Loving the Unlovable
by Thich Nhat Hanh

Dear Sangha, today is the 28th of January, 1996. We are in the Lower Hamlet (of Plum Village). It is the Winter Retreat. With us today are friends from the Lotus Bud Sangha in Australia. In France we are in the middle of winter. In Australia it is the middle of summer. Time and space have been brought together.

At the beginning of 1996, Plum Village invented the Telecom Dharma talk. The first was directed to Vietnam. The Vietnamese monks and nuns here were very happy and moved to be able to “go back” to our ancestral temple. This is the second Telecom Dharma talk, directed to the Australian continent.

Do you have someone to love? If you do not love anyone, your heart may dry up. Love brings happiness to ourselves and to those we love. We may want to love children who are hungry, disabled, or abused, to relieve them of their suffering. We carry that love in our heart and hope that someday we will be able to realize it. But when we actually contact these children, they may appear to be difficult to love. They may be rude, they may lie, they may steal. After a short time, our love for them may fade. We had the idea that loving children who need our help would be wonderful, but when confronted with the reality, we cannot sustain our love. When we discover that the object of our love is not lovable, we feel deep disappointment, shame, and regret, as though we have failed. If we cannot love a poor or disabled child, who can we love?

Everyone has an image of the Buddha. We think that if we meet the Buddha, he will be easy to love. He has so much compassion and understanding. But what if scientists were to find a way for us to see the faces of those who lived in the past? We see stars that perished thousands of light-years ago. Perhaps images do not travel in straight lines. When you fly from Paris to Los Angeles, the plane goes in a circular route. Maybe the image of the Buddha is also traveling in a circle. The sight of the Buddha teaching his disciples on Gridhrakuta Peak, the sound of his voice, those images went into space 2,500 years ago. With the right instruments, perhaps we could capture those images and sounds and see and hear the Buddha. Then we would be able to compare the Buddha’s teachings with the recorded sutras and discover mistakes that were made when the sutras were written down after being transmitted orally for several centuries.

A monk at Plum Village said to me, “My image of the Buddha is so beautiful. If I could see the real Buddha, I am afraid he might not be as beautiful. What do you think the Buddha looked like?”

I said, “He may have looked like Mahatma Gandhi.”

The monk was disappointed. To him, Gandhi is not as handsome as his image of the Buddha. I have visited families in Lumbini and Kapilavastu, belonging to the same Shakya clan as the Buddha, and I got an idea what the Buddha may have looked like.

We have beautiful images of Buddha and Jesus. We love our images and hold them in our store consciousness. But if
Passage
Jim Fauss, True Great Illumination, died of cancer on April 25. “He died just the way he wanted to, very beautifully, the way he did everything,” his wife Artie told us. A tribute to our dear brother will appear in the next issue. Please send us stories and reflections about Jim you would like to share.

Retreat Center Update
The property in West Virginia we have been negotiating for to establish a residential retreat center is not available after all. Our property search is continuing. If you know of a suitable place or would like to contribute to this effort, please contact Arnie Kotler, Therese Fitzgerald, or Ellen Peskin at the Community of Mindful Living. Thank you.

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Published by the Community of Mindful Living

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Photo credit correction from previous issue: Peter McLagan p. 18.

Positions Open
Director of Parallax Press
For ten years, Parallax Press has been publishing books and tapes on mindful awareness and social responsibility. The press was founded in late 1985 at Thich Nhat Hanh’s suggestion. Arnie Kotler edited Thay’s lectures into Parallax’s first book, Being Peace, which has since sold 200,000 copies. As of this year, Parallax Press has 100 books and tapes in print and five full-time employees.

As a project of the Community of Mindful Living, a Buddhist church and nonprofit organization, we try to practice mindfulness in the workplace—in the ways we talk to each other and in how we act. We offer incense every morning and recite a gatha together to start the day. When the telephone rings, we stop what we are doing and breathe consciously three times before continuing to work.

Parallax Press is in need of a director of operations—organizational and financial—so that Arnie can have more time for editing, leading retreats, and helping to start a retreat center. Experience in book publishing, organizational (people) and financial management, marketing, computer facility (Macintosh), and community involvement are plusses. Most important is a commitment to the practice of mindful living, to help cultivate a peaceful and positive environment within and without.

Please send a letter of interest and, if possible, a resumé by June 10 to Holly Hosner, Planet Works Staffing Solutions, 1123 Spruce Street, Suite 204, Boulder, CO 80302.

Editor of The Mindfulness Bell
For five years, Parallax Press and the Community of Mindful Living have produced three Mindfulness Bell newsletters per year. There has been no one whose primary task has been to edit and produce the newsletter. The co-editors have all been fully engaged taking care of the many tasks of the press and the community. Now, after 16 issues, we would like someone to assume the position of editor.

The editor receives the many submissions, selects what to include, stays in close touch with Sangha members worldwide, edits each piece for clarity and space, and also lays out the newsletter in Pagemaker on the Macintosh. Editing skills, word processing and layout skills, communications skills, and an appreciation for quiet joy are the position’s main requisites.

Please send a letter of interest and, if possible, a resumé to: Ellen Peskin, Community of Mindful Living, P.O. Box 7355, Berkeley, CA 94707.

Register now for special three-week retreat with Thich Nhat Hanh at Plum Village
Plum Village needs support for Emergency Building Fund See p. 38
Loving the Unlovable (Continued from Page 1)

we were to meet the Buddha at the Sainte Foy la Grande station (near Plum Village), I am not sure if we would love him. If we met Jesus in the Leclerc Supermarket, I am not sure we would love him as much as our image. Our images of the Buddha and Jesus may be quite different from the real Buddha and the real Jesus.

There were people at the time of the Buddha who did not love him. Some of his own monks left the Buddha’s Sangha to start an opposing Sangha. Some people tried to murder the Buddha. Others brought the body of a young woman to the Jeta Grove and accused the monks of violating and killing her. Love is not merely about enjoyment. It has to do with understanding. If we don’t truly understand, our love will vanish.

We think we love disabled and hungry children, but the truth might turn out to be different. A number of monks, nuns, and laypeople from Plum Village want to go back to Vietnam to help the children there and to bring about unity and faith among all the people. They want their country to have a future. The war created much division, hatred, suspicion and destruction in the hearts of people. These monks, nuns, and laypeople want to go home and walk on their native land. They want to embrace the people, relieve them of their suffering, and help them taste joy and peace.

But before they go back, they must prepare themselves. The people they want to help may not be easy to love. Real love must include those who are difficult, those who have been unkind. If we go back to Vietnam without first learning to love, when we find the people being unpleasant, we will suffer and we may even come to hate them.

When you lose your ability to love, you lose your life. We think we can change the world, but we should not be naive. Don’t think that the moment you arrive in Vietnam, you will sit down with all the conflicting factions and establish communication immediately. You may be able to give beautiful talks about harmony, but if you are not prepared, you will not be able to put your words into practice.

In Plum Village, we live together 24 hours a day. Do we cooperate to bring each other happiness? Do we work together in harmony? Are we able to overcome our individual views in order to bring together the views of everyone? Or do we maintain our own view and think that it alone is correct? If you cannot practice “harmony of views,” bringing your views together with the views of others to arrive at a collective view that everyone can accept, if you cannot love and accept each other, if you do not use loving speech every day, what will you be able to offer our countrymen when you return to Vietnam?

In Vietnam there are people who can give very good Dharma talks, who can explain how to reconcile and live in harmony, but not everyone can do it. We should not only talk about it. If we do not actually practice what we preach, what can we offer anyone? If older sisters do not hold each other’s hands like children of the same mother, how can the younger children have faith in the future?

We must practice harmony of views and harmony of speech. We bring our views together to have a deeper understanding, and we use loving speech to inspire others and not hurt anyone. We practice walking together, eating together, discussing together, so we can realize love and understanding. If you are able to breathe and smile when your sister says something unkind, that is the beginning of love. You do not have to go someplace else to serve. You can serve right here by practicing walking meditation, smiling, and shining your eyes of love on others.

We want to go out and share what we have learned. But if we do not practice breathing to untie the knots of pain in ourselves—the knots of anger, sadness, jealousy, and irritation—what can we teach others? We must understand and practice the teachings in our daily lives. We can only teach from our experience. People need to hear how we have to be able to overcome our own suffering and the irritations in our own heart. When we talk about the Dharma, our words need to have energy. That is not possible if our words come only from ideas, theories, or even sutras. We can only teach what we have done ourselves.

When we practice the First Prostration, we have to be able to see our blood ancestors and our spiritual ancestors at the same time. Some of our ancestors have done beautiful things, and others have made big mistakes. But all of them are our ancestors, and we have to accept them all, those only 20 years older than us and those 2,000 years older, those
who are wonderful, and those who are very difficult. Our parents and some of our ancestors may have made us suffer, but they are still our parents and our ancestors. Until we accept them, we cannot feel at peace. If we say, "That person is not worthy of being my ancestor," we will suffer our whole life.

After that, we get in touch with our descendants—our younger sisters and brothers, our disciples, our grandchildren, and our students. Some of them are beautiful. Some may argue with us. Some may be rude to us. When we practice the First Prostration, we have to accept all our children, those who are good and those who are difficult. That is the only way to find peace. The Three Prostrations are not just a devotional practice. They are a practice of insight, of looking deeply. We see that we are part of a stream of life comprised of all our spiritual and blood ancestors. We transcend our personal self, which is a basic Buddhist practice, and see what is meant by "no self." When we realize that we are our ancestors and our descendants, our "self" dissolves and we accept everyone, however wicked or wonderful they have been. If we do not have that insight when we prostrate, we are still caught in the individual self, a self apart from the Sangha. We think we are not our brother, our sister, or our teacher. If we think like that, we are not ready to go out and teach other people. We have a theory about no-self, but we do not yet have the insight.

At Plum Village, we practice dwelling peacefully in the present moment. By abiding peacefully in the present moment, we avoid running around in circles and we begin to have happiness. When we breathe and walk on the meditation path, when we eat a meal together in mindfulness, we see that we have the capacity for happiness every day. If we do not know how to make use of these practices and enjoy them, if we look for happiness somewhere else, we will never find it.

In Vietnam we say, "Standing on the top of one mountain, you look with envy at the top of another mountain." We don't realize how beautiful our mountain is. We look at the other mountain and think, It is much more beautiful over there. If only I could go over there, I would be happy. We have a husband, but we look at another family and think, Her husband is much kinder than mine. We are a child and we say, His mother is much sweeter than my mother. I wish I could exchange mothers. If we stand on this mountain peak and want to be on the other, that is because we do not know how to have happiness in the present moment in this very place. We do not have the capacity to accept the conditions for happiness that are already within us and all around us. In our Sangha, there are people who have the capacity to live happily in the present moment. They do not have the attitude of standing on the top of one mountain wanting to be on the other. They can sit very still, without feeling as though they are sitting on hot coals, wanting to be somewhere else, anywhere else.

Those who cannot be happy may think, If I could be a Dharma teacher, or a monk or a nun, I would be happy. But those who have the capacity to dwell peacefully in the present moment, I connect with ancestors and descendants of both my spiritual and blood families. My spiritual ancestors include the Buddha, the bodhisattvas, the noble Sangha of Buddha's disciples, 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 awakened 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 precepts, understanding, and compassion, and those who are still imperfect. I accept them all, because I also see shortcomings and weaknesses within myself. Aware that my practice of the precepts is not always perfect, that I am not always understanding and compassionate, I open my heart and accept all my spiritual descendants. Some of my descendants practice the precepts, understanding, and compassion in ways that invite confidence and respect, but there are others who come across many difficulties and are constantly subject to ups and downs in their practice.

In the same way, I accept all my blood ancestors on my mother's and father's sides. I accept their good qualities and virtuous actions, and also 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 and my blood ancestors, my spiritual descendants and my blood descendants are all part of me. I am them and they are me. I do not have a separate self. All of us are part of a wonderful stream of life.
present moment say, I am not a Dharma teacher or a monk or a nun, but I am just as happy. If you are not happy, becoming a Dharma teacher, a monk, or a nun will not make you happier.

How high is this peak? It represents the year 2050. We have only four more years to get to the 21st century. I am advanced in years, and I don’t know if I am going to arrive at the foot of the 21st century hill. But I think about that hill every day. I think about my descendants who are going to climb it. I don’t know whether I am going to live two years. Some things we cannot know. But one thing is certain. I am going to arrive at the foot of the 21st century hill. But I don’t know if I am going to live two years. Some things we cannot know. But one thing is certain. I am going to climb this hill with my descendants. I don’t agree with being a teacher for just three or four more years. I want to be a teacher and a companion for thousands of years. You may think that Brother Phap Canh will get to the top of the mountain in the year 2050. He is 20 now, so he will be 74 years old. When he stands there, what will he see? He will look down and see the Sangha climbing up together. At 74, he will probably have many disciples, both lay and monastic. They will call him “Grandfather Teacher.” What I want to say is we have to climb this hill together. We cannot go up as individuals. Our practice lies in doing it together. If we go as a Sangha, we will reach our goal. If we go as individuals, we will never get anywhere. We must go up the hill of the 21st century together. That is how we will transcend our individual selves. Your grandfather teacher is called Thanh Quy. He is present with us today in this Dharma Hall. He gave me the Dharma Lamp Transmission. He sent me out on the path with all his love and care. Now he is carrying me in his passing. I am carrying him in my passing, and I am transmitting him to you so you can carry him with you. If it were not for my teacher, how could I be here? We are just a stream called “life.” When we give Dharma Transmission, we are not giving it just to one person. We give it to many people at the same time. When you receive Dharma Transmission, you also receive it for many. The Sangha body of the Buddha has never ceased to be. Today we bear in our heart the Sangha of the Buddha, which is more than 2,500 years old. We may still be young, but we are also very, very old. Our Sangha body is now sitting in the Dharma Nectar Hall in France and in the Lotus Bud Sangha in Australia. But the Sangha is much greater and wider than this.

You have seen me teach the Dharma a little bit everywhere, and you have experienced the Sangha in many different parts of the world. Each part of the Sangha nourishes itself using different methods and different teachings, yet we are present in all these Sanghas, and our descendants will be present in them, also. To see this is the realization of no-self. You need this insight to be able to take stable steps on the path of life. We are not individuals suffering in isolation. When one horse in the stable is sick, none of the horses will eat hay. Our suffering is the suffering of others. Our smile is the smile of others. Our joy is the joy of others. Only when we live this way is the Buddha’s teaching of no-self a reality.

If you think you are standing outside, that is an illusion. You are standing on this mountain thinking you should be standing on that one. Everything depends on your way of looking. To have a cup of tea with Thay may be happiness. But not drinking tea with Thay is also happiness. Can you be at peace in the present moment? Can you accept the elements of happiness that are already here? If you don’t have happiness, it doesn’t matter whether you are a monk, a nun, a Dharma teacher, or a layperson.
During this winter retreat, we have been studying “The Living Tradition of Buddhist Meditation.” Today we are going to learn a little more about the poem by Nhan Tong, the Bamboo Forest Master, called “Living in the World of the Dust, but Enjoying the Path of Practice.”

If you understand, all wrongdoings from the past are wiped away. If you are able to understand, past wrongdoings will not be repeated. Practicing in daily life, keep your true nature shining. Realizing that Buddha is your mind, you don’t have to ask about the methods of Ma Tsu. When you are mindful, here and now, when your light is shining, why ask about the methods of Ma Tsu? Don’t even think about his methods. When you realize that Buddha is your mind, you will never ask again about Ma Tsu’s methods.

If you understand, all wrongdoings from the past are wiped away. We misbehave because we do not really understand what we are doing. Once we understand, we will stop. How can we understand what we are doing? By looking deeply. That is called the “shining nature” in us.

At times we have to prostrate before six other people and ask them to shine light on our practice. When we do this, we will receive great benefit. We have wrong perceptions that imprison us. We need at least six people to shine their light on us. They will do this only if we prostrate before them, and, with all our sincerity, ask for their help. The Sangha’s wisdom is greater than that of any individual. I always take refuge in the Sangha. Six is the minimum. You can ask sixty people if you like. When you ask them to shine light on your practice, it can reveal the darkest places in yourself, the things that bring about your suffering.

If you are able to understand, past wrongdoings will not be repeated. Practicing in daily life, keep your true nature shining. You perfect yourself in the Three Trainings of precepts, concentration, and insight. Gin means protect, maintain, look after. Tinh sảng means the essential nature that is shining and clear and resides in all of us. The energy of mindfulness is light. With mindfulness, we know what is happening. When we are angry and we know we are angry, we can transform it, because mindfulness is there. If we nourish our mindfulness for ten or fifteen minutes, our anger will be transformed. Keep your true nature shining. The shining nature is not a vague idea. It is mindfulness itself, and it helps us have concentration. With concentration, we look deeply, see, and understand. That is called prajña, wisdom or insight.

Keep your true nature shining so you do not enter the path of wrong practice. Tà is wrong or crooked. Dao is path. This is the path of suffering and self pity, the path that leads away from our teacher and our Sangha. The Sangha is a precious jewel, even with its weaknesses. It is essential for our practice. There are things you cannot accomplish without a Sangha. To lose your Sangha is like falling into the ocean without a life jacket. You might die. Keep your true nature shining so you do not venture onto the path of wrong practice. Keep the light of mindfulness shining so you develop the power of concentration and see the truth in your heart, in the environment, and in the Sangha. That will prevent you from falling into the path of suffering.

Always improve yourself by true practice. The word tu, “practice” in Vietnamese means, literally, “to make more beautiful or correct” or “to repair.” If you have a leaky roof, you repair it. If you have some jealousy, you have to transform it. To better yourself, to cultivate happiness, all these things are included in the Vietnamese word for “practice.”

