couples and families from being broken by sexual misconduct. Seeing that body and mind are one, I am committed to learning appropriate ways to take care of my sexual energy and cultivating loving kindness, compassion, joy and inclusiveness – which are the four basic elements of true love – for my greater happiness and the greater happiness of others. Practicing true love, we know that we will continue beautifully into the future.

This is the 3rd Mindfulness Training. Have you made an effort to study, practice, and observe it during the past month?

(Three breaths)

(Bell)

The Fourth Mindfulness Training: Loving Speech and Deep Listening

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful speech and the inability to listen to others, I am committed to cultivating loving speech and compassionate listening in order to relieve suffering and to promote reconciliation and peace in myself and among other people, ethnic and religious groups, and nations. Knowing that words can create happiness or suffering, I am committed to speaking truthfully using words that inspire confidence, joy, and hope. When anger is manifesting in me, I am determined not to speak. I will practice mindful breathing and walking in order to recognize and to look deeply into my anger. I know that the roots of anger can be found in my wrong perceptions and lack of understanding of the suffering in myself and in the other person. I will speak and listen in a way that can help myself and the other person to transform suffering and see the way out of difficult situations. I am determined not to spread news

that I do not know to be certain and not to utter words that can cause division or discord. I will practice Right Diligence to nourish my capacity for understanding, love, joy, and inclusiveness, and gradually transform anger, violence, and fear that lie deep in my consciousness.

This is the 4th Mindfulness Training. Have you made an effort to study, practice, and observe it during the past month?

(Three breaths)

(Bell)

The Fifth Mindfulness Training: Nourishment and Healing

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful consumption, I am committed to cultivating good health, both physical and mental, for myself, my family, and my society by practicing mindful eating, drinking, and consuming. I will practice looking deeply into how I consume the Four Kinds of Nutriment, namely edible foods, sense impressions, volition, and consciousness. I am determined not to gamble, or to use alcohol, drugs, or any other products which contain toxins, such as certain websites, electronic games, TV programs, films, magazines, books, and conversations. I will practice coming back to the present moment to be in touch with the refreshing, healing and nourishing elements in me and around me, not letting regrets and sorrow drag me back into the past nor letting anxieties, fear, or craving pull me out of the present moment. I am determined not to try to cover up loneliness, anxiety, or other suffering by losing myself in consumption. I will contemplate interbeing and consume in a way that preserves peace, joy, and well-being in my body and consciousness, and in the collective body and consciousness of my family, my society and the Earth.

This is the 5th Mindfulness Training. Have you made an effort to study, practice, and observe it during the past month?

(Three breaths)

(Bell)

TRAININGS OF THE MIND IN DIVERSITY

Introduction

The World Beat Sangha treasures all the elements of diversity of our sangha and the richness they bring to our community and our own lives. We also recognize that diversity, acceptance, understanding, and communication don't just happen, they have to be lovingly and diligently cultivated, in all of us.

Looking deeply, our sangha sees that there are many forces that can separate people in life, racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, special abilities, economic status, and others. We seek to train our minds to first recognize these barriers when they occur in ourselves or in society and second to transform and take action to alleviate the sufferings they cause.

Tonight, we will recite The Seven Trainings in Diversity. The practice of these trainings is an opportunity to begin the journey to narrow and remove the experience of separation in our lives. This is something that we, as practitioners, are called to do.

As our teacher Thich Nhat Hanh has written, *We have to look deeply together in order to develop the insights that will help us and our children find better ways to live wholesome, happy, and healing lives.*

Here, now, are the Seven Trainings in Diversity

1. Aware of the suffering caused by imposing one's own opinions or cultural beliefs upon another human being, I undertake the training to refrain from forcing others, in any way—through authority, threat, financial incentive, or indoctrination—to adopt my own belief system. I commit to respecting every human being's right to be different, while working towards the elimination of sufferings of all beings.

Will you commit to awareness of this training during the next month? (bell)

2. Aware of the suffering caused by invalidating or denying another person's experience, I undertake the training to refrain from making assumptions or judging harshly any beliefs and attitudes that are different or not understandable from my own. I commit to being open-minded and accepting of other points of view, and I commit to meeting each perceived difference in another person with kindness, respect, and a willingness to learn more about their worldview.

Will you commit to awareness of this training during the next month? (bell)

3. Aware of the suffering caused by the violence of treating someone as inferior or superior to one's own self, I undertake the training to refrain from diminishing or idealizing the work, integrity, and happiness of any human being. Recognizing that my true nature is not separate from others, I commit to treating each person that comes into my consciousness with the same loving kindness, care, and equanimity that I would bestow upon a beloved benefactor or dear friend.

Will you commit to awareness of this training during the next month? (bell)

4. Aware of the suffering caused by intentional or unintentional acts of rejection, exclusion, avoidance, or indifference towards people who are culturally, physically, sexually, or economically different from me, I undertake the training to refrain from isolating myself to people of similar backgrounds as myself and from being only with people who make me feel comfortable. I commit to searching out ways to diversify my relationships and increase my sensitivity towards people of different cultures, ethnicities, sexual orientations, ages, physical abilities, genders, and economic means.

Will you commit to awareness of this training during the next month? (bell)

5. Aware of the suffering caused by the often unseen nature of privilege, and the ability of privilege to benefit a select population over others, I undertake the training to refrain from exploiting any person or group, in any way including economically, sexually, intellectually, or culturally. I commit to examine with wisdom and clear comprehension the ways that I have privilege in order to determine skillful ways of using privilege for the benefit of all beings, and I commit to the practice of generosity in all aspects of my life and towards all human beings, regardless of cultural, ethnic, racial, sexual, age, physical, or economic differences.

Will you commit to awareness of this training during the next month? (bell)

6. Aware of the suffering caused to myself and others by fear and anger during conflict or disagreement, I undertake the training to refrain from reacting defensively, using harmful speech because I feel injured, or using language or cognitive argument to justify my sense of rightness. I commit to communicate and express myself mindfully, speaking truthfully from my heart with patience and compassion. I commit to practice genuine and deep listening to all sides of a dispute, and to remain in contact with my highest intentions of recognizing the Buddha nature within all beings.

Will you commit to awareness of this training during the next month? (bell)

7. Aware of the suffering caused by the ignorance of misinformation and the lack of information that aggravate fixed views, stereotypes, the stigmatizing of a human being as 'other', and the marginalization of cultural groups, I undertake the training to educate myself about other cultural attitudes, worldviews, ethnic traditions, and life experiences outside of my own. I commit to be curious with humility and openness, to recognize with compassion the experience of suffering in all beings, and to practice sympathetic joy when encountering the many different cultural expressions of happiness and celebration around the world.