Always improve yourself by true learning. Always follow the “right tradition,” which is the true teaching of the Buddha, not the things people added to the teachings later. The teaching of the Buddha is very clear, but there has always been a tendency to bring in other teachings that are more complicated. We have to be careful not to travel down paths of wrong teaching, or we will lose our way. The way of practice in the right tradition is the tradition of precepts, mindfulness, and living with the Sangha. To say that we can take drugs or drink alcohol while practicing meditation is an example of wrong teaching. To practice meditation without also practicing precepts, concentration, and insight is not following the right tradition. When Zen Buddhism first came to the West, people thought it had something to do with drugs, and they did not practice the precepts. That kind of practice always brings about suffering. Please follow the right tradition.

Realizing that Buddha is your mind, you don’t have to ask about the methods of Ma Tsu. Mind is Buddha. Buddha is your mind. Buddha is not some statue made of wood or jade. Buddha is not a god. Buddha cannot be found in heaven. The Buddha is in your heart and mind. When your mind has precepts, concentration, and wisdom, Buddha is present. The Buddha is not the mind of forgetfulness. He is the mind of mindfulness.

When you are mindful, here and now, when your light is shining, why ask about the methods of Ma Tsu? Don’t even think about his methods. You don’t have to ask about the methods of Ma Tsu, such as kung an, questioning, shouting, or using the stick. Yelling and hitting are tools that can help meditation students untie the knots of suffering in themselves. These kung an, questions and answers, are used by the Dhyana masters to undo the knots of the students. I prefer simpler methods, like asking, “What are you doing?” Sometimes when Sr. Chân Khồng is looking through her
files, I ask her, “What are you doing?” Sometimes she says, “You’ve caught me. I wasn’t practicing mindfulness.”

When you are cooking, sweeping, or working in the garden, practice mindfulness. If not, it is a waste of time. When I ask, “What are you doing?” if you are present, you can just look at me and smile. But if you are not practicing, you have to say, “Thây, you’ve caught me. I’m not practicing.”

When you realize that Buddha is your mind, you will never ask again about Ma Tsu’s methods. Ma Tsu was a very famous Dhyana master from China. He was born in 707 and he lived to be 81 years old. There is a story about a conversation between Ma Tsu and one of his students. One day, the student was sitting diligently practicing sitting meditation. The teacher asked, “What are you doing?” and the monk answered, proudly, “I am practicing sitting meditation.” The teacher said, “Why are you doing that?” and the student replied, “To become Buddha.” Ma Tsu began polishing a tile, and the student asked, “Master, why are you doing that?” Ma Tsu replied, “To make a mirror.” The student said, “Polishing a tile will not make a mirror.” Ma Tsu replied, “Sitting in meditation will not make a Buddha.”

To become a Buddha, you have to know how to smile, how to speak, how to stand, how to walk, how to work, how to wash pots, and do all those things while you look deeply in the state of samadhi (concentration). Meditation is not just sitting. Once a student came to Master Ma Tsu and asked, “Why did Bodhidharma come from the West?” Ma Tsu said nothing. He just beat him. You see how kind the teacher of Plum Village is.

The great Bamboo Forest Master, realizing that Buddha mind is said that you do not have to ask about the methods of Ma Tsu. If you are free from attachments, you will be happy. Wealth and sex, for example, are like worms on the end of a hook. If you don’t look deeply, you will get caught, and suffer a lot. If you see the dangers of wealth and sex, you can behave according to the precepts and keep your freedom. Without inner freedom, you can never be happy. Thóż means the behavior or way of life that is pure. Layman P’ang lived at the time of Ma Tsu in 8th century China. He had a wife, a daughter, and a son, and the four of them practiced together. Although they came from a wealthy family, they gave up their luxurious ways when they tasted the Dharma. They were very pleased to live simple lives.

One day Layman P’ang’s daughter came to Master Ta Dao and asked, “If I don’t want to be friends with all dharmas, objects of mind, what can I do?” Master Ta Dao just put his hand over his mouth. The next time Layman P’ang met Master Ma Tsu, he asked the same question, “If I don’t want to be friends with all dharmas, how should I act?” Ma Tsu said, “Layman, you can drink all the water in the Han River, I will answer your question.” Upon hearing that, he was awakened.

Layman P’ang and his family symbolize happiness with a simple life. This is the opposite of thinking you have to buy a lot of things to be happy. If you are not attached to wealth, it is because you have realized your shining nature of enlightenment.

You don’t have to go to a mountain to practice. If you follow the precepts, you will not be carried away by sounds and appearances. Some appearances infatuate us and we get carried away by them. Some sounds make us angry, others make us afraid. We practice mindfulness in order to stop—to stop our wrong perceptions, to stop being carried away by sounds and appearances, to stop our mind from running from place to place, unable to settle anywhere. We can do this because we have learned the art of mindful living.
Gratitude for Our Enemies
by Christopher Reed

During retreats, we practice "Touching the Earth," bowing deeply and honoring parents, friends, the religious traditions we were born into, teachers, and the land itself. We also honor our enemies and adversaries.

Someone wrote to me after attending a retreat with Thich Nhat Hanh because she was finding it hard to practice "Touching the Earth" in honor of the developers she was actively engaged in opposing. She found it difficult to feel any loving kindness toward the people who are destroying the community and the local environment in the part of Canada where she lives. She said that by looking deeply she could easily find forgiveness for people who may have hurt her, but to do the same for these developers was impossible.

At first I thought she was being too idealistic, trying to be perfect. Did she think she could eliminate her anger and despair altogether and that by doing so, love could emerge? Is it by opening to the pain of our anger and fear and seeing them as the outcome of a mutual process that loving kindness and compassion emerge?

Trying to eliminate grief and anger in ourselves can create the greatest violence, cutting us off from important feedback in very real situations. The anger itself is a starting point. If we imagine that to be loving we always have to be nice, we create a shadow within ourselves that eats away at our energy. Then, when we resist others, we do so only with fear and anger.

To love someone does not mean to accept and condone everything he or she does. To act out of love, you do not need to first eliminate your anger. To wait for your anger to disappear might be to wait forever. It would be better to act, honoring your anger, aware that you are not merely reacting from it.

In the last prostration of the "Touching the Earth" ceremony, we bow to reconcile with those who have made us suffer. We can say something like this: "To the enemies and adversaries who oppose us, we bow in gratitude and touch the Earth.

"You, who by deception deliberately engage in the destruction of the environment for your own profit and show me how much I value what is honest, what is generous, what has been clearly thought through, what is expressive of love for this planet home, for our fellow beings, human and other, I bow to you in gratitude and touch the Earth.

"You bring forth in me the passion and love I feel for this land, this soil, the passion I feel for strong community, sustainability, integrity. Because of the strength with which I resist your actions, I have seen how strong my love and passion really are. I bow to you in gratitude and touch the Earth.

"Because the pain I feel when I allow myself to witness the pain of the world is no less than your pain, you, who perpetuate destruction, who wreck this Earth, who have cut yourselves off from the generations of the future, I bow to you in gratitude and touch the Earth.

"Because the pain of greed, alienation and fear are no less than the pain of sorrow and mourning for what is lost, I bow to you in gratitude and I touch the Earth.

"For the power of my anger, transforming into love for what I see and hear, the bright energy of my passion, my love of all that lives, I bow in gratitude and touch the Earth.

"Because we all want to be happy, to feel ourselves intact and part of a single whole, for that shared longing, I bow to you in gratitude and touch the Earth.

"Because you challenge me by your actions, demanding that I release my attachment to the view that my perspective is the correct one, I bow to you in gratitude and touch the Earth.

"For you who teach me that the mind is a limitless source, a miracle capable of manifesting as love, greed, fear, capable of clarity or delusion, blind to the consequence of action or open to the boundless coherence of all that I do and experience in life. For you who show me what I myself am capable of when I let my life be governed by fear and greed, great awesome teachers, I bow to you in gratitude and touch the Earth.

"In awe at the mind’s capacity for delusion and alienation that calls me so insistently to understanding and joy, I bow in gratitude and touch the Earth.

"With the understanding that all this will pass and with all the love in my heart, I bow in gratitude and touch the Earth.”

Christopher Reed, True Jewel, is the cofounder of Ordinary Dharma and Manzanita Village, a retreat center in Southern California.

A lotus for you!
Sister Dog
by Dewain Belgard

I was driving home from work when I first saw Sister Dog. She appeared thin and hungry. Her collar was too tight, and she was dragging a broken leash. I suspected she had been homeless for some time.

The neighborhood where I saw her has a reputation for danger and violence. Yet despite my fear, I found myself stopping the car. I got out and called to her softly, “Sister Dog, could you use some help?” But evidently her experience with human beings had not left her with any basis for trust. She disappeared under a nearby abandoned house.

I tried for a few minutes to coax her out, but it was getting dark. And with darkness, the danger of the area increased. An obviously intoxicated man approached me and put his hand in his pocket. I expected him to produce a gun or knife, but he just stooped down with me and said, “That your dog?” “No,” I told him, “I’m just trying to get her to come out so I can remove the collar. I’m afraid it’s choking her.” He nodded in agreement. It occurred to me that he also was probably hungry and homeless. “I guess she’s not coming out,” I said. I got up and walked to my car, wondering with every step if he would try to stop me.

The next day I went back to the same place at noon, but Sister Dog wasn’t there. I drove by again after work, and this time she was standing on the sidewalk where I had first seen her. I had brought food with me. I offered it to her, but she ran under the abandoned house again. I left the food in the alley nearby and returned to the car to watch. In a few seconds, she came out cautiously and ate the food. The next day I returned and put out more food and some water. That evening when I drove by, the food and water were still there untouched. I checked several times after that, but never saw her again.

For some time afterwards I couldn’t get the image of Sister Dog out of my mind. It was difficult to sit down at the table to eat or to lie down in the comfort of my bed at night without thinking of her. It seemed to me that the suffering of millions of sisters and brothers, both human and nonhuman, had rolled itself into one little mass of flesh and had confronted me in Sister Dog. I felt overwhelmed by feelings of sorrow and pity.

In observing these feelings of sorrow and pity, I noticed how different they were from the spontaneous and unconscious feeling of compassion that had appeared when I first saw Sister Dog. That feeling of compassion was not overwhelming at all, but the subsequent feelings of sorrow and pity were draining me of energy.

I realized then that pity is not a wholesome feeling. Pity is demeaning. It doesn’t see the nobility of the one who is suffering. Compassion, on the other hand, is never separated from the noble and miraculous nature of awareness that shines through even the deepest misery. Compassion doesn’t drain us because it connects us to the infinite energy of our true self.

I am grateful to Sister Dog for this insight. I no longer see her as a poor helpless victim to be pitied, but as a Mahasattva Bodhisattva — a Great Being, a Being of Light. I feel honored and privileged to have met her.

Dewain Belgard, True Good Vows, is a social worker and practices with the Blue Iris Sangha in New Orleans.

Upon Your Death

There is a pain
which never stops hurting
which cannot be healed;
and dignity will carry it.

There is a wound
which never closes
and cannot be touched
but by the love of a bleeding heart.

There is a fear
which never leaves—
no place to hide—
and cannot be embraced
but by empty hands.

There is a loneliness
beyond abandonment
and it will not vanish
nor be filled,
but the patience
of my solitude
makes me smile.

Nel Houtman, True Marvelous Shining
Zurich, Switzerland
Secrets and Silence
by Claude An Shin Thomas

Susan Smith was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison for drowning her two children. She is eligible for parole in what, thirty years? Susan’s father committed suicide when she was a child. Susan’s mother remarried and her husband, Susan’s stepfather, sexually abused her when she was a teenager. Susan has several documented suicide attempts and I wonder how many that were undocumented. She has a history of abusing alcohol and, more likely than not, other drugs as well, and a history of promiscuity.

Could no one really see her, see where she was headed? Or the question might also be asked: why did no one intervene in a life so out of control?

None of her sexual partners, all people close to her, responsible and powerful people in their community, some parents themselves, ever said no or questioned her actions. They used her and fed her suffering. To my knowledge she was not involved with any type of program, group, or organization that could help her to recognize and touch her deep powerful suffering and encourage and support her healing.

Where was her community? Where was her support? When I sit with the reality of her action, the drowning of her two children, I am neither shocked nor surprised. It makes absolute sense, a direct result of her deep; abiding suffering, when we challenge the illusions that keep us trapped in denial, the answers come.

And now, faced with the reality of this deep suffering and the consequences of not addressing it, the community wants to push her out of their consciousness, reinforcing a collective denial.

They wish to believe that Susan Smith’s drowning of her children is only about her, not about them. That no one but her is capable of such acts. She has been berated, made evil, condemned, and gotten rid of.

I understand this dynamic. It has touched me because I also have killed. Killed far more people—men, women, children, adolescents—than Susan Smith. But my killing was “justifiable,” or so I was told many times, because it was in the service of my country in a time of war. Yes, my killing was justifiable until it came too close to those Americans who were not fighting, who thought themselves different.

When I came home, I, like many other combat veterans, experienced the same thing now happening to Susan. We were sacrificed and continue to be sacrificed to protect the collective denial and the illusions that support it. Because to sit with us, to listen to us, to enter into our skin, means that one has to touch the reality of one’s own responsibility and one’s own suffering, deep and powerful suffering.

Responsibility is not something external. We are responsible for our actions and the impact that those actions have on others. It is written that the Buddha taught that the only way to enlightenment is directly through our suffering. There is no other way.

Since the cessation of military involvement in Vietnam in 1975, more than 58,000 veterans have died as a result of suicide. At one time 66% of the prison population were vets. Yes, war is violent and the acts committed by combatants would be unfathomable in circumstances other than war. Yes, Susan Smith’s actions were both criminal and violent. But there is no cessation to the cycle of suffering if there is no acceptance of our collective responsibility.

The creation of illusions to mask our denial is a more powerful form of violence than the killing. More powerful because these illusions are not visible, because they are the seeds that spawn the acting out.

Must Susan be held responsible for her acts? Yes, without a doubt. But so must her community, her society, and culture. As she is guilty, so are they. Call me by my true names.

I have no idea how to deal with Susan Smith, or for that matter, with society. But I do know that when we stop attempting to avoid the reality of deep and powerful suffering, when we challenge the illusions that keep us trapped in denial, the answers come.

In the summer of 1994 I was introduced by Michael Daigu O’Keefe to Bernard Tetsugen Glassman, abbot of the Zen Community of New York. I was preparing to join an Interfaith Pilgrimage for Peace and Life, walking from Auschwitz to Hiroshima.

On our second meeting Roshi Glassman invited me to ordain in a new order that he had created, a Peacemaker order. At first I was surprised, distrusting. I tentatively agreed and was given jukai in Auschwitz.

While on this pilgrimage, the more I walked, the more suffering I witnessed, the clearer I became about becoming a Peacemaker Priest. I said before that I have no idea how to work with a Susan Smith or with society. That is only partly true. By becoming ordained as a Peacemaker Priest, I have committed my life in the most powerful and tangible way that I know to the action of healing and transformation, with a deeper understanding that as I heal my family heals, as my family heals my community heals, as my community heals my society heals. I am not them but I am not separate!

Claude Thomas is a combat veteran of the Vietnam War who has gone to Plum Village to practice since 1991. In 1995, he was ordained a Peacemaker Priest by Roshi Bernard Glassman. Claude has two books forthcoming from Parallax Press.

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Winter Retreat at Plum Village
by Fred Allendorf

I spent two weeks at Plum Village during this year’s Winter Retreat. My first days in Plum Village were difficult in ways I had not anticipated. Twenty-nine years ago I went to Vietnam as a nineteen-year-old soldier. I spent most of my time at the southern tip of Cam Ranh Peninsula in the Army company responsible for constructing port facilities in central South Vietnam. Living in a community consisting of approximately half Vietnamese men and women in Plum Village and looking at the smiling faces around me brought many suppressed “mental formations” to my consciousness. American soldiers in Vietnam were taught, and quickly learned, to be suspicious of all Vietnamese people.

I had no knowledge of Buddhism while I was in Vietnam. However, I remember going to the PX at the Cam Ranh Air Force Base many times and resisting the strong urge to buy a large jade Buddha. There was something about it that attracted me and held my fascination. I also have a clear memory of looking up at the large white Buddha statue above the city of Nha Trang. My wife and I now have a picture of that Buddha hanging on our bedroom wall.

I was in Vietnam for only one year and it was a long time ago. But certain experiences trigger old memories that are as fresh as yesterday. The sound of a helicopter inevitably yanks me back to 1967. Many smells have a similar effect. The sight of Plum Village residents walking around during the rain in their traditional Vietnamese round-pyramidal hats turned the French countryside into rice paddies in my mind’s eye.

Thây and Sister Chân Không led the Plum Village Sangha to the Pyrenees Mountains during my visit. The Vietnamese monks and nuns had a joyful time throwing snowballs and sledding in the mountains. Thây Nghuen, Head of Practice in the Upper Hamlet, sat next to me on our four hour bus trip to the Pyrenees. I learned that he is a monk visiting Plum Village for two years. His home monastery is in Ninh Hoa, just across the bay from where I had lived in Vietnam. He was just four years old while I was in Vietnam; I imagined him as one of the many small children I saw in Vietnam.

The mental knots that had held me captive for 29 years began to melt during my conversations with Thây Nghuen and the other Vietnamese residents of Plum Village. Their smiling faces quickly brought much joy, rather than caution, to my heart. I especially came to love and enjoy being with the monks I worked with on the working meditation crew to help construct the Lotus Pond in the Lower Hamlet.

My last breakfast in Plum Village was deeply emotional. I held back tears as I looked around at my new brothers. It is traditional for people who are leaving the Upper Hamlet during the winter retreat to do hugging meditation with one person after saying goodbye to the Sangha. I had requested that Thây Nghuen join me in hugging meditation. I felt the fear and caution that I had carried with me for almost 30 years melt away as we breathed together three times.

Order member Fred Allendorf is a biologist and an active member of the Open Way Sangha in Missoula, Montana.

Transformation Hall Meditation

The bell, the bell, the bell
invites us,
to sit, alone,
together.

Breathing slowly,
the fragrant incense flows,
in, out;
in, out;
in, out.

The silence of the meditation hall
gently
holds me
in the lap
of the Buddha.
The bell.

Fred Allendorf
Calmly Speaking the Truth
by Lee Swenson

When Maxine Hong Kingston asked me to join the Vietnam War Veterans Writing Group, I hesitated for a few months. The group was a real mix—Vietnam combat vets, stateside draftees, nurses, widows, medics. All wanted to write out their stories. It was hard to imagine reliving those intense days and walking back into those battlefields, terrain laden with buried mines, ready to explode in heart and mind. I also feel tender about my old moralizing voice coming back, a voice with an edge I wanted to keep at rest. I was not sure I could keep calm while speaking my truth about nonviolent anarchism, and I was not sure I wanted to go back into the endless debate between those who went to war and those who chose not to. Yet, how could I resist?

As I went to the monthly meetings, I began to know individuals—a medic, a pilot, a widow, a river patrol point man, a vet coming in from 20 years of living on the streets. Each of us had a separate reality, and now we were all tied together. I saw how hard it was, and is, for the vets to see differences within the antiwar movement, to see individuals making a choice, willing to suffer, to do prison time, to be written out of their families for refusing to kill.

Every month for three years, the Veterans Writing Workshop met for a Day of Mindfulness facilitated by Maxine Hong Kingston and members of the Community of Mindful Living. We began with a bell, heard again and again throughout the day, to calm, to still, to breathe. When we read our day’s writing to the group, we found that by remembering to breathe we could do and say nearly anything. After the opening bell and meditation, we went around the circle and added a voice to the community. We were breaking the ice of twenty-five-year-old thoughts and feelings.

At the center of the day, we wrote in community. Maxine suggested an idea, and after discussion, we went to different parts of the room or outside. We wrote for the next few hours, side by side, separate, yet together. Like meeting a grizzly bear on the trail, the electricity of producing together got our undivided attention. After lunch, we read aloud what we had written.

At moments, hardly anyone could breathe as the stories spilled out: buddies killed, body bags zipped up, sheer fear in battle still deep in the bone, coming Stateside, survivor’s guilt, rehab drudgery, going to the Wall and finding the name of a platoon mate or husband, leaving a widow’s letter and a daughter’s baptism gown, never to see her father.

There have been few stories from draft resisters and nonviolent activists, and we had many to tell. I wrote about the virtues of nonviolence and why “we” resisted the war. I wrote about a small boy milking the family cow in an Indian village, who meets Gandhi on his way to the sea to commit civil disobedience by gathering his own salt during the Great Salt March. The boy dreams of joining the Freedom Movement. I wrote and read aloud about being in Santa Rita Jail over Christmas 1967,
and how Martin Luther King, Jr. came to visit Joan Baez and the rest of us the day after we “offenders” were released. King was assassinated just three months later. In January 1968, we heard on the jail radio that Dr. Spock and six others were arrested for aiding and abetting draft resistance. It was a conspiracy not to kill.

Great veteran writers and National Book Award winners Tim O’Brien and Larry Heineman spent a day with us. One of America’s truly great short story writers and peace activist Grace Paley came for an afternoon. We also had a day with Vietnamese soldiers (the “enemy”). Lê Minh Khùê had spent her youth on the Ho Chi Minh (Song My) Trail. Her greatest fear on the Trail was of American pilots just hundreds of feet overhead, releasing napalm or fragmentation percussion bombs. She could almost see their faces and look into their eyes. Now they were face-to-face, pilot and foot soldier. They met, touched, and hugged.

We edited together. We brought copies of stories, lay them on a table, and gave and received criticism. It was scary and very moving. Grace Paley said, “Editing is taking out the lies!” This group was a great lie detector.

We did bookstore readings and a public radio show on Veteran’s Day. Some of us were men who had lived on the streets for years. At Black Oak Bookstore, Tom, blinking, twitching, and agitated bellowed out, “I useta get kicked outa Black Oak, now I’m reading here!” Maxine held steady through all this, month after month—encouraging, criticizing, and firmly prodding us. Now Maxine is taking a rest from group organizing to finish her own peace novel.

An anthology is in the works. Our task is to keep writing, to find the stories in this great flow of memory, and to bring them to the surface. There are many more stories to come.

Lee Swenson, a longtime peace activist and community organizer, lives in Berkeley, California.

Writing Breakthrough
by Richard Gilman

From the age of six, I knew that I would design computers. My whole life has been about science, math, and statistics. I only wrote to put a few words between the formulas, postulates, and theorems, so they would flow better. Arts and literature were not for me.

But, something happened last year that allowed me to begin to focus on what had been bothering me deep in the recesses of my being. I found myself at a writing workshop, sitting in a semicircle, surrounded by an eclectic group of people, listening to a tiny grey-haired woman whose strong, yet gentle, voice commanded my attention. I had been hot, scared, uncomfortable, and ready to exit at the first opportunity, but the melodiousness of her tone said stay for a while, listen to us, and feel welcome here.

At that introductory session, we paired off and talked with the person next to us for a few minutes, and then listened to them for a few more minutes. Meeting Jim Janko was the most powerful, overwhelming, and bonding experience of my life. Somehow this person knew my fears, trepidations, and issues even better than I did—and in only a couple of minutes. Very powerful stuff.

I was still too uptight to participate for very long though, and left before the end of the session. I felt intimidated by all these people who seemed like professional writers looking to just get a few pointers from the master writer. But as I rode my motorcycle out the long driveway from Green Gulch Farm, instead of turning right to go home, I turned left toward the ocean. I stopped at this magnificent spot with all of the Pacific in front of me, and wrote. I wrote and wrote and wrote some more. When I stopped, seven hours had passed! Nothing in my life had ever fueled me that swiftly and with such passion. I wrote about people I had met in Vietnam, about many of the events that I had been part of there, and about some of my feelings of what went on during the war.

At the second gathering I attended, thoughts flowed out faster than I could write them. I had said to myself that I needed some experience from Vietnam to write about. Ten minutes later, I had 36 major events listed, at least 30 of which I hadn’t thought about in 20 years!

The Veterans Writing Workshop opened a new path for me. The thought that I would leave engineering to write and listen to new ideas, and experience literature—wow!

Richard Gilman, a Vietnam war veteran, lives in San Francisco, and now writes full-time.
Being Present in Prison
by Mark French

I just finished reading Chân Không’s book, Learning True Love. It is one of the most inspiring books I have ever read. As a combat veteran of Vietnam in 1968, I was particularly touched by her book. I felt a certain connection to past experiences after reading about the struggles of Chân Không, Thích Nhat Hanh, and others, and how they overcame obstacles to bring help to the Vietnamese people.

I just recently became involved in a meditation group here in prison. Our meditation began with only three to five inmates, as well as a staff sponsor. In the last month, two new people joined our group. We meet every Friday and sit in meditation for 20 minutes, then our staff sponsor leads us in a discussion. We just finished reading and discussing Zen Keys, and now we are reading a book called Everyday Zen by Charlotte Joko Beck. I have a lot more time to do here in prison and I now face each day with a much better outlook, thanks to the meditation and mindfulness I have allowed into my life.

My dad was a Baptist minister and I was the typical rebellious “preacher’s kid.” Isn’t it ironic that while most would think I had the ideal religious environment to grow up in, I am now 45 and in prison, and finally I have some spiritual peace and wholeness in my life? I try to sit twice a day, for 20 minutes in the morning and 30 minutes in the evening. I live and work on the prison dairy farm, so there is plenty of opportunity for mindful working. As far as I am concerned, the only way to do prison time is simply by being in the moment.

I have been in contact with Open Way Sangha in Missoula, and they have expressed an interest in coming to the prison periodically to help us out with establishing a meditation group. The prison chaplain is not the most cooperative person when it comes to something like this. Nevertheless, since our building at the Religious Activities Center is intended for all religious activities, I have hopes that the administration will allow the people from Open Way to come in and help us out. I have also written to the Engaged Zen Foundation that has successfully started Zen meditation groups at other prisons, and perhaps they will have some helpful information.

It amazes me how people in the Buddhist community seem to care so much, unconditionally, for those of us who are incarcerated. I also belong to a veteran’s group here at the prison. Our group has some funds to spend on worthwhile service projects, and I suggested we send a small donation each month to help the children of Vietnam. I will share the information I have about Sr. Chân Không’s work in Vietnam. Other Vietnam war veterans are also planning to send a small donation each month. Perhaps someone reading this might feel that if someone in prison can afford to donate $10 a month, then just about anyone can.

At times it makes me think how much I wish I could get out of here and really get involved in a Buddhist Sangha. I recently read about a Vietnam vet who suffered greatly from PTSD. His search for answers and treatment took him to France, and of course, Plum Village. There, his treatment program was to live in the Vietnamese village and overcome his fears. It was a tremendous account of changing his life. I often wish I could do the same thing. But when those thoughts of freedom come up, I just get into my breathing: “Breathing in, I calm myself. Breathing out, I think about my personal mission, Thích Nhat Hanh, Sr. Chân Không, and how lucky I am to be here this moment, to be able to share Buddhism with others, and how meditation can make ‘doing time’ so much easier.”

Mark French is an inmate in Deer Lodge Correctional Facility, Montana.

Prison Bells
by Sam Dubois

I have a single cell—a semi-quiet, smoke-free, private environment with a window onto a grassy area often serving as a dining room for many birds. I am also working in the kitchen half-time as an assistant in the diet department, so I am able to eat well. There is still no tofu or other soy products, but there is rice, raw vegetables, fruit, oatmeal, and a few dried spices. I am very fortunate.

I work rinsing off the metal serving trays (around 600 trays twice a day). This is a challenge. I enjoy washing them, just as I enjoy chopping vegetables, but the trays are noisy. The racks I put the trays into send them through the washer hold eight wonderful clean trays. Loud, very loud, but I clean each one of them for you and so many others that I love, as I try to contemplate the eight rightful steps along our path.

I have read about individuals who overcame distractions by meditating in caves with demons, or by a creek with a brass band playing nearby. I think I may have found an ideal place for sitting meditation just outside of the practice room of a Salvation Army Youth beginner’s band. I have some concern that I may not be able to practice later without engaging someone to bang on a strip of sheet metal while I’m sitting, but I know there are many different kinds of bells.

Sam Dubois is an inmate in prison in North Carolina.
Mindful Lunch
by Lorena Monda

As a psychotherapist for 18 years, I have encountered many people—including myself—who need to heal their relationship with food. Though I have studied and practiced many ways to help this healing come about, I discovered that mindful eating is one of the simplest and most powerful.

At Plum Village, I found eating in mindfulness quite difficult. So when I returned home, I started a “Mindful Lunch Group.” Every Thursday, we gather and eat our lunch together slowly and mindfully, for 45 minutes. It is an opportunity to slow down and just eat. Though we do not talk to each other, we are mindful that we are eating as a community, and we acknowledge each other’s presence. We are aware of our food—how beautiful it is, how it was alive, how it has come from the earth to support our being. We are aware of how much we have in quantity and variety, and of people less fortunate than we, for whom a small portion of what is on our plates would seem like a feast. We are aware of all the elements involved in getting the food from the earth to our plates—sun, rain, soil, farmers, pickers, truckers, grocers, and our own efforts preparing the food.

Members of the group have become aware that Mindful Lunch does not begin at noon Thursday, but in the grocery store while selecting the food, and in the kitchen preparing the meal. Slowing down and paying attention while eating has made some of us aware of how uncomfortable we are to let others see us eat and take time to taste our food and chew slowly. We practice returning to our breathing when we feel uncomfortable and allow ourselves to be fully present.

Afterwards, group members often gather outside to share their experiences. One chronic overeater noticed that she needs less food to feel satisfied when she slows down and is present with herself during the meal. Another member is able to taste his food and feel its effects on his body. He has begun to choose foods that are more supportive of how he wants to feel. Another described the panic she feels while eating, related to stressful times with her family at the dinner table, when she avoided eating or ate very rapidly to keep herself from feeling this panic. She has learned to eat quietly with others who are practicing the same way, and that has left her feeling peaceful.

In the course of our practice, eating has become a sacred, healing act. By eating what is good for us, and eating it in a way that is conscious and supportive, we affirm life. And we are not alone. The earth, the heavens, the farmers, our loved ones with us at the table, and everyone in our Sangha who practices mindful eating are supporting us in our affirmation of being alive.

Lorena Monda, True Perfect Way, lives in Placitas, New Mexico.

Keep Your Eye on the Bagel—And on the (Whole)
by Gary Gach

Nearly every day I eat a bagel at my local deli. This particular deli has a menu of so many exotic-sounding edibles it boggles the mind! Thus my regular menu selection initially earned me the attention of the staff. Just a bagel. Toasted. Period. No hummus, thank you. No butter, thank you. Just a bagel, sliced, toasted in the oven. (One clerk decided to call it “Virgin,” which caused heated debate between her and a coworker, reminding me how my deeds affect others, and others in turn.) Once or twice a month, I’ll break form and order a tamale. To drink: a glass of water, with lemon. Self-service. I tray my own dishes, and sometimes those of others.

One day when the clerk asked, “What can I get you?” I looked ‘em right in the eye, smiled, and said, “365 days of peace and serenity across the entire planet—but that may be impossible today, and I know that’s not your immediate department. So, just a bagel for now.”

Sometimes it comes to me with a sprig of greens on the side, with a shaving of carrot, artfully arranged. No big deal. But when that happens, it means everything to me, and really makes my whole week.

Maybe you might find yourself making a Sangha out of your own lunch table. I’d love to join you.

Gary Gach, a writer and Sangha member in San Francisco, is the author of Pocket Guide to the Internet.
Peace to Your Heart
by Karl and Helga Riedl

Last August we were invited to visit Moscow and offer a public talk and three-day retreat for Russians. A young Russian named Michael Sherbakov, who was in Plum Village attending the Summer Opening, offered to organize our activities in Moscow. Michael runs a “New Age Institute.” He trained in the United States to lead psychological growth seminars. He did a perfect job with his group so we could be totally focused on teaching and being available for people.

Though we initially felt insecure about going to Russia as this would be our first teaching trip, we felt deeply welcomed by the people and nourished by their warmth and hospitality, and we really enjoyed our stay. Thây’s and Arnie and Therese’s visits had prepared the ground so thoroughly that we did not have to do much. It was like inheriting a big bank account. We hope we have not spent much of it, and maybe even added a bit.

During his 1994 visit to Russia, Thây had the first contact with a Vietnamese group in Moscow. This year, the group grew strong enough to host visiting teachers and rent a flat that serves as a temple. Boris and Olga Orion invited us to stay at their place and took care of us with all their hearts, as if we had been old friends or relatives.

We found the 60 Russian retreatants to be extremely committed, cooperative, and open-minded. They were obviously touched by our general message of giving life more dignity, depth, meaning, and joy. After three days, there was a very warm, light, and joyous atmosphere in the group. In the beginning, it was difficult. Several “Beginning Anew” sessions between group members helped establish some harmony. In the end, people were able to let go of old anger and grudges, and expressed a deeper understanding and compassion for each other.

One evening we invited all of those who had taken the Five Precepts during the retreat to receive their precept certificates and share tea with us. This group of about 18 is basically connected with Boris Labkovsky and his work. Everyone expressed enthusiasm about meeting regularly to share the practice.

We then spent two wonderful days with Boris Labkovsky in St. Petersburg. His friend, Ludmilla, organized a two-day retreat which was a very special experience. Although we did not meet any of the people who had practiced with Thây in St. Petersburg in 1994, we shared our practice with a group of about 50 people, mainly from helping and healing professions. Their sharing and insights were deep and touching. At the end of the retreat, this group was also very enthusiastic to meet regularly and share their experiences.

It was a beautiful experience to be in Russia. We immediately established a very warm and deep connection and people expressed their affection spontaneously. They are a deeply spiritual people and, with guidance, can easily use the practice of mindfulness to touch the deeper parts of their beings.

Several young people shared with us that they felt lost in their meditative absorption. They not only need more specific teachings, but also a “spiritual friend,” someone who can be a model for them, inviting them into the ordinary magic of everyday life. It is difficult to appreciate a glass of clear water once you are used to strong coffee! I think that a yearly three to five-day retreat is not much help for these precious ones.

Two children participated in the retreat—Ivan, 12 years old, and Anya, 10 years old. Anya was the first one to come for the morning meditation at 7:00 a.m., listened quietly and deeply to the Dharma talk, did not miss any activity, and was the last one to say goodnight after Dharma discussion and guided meditation at 9:30 p.m. In our last Dharma discussion sharing, I asked Anya how she felt about the retreat. After a brief, thoughtful moment, she replied, “It was a happy, quiet time.” Then I asked her, “How do you feel now, Anya?” The answer came out of the depth of her being, “I have peace in my soul.”

In our search for touching the Russian heritage, we discovered a traditional Russian greeting. In former times when people met, they would greet each other with the words, “Peace to your home.” When we shared that in St. Petersburg, someone offered an even older way, and with that we closed our group: You place your right hand on your heart and, while bowing to each other, say, “Peace to your heart.”