Will you commit to awareness of this training during the next month? (bell)

Brothers and Sisters, we have recited the Seven Trainings of the Mind in Diversity. Thank you for listening deeply and with a serene mind. May our practice help heal ourselves and our society.

Adapted from Larry Yang's Chapter in *Friends on the Path*, compiled by Jack Lawlor, Parallax Press, 2002

The 14 Mindfulness Trainings Recitation

Today is the day that has been established by the community to recite the 14 Mindfulness Trainings. We ask the community for spiritual support. Please, Brothers and Sisters, listen.

The Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings are the very essence of the Order of Interbeing. They are the torch lighting our path, the boat carrying us, the teacher guiding us. They allow us to touch the nature of interbeing in everything that is, and to see that our happiness is not separate from the happiness of others. Interbeing is not a theory; it is a reality that can be directly experienced by each of us at any moment. The Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings help us cultivate concentration and insight which free us from fear and the illusion of a separate self. We ask the community to listen with a serene mind. Consider the mindfulness trainings as a clear mirror in which to look at ourselves. Say yes, silently, every time you see that during the past month you have made an effort to study, practice, and observe the mindfulness training read.

(bell)

Brothers and Sisters, are you ready?

Everyone: (silently) I am ready.

These then are the 14 Mindfulness trainings of the Order of Interbeing.

The First Mindfulness Training: Openness

Aware of the suffering created by fanaticism and intolerance, we are determined not to be idolatrous about or bound to any doctrine, theory, or ideology, even Buddhist ones. We are committed to seeing the Buddhist teachings as guiding means that help us learn to look deeply and develop our understanding and compassion. They are not doctrines to fight, kill, or die for. We understand that fanaticism in its many forms is the result of perceiving things in a dualistic and discriminative manner. We will train ourselves to look at everything with openness and the insight of interbeing in order to transform dogmatism and violence in ourselves and in the world.

Have you made an effort to study, practice, and observe it during the past month?

(Three breaths)

(Bell)

The Second Mindfulness Training: Non-Attachment to Views

Aware of the suffering created by attachment to views and wrong perceptions, we are determined to avoid being narrow-minded and bound to present views. We are committed to learning and practicing nonattachment from views and being open to others' insights and experiences in order to benefit from the collective wisdom. Insight is revealed through the practice of compassionate listening, deep looking, and letting go of notions rather than through the accumulation of intellectual knowledge. We are aware that the knowledge we presently possess is not changeless, absolute truth. Truth is found in life, and we will observe life within and around us in every moment, ready to learn throughout our lives.

Have you made an effort to study, practice, and observe it during the past month?

(Three breaths) (Bell)

The Third Mindfulness Training: Freedom of Thought

Aware of the suffering brought about when we impose our views on others, we are determined not to force others, even our children, by any means whatsoever — such as authority, threat, money, propaganda, or indoctrination — to adopt our views. We are committed to respecting the right of others to be different, to choose what to believe and how to decide. We will, however, learn to help others let go of and transform narrowness through loving speech and compassionate dialogue.

Have you made an effort to study, practice, and observe it during the past month?
(Three breaths) (Bell)

The Fourth Mindfulness Training: Awareness of Suffering

Aware that looking deeply at the nature of our suffering can help us develop understanding and compassion, we are determined to come home to ourselves, to recognize, accept, embrace and listen to our own suffering with the energy of mindfulness. We will do our best not to run away from our suffering or cover it up through consumption but practice conscious breathing and walking to look deeply into the roots of our suffering. We know we can only find the path leading to the transformation of suffering when we understand the roots of suffering. Once we have understood our own suffering, we will be able to understand the suffering of others. We are committed to finding ways, including personal contact and using the telephone, electronic, audiovisual, and other means, to be with those who suffer, so we can help them transform their suffering into compassion, peace, and joy.

Have you made an effort to study, practice, and observe it during the past month?
(Three breaths) (Bell)

The Fifth Mindfulness Training: Compassionate, Healthy Living

Aware that true happiness is rooted in peace, solidity, freedom, and compassion, we are determined not to accumulate wealth while millions are hungry and dying nor to take as the aim of our life fame, profit, wealth, or sensual pleasure, which can bring much suffering and despair. We will practice looking deeply into how we nourish our body and mind with edible foods, sense impressions, volition, and consciousness. We are committed not to gamble or to use alcohol, drugs or any other products which bring toxins into our own and the collective body and consciousness such as certain websites, electronic games, TV programs, films, magazines, books and conversations. We will consume in a way that preserves compassion, peace, joy, wellbeing in our bodies and consciousness and in the collective body and consciousness of our families, our society, and the earth.

Have you made an effort to study, practice, and observe it during the past month?
(Three breaths) (Bell)

The Sixth Mindfulness Training: Taking Care of Anger

Aware that anger blocks communication and creates suffering, we are committed to taking care of the energy of anger when it arises, to recognizing and transforming the seeds of anger that lie deep in our consciousness. When anger manifests, we are determined not to do or say anything, but to practice mindful breathing or mindful walking to acknowledge, embrace, and look deeply into our anger. We know that the roots of anger

are not outside of ourselves but can be found in our wrong perceptions and lack of understanding of the suffering in ourselves and in the other person. By contemplating impermanence, we will be able to look with the eyes of compassion at ourselves and at those we think are the cause of our anger, and to recognize the preciousness of our relationships. We will practice Right Diligence in order to nourish our capacity of understanding, love, joy and inclusiveness, gradually transforming our anger, violence, fear, and helping others do the same.

Have you made an effort to study, practice, and observe it during the past month?
(Three breaths) (Bell)

The Seventh Mindfulness Training: Dwelling Happily in the Present Moment

Aware that life is available only in the present moment, we are committed to training ourselves to live deeply each moment of daily life. We will try not to lose ourselves in dispersion or be carried away by regrets about the past, worries about the future, or craving, anger, or jealousy in the present. We will practice mindful breathing to be aware of what is happening in the here and the now. We are determined to learn the art of mindful living by touching the wondrous, refreshing, and healing elements that are inside and around us, in all situations. In this way, we will be able to cultivate seeds of joy, peace, love, and understanding in ourselves, thus facilitating the work of transformation and healing in our consciousness. We are aware that happiness depends primarily on our mental attitude and not on external conditions, and that we can live happily in the present moment simply by remembering that we already have more than enough conditions to be happy.