Karl Riedl, True Communion, and Helga Riedl, True Wonderful Loving Kindness, are Dharma teachers from Germany who live in Plum Village.
Mindfulness in Milano
by Alberto Annicchiarico

A small group of mindfulness practitioners in Milan is trying to create an association, Essere Pace (Being Peace), to awaken society with Thich Nhat Hanh’s teachings. The association’s activities will be closely connected with the practice of the Fourteen Precepts of the Order of Interbeing, and will also open to the Italian spiritual (i.e., Christian) and social-caring tradition. Our aspiration is to nourish individuals and society. Some people in our Sangha do not feel it is necessary to create a formal association, believing that we could do the same things we are doing now as a simple Sangha. We already did things like that, but there were many problems. In order to publish books and newsletters and organize public talks and other initiatives in Italy, it is necessary to be an association. We would appreciate hearing from other Sanghas who may have struggled with similar issues.

Alberto Annicchiarico is the contact person for the Milan Sangha in Italy.

Sangha Delight
by Jo-ann Rosen

Last September eight of us from Ukiah, California attended the Northern California retreat with Thich Nhat Hanh. While we were friends in varying combinations, it was the first time we’d come together spiritually. By the last day, we were all feeling joy and excitement at the new ways in which we felt connected.

Sitting down together for lunch the last day, we could barely contain our energies. There was one other diner at our table, who, after great patience, asked us to please slow down. The request fell on my shoulders like a Zen master’s stick. All of a sudden, what I had been perceiving as joyful fun I saw through more mindful eyes. After meditating on this sudden shift in perception, I realized that my body was not accustomed to containing so much joy. It was as though I needed to ease the sensations in my body by letting out some of the joy in the form of muted rowdiness. Previous to this I would have held that the rowdiness was joyous connection. Now I see that it is a poor substitute for the deeper, richer joy I am capable of feeling during a more mindful calm. My deepest appreciation for the Dharma sister who was brave enough to speak up.

Jo-ann Rosen lives in Ukiah, California.

Opening Our Hearts
by Marcel Geisser

On the weekend of March 29-31, we had the first meeting of German-speaking Order of Interbeing members. Fourteen of us met at Haus Tao, a meditation center in Switzerland (See p. 30)—Iris Nowak, Uli Scharpf, Irmgard and Richard Buck, Steffi Holtje, Margret de Beckere, Loriana Pauli, Nel Houtman, Barbara Croci, Marcel Geisser, Bettina Schneider, Annette and Rainer Landgraf, and, on Saturday Karl Schmied and Claudia Wieland. We were very pleased to also have Sr. Jina with us, as she is Chief Executive of the Order of Interbeing and also serves as a bridge to the monastic Sangha.

Most of the participants came from southern Germany and Switzerland, however some traveled from as far as Berlin and Plum Village. From the first gathering on Friday evening, we realized what immense potential this community has. There are many interesting people walking this path, experiencing the same fruits of practice, and similar difficulties in life.

After our sitting and walking practice, we gathered the questions, expectations, and ideas we brought with us. Many of us wondered if the Order of Interbeing was more than a personal dedication to practice the Fourteen Precepts. During the discussions that followed, a shift of perspective happened. We started with the question, “What do I expect from the Order?” but it became, “What can I do to make the Order more alive?”

We realized how little we know each other and, therefore, have not yet come to a deeper, more personal level of communication. Some spoke about feeling they had to behave in a “correct” way, as is common in religious orders, out of fear of what other members might think if they knew certain things about them. Many expressed their wish that our group begin communicating openly and authentically like real sisters and brothers, with mindfulness and loving care for one another. Then it just happened, we opened our hearts and spoke and listened from a place of great trust.

By the end of the weekend we expressed our wish to meet once or twice a year in a way that gives us time to look deeply into a subject of our choice. Most of us will also meet at Thay’s retreats in Germany in June and again in Plum Village in September. We scheduled the next meeting of German-speaking Order members for November, possibly at Zen Klausen in der Eifel in Germany, and another meeting in April 1997 at Haus Tao.

Marcel Geisser, True Realisation, is the founder of Haus Tao in Wolfrhalden, Switzerland. For more information about the Order of Interbeing, see the book Interbeing by Thich Nhat Hanh (Parallax Press, Berkeley, CA).
Beginning Anew
by Penelope Thompson & Lee Lipp

It has been more than six months since our Sangha “got a divorce,” and it has been a time of suffering and broken-heartedness for everyone. It has also been a time of looking inward, learning to take responsibility for ways we have caused each other pain.

For seven years, we met weekly for meditation and Dharma discussion and monthly for a Day of Mindfulness. There was much joy among us and a shared love of the Dharma. As 14 individuals from different backgrounds and experiences, it is not surprising or unusual that there were also many issues and causes for conflict in the Sangha.

Our failing as a group is that we did not openly confront these shadows. We did not speak about problems that we did not wish to acknowledge. Furthermore, we did not practice Thây’s recommendations for conflict resolution and peacemaking.

Looking backward, it is easy to talk about how we failed to create peaceful means and safe structures in which we could speak truthfully to one another. There were undressed issues of power and control, leadership, direction of the group, and strong differences of opinion about rituals, perceptions of boundaries, and privacy concerns. We may have felt afraid of what would happen if we addressed these issues directly. But by failing to shine a bright light on the shadows, they grew larger and festered in the dark, until they exploded.

In the wake of this catastrophic community breakdown, the remaining members of the Santa Monica Sangha have worked over the past months to establish processes of peacemaking, conflict resolution, and Beginning Anew, based on Thây’s teachings. We are still fine-tuning and modifying the forms as we try them out.

Each month we have a new moon ceremony. We begin with “watering each other’s flowers.” Slowly and joyfully, we express our appreciation of one or more Sangha members for something they have done or an aspect of their way of being. In the second phase of the ceremony, each of us takes responsibility for our behavior that may have caused suffering to a member of the group or to the Sangha. This is received in silence, as other Sangha members practice deep listening. In the third phase, we each invite feedback from the others. Perhaps we have been unaware of a behavior in ourselves that has caused problems for someone. After some silence, other members of the Sangha may give feedback, which is received in silence, unless further clarification is needed.

This new moon ceremony is based on two prior steps of conflict resolution. Whenever there is some difficulty between members of the Sangha, the first step is for them to meet alone together, to speak and listen deeply to each other. If they are not able to complete the reconciliation process, the second step is for them to request a fair witness from the Sangha to meet with them. The role of the witness is to hold loving energy for them and, where necessary, to intervene to assist them in listening to each other with open hearts. If the conflict is still not resolved, it is brought to the new moon ceremony and addressed by the whole group. At this time, both persons describe, without blaming the other, their perceptions of the problem. We meditate on the issue as a group, and then we make suggestions for reconciliation that the two conflicting members can agree upon. If the conflict begins to pervade the Sangha at large, a friend of the Sangha, a fair witness from another Sangha, might be invited to facilitate open dialogue, but we have not had to try this yet.

All of these procedures depend on the goodwill of everyone in the group. The forms alone are not enough to ensure stability and reconciliation. They are only a skeleton that must be fleshed out with loving compassion, right intention, and skillful speech. The new moon ceremony has helped us feel safer and more trusting. We have begun anew as a Sangha to heal ourselves from the wounds of separation and loss, so that we may grow and be strengthened as a community of practice.

Penelope Thompson, True Dharma Source, and Lee Lipp, True Opening of the Dharma, are psychologists practicing in Santa Monica and members of the Santa Monica Sangha.

Room to Breathe

Breathing in,
I honor the beauty of being.
Breathing out,
I let go of constantly doing.

Breathing in,
feelings surface.
No need to hide.
Breathing out
releases the pain deep inside.

Breathing in,
stop to listen and smile.
Breathing out,
make room to breathe in for awhile.

Jennifer Biehn
Toward Greater Inclusiveness
by Scott Plous

Last fall, I attended a wonderful mindfulness retreat at the Omega Institute. For four glorious days, 800 people practiced sitting, walking, and smiling together. Thây gave a series of eloquent Dharma talks on how to love one another, and several hundred retreat participants ended up taking the precepts.

Halfway through the retreat, it occurred to me that something important was missing. If the 800 participants at Omega had been a random sample of Americans, we would have expected to see more than 100 African Americans. Instead, the retreat included only two or three African-American participants.

To me, this suggests that the American Dharma tree is not as strong as it could be. Without African-American practitioners and Dharma teachers, how can peace be reached in the United States? The issue of race is too important to neglect.

Just as a garden is most beautiful when it has many different types of flowers, a Sangha is most beautiful when its members reflect the full richness of society.

Consequently, I would like to ask all American sanghas to make a special effort to welcome the participation of African Americans. As the following quote from Martin Luther King, Jr., shows, African Americans have much to contribute to the practice of mindful living.

All life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.... Did you ever stop to think that you can’t leave for your job in the morning without being dependent on most of the world? You get up in the morning and go to the bathroom and reach over for the sponge, and that’s handed to you by a Pacific islander. You reach for a bar of soap, and that’s given to you at the hands of a Frenchman. And then you go into the kitchen to drink your coffee for the morning, and that’s poured into your cup by a South American. And maybe you want tea: that’s poured into your cup by a Chinese. Or maybe you’re desirous of having cocoa for breakfast, and that’s poured into your cup by a West African. And then you reach over for your toast, and that’s given to you at the hands of an English-speaking farmer, not to mention the baker. And before you finish eating breakfast in the morning, you’ve depended on more than half of the world. This is the way our universe is structured, this is its interrelated quality. We aren’t going to have peace on earth until we recognize this basic fact of the interrelated structure of all reality.

Martin Luther King, Jr.
The Trumpet of Conscience, 1967

If we are to touch peace in these days of racial tension, the involvement of African Americans is imperative. Please strengthen the American Dharma tree by helping it to grow new roots. If each of us makes this issue a priority, I am sure we will succeed.

Scott Plous teaches psychology at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut.
The following communities of mindful living practice together regularly and invite you to contact them. They are listed by region, and then alphabetically by country or state, and by postal code within each country or state. This full list, as well as the schedule of retreats that follows it, is updated regularly on the Parallax Press world wide web site: http://www.parallax.org

AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND

Australia
Lotus Bud Sangha
Khanh and Dan Le Van
c/o 43 Osprey Drive
Illawong, NSW 2234
Tel: 61 (02) 543-7823
Fax: 61 (02) 541-1272

We meet Wednesday evenings for meditation. Khanh has been slowly working her way through the Sutra on the Full Awareness of Breathing. We have a Day of Mindfulness the second weekend of the month, and Dharma discussions the second Monday evening at Khanh and Dan's house. We also have quarterly retreats and publish a journal, Lotus Leaves.

Japan
Mindful Sangha, Web of Life
Tamio Nakano
6-8-26-103 Daita, Setagaya-ku
Tokyo T155 Tel: 81 (3)3466-3460

Odawara Sangha
Keisuke Shimada
117 Uchiyama Minami Ashigara
Kanagawa Tel/Fax: 81 (465)73-0831

This spring, nine monks and nuns from Plum Village visited and shared Dharma practices with us.

Thich Thien Son
P.O. Box 7-605
Taipei Tel: 886 (2)686-5019

ASIA

India
New Delhi Sangha
Shantum Seth
309 B Sector 15A
Noida, UP 201301
Tel/Fax: 91 (11)852-1520
Email: shantum@artisan.unv.ernet.in

Shantum Seth will lead pilgrimages to the sites of the life of the Buddha in December 1996 and January 1997. In the U.S., contact Aura Wright, 3439 N.E. Sandy, Suite 207, Portland, Oregon 97232, (503) 335-0794.

Korea
Frank and Jenny Tedesco
516-85 Suyu 5 Dong, Kangbuk-gu
Seoul 142-075 Tel/Fax: 82 (2)997-3954
Email:UMADK@emh7.korea.army.mil

Taiwan
Dr. Hsiang-Chou Yo
6F, 209 Sung-Kiang Road
Taipei 10430 Tel/Fax: 886 (2) 507-0002

We have a Day of Mindfulness every other month. We also have monthly meetings in Osaka led by Hisayo Ikeda, translator of Peace Is Every Step; in Kyoto led by Keiko Okuyama, disciple of Shin Watanabe; and in Nagoya led by Ann Ellis, participant of Isehara retreat.

New Zealand
Long White Cloud Sangha
Michael Emerson
14 Grotto Street
Onehunga, Auckland Tel: 64 (9)634-7296

We meet Wednesday nights for meditation and Dharma discussion, and hold monthly Days of Mindfulness.

Thich Thien Son
P.O. Box 7-605
Taipei Tel: 886 (2)686-5019

Eastem Europe

Czech Republic
Robert Nemec
Box 6, Posta 48
14008 Prague 4 Tel:42 (2)53.47.70

Latvia
Firma Jonathan
Juri Kutirev
Sapietu iela 5
Riga Tel: 371 (2)323-701

Poland
Mindfulness Sangha
Tanna Jakubowicz-Mount
ul. Czerniakowska 36 m80
00-714 Warszawa Tel: 48 (22)40-06-58

We meet monthly for a Mindfulness Day in different people's homes or at local meditation halls. We listen to tapes of Thay's Dharma talks and read passages from his books.

Russia
Moscow Sangha
Boris Orion
Novogireevskaya Street 14-2-34
11140 Moscow Tel: 7 (095)304-4562

We meet every Saturday for sitting meditation and mindfulness practice.

Boris Labkovsky
ul.Geroev
Panfilovz, Bld. 22/1, 623
Moscow Tel: 7 (095)949-8671

Discovery Club
Michael Sherbakov
Moscow Tel: 7 (095)443-4072

We began meeting as a Sangha in November. Every Saturday evening, we gather for meditation, discussion, and tea ceremonies.

Korea
Frank and Jenny Tedesco
516-85 Suyu 5 Dong, Kangbuk-gu
Seoul 142-075 Tel/Fax: 82 (2)997-3954
Email:UMADK@emh7.korea.army.mil

Taiwan
Dr. Hsiang-Chou Yo
6F, 209 Sung-Kiang Road
Taipei 10430 Tel/Fax: 886 (2) 507-0002

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At-Oneness Sangha
Edward Meaning
P.O. Box 7, 198147
St. Petersburg Tel: 7 (812)316-2235
WESTERN EUROPE

Denmark
Peace Is the Way Sangha (Fred Er Vejen)
Katla and Jørgen Hannibal
Vinkelvej 16 C
3200 Helsingø Tel/Fax: 45 (48)79.62.88
We meet every second week for meditation, Dharma talk, walking meditation, and recitation of the precepts. One Sunday each month, we share a Day of Mindfulness.

Sangha of the Here and Now
Lisa Vorsig
Lilliendalsvej 29
4735 Mern Tel: 45 (53)79.72.15
We meet on Sundays for meditation, a tape by Thay, discussion, tea, and sharing a meal in silence.

England
Mike Bell
Tel: 44 (122)323-3200
69 Cambridge Road
Oakington, Cambs CB4 5BG
Email: M.P.Bell@cranfield.ac.uk
We have made great strides in the last year. From no national organisation in January 1995, we now have a paid membership of 200 and a national newsletter. We are compiling a manual of practice and have a range of retreats planned. The daffodils are finally opening.

Buddhist Interhelp Network
Mai Nguyen
12 Shell Road
London SE13 7TW Tel: 44 (181)692-1737
We hold a monthly Day of Mindfulness and precept recitation.

FriholmVersions
Vari McCluskie
60 Cavendish Road
London SW12 ODG Tel: 44 (171)673-6691
We meet on the first and third Tuesday of the month for meditation, precept recitation, and a shared meal. We have quarterly Days of Mindfulness in central London.

Community of Interbeing
Martin Pitt
42 Hangingroyd Road, Hebden Bridge
West Yorkshire HX7 6A Tel: 44 (1422)842-804
Email: Ptimna@cs.man.ac.uk
We meet for mindfulness squirees every fortnight (second and fourth Sunday of each month). Regional groups hold Days of Mindfulness throughout the UK. On February 3, we had a national Sangha building meeting. For a complete list of contacts and for a copy of our newsletter, Looking Deeply, write to Val Philpott, 12 The Mount, Thornton le Dale, Pickering, North Yorks Y018 7TF.

Brighton Sangha
Dave Tester
18a Hove Park Villas, Hove
East Sussex BN3 6GH Tel: 44 (1273)703-469
Email: 100345.3214@compuserve.com
We meet alternate Wednesdays for meditation, tea, discussion and reading of the precepts. We are currently studying the Heart Sutra. Days of Mindfulness are held on Sundays once a month.

France
Paris Sangha
Daniel Milles
8 rue Crebillon, 4th floor
94300 Vincennes Tel: 33 (1)43.28.09.11
We meet every Friday night for meditation at Thây Hao Bach’s house (Tel: 43.74.23.28). We also meet on the second Sunday of each month (except July and August) at Fleur de Cactus Monastery for a Day of Mindfulness, guided by two people (usually monks or nuns) from Plum Village. Travelers to Plum Village are welcome to stay overnight.

In March, Thây gave five days of teaching in Paris. About 200 people (including 30 from Plum Village) participated in the weekend retreat in a beautiful setting in Fontainebleau. The following Monday, Thây gave a talk in Paris introduced by Sogyal Rinpoche. One thousand people attended, which we consider a great success, as in the past no more than 160 people came to a talk by Thây. The following day, Thây gave another talk to a group about the same size. The silence of the 1,200 participants was impressive. Thirty monks and nuns from Plum Village were on stage with Thây. They contributed greatly in creating an atmosphere of mindfulness and prayer. Each talk started with a 15 minute meditation period and was followed by 20 minutes of sutra chanting. Sr. Chân Không completed the evening with some beautiful songs.

Plum Village
Meyrac
47120 Loubâs-Bernac Tel: 33 (53)94.75.40
During the Winter Retreat, Thây gave teachings on the meditation schools in Vietnam, and we studied the writings of our spiritual ancestors, the important lay-practitioner meditation masters: Master Tran Thai Tong, Master Tue Trung, Master Thuong Chieu, and Master Tran Nhan Tong (or Bamboo Forest Master). Thây transmitted the Lamp of the Dharma to these new Dharmacaryas: Thây Giac Vien, Thây Thanh Dao, Thây Thien Phuc, Thây Nguen Hai, Brother Shapurtra, Brother Doji, Su Co Minh Huyn, and Su co Vien Quang. In the third week of February, Plum Village had two days of beautiful snowfall, welcoming Têt, the Vietnamese New Year.

In April the bougs of the plum trees were graced with tiny white plum blossoms, as though the winter snowflakes had returned. Four hundred beautiful poplar trees were planted in the Lower Hamlet next to the plum orchard and the lotus pond which we finished constructing during the winter retreat.

In the months of March and April, brothers and sisters traveled to Holland, Denmark, Taiwan, Switzerland, Vietnam, Thailand, Italy, and Paris to offer retreats.

Information and registration forms for our Summer Retreat (July 15-August 15) and our Fall Retreat (September 8-29) are available. Please contact the registration team at Plum Village. Registration is by mail only. This summer and fall, Western and Vietnamese practitioners will be living and practicing together in all of the hamlets.

Germany
Achtsamkeit in Oldenburg e.V.
Manfred Folkers
Franz-Poppe-Str.11
26121 Oldenburg Tel: 44 (441)77.67.37
We meet Wednesday evenings for meditation and Dharma discussion, and have a Day of Mindfulness one Sunday a month. In February, Karl Schmied led an inspiring weekend retreat, "The House of the Buddha-Dharma." Four hundred people are registered for a five-day retreat in June with Thích Nhất Hạnh, Sr. Chân Không, Sr. Jina, other nuns and monks from Plum Village, as well as several Dharmacaryas and members of the Order of Interbeing. Thây will also give three public lectures (in Oldenburg, at the University of Cologne, and in Mainz), and lead a Day of Mindfulness in Neuss.

Gemeinschaft für achtsames Leben e.V.
Karl Schmied
Fax: 49 (8)025.7159
Attenbergstraße 20/P.O. Box 60
83730 Fischbachau
Tel: 49 (8)025.5059
We meet every Thursday in Munich for mindfulness practice and monthly in Gmund, Tegernsee, for a Day of Mindfulness. We hold Days of Mindfulness in the Stuttgart area.

Bodensee-Sangha
Claudia Wieland
Überlingerstr. 23
88682 Salem-Tübingen
Tel: 49 (7)55.35.96
We meet once a week for meditation practices. Steffi and Margret are visiting, after their long stay at Plum Village, adding a lot of joy to our Sangha.

Margrit Irgang
Kaiserhausstraße 20a
79872 Bernau
Tel: 49 (7)675.10.51
We offer an evening meditation every other Thursday in Freiburg and a Day of Mindfulness the last Sunday of every month.
Zen-Klausen in der Eifel
Judith Bossert and Heidi Meutes-Wilsing
Huffertsheck 1  Tel: 49 (6)55.94.67
54619 Lautzerath/Leidenborn
We have morning and evening meditations, and walking meditation in the woods.

Bettina Schneider
Blücherstrasse 38
1091 Berlin  Tel: 49 (30) 6911294

Holland
Eveline Beumkes
De Genestetstraat 17
1054 AW Amsterdam  Tel: 31 (2) 616-4943
We meet on Friday evenings. Over Easter weekend, 300 people participated in a retreat with Thay.

Nora Houtman
Spoorlaan 46
3721 PC Bilthoven  Tel: 31 (3) 028-3369
We meet once a month for sitting and walking meditation, precept recitations, and discussions, and potluck dinners in silence.

Sunflower Sangha
Anneke Brinkerink
Dorpsweg 8
1711 RJ Hensbroek  Tel: 31 (2) 265-2499
We meet every third Sunday for a Day of Mindfulness that includes a Dharma discussion and recitation of the Five Precepts.

Switzerland
Haus Tao/Foundation of Mindful Living
Marcel and Beatrice Geisser
(See "Sangha Profile," p. 30.)

NORTH AMERICA

Canada
Bow Valley Sangha
Mary Dumka
Box 3285
Canmore, AB  T0L 0M0  Tel: (403) 478-7098
We meet each weekly for meditation and discussion.

The Ha Nguyen
162 Silver Aspen Crest
Kitchener, ON N2N 1J1
We practice Thay’s teachings of mindfulness every day. Sangha members take turns inviting the whole group to their home for Days of Mindfulness once a month. There are two Dharma teachers in our groups who were ordained by Thay last summer in Plum Village. Our Sangha is so close, solid, and friendly. We are trying to spread the seeds of understanding and love that we experience in our Sangha to other people in the larger community.

Smiling Flower Sangha
37 Kingsgreen Road
Toronto, ON M8X 1L7  Tel: (416) 787-3737
Fax: (416) 787-5952
We meet Sunday mornings for meditation. On March 31, we had a Day of Mindfulness and collected donations to help the Tibetans who experienced an unusually cold winter. We are working with the Toronto Vietnamese Zen Meditation Sangha and Trong Phu Nguyen to organize Sr. Annabel’s retreat in Toronto in May.

Scotia
Glasgow Sangha
Ian Stead
46 Landressey Place
Glasgow G40 1HF  Tel: 44 (141)554-6301
We hold Days of Mindfulness twice monthly.

Stephen Malloch
Edinburgh, Scotland  Tel: 44 (131) 499-6703
Email: smn@cplab.ph.ed.ac.uk
We meet every third Sunday for a Day of Mindfulness that includes a Dharma discussion and recitation of the Five Precepts.

USA

Alaska
Anchorage Zen Center
Elizabeth McNell
3852 Caravelle Drive
Anchorage, AK 99502  Tel: (907) 278-6732
We sit Sunday mornings and have a short recitation. A Dharma discussion on the precepts is held once a week, and Days of Mindfulness each month in our forest retreat.

Arizona
Marcie Colpas
5437 East Pinchot Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85018  Tel: (602) 952-0915

Warm Snow Sangha
Gabrielle Yensen
61 Frank Street
Ottawa, ON K2P 0X1  Tel: (613) 236-8662
Email: ah529@freenet.carleton.ca
With Chân Ngọc’s guidance, we meet Saturday mornings for sitting and walking meditation, followed by tea, precept recitation, and/or Dharma discussion. Once a month, we study a basic Buddhist text from one of Thay’s lectures. May 20-21, Sr. Annabel will lead a Mindfulness Day for women.

Toronto Zen Meditation Group
Trong Phu Nguyen  Tel: (416) 752-6894
We study and practice the precepts in small groups. Sr. Annabel will give a public talk on May 14, and lead a retreat here on May 17-19.

For regular/youth groups, call Tim Nguyen (416) 463-4241; professional group, call Ms. Van Nguyen (416) 860-1652; English-speaking group, call Ms. Châu Hào (416) 482-7308.

Tu-An Pagoda Meditation Group
Chân Ngộ (Vinh D. Nguyen)
601-40 Landry, #601
Vanier, ON K1L 8K4  Tel: (613) 747-9096
Email: vinh.nguyen@nrc.ca
We meet Thursday evenings for sitting and mindfulness practice.

M. Bach Vo
Beauport, PQ  Tel: (418) 660-6407
Sitting meditation sessions are organized on Friday nights at Bo De Pagoda.

Maple Village
Chân Huy
1730 Suede Crescent,
Brossard, PQ J4H IN7  Tel: (514) 466-8726
Email: nguyenn@paprican.ca
Sr. Annabel will give a retreat here May 22-27. Evenings of meditation are held on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays in Montréal. During the summer, we have a Day of Mindfulness once every two weeks at Maple Village. We also organize four retreats at Maple Village every year.

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5437 East Pinchot Avenue
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Brossard, PQ J4H IN7  Tel: (514) 466-8726
Email: nguyenn@paprican.ca
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We have a half-Day of Mindfulness the first Sunday of every month and one evening of meditation practice each month. On May 3-5 Christopher Reed and Michele Benzamin-Masuda will lead a mindfulness retreat that will include meditation and interactive exercises, movement, and lectures.

Tom Brodersen
Satisfied Mind Bookstore
113 West Goodwin
Prescott, AZ 86303 Tel: (602) 776-9766
We meet every Wednesday evening as a non-sectarian Buddhist meditation group.

Arkansas
Ecumenical Buddhist Society
Gans Place Carriage House
1010 West Third
Little Rock, AR 72201 Tel: (501) 661-9819
We hold meditation practice every week and occasional Days of Mindfulness. In January, Arnie and Therese led a wonderful retreat.

California
Santa Monica Sangha
Penelope Thompson and Lee Lipp
67 Village Park Way
Santa Monica, CA 90405 Tel: (310) 392-1796
We meet Monday evenings for sitting and Dharma discussion. On the third weekend of the month, we hold a half-Day of Mindfulness and plan to have regular Days of Mindfulness every other month. We have a group on Thursdays for yoga and meditation, and three study groups: general Buddhism, women and Buddhism, and Thây’s books and tapes.

Palo Alto Friends Mindfulness Sangha
Susan Murphy
2043 El Sereno Avenue
Los Altos, CA 94024 Tel: (415) 969-3452
Email: somurphy@email.sjsu.edu
We meet Thursday mornings for meditation and discussion based on exercises in The Miracle of Mindfulness.

San Francisco Mindfulness Community
Joanne Connelly
21 Lapidge Street, Apt. 6
San Francisco, CA 94110 Tel: (415) 861-1733
We meet the first and third Monday evenings each month for sitting and walking meditation, and listening to tapes from Thây’s talks. We also meet twice a month on Sunday mornings for meditation, precept recitation, tea, and discussion. Therese and Arnie led a Day of Mindfulness in April. For Sunday gatherings, contact Michael Kahn at (415) 883-3122.

Dharma Gate Sangha
Patrick Thornton
P.O. Box 1933
Benicia, CA 94510 Tel: (707) 747-9550
We meet Sunday evenings for meditation, Dharma talk, and discussion. We also offer beginning meditation classes and retreats.

Hayward Buddhist Center
Thich Tu-Luc
27878 Calaroga Avenue
Hayward, CA 94545 Tel: (510) 732-0728
We meet Tuesday evenings for meditation and chanting. We also meet the second Saturday morning of each month for meditation, precept recitation, and discussion.

Clear Heart Sangha
Marylee Revels
1671 Kentfield
Redwood City, CA 94001 Tel: (415) 369-1021

Oakland Sangha
Connie Cronin
574 Forest
Oakland, CA 94618 Tel: (510) 655-4650
Every Sunday afternoon we meet for meditation and discussion. Once a month we recite precepts and have a family potluck.

Caleb Cushing
5995 Chabolyen Terrace
Oakland, CA 94618 Tel: (510) 654-2456
On Sunday mornings, we practice sitting and walking meditation, recite the Five Precepts, and discuss the Dharma.

Community of Mindful Living
850 Talbot Avenue
Albany, CA 94706 Tel: (510) 527-3751
Fax: (510) 525-7129
Email: parapress@aol.com
Every Tuesday evening we have meditation and discussion led by a different Sangha member. This spring, our discussions are focused on the precepts and the Sangha. Once a month, we recite and discuss the precepts. On the full moon, we do outdoor walking meditation in a local park.

We had a joyful, rainy weekend of mindfulness in February with 80 people at a nearby Tibetan monastery, led by Arnie Kotter and Wendy Johnson. June 7-9, we will have another weekend retreat led by Arnie and Therese.

Edie Hartshorne
768 Contra Costa Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94707 Tel: (510) 526-4476
We meet Monday mornings and Thursday afternoons for sitting and walking meditation.

Green Gulch Farm
Wendy Johnson
Highway 1
Muir Beach, CA 94965 Tel: (415) 383-3134
On April 7, we had our annual Buddha’s birthday pageant. We have begun offering a young people’s lecture during the first 20 minutes of the Dharma talk and programs for young people on the first Sunday of the month. After the Dharma talk, the children leave the meditation hall mindfully and have tea and cookies, talk about the lecture, and read a story or do exercises. 35-40 young people attend regularly.

Nicola and Thomas Anderson
1007 Smith Grade
Santa Cruz, CA 95060 Tel: (408) 457-2015
We will have a Day of Mindfulness, “Family as a Spiritual Path,” on May 19, for adults and children from 3-12 years old.

Hearth Sangha
Nanda Currant
530 Amigo Road
Soquel, CA 95073 Tel: (408) 462-3703
We meet Monday evenings at the Santa Cruz Zen Center for sitting and walking meditation, followed by a short Dharma talk and discussion. We have a precept recitation ceremony on the Monday closest to the new moon.

In the winter, we began the practice of each Sangha member preparing a short discourse on a particular precept and leading a discussion. Topics included “Language and Right Speech,” “Service,” “Environmental Work,” “Confrontation,” and “The Poetics of Practice.” We have also been discussing reconciliation, suffering, and helping the world, animals, and plants.

We hosted an evening for young people in the community interested in exploring mindfulness practices. A young person in our Sangha, Diane Keryk, opened the evening with a discourse on taking the Five Wonderful Precepts, and how practice has helped in her social relationships.

Almond Blossom Sangha - Modesto
115 Magnolia Avenue
Modesto, CA 95354  Tel: (209) 576-7311
We meet every other Wednesday evening for meditation, recitation, and discussion of the precepts.

Almond Blossom Sangha - Turlock
Stan Cunningham
501 Thor Street
Turlock, CA 95380  Tel: (209) 634-2172
Email: scunningham@stan-co.k12.ca.us
We meet every other Tuesday evening.

Arcata Sangha
Ginger Kossow
3471 Jacoby Creek Road
Bayside, CA 95421  Tel: (707) 443-6558
We meet for sitting meditation on the second and fourth Mondays of each month.

We meet every Sunday morning at Anderson Hall in Camp Meeker for mindfulness practice, including walking meditation and Dharma talk. The first Sunday of each month we have a precept recitation.

Moon Valley Sangha
255 West Napa Street
Sonoma, CA 95476  Tel: (707) 938-8899

Jo-ann Rosen
406 West Standley Street
Ukiah, CA 95482  Tel: (707) 462-7749
jrosen@zapcom.net
We began meeting as a Sangha after the retreat with Thây in Northern California in September 1995. Fifteen people now meet once a month to provide support and inspiration for living the Five Wonderful Precepts. We begin with a song, and sitting meditation. Then we go outside for walking meditation, and then return to our meditation “hall” for another song or poem, and then we focus on the precepts. Someone reads whatever precept is relevant to his or her life at the moment. Personal sharing follows. We proceed until all five precepts have been read and discussed.

We are exploring the possibility of beginning a community garden that would be connected to our local soup kitchen, “Plowshares,” and are hoping to cultivate both vegetables and precepts in this garden. We are preparing a way to present these goals that will be inviting to all community gardeners regardless of their spiritual paths. We would like to feel more connection with the greater Sangha and welcome visitors.

Colorado
Gaia Mika and Hank Brusselback
3546 Nyland Way
Lafayette, CO 80026  Tel: (303) 499-7418
One Sunday each month, we have a Morning of Mindfulness and one Friday evening each month, we have a precepts recitation.

White Clouds Peace Center
Deborah Hunley and Mary Garvey
1009 Terry Street
Longmont, CO 80501  Tel: (303) 772-6448
We meet for sitting meditation each weekday morning. One Sunday each month, we offer a Morning of Mindfulness. Each season we have a Children’s Mindfulness Workshop, adult Dharma classes, and talks on mindfulness and children.

Connecticut
Deborah Star Conklin
46 Dougherty Street
Manchester, CT 06040  Tel: (203) 647-0347
We meet every Thursday for meditation, chanting, tea, and discussion in a local Vietnamese temple.
We meet every Sunday evening for meditation and Dharma discussion. Upcoming events include a May 19 Day of Mindfulness in southwest suburban Plano, Illinois, led by Jack Lawlor, and a Day of Mindfulness August 4 in Chicago on the topic of Engaged Buddhism, featuring panel discussions with Right Livelihood Award winner and activist Sulak Sivaraksa of Thailand. (See "Sangha Profile," Mindfulness Bell #15.)

Prairie Buddha Sangha
Bruce and Estelle von Zellen
136 Ithamwood
DeKalb, IL 60115 Tel: (815) 756-2801
We meet on Sundays for mindfulness practices. We will participate in a Day of Mindfulness with Jack Lawlor on May 19, as well as a weekend retreat with Sr. Annabel Laity on June 1-2. Sr. Annabel will also be giving a public talk in Madison, Wisconsin, on May 31.

Kentucky
Louisville Community of Mindfulness
Bronson Rozier
1544 Quadrant Avenue
Louisville, KY 40205 Tel: (502) 451-2193
We meet Sunday mornings for sitting meditation, reciting sutras, and discussion. On the first Sunday of the month, we recite precepts and have discussed the Heart Sutra.

Louisiana
Blue Iris Sangha
Dewain Belgard
2419 Chartres
New Orleans, LA 70117 Tel: (504) 947-6227
We meet Monday evenings for precept recitation and meditation practices, and observe occasional Mornings of Mindfulness together on Saturdays.