Have you made an effort to study, practice, and observe it during the past month?
(Three breaths) (Bell)

The Eighth Mindfulness Training: True Community & Communication

Aware that lack of communication always brings separation and suffering, we are committed to training ourselves in the practice of compassionate listening and loving speech. Knowing that true community is rooted in inclusiveness and in the concrete practice of the harmony of views, thinking and speech, we will practice to share our understanding and experiences with members in our community in order to arrive at a collective insight. We are determined to learn to listen deeply without judging or reacting and refrain from uttering words that can create discord or cause the community to break. Whenever difficulties arise, we will remain in our Sangha and practice looking deeply into ourselves and others to recognize all the causes and conditions, including our own habit energies, that have brought about the difficulties. We will take responsibility for the ways we may have contributed to the conflict and keep communication open. We will not behave as a victim but be active in finding ways to reconcile and resolve all conflicts however small.

Have you made an effort to study, practice, and observe it during the past month?
(Three breaths)
(Bell)

The Ninth Mindfulness Training: Truthful and Loving Speech

Aware that words can create happiness or suffering, we are committed to learning to speak truthfully, lovingly and constructively. We will use only words that inspire joy, confidence and hope as well as promote

reconciliation and peace in ourselves and among other people. We will speak and listen in a way that can help ourselves and others to transform suffering and see the way out of difficult situations. We are determined not to say untruthful things for the sake of personal interest or to impress people, nor to utter words that might cause division or hatred. We will protect the joy and harmony of our Sangha by refraining from speaking about the faults of another person in their absence and always ask ourselves whether our perceptions are correct. We will speak only with the intention to understand and help transform the situation. We will not spread rumors nor criticize or condemn things of which we are not sure. We will do our best to speak out about situations of injustice, even when doing so may make difficulties for us or threaten our safety.

Have you made an effort to study, practice, and observe it during the past month?
(Three breaths) (Bell)

The Tenth Mindfulness Training: Protecting and Nourishing the Sangha

Aware that the essence and aim of a Sangha is the practice of understanding and compassion, we are determined not to use the Buddhist community for personal power or profit or transform our community *into* a political instrument. However, as members of a spiritual community, we should take a clear stand against oppression and injustice. We should strive to change the situation, without taking sides in a conflict. We are committed to looking with the eyes of interbeing and learning to see ourselves and others as cells in one Sangha body. As a true cell in the Sangha body, generating mindfulness, concentration and insight to nourish ourselves and the whole community,

each of us is at the same time a cell in the Buddha body. We will actively build brotherhood and sisterhood, flow as a river, and practice to develop the three real powers — love, understanding and cutting through afflictions — to realize collective awakening.

Have you made an effort to study, practice, and observe it during the past month?
(Three breaths) (Bell)

The Eleventh Mindfulness Training: Right Livelihood

Aware that great violence and injustice have been done to our environment and society, we are committed not to live with a vocation that is harmful to humans and nature. We will do our best to select a livelihood that contributes to the wellbeing of all species on earth and helps realize our ideal of understanding and compassion. Aware of economic, political, and social realities around the world, as well as our interrelationship with the ecosystem, we are determined to behave responsibly as consumers and as citizens. We will not invest in or purchase from companies that contribute to the depletion of natural resources, harm the earth; and deprive others of their chance to live.

Have you made an effort to study, practice, and observe it during the past month?
(Three breaths) (Bell)

The Twelfth Mindfulness Training: Reverence for Life

Aware that much suffering is caused by war and conflict, we are determined to cultivate nonviolence, compassion and the insight of interbeing in our daily lives and promote peace education, mindful meditation, and reconciliation within families, communities,

ethnic and religious groups, nations, and in the world. We are committed not to kill and not to let others kill. We will not support any act of killing in the world, in our thinking or in our way of life. We will diligently practice deep looking with our Sangha to discover better ways to protect life, prevent war, and build peace.

Have you made an effort to study, practice, and observe it during the past month?
(Three breaths) (Bell)

The Thirteenth Mindfulness Training: Generosity

Aware of the suffering caused by exploitation, social injustice, stealing, and oppression, we are committed to cultivating generosity in our way of thinking, speaking, and acting. We will learn ways to work for the well-being of people, animals, plants, and minerals and practice generosity by sharing our time, energy, and material resources with those who are in need. We are determined not to steal and not to possess anything that should belong to others. We will respect the property of others, but will try to prevent others from profiting from human suffering or the suffering of other beings.

Have you made an effort to study, practice, and observe it during the past month?
(Three breaths) (Bell)

The Fourteenth Mindfulness Training: Right Conduct

[For lay members]: Aware that sexual desire is not love and that sexual relations motivated by craving cannot dissipate the feeling of loneliness but will create more suffering, frustration, and isolation, we are determined not to engage in sexual relations without mutual understanding, love, and a deep long-term commitment made known to our family and friends. Seeing that body and mind are one, we are committed to learning appropriate ways to take care of our sexual energy and to cultivating loving kindness, compassion, joy and inclusiveness for our own happiness and the happiness of others. We must be aware of future suffering that may be caused by sexual relations. We know that to preserve the happiness of ourselves and others, we must respect the rights and commitments of ourselves and others. We will do everything in our power to protect children from sexual abuse and to protect couples and families from being broken by sexual misconduct. We will treat our bodies with compassion and respect. We are determined to look deeply into the Four Nutriments and learn ways to preserve and channel our vital energies (sexual, breath, spirit) for the realization of our bodhisattva ideal. We will be fully aware of the responsibility of bringing new lives into the world, and will meditate upon their future environments.

Brothers and Sisters, we have recited the 14 Mindfulness Trainings of the Order of Interbeing as the community has wished. Thank you everyone for helping to do it serenely.

The Five Contemplations

This food is a gift of the whole universe, the earth, the sky,
numerous living beings and much hard work.

May we eat in mindfulness and gratitude,
so as to be worthy to receive it.

May we transform our unwholesome states of mind,
especially our greed
and learn to eat with moderation.

May we eat in such a way as to keep our compassion alive,
reduce the suffering of living beings, preserve our planet,
and reverse the process of Global Warming.

We accept this food so that we may nourish
our brotherhood and sisterhood, strengthen our Sangha,
and realize our ideal of serving living beings.



Beginning Anew Practice

To begin anew is to look deeply and honestly at ourselves, our past actions, speech and thoughts and to create a fresh beginning within ourselves and in our relationships with others. We can practice Beginning Anew as a family or group of friends or individually as often as we like.