Maine
Brunswick Sangha
Anne Dellenbaugh
941 Mere Point Road
Brunswick, ME 04011 Tel: (207) 721-9005
We meet Wednesday evenings for practice and Dharma discussion, and recite the precepts on Wednesdays nearest the new moon.

Morgan Bay Zendo
Howard Evans and Vicki Pollard
P.O. Box 838
Blue Hill, ME 04614 Tel: (207) 374-9963
Email: howard7@downeast.net
We meet Sunday mornings for sitting and walking meditation, discussions, and work. On the first Sunday of the month, we also recite the precepts.

Mid-Coast Sangha
Mair Honan
RFD 2 Box 596
Lincolnville, ME 04849 Tel: (207) 763-3692
We meet at the Camden Yoga Studio the first and third Sunday of every month for sitting, walking, and Dharma discussion.

Maryland
Bill Menza and Don Switzer
4340 East West Highway, Suite 709
Bethesda, MD 20814 Tel: (301)504-0994 x1388
Email: /OU1=CPSCHQ2@mhs.attmail.com
We meet Wednesday, Monday, and Friday at noon for meditation and discussion.

Massachusetts
Sebern Fisher
34 Elizabeth Street
North Hampton, MA 01060 Tel: (413)634-5421
We meet the fourth Sunday of each month in Haydenville for an Afternoon of Mindfulness including a precept recitation, and have seasonal half-Days of Mindfulness.

Clausen An Shin Thomas
321 Bedford Street
Concord, MA 01742 Tel: (508) 369-6112
Fax: (508) 287-4316
Weekly Mindfulness Days for Vietnam War combat veterans and Sunday Days of Mindfulness for everyone. Claude will lead a veterans retreat within the general mindfulness retreat at Omega Institute, October 17-20, Rhinebeck, New York.

First Parish Church
Barbara Atenasio
Box 16
Stow, MA 01775 Tel: (508) 264-9076
We meet the last Sunday evening each month for meditation, precepts recitation, and discussion, and Wednesday evenings for sitting.

Community of Interbeing
Andrew Weiss
20 Elm Street
Concord, MA 01742
Tel: (508) 897-0796 Tel: (617) 354-7555
Fax: (617) 237-1127
Email: AndreWeiss@aol.com
We gather the first Sunday evening of each month for meditation, precept recitation, tea, and discussion at the Cambridge Buddhist Association. We offer a Day of Mindfulness the second Saturday of every other month. Local sitting groups meet weekly. For Jamaica Plain group, contact Laura Derr (522-3656). For walking meditation in Cambridge, contact Fred Small (497-1416). We have a quarterly newsletter.

Michigan
Katherine Roth and Greg Holmes
6423 Pleasant River Drive
Dimondale, MI 48821 Tel: (517) 646-9828
We meet the fourth Sunday of the month for meditation, reading, and discussion. We are currently reading Touching Peace.
We also publish a 16-page quarterly newsletter, News & Views. Arnie and Therese will lead our Spring Retreat May 9-12. Eileen Kiera will lead our Fall retreat.

**Nevada**

Dharma Zephyr Sangha
Kathy Schwerin
3585 Ormsby Lane
Carson City, NV 89704
We have sitting and Dharma discussion on Monday nights, precept recitations monthly, and occasional retreats and Days of Mindfulness.

**New Hampshire**

Peggy Cappy and Ferris Urbanowski
Professional Health Center
10 Route 101 West
Peterborough, NH 03458 Tel: (603) 924-4209
Email:ferris.urbanowski@bayanummed.edu
We meet Wednesday evenings for meditation and discussion or reading from Thay’s books.

**New Jersey**

Sid Kemp and Kris Lindbeck
The Wholeness Center
54 Elm Street
Morristown, NJ 07960 Tel: (201) 898-9368
We meet Wednesday evenings for mindfulness practice, have monthly Days of Mindfulness, and introductory meditation classes.

Juniper Ridge Community
Bill Alexander
Kitchell Road
Convent Station, NJ 07961 Tel: (201) 455-7133
Email:alex322@concentric.net
We regularly offer meditations and Dharma discussions, with an emphasis on the 12 steps.

Central New Jersey Sangha
Bineke and Bram Oort
20 Montgomery Avenue
Rocky Hill, NJ 08553 Tel: (609) 924-1324
Our Sangha celebrates Saturday Mindfulness Evenings monthly and Mindfulness Sundays once every three months. We meet weekly to study Thay’s Dharma talks.

**New Mexico**

Open Way Sangha
Cynthia Jurs and Hugh Weir
Route 9, Box 65XX
Santa Fe, NM 87505 Tel: (505) 982-3846
We meet Wednesday evenings for sitting and walking meditation, and Dharma discussion. Days of Mindfulness are held monthly, with precept recitation and writing practice.

Upaya Foundation
Joan Halifax
1404 Cerro Gordo Road
Santa Fe, NM 87501 Tel: (505) 986-8518
Fax: (505) 986-8528
Email: upaya@RT66.com
We meet for sitting meditation and a sutra study group on Tuesday evenings, and on Thursdays for sitting, walking, and chanting the Heart Sutra. Precept recitation and Days of Mindfulness are held monthly. We also have celebrations on solstices and equinoxes. We will have Mindfulness Retreats on May 3-5, June 9, July 14, August 11, and Sept. 8.

Open Heart Sangha
Susan McCarthy
P.O. Box 1591
Taos, NM 87571 Tel: (505) 758-4035
Email: kate@laplaza.taos.nm.us
We meet on Wednesday evenings for sitting and walking meditation, precept recitation, reading from Thay’s books, and tea ceremonies. We have a monthly Day of Mindfulness. We share in socially engaged activities such as working with the Habitat for Humanity house. We have occasional Dharma talks by visiting teachers.

**New York**

Phyllis Joyner
110 Reed Street, #2
New York, NY 10013 Tel: (212) 732-4921
We meet Wednesday nights for sitting, walking, and chanting.

New York Community of Mindfulness
Lyn Fine
530 West End, #5B
New York, NY 10024 Tel/Fax:(212)362-5923
Email:leonoref@aol.com
Sr. Annabel will be here May 28-30. A Day of Mindfulness is held on the second Saturday of every month. Jewish-Buddhist practices are also held. An Upper West Side study group meets on Sunday evenings. Downtown study groups meet on Thursday evenings. Anh Huong Nguyen led a weekend retreat on March 23-24 which benefited many people. On March 3, we had our second annual benefit concert, which raised $800 for the relief work in Vietnam and the Sangha Fund for New York City.

Amy Krantz
115 West 86th Street, #9B
New York, NY 10024 Tel: (212) 873-3142
We meet for guided meditation on Thursday evenings. Each Tuesday evening we meet for sitting and a short reading.

Judy Davis
49 Florence Drive
Chappaqua, NY 10514 Tel: (914) 238-8296
Email:Judithdav@aol.com
We meet Wednesday evenings for sitting, walking, and chanting. Days of Mindfulness are held monthly. We also have celebrations on solstices and equinoxes. We will have Mindfulness Retreats on May 3-5, June 9, July 14, August 11, and Sept. 8.

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Email:Judithdav@aol.com
We meet Wednesday evenings for sitting, walking, and chanting. Days of Mindfulness are held monthly. We also have celebrations on solstices and equinoxes. We will have Mindfulness Retreats on May 3-5, June 9, July 14, August 11, and Sept. 8.
We meet the first Sunday evening of each month for sitting and walking meditation, with a potluck afterwards.

Westchester, Rockland, and Fairfield Counties Mindfulness Group
Sally and Eric Taylor
Box 0089
Maryknoll, NY 10545 Tel: (914) 762-9097
We meet one Sunday each month for a Day of Mindfulness that includes sitting, indoor and outdoor walking meditation, readings, precept recitation, Dharma discussions, and a potluck meal. The location alternates between Bailey Farm in Millwood and Hunt Farm in Waccabuc.

Patricia Lenore
412 9th Street, #3
Brooklyn, NY 11215 Tel: (718) 499-5104
On Sundays and Tuesdays we have meditation practices followed by a mindful discussion. On Sundays we do outdoor walking meditation in a local park. Once a month, we have a Day of Mindfulness organized by Roberta Wall.

Long Island Sangha
Tonia Leon-Hysko
10 Gail Court
Huntington, NY 11743 Tel: (516) 427-9790
We meet the first Friday evening of the month for meditation practice. The location rotates among members' homes. We are in the process of forming a family-oriented Sangha. Contact Karen Zampa Leon at (516) 767-0677.

Budding Flower Sangha
Patricia Hunt-Perry
77 Wells Road, Rural Delivery 7
Newburgh, NY 12550 Tel: (914) 561-0995
Meditation practice is held on Monday, Thursday, and Sunday. On May 19th Thây Giac Thanh will lead a Day of Mindfulness. On May 28, Sr. Annabel will lead an evening of mindfulness.

In June we will be participating in activities related to opposing the death penalty and nuclear testing. On the weekend of August 16-18, Anh Huong Nguyen and Lyn Fine will lead a weekend mindfulness retreat.

Saratoga Ctr. for Med. and Mindful Living
Kathryn Tracy
II Marion Place
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 Tel: (518) 587-2667
We meet the second Sunday morning of each month. Children are included in the first ten-minute sitting period, and then go into another room with one of the parents for a simple Dharma lesson. Parents take turns being with the children while the rest of the Sangha continues with another period of sitting and walking meditation, and a Dharma reading.

North Carolina
Jackie Wilson
1004 North Buchanan Boulevard
Durham, NC 27701 Tel: (919) 286-1869
We meet Wednesday evenings for sitting, reading, and Dharma discussion.

Kim Warren
4907 Garrett Road
Durham, NC 27704 Tel: (919) 220-0321
Email: warre016@mc.duke.edu
We meet Tuesday evenings at the Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship for sitting and walking meditation, reading, discussion, and practice support.

Charlotte Community of Mindfulness
Leslie Rawls
14200 Fountain Lane
Charlotte, NC 28278 Tel: (704) 588-1413
Email: LCRawls@aol.com
We meet on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings for sitting, walking, and Dharma discussion, and for a Day of Mindfulness and precept recitations the second Saturday of each month. Thây Huong will come from Washington, D.C. to lead our Day of Mindfulness May 4.

Celo Community Sangha
278 White Oak Creek Road
Burnsville, NC 28714 Tel: (704) 675-4626
We meet every Wednesday for walking meditation and other mindfulness practices. Order member Herb Walters will lead a Living Earth Meditation Retreat August 8-11. Contact Ayal Hurst, Silver Water Retreat, 2511 Bald Fork Road, Todd, NC 28684, (910) 385-1401.

Ohio
Ruth Ragucci
2616 Dartmoor Road
Cleveland Hts., OH 44118 Tel: (216) 371-1372
We meet monthly for meditation, precept recitation, and discussion. We had our first quarterly Day of Mindfulness on March 24, including a video of a talk Thây gave at the retreat in upstate New York last autumn. We also prepared and shared a silent dinner together.

Deborah and Keith Andrews
700 Berkshire Lane
Cincinnati, OH 45220 Tel: (513) 221-1382
We practice mindful sitting and walking together and discuss Thây's writings.

Lynn Lyle
5102 Pickfair Drive
Toledo, OH 43615 Tel: (419)534-3063
Email: jim.lynn@sylvania.sev.org
We meet monthly for meditation, reading of the precepts, and sometimes a silent meal. A Day of Mindfulness is planned quarterly.

Oregon
Portland Community of Mindful Living
Katie Radditz
Looking Glass Bookstore
318 S.W. Taylor
Portland, OR 97204 Tel: (503) 227-4760
We meet one evening each week for meditation and precept recitation.

Leah Wronker
84 West 19th Avenue
Eugene, OR 97401 Tel: (503) 683-2383
We have sitting meditation the first and third Wednesday evenings of the month.

Bonnie Whittington
2430 Cherry Grove Street
Eugene, OR 97403 Tel: (503) 683-2127
We have a Day of Mindfulness the third Sunday of the month in a beautiful country setting.
Central Oregon Sangha
Marion Tripp
123 South Ninth
Redmond, OR 97756  Tel: (503) 548-0590
We have merged with an interfaith group in Bend that meets on Monday and Friday nights for chanting, sitting, and walking meditation.

Pennsylvania
Laughing Rivers Sangha
Katherine Hammond
1006 South Trenton Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15221  Tel: (412) 243-1545
Email: bkrl@vms.cis.pitt.edu
We meet twice monthly on Sunday afternoons for sitting, walking meditation, informal tea and discussion, and support for one another. We are also printing a Community NewsLetter in hopes that we can better support each other in our practice.

Dallas Community of Mindful Living
Luke Barber and Lee Paez
8015 Forest Trail
Dallas, TX 75238  Tel: (214) 342-3309
We meet Sunday mornings for meditation practice, readings, and sometimes precepts recitation. On the last Sunday of each month, we have a potluck vegetarian silent meal.

Houston Zen Community
Doug Lindsay
P.O. Box 131372
Houston, TX 77219  Tel: (713) 880-1030
We meet Sunday and Wednesday evenings for meditation, discussion, and chanting the Heart Sutra. On Sunday evenings we read and discuss Old Path White Clouds. On Wednesday evenings we read and discuss Thây’s Dharma talks on basic Buddhism. At our meeting in March, we discussed how the Peace Treaty can be useful for families as well as groups of practitioners who do not live together. We also tried the first stage of the Beginning Anew ceremony, the flower-watering. A Buddha’s birthday celebration and Day of Mindfulness will be held on May 4. We recite precepts monthly, and hold two retreats per year. Sr. Annabel will lead a retreat June 6-9.

San Antonio, TX 78213  Tel: (210) 344-0681
We meet every Sunday morning for meditation. We recite the precepts and have tea the first meeting of each month.

Old Path Zendo
Philip and Judith Toy
2725 Aquetong Road
New Hope, PA 18938  Tel: (215) 862-2968
We sit together every weekday morning at dawn. On Sunday mornings we have sitting and walking meditation, informal tea and Dharma discussions. We also host Days of Mindfulness and weekend retreats. We’re fresh from a Day of Mindfulness with Dai-En Bennage which was held on April 6.

Lilac Breeze Sangha
Joyce Haase
267 South Van Pelt Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103  Tel: (215) 545-3319
We meet every other week for meditation, precepts recitation, reading, and listening to tapes of Thây.

Utah
Vaughn and Joanne Lovejoy
1588 Princeton
Salt Lake City, UT 84105  Tel: (801) 583-9238
We meet every Sunday for sitting meditation and Dharma discussion, and once monthly for precepts recitation. We have a Day of Mindfulness the third Sunday of the month in a beautiful country setting, May 17-19. Arnie and Therese will lead a weekend retreat.

Vermont
Southern Vermont Sangha
Eva Mondon
RR2, Box 345
Putney, VT 05346  Tel: (802) 387-4144
We meet regularly for Days of Mindfulness and reciting the precepts.

Pot Lid Sangha
Bill Lipke, Vermont Respite House
P.O. Box 954
Williston, VT 05495  Tel: (802) 864-0981
We meet Friday afternoons for sitting and Dharma discussion, and recite the precepts the first meeting each month.

Summer Vine Community Sangha
Carrie Bagnall
19 Vine Street
Montpelier, VT 05602  Tel: (802) 229-9678
Our child-centered Sangha has meditation on Wednesday evenings.

Fire on the Mountain
Ellie Hayes and Michael Gray
RD1 Box 133
S. Woodbury, VT 05650  Tel: (802) 456-1983
The group is in the process of reformulating itself after a very intense winter. Please call for our current schedule of events. We make occasional forays to Montréal to sit with the Maple Village Sangha, and are looking forward to summer retreats at Maple Village.

Virginia
Loudon County Sangha
Alican and Dan Magorian
20711 Sycolin Road
Leesburg, VA 22075  Tel: (703) 777-1618
We meet once a month for sitting and walking meditation, a potluck, and discussion.

Bill Menza
8502 Rehoboth Court
Vienna, VA 22182  Tel: (703) 356-4912
Email: cpsc-hq2@mhs-cpsc.attmail.com
We meet Tuesday evenings for meditation, precepts recitation, and discussion. Every other month on the second Saturday, we have a morning of mindfulness.

Charlottesville Sangha
Kim Cary
Box 33
Mannie’s Mill, VA 22954  Tel: (804) 277-8452
We meet Wednesday evenings at the Friends Meeting House for meditation, precepts recitation, and discussion. We also have monthly Days of Mindfulness. In June, Fred Eppsteiner will lead a family retreat. Contact the St. Louis, Missouri Sangha.
Acorn Sangha  
Craig Green  
Route 3, Box 486A  
Mineral, VA 23117  
Tel: (703) 894-0582  
We are a Sangha within a land-based community. We share daily morning practice, and a Morning of Mindfulness on Sundays.

Mindfulness Community of Hampton Roads  
Allen Sandler  
612 Westover Avenue  
Norfolk, VA 23507  
Tel: (804) 625-6367  
We meet the first and third Sunday morning of each month. We begin by watching videotapes of Dharma talks by Thây and other Buddhist teachers. We also do sitting and walking meditation, recite sutras, and have ceremonies.

HumanKind Sangha  
Michelle and Joel Levey  
5536 Woodlawn Avenue North  
Seattle, WA 98103  
Tel: (206) 632-3551  
We meet on Tuesday evenings to share mindfulness and loving kindness meditations, enjoy Dharma discussions, Sangha building, and meditation instruction.

Peach Tea Sangha  
Nann Dawn  
331 17th Avenue East  
Seattle, WA 98112  
Tel: (206) 870-9712  
We meet Monday evenings for meditation and discussion. On the third Sunday of each month, Eileen Kiera leads a Day of Mindfulness. In April, we hosted a retreat with Mountain Lamp Sangha on Puget Sound. Eileen offered teachings from the Satipatthana Sutta.

Mountain Lamp Community  
Eileen Kiera  
Bellingham Dharma Hall  
115 Unity Street  
Bellingham, WA 98225  
Tel: (360) 592-5248  
We meet Wednesday evenings for meditation and discussion, and we also have a Day of Mindfulness each month.

Laughing Frog Sangha  
Carol Ann Stockton and Ed Brown  
P.O. Box 1447  
Poulsbo, WA 98370  
Tel: (360) 598-4247  
We meet every Wednesday and the first Friday of the month for sitting, walking and tea. Children are welcome. Our beautiful, secluded retreat cottage is available for solitary retreats. Two of our members attended the winter retreat at Plum Village. Toni Marie Barz stayed for three months with the laywomen and nuns in the Lower Hamlet, and Christopher Stockton stayed for two months with the laymen and monks in the Upper Hamlet. At the age of 15, he was the youngest person to ever attend the Winter Retreat.

This spring we look forward to including days of mindfulness and recitation of the precepts in our Sangha activities.

Washington, D.C.  
Washington Mindfulness Community  
Mitchell Ratner  
6814 Westmoreland  
Takoma Park, MD  
Tel: (301) 270-8353  
Email: childers@mail.erols.com  
With twenty-five or more people often attending the weekly meetings (and a mailing list of over 200), our community is currently exploring ways to create an intimate, spiritually supportive community while serving a large, geographically dispersed, and often transient membership. From our ongoing discussions, our direction in the next year will be toward fostering a range of Dharma-related activities, such as classes, reading groups, neighborhood sitting groups, nature walks, and social action activities, each of which involves a small, ongoing core group.

The community meets each Sunday evening at the Washington Buddhist Vihara for meditation, precept recitation, and Dharma discussion. Neighborhood groups meet on Tuesday evenings and Wednesday and Friday mornings for sitting meditation. In May the community will have its seventh, semi-annual “Friends and Family” sangha-building weekend retreat at a center on the Susquehanna River. On June 8-9 the community will sponsor a nonresidential mindfulness retreat with Dharma teachers Thây Giac Thanh and Anh Huong Nguyen.

Wisconsin  
Community of Mindfulness of Milwaukee  
Mary and Chuck Eigen  
2958 South Mabbett Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53207  
Tel: (414) 271-9988  
We meet every Friday evening at Plymouth Church for meditation, readings from Thây’s books, and occasional half-days of Mindfulness.

SnowFlower Sangha  
David and Barbara Lawrence  
1836 South Sharpes Corner Road  
Mt. Horeb, WI 53572  
Tel: (608) 832-6658  
We continue to meet every Friday evening for sitting and walking meditation, reciting the precepts, and Dharma discussions. We hold a half-Day of Mindfulness the last Saturday of each month. We have been involved in fund raising for the orphans and elderly in Vietnam.

Several Sangha members also join a local group to help provide meals for some of Madison’s poor. Sister Annabel Laity will come to Madison for a public talk, May 31, and a weekend retreat, June 1-2.

Sacred Lakes Buddha Sangha  
Catherine and Larry Mandt  
2254 Monroe Street  
Madison, WI 53711  
Tel: (608) 256-0398  
We meet once a month to recite the Fourteen Precepts.

East Side Sangha  
Kate Behrens and Cindy Cowden  
2037 Winnebago Street  
Madison, WI 53704  
Tel: (608) 244-2446  
We meet Sunday evenings for meditation and reading from Thây's books. Once each month, we meet for precept recitation and tea.

Sun Farm Sangha  
Chris LaForge and Amy Wilson  
Route 1, Box 71  
Port Wing, WI 54865  
Tel: (715) 774-3374  
We sit each morning and read from Peace Is Every Step. We also plan to have regular Days of Mindfulness.

Sr. Jina at Plum Village
Sangha Profile:
Haus Tao/Foundation of Mindful Living

Marcel and Beatrice Geisser
9427 Wolfhalden, Switzerland
Tel: 41 (71) 44.35.39, Fax: 41 (71) 44.35.35
Email: 101676.1466@compuserve.com

In August 1996, Haus Tao will celebrate its tenth anniversary as a Buddhist meditation center. As the house was built more than 200 years ago, ten years might seem like a short time, but considering the history of Buddhism in Switzerland, it is a great example of the growing interest in Switzerland in the Buddha's teaching, and of the common effort of the local Sangha to create and maintain a practice center.

In the mid-1980s, there were only a small Tibetan and a small Thai Buddhist monastery in Switzerland. Marcel Geisser and many of his friends felt the need to have a center that addressed the issues of lay Buddhists. In 1986, Marcel purchased the property that was to become Haus Tao, which is in the northeast part of Switzerland, 1 1/2 hours from Zurich. His intention was for the house to be communally owned with practice rooted in the Buddhist tradition. After four years of effort, in 1990 Haus Tao was founded as a communally run meditation center based on the Fourteen Precepts of the Order of Interbeing.

Marcel was the main person to begin restoring the house, financing this work by giving seminars in psychotherapy and meditation, as well as by renting the house to other Buddhist teachers and therapists. Although the need for the support of the nationwide Sangha was obvious, it was difficult to rally everyone’s energy to create this center. It was only when Marcel was about to sell the property for financial reasons that people began to raise funds to keep it.

In the early 1990s, Thich Nhat Hanh and Sister Chân Không visited the center several times. It seems like a miracle that since then, the Sangha has been investing in Haus Tao, both financially and with their personal skills, by helping restore the building, sew curtains, and maintain the garden. As there is a growing interest in Thich Nhat Hanh’s teachings throughout Europe, the center is now able to support itself.

Haus Tao is near the German-Austrian border, and attracts people from all over German-speaking Europe. The center is open year-round and offers a schedule of morning and evening meditation. The quiet and serene valley surrounding the center supports our practice. When sitting in the meditation hall, we can hear the nearby river and birds singing. Loriana, our guest manager, is the only permanent resident. However, guests come throughout the year to join her in the practice. Haus Tao can accommodate up to 25 people. Marcel, the resident Dharma teacher, and his wife Beatrice, a movement therapist, live nearby and support the Sangha with weekly Dharma discussions and Days of Mindfulness. They lead several retreats a year, including a three-month retreat which will begin November 1. Retreats and seminars include a daily work period and a session in mindful movement, guided by Beatrice. Haus Tao is now in the middle of our first three-year ongoing seminar in Buddhist studies and practice, which gives the 15 participants the opportunity to integrate the knowledge derived from Buddhist texts with personal growth practices. Since 1993 Haus Tao has published InterSein twice a year, which is the German-speaking sister of The Mindfulness Bell.

Marcel is on the executive committee of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), and the Sangha networks with INEB members all over the world. In Europe, many people consider Buddhism to be a practice of meditation and theory only. As the idea of engaged Buddhism is still very new, Haus Tao is currently investigating what the social needs in our area are and what are realistic possibilities for developing socially engaged Buddhism in Switzerland. The Sangha may adopt a model similar to the Buddhist Alliance for Social Engagement (BASE) program organized by the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. The Sangha actively networks with Christian groups, who have a long history of social engagement in Europe, and are grateful for all the inspiration and help from open-minded Christians. In the future, Haus Tao wants to put more energy in building a strong neighborhood Sangha.

Sr. Chân Không and Thầy by the stupa at Haus Tao
### Sangha-Building

Since our last issue, these people have expressed interest in beginning a Sangha in their area. Please contact them if you would like to join the practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cynthia Rory Capalupa</td>
<td>413 Crawford Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13224</td>
<td>(315) 446-7994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsha Olenych</td>
<td>HC 65, Box 3, Bovina Center, NY 13740</td>
<td>(607) 832-4373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janet Erb</td>
<td>640 West Chestnut Street, Lancaster, PA 17603</td>
<td>(717) 390-0935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rick Kuntz</td>
<td>23 North Main Street, Nazareth, PA 18064</td>
<td>(610) 759-4925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peggy A. Mackenzie</td>
<td>1512 Iveson Street N.E., Atlanta, GA 30307</td>
<td>(404) 522-8643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Kirchberg</td>
<td>1611 Linden Avenue, Memphis, TN 38104</td>
<td>(901) 523-8990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandi West</td>
<td>2541 West Monroe Street, Springfield, MO 65802</td>
<td>(417) 865-4732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethany Freshnock</td>
<td>8822 West 100th Terrace, Overland Park, KS 66212</td>
<td>(913) 642-1205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tina Moon</td>
<td>Route 1, Box 184A, Eureka Springs, AR 72632</td>
<td>(501) 253-6984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John McNew</td>
<td>4501 Boardwalk Drive #H73, Fort Collins, CO 80525</td>
<td>(970) 282-1272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanette Ford</td>
<td>400 East Tangelo Drive, Tucson, AZ 85737</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Askew</td>
<td>450 Rincon Avenue, Sunnyvale, CA 94086</td>
<td>(408) 736-9482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royce Wilson</td>
<td>c/o Island Books, P.O. Box 645, Kealakekua, HI 96750</td>
<td>(808) 322-2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Dharmacaryas

The following men and women have been ordained as Dharma teachers by Thich Nhat Hanh. Their schedules of lectures and retreats are listed on the following pages.

**Vietnam**
- Thầy Giác Vien
- Thầy Thiện Phước
- Thầy Thạnh Duy
- Su Co Dam Nguyễn
- Su Co Minh Huyễn

**Australia**
- Khanh Lê Văn, True Transmission
- Thân Bạch Mai, Chân Luồng
- *Lotus Bud Sangha, Sydney, Australia*

**Europe**
- Jørgen Hannibal, True Loving Eyes
- *Peace Is the Way Sangha, Denmark*
- Svein Myrøeng, True Door
- *Sangha of Floating Clouds, Norway*
- Judith Bossert, True Form
- *Bodensee Sangha, Germany*
- Karl Schmied, True Dharma Eye
- *Gemeinschaft für achtsames Leben, Germany*
- Nora Houtman de Graaf, True Fruition
- *Dutch Sangha*
- Eveline Beunkes, True Peace
- *Amsterdam Sangha, Holland*
- Marcel Geisser, True Realisation
- *Fdn. of Mindful Living/Haus Tao, Switz.*
- Jean-Pierre Maradan
- *1725 Ecuvillens, Pres De Fribourg, Switzerland*
- Brother Shariputra
- Brother Doji
- Thích Nguyên Hải
- Sister Chân Không, True Emptiness
- Sister Annabel Laity, True Virtue
- Sister Jina, True Wonder Adornment
- Su Co Vien Quang
- Chân Nguyên, True Vow
- Karl Riedl, True Communion
- Helga Riedl, True Wonderful Loving Kindness
- *Plum Village, France*
- Martin Pitt, True Learning
- *Community of Interbeing, England*

### Canada
- Nguyen Tan Hong, Chân Hồi
- Trịnh Đình Tan, Chân Co
- Trân Minh Dung, Chân Huy
- *Maple Village, Montréal*
- Nguyễn Văn Kỳ Cuong, Chân Tĩnh Nhan
- Nguyễn Trọng Phu, Chân Tĩnh Giỏi
- Nguyễn Đạo Như Tuyên, Chân Hao
- *Toronto Zen Meditation Group*
- Nguyễn Duy Vinh, Chân Ngộ
- *Ottawa Sangha*
- Nguyễn Huu Loi, Chân Túc
- *Edmonton, Alberta*

### United States
- Harrison Hoblitelle, True Vehicle
- Larry Rosenberg, True Calm
- Nguyễn Huu Chi, Chân Đạt
- Barry Roth, True Healing
- *Community of Interbeing, Cambridge, MA*
- Lyn Fine, True Goodness
- *Community of Mindfulness, New York City*
- Anh Huong Nguyen, Chân Y
- Thu Nguyen, Chân Trí
- Thích Giác Thanh
- *Mindfulness Community of Washington, D.C.*
- Fred Eppsteiner, True Energy
- *Naples, Florida Sangha*
- Jack Lawlor, True Direction
- *Lakeside Buddha Sangha, Evanston, Illinois*
- Robert Schaibly, True Deliverance
- Do Văn Hoa, Chân Thien Can
- Houston, Texas Zen Community
- Joan Halifax, True Continuation
- *Upaya Sangha, Santa Fe, New Mexico*
- Cynthia Jurs, True Source
- *Open Way Sangha, Santa Fe, New Mexico*
- Eileen Kiera, True Lamp
- *Mountain Lamp Community, Bellingham, WA*
- Arnold Kotler, True Realization
- Wendy Johnson, True Compassion Adornment
- Therese Fitzgerald, True Light
- *Community of Mindful Living, Albany, CA*
- Thích Tu-Luc
- *Hayward, California*
- Sister Nhu Phuoc
- *San Jose, California*
- Christopher Reed, True Jewel
- *Manzanita Village, California*
## Retreat Schedule

### Retreats Led by Thich Nhat Hanh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JUNE</td>
<td>2 Public Talk in Oldenburg, Germany</td>
<td>Oldenburg, Germany</td>
<td>Karl Schmied 49-8025-5059</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-7 Retreat near Oldenburg, Germany</td>
<td>Oldenburg, Germany</td>
<td>Karl Schmied 49-8025-5059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 Public Talk in Neuss or Cologne, Germany</td>
<td>Neuss or Cologne, Germany</td>
<td>Werner Heidenreich</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 Day of Mindfulness in Neuss, Germany</td>
<td>Neuss, Germany</td>
<td>Karl Schmied 49-8025-5059</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 Public Talk in Wiesbaden, Germany</td>
<td>Wiesbaden, Germany</td>
<td>Karl Schmied 49-8025-5059</td>
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</table>

**JULY 15-AUGUST 15**

Summer Opening, Plum Village, France

### Retreats Led by Order of Interbeing Dharma Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAY</td>
<td>3-5 Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA</td>
<td>Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA</td>
<td>Joan Halifax (Upaya Foundation, 505-986-8518)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-5 Phoenix, Arizona, USA</td>
<td>Phoenix, Arizona, USA</td>
<td>Christopher Reed and Michele Benzamin-Masuda (Marcie Colpas, 602-952-0915)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Charlotte, North Carolina, USA</td>
<td>Charlotte, USA</td>
<td>Anh Huong Nguyen (Charlotte Community of Mindfulness, Leslie Rawls, 704-588-1413)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 Munich, Germany</td>
<td>Munich, Germany</td>
<td>Martin Pitt (Stephen Malloch, 0131-449-6703)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9-12 Missoula, Montana, USA</td>
<td>Missoula, Montana, USA</td>
<td>Arnie Kotler and Therese Fitzgerald (Open Way Sangha, Bill Clarke, 406-549-6214)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12 Bellingham, Washington, USA</td>
<td>Bellingham, USA</td>
<td>Eileen Kiera (Bellingham Dharma Hall, Francesca Cameron, 360-676-8634)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17-19 Toronto, Ontario, Canada</td>
<td>Toronto, Ontario, Canada</td>
<td>Sr. Annabel Laity (Toronto Zen Meditation Group, Trong Phu Nguyen, 416-752-6894)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17-19 Salt Lake City, Utah, USA</td>
<td>Salt Lake City, Utah, USA</td>
<td>Arnie Kotler and Therese Fitzgerald (Louisiana Community of Mindful Living, 510-527-3751)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19 Plano, Illinois, USA</td>
<td>Plano, Illinois, USA</td>
<td>Jack Lawlor (Lakeside Buddha Sangha, 708-475-0080)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19 Seattle, Washington, USA</td>
<td>Seattle, USA</td>
<td>Eileen Kiera (Peachtree Sangha, Nann Dohn, 206-720-1801)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19 Newburgh, New York, USA</td>
<td>Newburgh, USA</td>
<td>Thay Giac Thanh (Budding Flower Sangha, 914-561-0995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-21 Ottawa, Ontario, Canada</td>
<td>Ottawa, Ontario, Canada</td>
<td>Gabrielle Vesen (Warm Snow Sangha, 613-236-8662)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22-27 Brossard, Quebec, Canada</td>
<td>Brossard, Quebec, Canada</td>
<td>Sr. Annabel Laity (Maple Village, Chân Huy, 514-466-8726)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24-27 Manzanita Village, California, USA</td>
<td>Manzanita Village, USA</td>
<td>Christopher Reed and Michele Benzamin-Masuda (Manzanita Village, 619-782-3604)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28-30 New York, New York, USA</td>
<td>New York, USA</td>
<td>Martin Pitt (Stephen Malloch, 0131-449-6703)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30-6/2 Moscow, Idaho, USA</td>
<td>Moscow, Idaho, USA</td>
<td>Martin Pitt (Stephen Malloch, 0131-449-6703)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31 Madison, Wisconsin, USA</td>
<td>Madison, Wisconsin, USA</td>
<td>Joan Halifax (SnowFlower Sangha, 608-832-6658)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**JUNE**

- **1-2** Madison, Wisconsin, USA  
  Weekend retreat with Sr. Annabel Laity. (SnowFlower Sangha, David and Barbara Lawrence, 608-832-6658)

- **1-2** Edinburgh, Scotland  
  Public talk and Day of Mindfulness with Martin Pitt. (Stephen Malloch, 0131-449-6703)

- **6-9** Houston, Texas, USA  
  Weekend retreat with Sr. Annabel Laity. (Houston Zen Community, Doug Lindsay, 713-880-1030)

- **7-9** Soquel, California, USA  
  Family Day of Mindfulness with Wendy Johnson. (Green Gulch Farm, 415-383-3134)

- **8-10** Sydney, Australia  
  Retreat with Khanh and Dan Le Van. (Lotus Bud Sangha, 61 (2) 543-7823)

- **9** Bellingham, Washington, USA  
  Day of Mindfulness with Eileen Kiera. (Bellingham Dharma Hall, Francesca Cameron, 360-676-8634)

- **9** Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA  
  Day of Mindfulness with Joan Halifax. (Upaya Foundation, 505-986-8518)
**AUGUST**

4  Chicago, Illinois, USA
Day of Mindfulness, “Engaged Buddhism,” featuring panel discussions with Right Livelihood Award winner and activist Sulak Sivaraksa of Thailand, moderated by Jack Lawlor. (Lakeside Buddha Sangha, 708-475-0080)

11  Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA
Day of Mindfulness with Joan Halifax. (Upaya Foundation, 505-986-8518)

11  Bellingham, Washington, USA
Day of Mindfulness with Eileen Kiera. (Bellingham Dharma Hall, Francesca Cameron, 360-676-8634)

16-18  Craryville, New York, USA
Weekend retreat with Anh Huong and Thu Nguyen, and Lyn Fine. (Pumpkin Hollow Farm, 518-325-3583 or 518-325-7105)

18  Seattle, Washington, USA
Day of Mindfulness with Eileen Kiera. (Peach Tea Sangha, 206-720-1801)

**SEPTEMBER**

4-8  Missoula, Montana, USA
Residential retreat with Eileen Kiera. (Open Way Sangha, Betsy Hart, 406-549-0218)

8  Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA
Day of Mindfulness with Joan Halifax. (Upaya Foundation, 505-986-8518)

**OCTOBER**

18-20  Rhinebeck, New York, USA
Touching Peace: Practicing the Art of Mindful Living. A retreat led by Dharma teachers Arnie Kotler, Therese Fitzgerald, Anh Huong Nguyen, and Lyn Fine. (Omega Institute, 914-338-6030)

**NOVEMBER**

8-11  Soquel, California, USA
Mindfulness Retreat with veterans, led by Wendy Johnson. (Community of Mindful Living, 510-527-3751)

16  Munich, Germany
Day of Mindfulness with Karl Schmied. (Gemeinschaft für achtsames Leben e.V., 49 (8) 025-5059)

20-30  Manzanita Village, California, USA
Retreat with Christopher Reed and Michele Benzamin-Masuda. (Manzanita Village, 619-782-3604)

**DECEMBER**

14  Munich, Germany
Day of Mindfulness with Karl Schmied. (Gemeinschaft für achtsames Leben e.V., 49 (8) 025-5059)
Being In Touch with Vietnam
by Sister Chân Không

Flood Relief
Last winter, heavy floods brought severe devastation to Vietnam during two months. Sanghas throughout the world sent $10,000 to help Vietnamese people.