We practice Beginning Anew to clear our mind and keep our practice fresh. When a difficulty arises in our relationships with fellow practitioners and one of us feels resentment or hurt, we know it is time to Begin Anew. The following is a description of the four-part process of Beginning Anew as used in a formal setting. One person speaks at a time and is not interrupted during his or her turn. The other practitioners practice deep listening and following their breath.

- 1) Flower watering - This is a chance to share our appreciation for the other person. We may mention specific instances that the other person said or did something that we had admired. This is an opportunity to shine light on the other's strengths and contributions to the sangha and to encourage the growth of his or her positive qualities.
- 2) Sharing regrets - We may mention any unskillfulness in our actions, speech or thoughts that we have not yet had an opportunity to apologize for.
- 3) Expressing a hurt - We may share how we felt hurt by an interaction with another practitioner, due to his or her actions, speech or thoughts. (To express a hurt we should first water the other person's flower by sharing two positive qualities that we have truly observed in him or her. Expressing a hurt is often performed one on one with another practitioner rather than in the group setting. You may ask for a third party that you both trust and respect to be present, if desired.)
- 4) Sharing a long-term difficulty & asking for support- At times we each have difficulties and pain arise from our past that surface in the present. When we share an issue that we are dealing with we can let the people around us understand us better and offer the support that we really need.

The practice of Beginning Anew helps us develop our kind speech and compassionate listening. Begin Anew is a practice of recognition and appreciation of the positive elements within our Sangha. For instance, we may notice that our roommate is generous in sharing her insights, and another friend is caring towards plants. Recognizing others positive traits allows us to see our own good qualities as well.

Along with these good traits, we each have areas of weakness, such as talking out of our anger or being caught in our misperceptions. When we practice "flower watering" we support the development of good qualities in each other and at the same time we help to weaken the difficulties in the other person. As in a garden, when we "water the flowers" of loving kindness and compassion in each other, we also take energy away from the weeds of anger, jealousy and misperception.

We can practice Beginning Anew everyday by expressing our appreciation for our fellow practitioners and apologizing right away when we do or say something that hurts them. We can politely let others know when we have been hurt as well. The health and happiness of the whole community depends on the harmony, peace and joy that exists between every member in the sangha.

Gatha Practice

One way to help us dwell in the present moment is to practice reciting gathas or mindfulness verses. When we practice with gathas, the gathas and the rest of our life become one and we live our entire lives in awareness. There are many gathas, you begin with one or two and learn more over time.

Waking Up

Waking up this morning I smile
24 brand new hours are before me.
I vow to live fully in each moment
And look upon all beings with the eyes of
compassion.

Sitting Down

Sitting here is like sitting under the Bodhi
tree.
My body is mindfulness itself,
Calm and at ease,
entirely free from distraction.

Walking Meditation

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

Letting Go

Hearing the bell,
I am able to let go of all afflictions.
My heart is calm, my sorrows ended.
I am no longer bound to anything.
I learn to listen to my suffering
and the suffering of the other person.
When understanding is born in me,
Compassion is also born.

Experiencing emotions

Feelings come and go
like clouds in a windy sky.
Conscious breathing
is my anchor.

Looking in the Mirror

Awareness is a mirror
reflecting the four elements.
Beauty is a heart that generates love
and a mind that is open.

Turning on the Tap

Water comes from high mountain sources.
Water runs deep in the Earth.
Miraculously water comes to us and
sustains all life.
My gratitude is filled to the brim.

Brushing your teeth

Brushing my teeth and rinsing my mouth,
I vow to speak purely and lovingly.
When my mouth is fragrant with right
speech,
a flower blooms in the garden of my heart.

Drinking Tea

This cup of tea in my two hands,
mindfulness held perfectly.
My mind and body dwell
in the very here and now.

Turning on the Light

Forgetfulness is the darkness;
Mindfulness is the light
I bring awareness
To shine upon all life.

Good Night Gatha

Breathing in, I let go of my worries, my
tensions.
Breathing out, I touch Peace

Deep Relaxation

The following is an example of how to guide yourself or others in Deep Relaxation.

Allowing your body to rest is very important. When your body is at ease and relaxed, your mind will be at peace as well. The practice of Deep Relaxation is essential for your body and mind to heal. Please take the time to practice it often.

Although the following guided relaxation may take you thirty minutes, feel free to modify it to fit your situation. Use the time you have. Just five to ten minutes when you wake up in the morning, before going to bed in the evening, or during a short break in the middle of a busy day will relax your body and mind. You can also make it longer and more in-depth. The most important thing is to enjoy it.

Lie down comfortably with your back on the floor or a bed. Close your eyes. Allow your arms to rest gently on either side of your body and let your legs relax, turning outwards. As you breathe in and out, **become aware of your whole body lying down.** Feel all the areas of your body that are touching the floor or bed you are lying on: your heels, the backs of your legs, your buttocks, your back, the backs of your hands and arms, the back of your head. With each out-breath, feel yourself sinking deeper and deeper into the floor, letting go of tension, letting go of worries, not holding on to anything. As you breathe in, feel your abdomen rising; as you breathe out, feel your abdomen falling. For several breaths, just notice the rise and fall of your abdomen.

Now, as you breathe in, **become aware of your two feet.** As you breathe out, allow your two feet to relax. Breathing in, send your love to your feet; breathing out, smile to your feet. As you breathe in and out, know how wonderful it is to have two feet that allow you to walk, run, play sports, dance, drive, and do so many other activities throughout the day. Send your gratitude to your two feet for always being there for you wherever you need them.

Breathing in, **become aware of your right and left legs.** Breathing out, allow all the cells in your legs to relax. Breathing in, smile to your legs; breathing out, send them your love. Appreciate whatever degree of strength and health is there in your legs. As you breathe in and out, send them your tenderness and care. Allow them to rest, sinking gently into the floor. Release any tension you may be holding in your legs.

Breathing in, **become aware of your two hands** lying on the floor. Breathing out, completely relax all the muscles in your two hands, releasing any tension you may be holding in them. As you breathe in, appreciate how wonderful it is to have two hands. As you breathe out, send a smile of love to your two hands. Breathe in and out and be in touch with all the things your two hands allow you to do: cook, write, drive, hold someone's hand, hold a baby, wash your own body, draw, play a musical instrument, type, build and fix things, pet an animal, hold a cup of tea. So many things are available to you because of your two hands. Just enjoy the fact that you have two hands, and allow all the cells in your hands to really rest.

Breathing in, **become aware of your two arms.** Breathing out, let your arms fully relax. As you breathe in, send your love to your arms; as you breathe out, smile to them. Take the time to appreciate your arms and whatever strength and health are there in them. Send them your gratitude for allowing you to hug someone, to swing on a swing, to help and serve others, to work — cleaning the house, mowing the lawn, doing so many things throughout the day. Breathing in and out, allow your two arms to let go and rest completely on the floor. Feel the tension leaving your arms. As you embrace them with your mindfulness, feel joy and ease in every part of your two arms.

Breathing in, **become aware of your shoulders.** Breathing out, allow any tension in your shoulders to flow out into the floor. As you breathe in, send your love to your shoulders; as you breathe out, smile with gratitude to them. Breathing in and out, be aware that you may have allowed a lot of tension and stress to accumulate in your shoulders. With each exhalation, allow the tension to leave your shoulders, and feel

them relaxing more and more deeply. Send them your tenderness and care, knowing that you do not want to put too much strain on them, you want to live in a way that will allow them to be relaxed and at ease.

Breathing in, **become aware of your heart.** Breathing out, allow your heart to rest. With your in-breath, send your love to your heart. With your out-breath, smile to your heart. As you breathe in and out, get in touch with how wonderful it is to have a heart still beating in your chest. Your heart allows your life to be possible, and it is always there for you, every minute of every day. It never takes a break. Your heart has been beating since you were a 4-week old fetus in your mother's womb. It is a marvelous organ that allows you to do everything you do throughout the day. Breathe in and know that your heart also loves you. Breathe out and commit to live in a way that will help your heart to function well. With each exhalation, feel your heart relaxing more and more. Allow each cell in your heart to smile with ease and joy.

Breathing in, **become aware of your stomach and intestines.** Breathing out, allow your stomach and intestines to relax. As you breathe in, send them your love and gratitude. As you breathe out, smile tenderly to them. Breathing in and out, know how essential these organs are to your health. Give them the chance to rest deeply. Each day they digest and assimilate the food you eat, giving you energy and strength. They need you to take the time to recognize and appreciate them. As you breathe in, feel your stomach and intestines relaxing and releasing all tension. As you breathe out, enjoy the fact that you have a stomach and intestines.

Breathing in, **become aware of your eyes.** Breathing out, allow your eyes and the muscles around your eyes to relax. Breathing in, smile to your eyes; breathing out, send them your love. Allow your eyes to rest and sink back into your head. As you breathe in and out, know how precious your two eyes are. They allow you to look into the eyes of someone you love, to see a beautiful sunset, to read and write, to move around with ease, to see a bird flying in the sky, to watch a movie — so many things are possible because of your two eyes. Take the time to appreciate the miraculous gift of sight, and allow your eyes to rest deeply. You can gently raise your eyebrows to help release any tension you may be holding around your eyes. Here you can continue to relax other areas of your body, using the same pattern as above.

Now, if there is a **place in your body that is sick or in pain**, take this time to become aware of it and send it your love. Breathing in, allow this area to rest; breathing out, smile to it with great tenderness and affection. Be aware that there are other parts of your body that are still strong and healthy. Allow these strong parts of your body to send their strength and energy to the weak or sick area. Feel the support, energy, and love of the rest of your body penetrating the weak area, soothing and healing it. Breathe in and affirm your own capacity to heal; breathe out and let go of the worry or fear you may be holding in your body. Breathing in and out, smile with love and confidence to the area of your body that is not well.

Finally, breathing in, become aware of the **whole of your body** lying down. Breathing out, enjoy the sensation of your whole body lying down, very relaxed and calm. Smile to your whole body as you breathe in, and send your love and compassion to your whole body as you breathe out. Feel all the cells in your whole body smiling joyfully with you. Feel gratitude for all the cells in your whole body. Return to the gentle rise and fall of your abdomen.

If you are guiding other people, and if you are comfortable doing so, you can now sing a few relaxing songs or lullabies.

To end, slowly stretch and open your eyes. Take your time to get up, mindfully and lightly. Practice to carry the calmness and attentiveness you have generated here into your next activity, and throughout the day.

The Shade of the Tree, The Ring of the Bell: On the POC Retreat

I now understand the Bodhi Tree is Teacher, and last weekend we sat under the Shade of the Tree, we sat under the shade of branches of wisdom and time, and study, and practice, we sat in the shade of something unborn, something undying, and something indefinable—

Yet defined Bright Faith out of experience, reliable certainty, Like if I have too much on my plate mindlessly eating can lead to too much on my plate in the world, shrink the food on my plate and I shrink my work in the world but not my responsibility to reduce suffering.
Bell ring, Breathe In...Breathe Out...

Panting tiredness, restlessness, irritable, discontent: When I forget to be thankful to all ancestors, known & unknown
Bell ring, Touch the Earth,

Anger, frustration, loneliness, emptiness, When I forget to bow to all ancestors, Known & unknown, Who when they traveled never killed anyone, They married them
Bell ring, Touch the Earth,

If I put my practice before me, Put my practice in my heart, I solve major problems, Spiritual scientist finding hidden face,
Bell ring, Touch the Earth,

Find the practice that I can wear like a comfortable suit, like angels' wings, It will grow and I will grow, It will bring out my hidden face, And that will be my true face,
Bell ring, Touch Mother Earth,

What is this hunger mind? This eating that is grazing? I am not a cow, I am the cow's relative, Same church, different pew, What is this grief eating, This greed eating when I am full?

I am here at Deer Park because I am in trouble with food so I am in trouble with mindlessness...

Bell ring, Touch the Jewel, Om Mani Padme Hum...

I am in trouble with fear hunger, Lonely hunger, angry hunger, Nowhere in the vicinity of mindfulness, Nowhere in the vicinity of happiness, So I eat too much and so starve nutrition,

Breathe in, Om, Mani Padme, Hum...Breathe out, Nam Myoho, Renge Kyo...

What is this fear hunger, Lonely hunger, Angry hunger, Anxiety hunger, Food as lover, Food as companion, Food as exercise, Food as executioner, Food as exercise-of-the-mind-wrongful-thinking, unwholesome mental formations

Bell ring, fork down, slow chew, Touch the Jewel, Om, Mani Padme, Hum...

Move more deeply into a life of practice, I have a right to be angry, But I have a responsibility to be free of anger,
Bell ring, touch Freedom's Stream,

Move more deeply into a life of peace, I have a right to transform the anger into freedom,
The greater my freedom the less interested I will be in the right to be angry
Bell ring, fork down, Bell ring, eyes down, Bell ring, Touch the Earth

And on this weekend I walked with my Sangha, 100 brothers and sisters mindfully walking, The standing people, the trees, watched, The standing people, the plants, watched,
the winged ones, the four legged, the two legged, the creepy crawlers, the fish people all watched, My mantra unfolded with each step, Breathing In: Om, Pram...Breathing Out: Om, Pram...
Breathing In: I am strong, I am healthy...Breathing Out: I am calm...I am relaxed...
Breathing In: (To the plants) You are my relatives...Breathing Out: I am your relative...
Bell ring, Touch the Earth

My mantra sings away loneliness, I breath in freedom, I breathe out want...
My mantra unfolds like flowers blooming, Breathing In: (to the tree) You are my relative...
Breathing Out: I am your relative.
Bell ring, Touch the Earth,

Touch the jewel, Touch freedom, Touch mindfulness, Touch the Pure Land, Namu Amida Butsu, Sound the flute, Strike the drum, Shake the rattle, Round Dance Mother Earth Heart Beat Step, Ha Ho Matakuye Oyasin, Leah Kikich Wun, All My Relations, Bell ring...circle splash, Bell ring...circle song, Bell ring...circle Sangha sees...Sangha sees....Sangha sees...
Noble Silence.

--Jim Moreno, Summer 2012

TOUCHING THE EARTH PRACTICE

The Three Earth-Touchings

I

Touching the Earth, I connect with ancestors and descendants of both my spiritual and my blood families.

[bell] [all touch the earth]

My spiritual ancestors include the Buddha, the Bodhisattvas, the noble Sangha of Buddha's disciples, *[insert names of others you would like to include]*, and my own spiritual teachers still alive or already passed away.

They are present in me because they have transmitted to me seeds of peace, wisdom, love, and happiness. They have woken up in me my resource of understanding and compassion. When I look at my spiritual ancestors, I see those who are perfect in the practice of the mindfulness trainings, understanding, and compassion, and those who are still imperfect.

I accept them all because I see within myself shortcomings and weaknesses.

Aware that my practice of the mindfulness trainings is not always perfect, and that I am not always as understanding and compassionate as I would like to be, I open my heart and accept all my spiritual descendants. Some of my descendants practice the mindfulness trainings, understanding, and compassion in a way which invites confidence and respect, but there are also those who come across many difficulties and are constantly subject to ups and downs in their practice.

In the same way, I accept all my ancestors on my mother's side and my father's side of the family. I accept all their good qualities and

their virtuous actions, and I also accept all their weaknesses. I open my heart and accept all my blood descendants with their good qualities, their talents, and also their weaknesses.

My spiritual ancestors, blood ancestors, spiritual descendants, and blood descendants are all part of me. I am them, and they are me. I do not have a separate self. All exist as part of a wonderful stream of life which is constantly moving.

[three breaths] [bell]

II

Touching the Earth, I connect with all people and all species that are alive at this moment in this world with me.

[bell] [touch the earth]

I am one with the wonderful pattern of life that radiates out in all directions. I see the close connection between myself and others, how we share happiness and suffering. I am one with those who were born disabled or who have become disabled because of war, accident, or illness. I am one with those who are caught in a situation of war or oppression.

I am one with those who find no happiness in family life, who have no roots and no peace of mind, who are hungry for understanding and love, and who are looking for something beautiful, wholesome, and true to embrace and to believe in. I am someone at the point of death who is very afraid and does not know what is going to happen. I am a child who lives in a place where there is miserable poverty and disease, whose legs and arms are like sticks and who has no future.

I am also the manufacturer of bombs that are sold to poor countries. I am the frog swimming in the pond and I am also the snake who needs the body of the frog to nourish its own body. I am the caterpillar or the ant that the bird is looking for to eat, and I am also the bird that is looking for the caterpillar or the ant.

I am the forest that is being cut down. I am the rivers and the air that are being polluted, and I am also the person who cuts down the forest and pollutes the rivers and the air. I see myself in all species, and I see all species in me. I am one with the great beings who have realized the truth of no-birth and no-death and are able to look at the forms of birth and death, happiness and suffering, with calm eyes. I am one with those people — who can be found a little bit everywhere — who have sufficient peace of mind, understanding and love, who are able to touch what is wonderful, nourishing, and healing, who also have the capacity to embrace the world with a heart of love and arms of caring action.

I am someone who has enough peace, joy, and freedom and is able to offer fearlessness and joy to living beings around themselves. I see that I am not lonely and cut off. The love and the happiness of great beings on this planet help me not to sink in despair. They help me to live my life in a meaningful way, with true peace and happiness. I see them all in me, and I see myself in all of them.

[three breaths] [bell] [stand up]

III

Touching the Earth, I let go of my idea that I am this body and my life span is limited.

[bell] [touch the earth]

I see that this body, made up of the four elements, is not really me and I am not limited by this body. I am part of a stream of life of spiritual and blood ancestors that for thousands of years has been flowing into the present and flows on for thousands of years into the future. I am one with my ancestors.

I am one with all people and all species, whether they are peaceful and fearless, or suffering and afraid. At this very moment, I am present everywhere on this planet. I am also present in the past and in the future.

The disintegration of this body does not touch me, just as when the plum blossom falls it does not mean the end of the plum tree. I see myself as a wave on the surface of the ocean. My nature is the ocean water. I see myself in all the other waves and I see all the other waves in me. The appearance and disappearance of the form of the wave does not affect the ocean. My Dharma body and spiritual life are not subject to birth and death. I see the presence of myself before my body manifested and after my body has disintegrated.

Even in this moment, I see how I exist elsewhere than in this body. Seventy or eighty years is not my life span. My life span, like the life span of a leaf or of a Buddha, is limitless. I am a body that is separated in space and time from all other forms of life.

[three breaths] [bell] [stand up]

Touching the Earth to our Land Ancestors

**In gratitude, I bow to this land and to all of
the ancestors who made it available.**

(Bell, all touch the earth).

I see that I am whole, protected, and nourished by this land and all of the living beings that have been here and made life easy and possible for me through all their efforts. I see all those known and unknown who have made this country a refuge for people of so many origins and colors, by their talent, perseverance, and love—those who have worked hard to build schools, hospitals, bridges, and roads; to protect human rights; to develop science and technology and to work for freedom and social justice.

(Bell, three breaths. All stand up slowly. Three breaths)

**I touch my African American ancestors, you
who were enslaved and brought to this land,
who poured your blood, sweat, and tears on
this land, whose unrewarded labor helped
make this country an economic world power.**

(Bell, all touch the earth).

I am in touch with the crippling violence and inhumanity that my African American ancestors faced every day, the loss of your land, language, culture, family, and freedom, and how you always found ways to resist, to subvert oppression, to maintain your humanity, through soulful singing, prayer, humor, slave revolts, communities of escaped slaves, as well as through political struggle, a strong commitment to education, and economic empowerment. I aspire to preserve, nourish, and pass on your strength, patience, perseverance, love, forgiveness, humility, your creativity and innovation in agriculture,

inventions, history, music, dance, art, the sciences, sport, oratory, literature, religion, civil and human rights activism, and community spirit.

I see Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, George Washington Carver, Garrett A. Morgan, W.E.B. DuBois, Langston Hughes, Ernest Just, Roger Arliner, Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Audre Lorde, Ella Baker, Fannie Lou Hamer, John Henrik Clarke, Ivan Van Sertima, and all others known and unknown inside of me, and in gratitude I honor you all.
(Bell, three breaths. All stand up slowly. Three breaths)

**I touch my Asian American and Pacific
Islander ancestors of this land, those of you
from the Philippines, China, Japan, Korea,
India, Nepal, Tibet, Burma, Southeast Asia,
and the Pacific Islands.**

(Bell, all touch the earth).

I am in touch with you who courageously survived the devastation of war, colonialism, and displacement from our ancestral homelands and who carved a graceful new path amidst the turmoil of dislocation and discrimination, I touch your experiences of Chinese and South Indian indentured servitude, Japanese American internment camps, anti-Asian exclusion laws, labor exploitation, land dispossession and contamination, refugee camps, family separation, hate crimes, and assimilation. I touch your sacrifice and contribution to the economic success along the Pacific Coast, your work in the dangerous construction of transcontinental railroads, and your many innovations in agriculture, textiles, manufacturing, and technology throughout this land. I honor the ways that you preserved your body, mind, and spirit through music,

poetry, literature, food, culture, community, and interracial solidarity. I aspire to preserve, nourish, and pass on your patience perseverance, determination, respect for ancestors and elders, commitment to youth and family, education, arts, and your painstaking care to maintain culture, language, and religion for future generations.

I see Fred Korematsu, Maxine Hong Kingston, Queen Lili'uokalani, Richard Aoki, Haing S. Ngor, Grace Lee Boggs, Gayle Kawaipuna Prejean, Al Kobles, Jose Rizal, Yo Yo Ma, Vincent Chin, Kalpana Chawla, David Suzuki, Ellison Onizuka, Maya Lin, and Daniel Tsui and all others known and unknown inside of me, and in gratitude I honor you all.
(Bell, three breaths. All stand up slowly. Three breaths)

I bow to my European American ancestors, you who came to this land to find freedom from political and religious oppression and poverty who came seeking a new vision of society.
(Bell, all touch the earth).

I touch the deep insight and compassion of these ancestors: the Quakers, Jews, Abolitionists, peace activists, and the great conservationists, I am aware that many of you European Ancestors lost your fortunes and even your lives to resist the oppression of people of color. At the same time, I touch the great suffering experience by some of you in my ancestry who were misguided in their views, whose belief in your superiority led to the decimation of Native peoples, the horrors of slavery, and the exclusion of people of color. I pour all this suffering on the earth and ask the earth to help me transform it into wisdom and compassion. I aspire to preserve, nourish, and pass on your courage in coming to an unfamiliar land, your strong faith and

commitment to democracy your perseverance, respect for the arts and ingenuity.

I see Abigail Adams, Abraham Lincoln, Jane Addams, Benjamin Franklin, William Lloyd Garrison, Susan B. Anthony, John Dewey, Amelia Earhart, Dorothy Day, Albert Einstein, Helen Keller, Woody Guthrie, Ralph Carr, Isadora Duncan, Myles Horton, Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, Howard Zinn, Jane Goodall, Paul Farmer, and all others known and unknown inside of me, and in gratitude I honor you all.
(Bell, three breaths. All stand up slowly. Three breaths)

I touch my Latino/a ancestors of this land, you who are the children of the indigenous peoples of the Americans and the Spanish colonizers, some who for centuries lived on and built up roughly half of the present day U.S. and some who immigrated from Central and South America more recently.
(Bell, all touch the earth).

I touch the blood, sweat, and tears you have poured on to this land as farm laborers, skilled artisans, teachers, politicians, architects, and activists. I am in touch with the suffering of my Latino/a ancestors due to war and racist policies, like the deportation of two million Mexican American U.S. citizens during the Depression, as well as loss of land and culture. I am in touch with the United Farm Workers movement to end dehumanizing conditions for migrant workers. I feel this collective energy, courage, intelligence and dedication nourishing and supporting me to also do my part. I aspire to preserve, nourish, and pass on your strength, patience, perseverance, love, forgiveness, humility, humor, your creativity and innovation in the arts, your tradition of nourishing food and taking care of family.

I see Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, Emiliano Zapata, Pablo Neruda, Simon Bolivar, Rigoberta Mendhu, Sandra Cisneros, Emma Tenayuca, Gloria Anzaldua, Rodolfo (Corky) Gonzalez, Sonia Maria Sotomayor, and all others known and unknown inside of me, and in gratitude I honor you all.

(Bell, three breaths. All stand up slowly. Three breaths)

I touch my Native American ancestors, you who have lived on this land for such a long time and have known the ways to live in peace and harmony with each other and with nature, protecting the mountains, forests, animals, plants, and minerals.

(Bell, all touch the earth).

I am grateful for all the foods that you, our ancestors have cultivated to nourish us today, and for the Iroquois contribution to our system of government. I am in touch with the profound suffering of my Native American ancestors; genocide, displacement, racism, and separation from homeland, culture, religion, food, dance, songs.

I deeply honor the bravery and leadership that has allowed our people to survive and thrive, and I am

humbled by the brilliance of our cultural renewal, the resilience of our traditions, and our deep generosity over the past five hundred years. I release our suffering to the earth and ask the earth, sky, water, and fire to help me



transform it into wisdom and compassion. I aspire to preserve, nourish, and pass on your medicine, ingenuity, humor, courage, dignity, clarity, compassion, art, culture, traditions of cooperation and selfless service to the community.

I see Black Elk, Geronimo, Wilma Mankiller, Tecumseh, Winona Laduc, Crazy Horse, Linda Logan, L. Frank Marquez, Chief Joseph, Christos, Lenoard Pettier, Anne Dunn, Red Cloud, John Strudel, Mona Stonefish, Vine Deloria, Jr., Wovoka, and all others known and unknown inside of me, and in gratitude I honor you all.

(Bell, three breaths. All stand up slowly. Three breaths)

I feel the energy of this land penetrating my body, mind, and soul, supporting and accepting me.

I vow to cultivate and maintain this energy and to transmit it to future generations.

I vow to contribute my part in transforming the violence, hatred and delusion that still lie

deep in the collective consciousness of this society—in all ethnic groups so that future generations will

have more safety, joy, and peace. I ask this land for its protection and support.

(End with three sounds of the bell)

Your Sangha may benefit from regular teachings offered on-line. There are several courses to choose from on the Deer Park Dharmacast and on the Deer Park Website.

Moment by Moment - a course in 11 sessions

Available on <http://deerparkmonastery.org/teachings/moment-by-moment>

focusing on the Four Noble Truths and Noble Eightfold Path

A 90 day journey in the landscape of Buddhist Teachings & Practices

This winter a group of Monastic Dharma Teachers here at Deer Park will offer a course based in the Buddhas Teaching on the Four Noble Truths and Noble Eightfold Path.

***This winter's course - **Moment by Moment**:** will be an opportunity to enjoy walking meditation through some of the vistas of central Buddhist teachings and practices.*

You can listen to the talks online on [Deer Park Dharma Cast](#)

and download the course material from the bar to the left.

*If we look deeply at the Buddhist Dharma, we see concentric circles- at the very heart of the circles lies the **Four Noble Truths**. All of the foundational teachings and practices spring from this source. Out of the Four Noble Truths emerge the **Noble Eightfold Path**, the Buddha's guidance for realizing transformation in body, speech and mind at a fundamental level. From the various steps of the Noble Eightfold Path spring a multitude of sutras, practices and commentaries.*

*During this course, we will enjoy **sharings** on each of the Truths and the steps of the path; we will be offered **concrete practices** to apply at home and we will have **suggested readings and reflections**, as appropriate. These will be available on the [Deer Park Monastery website](#). The recorded sharings*

*The **three month** winter retreat is a time of **focused attention and deep looking**. It is also a time of **simplifying, of settling**... a time of recognizing how we use our energy in our daily life. Most of all it is a time of allowing ourselves to settle- to **settle into our experience of themoment**.*

*Making the **commitment** to attend this class- even knowing all of the challenges- is one way to bring that element of focused intention into our lives- even if we cannot spend ninety days in a practice center.*

The Ten Gates: An Exploration of Fundamental Buddhist Practices

During this twelve week winter course, we will focus on establishing and deepening our fundamental practice whilst exploring essential Buddhist teachings through the lens of a text from the Shorter Passages section of the Pali Canon. The course- consisting of weekly talks and a handout with readings and reflection questions either to use on your own , or to work with as a sangha, will be offered for download each week. Links will be posted here and on our Facebook page. Unlike previous years, this years course will be offered entirely online.

Links and further information will be posted under Teaching, [click here!](#)

<http://deerparkmonastery.org/teachings/the-ten-gates-online-course-winter-2012-2013>

Fourteen Verses on Meditation - Course Nov 21, 2010 - Feb 20, 2011

On Sunday afternoons during the coming Winter Retreat, Dharma Teachers at Deer Park will offer a course on the verses (stopping & looking deeply)

<http://deerparkmonastery.org/teachings/fourteen-verses-on-meditation-course-nov-21-2010-feb-20-2011>

[Fourteen Verses on Meditation](#) typed version to print

[Course Description](#) you can follow this course online

[Handout Verse 1 of 14](#) the text for the practice and reflection for the first week

[Handout for Week 2, Verse 2](#) including the Discourse on Knowing the Better Way to Live Alone

[Weekly talks on the Verses](#) on the Deer Park Dharma Cast website you can find the recording of the weekly sharings by the Monastic Dharma Teachers at Deer Park

[Handout Verse 3 of 14](#) including a guided meditation on the Five Skandhas and the Discourse on the Four Establishments of Mindfulness

[Handout Verse 4 of 14](#) including the Five Touchings of the Earth and several gathas for daily practice

[Handout Week 5, Verse 5 of 14](#) including description of Deep Relaxation and the Discourse on the Full Awareness of Breathing

[Handout Verse 6 of 14](#) including reflections on the New Year and the Discourse on Knowing the Better Way to Live Alone

[Handout Verse 7 of 14](#) including the Five Mindfulness Trainings & Discourse on the White-Clad Disciple

[Handout verse 8 of 14](#) including the Discourse on the Middle Way

[Handout Verse 9 of 14](#) includes the Five Remembrances and the Discourse on the Dharma Seal

[Handout Verse 10 of 14](#) including the Discourse to Be Given to the Sick

[Handout Verse 11 of 14](#) including three verses from the Dhammapada

[Handout verse 12 of 14](#)

[Handout verse 13 of 14](#) incl Three Touchings of the Earth and the Discourse on the Diamond that Cuts through Illusion

[Handout Verse 14 of 14](#) including the Four Recollections and the Discourse on Taking Refuge in Oneself

Additional Resources

OnLine Dharma

- Plum Village Online Monastery I: <http://vimeo.com/plumvillage> (with current dharma talks by Thay from the Summer 2012 retreats)
- PV Online Monastery II: <http://blip.tv/pvom>
- Thich Nhat Hanh Audio <http://tnhaudio.org/>
- Deer Park DharmaCast: <http://deerpark.libsyn.com/>
- Plum Village website: <http://plumvillage.org/video-audio.html> (songs, some videos and mp3 files)
- 12- week Online Courses on Basic Mindfulness Practices with Study guides: <http://deerparkmonastery.org/teachings>
 - The Ten Gates
 - Moment to Moment- Teachings on the Noble 8-Fold Path
 - The 14 Verses on Meditation

Books and magazines

The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching, Thich Nhat Hanh, Parallax Press or Three Rivers, 1999

Present Moment, Wonderful Moment, Thich Nhat Hanh, Parallax Press, 1990

Being Peace, Thich Nhat Hanh, Parallax Press

Peace is Every Step, Thich Nhat Hanh, Parallax Press

Blooming of the Lotus, Thich Nhat Hanh, Parallax Press

Together We are One, Thich Nhat Hanh, Parallax Press, and many, many more wonderful books at:

Parallax Press <http://www.parallax.org/>

Mindfulness Bell Magazine <http://mindfulnessbell.org/>

Deer Park Monastery

Open to the public most Sundays and Thursdays at 8:45 am for a Day of Mindfulness. Check here for schedule

www.deerparkmonastery.org