In Central Vietnam, we assisted the most impoverished villages where there were no schools, health care systems, or bridges. In the rainy season these villages flood with water. In the summer, the land is too dry for anything to grow. With the $7,600 we received from the Canada Sangha and the Nu Hong Sangha, we bought blankets and old clothes and rebuilt houses in remote areas of Qui Nhơn, Quảng Ngãi, Thua Thien, Đồng Nai, Quảng Xuyên, and An Tuyên. In Phủ Hòa and Sơn Thủy, Quảng Bình, and in Quảng Trị, 120 families were given $50 each to rebuild their houses. In Thua Thien, 80 families were helped.

We were able to to rebuild 109 huts in Bình Hòa Trung, Bình Thạnh, Huyện An, and Thanh Hóa, Long An in South Vietnam with $2,100, and to lend money to peasants there to buy fertilizer and seeds for planting rice.

Medical Care
Twice a month, a group of doctors, pharmacists, and social workers travel to remote areas to examine patients, distribute medicine, and treat dental problems of young children and poor adults. In these areas, there is no other form of health care. Plum Village and a benevolent association in the U.S. give $350 for every trip to buy medicine, pay for travel expenses, and buy simple meals for the workers.

We gave $2,000 to the leper camp in Văn Mon, in North Vietnam to increase the amount of food given to undernourished families. Doctors specializing in leprosy have asked Plum Village to build at least five operating and recovery rooms so they can offer effective treatment. We will help with $36,000 (1/5 of the total amount needed to build a good hospital in Văn Mon). A hospital in Văn Mon, Thái Bình, also needs some rooms rebuilt. Plum Village and a Sangha in Germany are looking for sponsors to carry out this work. We gave $4,200 to help build two rooms at an herbal medicine clinic in the valley of the Yên Tử mountain—one is used for examinations and acupuncture treatments, the other for storing medicine.

Feeding Hungry Children
We sponsor 133 undernourished children, and provide food for 76 children at the day care center in Kinh Te Môi Xa Bang, Suối Nghe in South Vietnam. The South Vietnam Sangha travels to the mountains of Quảng Ngãi where there is no school and the children are undernourished. Their lips are often purple from the cold, and most only have a pair of torn shorts to wear. We sent 400 packages to these children, each containing rice, a blanket, instant noodles, and clothes. Social workers show young mothers the importance of including protein in their children's diet. Together, they make a porridge that contains brown rice, string beans, tofu, and eggs. Each month the mothers are given 30,000 đồng which they use to prepare this meal for their families.

Education
With the help of Partage in France and Aktion Lotus in Switzerland, the Sangha in South Vietnam gives scholarships to 180 students in Kinh Te Môi Xa Bang, Suối Nghe. In Diệu Giác, we supply provisions for 16 kindergarten classes in areas where there were no public schools.

In North Vietnam, 150 children in Từ Liêm and Sóc Sơn near Hanoi are sponsored by funds collected through the Community of Mindful Living. Two day-care centers are maintained in Sóc Sơn with help from the Maitreya Funds in Germany.

In Thua Thien, Quảng Trị, Quảng Ngãi, and Nha Trang in Central Vietnam, we give monthly scholarships to over 1,500 undernourished students, $10 a month to 148 apprentices, and income supplements of $2.50 a month to 732 people who are old or have physical disabilities. We provide salaries for 267 teachers and 48 students who are carefully trained to take care of the young children. We also sponsor 127 students at the universities of Huế and Đồng Nghiên.

We have helped ten communities in remote areas of Bình Tri Thie. We give 10% of what the community itself takes responsibility for in order to realize the various projects. $600 a month supports the work the social workers are doing. It costs $150 a month to feed the children in one kindergarten boarding school. The Washington D.C. Sangha, the Community of Mindful Living, and the Maitreya Funds in Germany, have sponsored 14 daycare centers in these communities where children learn songs such as "Fresh as a Flower, Solid as a Mountain" and receive soy milk daily to supplement the protein in their
diets. Trung An is a very poor and arid area with white sand and few trees. Most of the children are not educated, and have only one pair of trousers and few have shirts. Eighty percent of the teenagers do not know how to read. The aid from Plum Village makes evening classes available for them, because during the day they must work—even seven-year-old children must work or else they starve. Teenagers learn a trade in their own village or are sent to Huế for an apprenticeship. This program helps to eliminate the gambling, smoking, drinking, and fighting that are common. Every school has a health care team of nurses and physicians from Huế.

Dear International Sanghas, if you would like to sponsor a community, please talk to the social work staff at Plum Village. Each community has a long-term project which they discuss with the Sangha that sponsors them.

In one family, the parents could not earn enough to support their four children, so the father took a job far from home and was gone five to seven days at a time. The father had not yet returned home, and the children had not eaten rice for three days. The mother could not bear to see her children crying out from hunger. Even though she knew it was extremely dangerous to leave the house, she decided to go out to look for food. The water had flooded the rice fields around their house. She filled the holes in their boat with rags and went out with a net to catch some fish. She was not far from the house when the wind and waves became strong. Her boat began to shake and she fell in the water and got entangled in the net. She could not free herself and finally drowned. Her children waited for her to return home. When the water receded, they found her corpse with many wounds in it from her efforts to break free from the net. (Luan)
experience in practice. Sometimes during sitting meditation I see you doing walking meditation with the whole community of Loc Hoa. Sometimes I see you sitting with people who are highly esteemed in society. They have all the material possessions they could want, but what they miss is peace. I do not have the material possessions, but since practicing what you teach, I am more peaceful. I can continue to help people with a clear mind and a peaceful heart. I can love without being attached to results.

During this New Year's, I bow to you and the monks and nuns (the Buddhas-to-be) in the Western world.

Mr. Tran D, Loc Hoa, January 22, 1996

Prisoners of Conscience in Vietnam by Stephen Denney

In the last issue of The Mindfulness Bell, we reported Ven. Thich Quang Do, Secretary-General of the banned Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBC), had been deported to northern Vietnam after receiving a five year prison sentence for his public criticism of government religious policy. His colleague, Ven. Thich Huyen Quang, age 78, Executive Director of the UBC, remains under house arrest in central Vietnam. Both are in poor health. According to a recent report, Ven. Huyen Quang is incarcerated in a cramped one-room shack in Nghia Hanh Village, Quang Ngai Province. He is held incommunicado, surrounded by police and suffering from lung disorders resulting from heavy insecticides sprayed in the surrounding fields.

Several other Buddhist monks also remain in prison for their dissent. Most recently, we received news about Thich Hai Tang, reported to be seriously ill from stomach ulcers and in urgent need of surgery. However, his relatives fear he will die if operated on by a police surgeon. On March 7, his father sent an open letter to government and party officials urging them to end mistreatment of his son, allow the monks from his Linh Mu Pagoda in Huế to choose his surgeon, and temporarily release Ven. Tang for medical treatment pending his recovery.

There are also some other prisoners of conscience serving long prison sentences. One of them, Doan Thanh Liem, was released earlier this year from prison, and put on a plane to Los Angeles the same day. Liem had worked for street orphans with Dick Hughes in the Shoeshine Boy Project in Saigon during the war years, and belonged to a group of progressive Catholics who worked with antiwar Buddhists. He was serving a 12-year prison sentence for urging constitutional reform in Vietnam.

Two other prisoners of conscience are Professor Doan Viet Hoat, former vice rector of the Buddhist Van Hanh University, and Dr. Nguyen Dan Que, a medical doctor and the first member of Amnesty International in Vietnam. They are serving 15-year and 20-year prison sentences, respectively, for their nonviolent dissent and advocacy of political democracy in Vietnam. Both received the Robert F. Kennedy award last year for their human rights work. Both are in poor health and their relatives are very worried.

Professor Hoat is detained at Thanh Cam prison in a jungle area of Vietnam near the Lao border 1,400 kilometers from his home. He is very frail. He suffers from a serious kidney disorder and has been urinating blood. He has lost much weight and is extremely weak from malnutrition. His family has sent him abundant supplies of food, medicine and money, but he appears to have received very little of that and is fed barely enough rice to keep alive. Visits by relatives have been extremely restricted. He has been forbidden to read any publications and is kept in a camp where he is surrounded by hardened criminals.

As always, thank you to all who have participated in the campaign to release prisoners of conscience in Vietnam. As I write this it is Good Friday, an appropriate time to honor and support the prisoners of conscience throughout the world, some well-known, others anonymous, who have sacrificed themselves in nonviolence for a better society. If you would like to write a letter on behalf of any of the prisoners mentioned in this article, please contact me in care of The Mindfulness Bell.

Stephen Denney is editor of Vietnam Journal and a longtime activist for human rights in Southeast Asia.
Announcements

Documentary Film about Thây

Work continues on Peace Is Every Step, the film profile of Thich Nhat Hanh. Recently, actor Ben Kingsley (Gandhi, Schindler’s List) agreed to narrate the film, an extraordinary gesture that significantly improves the film’s prospects for worldwide broadcast. In addition, negotiations underway for a coproduction arrangement with a German production company are designed to result in a broadcast agreement with German public television. Broadcasters in Canada, England, France, Korea, and Australia are also interested.

In the meantime, writing and editing continue in Berkeley, with a rough cut possible by the end of May and, if funding is secured, the film can be finished before the summer. To maintain this schedule (and not lose momentum and the availability of facilities and key personnel), $10,000 is required over the next six weeks. Loans (to be repaid from the proceeds of film sales) and donations (to CML) are most welcome.

New Books & Tapes by Thich Nhat Hanh

Living Buddha, Living Christ, read by Ben Kingsley (audio tape, Simon & Schuster)
Teachings on Love (audio tape, Sounds True)

Order of Interbeing Ordinaries

We extend a warm welcome to the following members of the Order of Interbeing who were ordained at Plum Village on January 25, 1996: Brother Shariputra, Brother Ivar, Michael Ciborski, Fern Dorresteyn, Danka Lucznik, Ursula Schwarz, Thich Thanh Due, Sister Dam Tien, Sister Nhu Quang.

Next Year in Jerusalem

Michael Rosenbush is exploring the possibility of Thây offering a retreat in Israel in May 1997. This summer he is trying to sponsor five Israeli students and adults to attend the Plum Village Summer Opening. To contribute towards these efforts, please contact Michael at 189 Rue St. Honore, 75001, Paris, France. Phone/Fax: (33) 1-4926-0728.

New Books & Tapes by Order Members

Getting Our Bodies Back: Recovery, Healing, and Transformation Through Body-Centered Psychotherapy by Christine Caldwell, True Original Vow (Shambhala)
Zen and Japanese Culture by D.T. Suzuki, read by Christopher Reed, True Jewel (Audio Renaissance Tapes)
Appetites: On the Search for True Nourishment by Geneen Roth, True Dharma Joy (Penguin)

Letters to the Mindfulness Bell

I was first drawn to Thich Nhat Hanh’s teaching during the Gulf War when a friend gave me Peace Is Every Step. I felt open to the truth of his words because of his work with veterans and because of what he suffered in Vietnam. I felt that if he could make peace in the midst of that fire, I ought to be able to make a little peace in my own life. I continue to draw benefits from the mindfulness retreats I have attended at Omega, and I look forward to more. I feel like I’m in kindergarten practicing awareness and mindful breathing, and kindergarten is not a bad place to be.

Susan Fanti Spivak
Cobleskill, New York

Thank you so much for The Mindfulness Bell! I love the magazine, and it means a lot to us to get it here in Bermuda.

John Shane
Paget, Bermuda

On the morning I was to leave for the Northern California retreat with Thich Nhat Hanh last fall, my favorite human being—friend, teacher, AA sponsor—suddenly began to die. She had been sober in Alcoholics Anonymous for 13 years and, throughout that time, she had cancer and was in pain, often near death. Her courage, humility, common sense, and great compassion helped countless people, including others suffering with cancer, alcoholics trying to get sober, and even her doctors and caregivers. I am seldom as clear and centered in decision-making as I was when I gave up the opportunity to be on retreat so I could stay with my friend.

She died the next night of massive pneumonia, her body too weakened to fight it off. Her living will was eloquent and specific in expressing her view of death, and refusing to be artificially maintained beyond the moment when true recovery ceased to be possible. For me, being with my friend while she was dying was a blessing and a valuable exercise in mindfulness, in staying in the present moment.

As I sat vigil with my friend, I thought of Thich Nhat Hanh, Sister Chân Không, and the many retreatants who were enjoying sitting and walking meditation together. The practice of mindfulness enabled me to be present during this precious time, and I am grateful to Thich Nhat Hanh for bringing these teachings into my life.

Susan McCarthy
Taos, New Mexico

Receiving The Mindfulness Bell brings me back to my true self. It enriches the quality of life for weeks and months.

Kim Cary
Massies Mill, Virginia
Dear Friends of Plum Village,

I am writing to you as I return from my most recent visit to Plum Village. Just before Thây left for his trip to Italy, on March 14, he gave a talk about the importance of the extended Sangha to Plum Village. Later that day in an unrelated way, he spoke about the local French authorities’ demand that buildings in the Lower Hamlet undergo extensive renovations to meet building and sanitary codes. It occurred to me that this is a good time to bring more awareness to the extended Sangha of their importance to Plum Village. Since I was one of the few extended Sangha members present at this talk, I have taken the initiative to share my reaction to Thây’s message. In his talk, Thây mentioned the importance of leadership within the Plum Village Sangha. It seems that it is also important to cultivate leadership in the extended Sangha.

It would be very helpful to have a list of the people who have visited Plum Village. The registration forms and guest books need to be computerized, to make mailings with updates from Plum Village, notices of retreats and schedules, as well as to hear when needs emerge for financial assistance. It seems that many people who have been at Plum Village do not even know about The Mindfulness Bell or that there are practice groups throughout the world.

Since I can’t support Plum Village by living nearby, I would like to help in other ways. I would like to help activate those people who have been touched by Plum Village to form some kind of association which could support the work of Plum Village.

Plum Village is a unique Buddhist community. The monks, nuns, and lay residents open their doors to people from around the world who wish to deepen their practice of mindfulness in retreats of a week or longer. In addition to the residential community, at least three other communities constitute the extended Sangha of Plum Village. One is the practitioners who live near Plum Village and regularly participate in the community’s life. The second consists of all those whose lives have been enriched by directly touching Plum Village during the summer or winter retreats or other programs. The third and widest community includes all those who enjoy Thây’s wonderful books, since the Sangha of Plum Village offers important support for Thây to be able to continue his teaching. This wide community includes all the individuals and Sanghas throughout the world who benefit from the monks, nuns, and lay teachers that Plum Village has helped to nurture.

In his teaching on community, Thây described the extended Sangha as the water that makes it possible for the fish, the residents of Plum Village, to live. In turn, the monks, nuns, and long-term lay residents offer the greater community the many benefits that arise from a community of mindfulness that is open for retreats. Plum Village offers us a place of practice so we can return to our true home, and so that when we go back to our everyday home, we can truly arrive. In many ways, Thây and Plum Village are the heart of our mindfulness practice: Those who come for retreats at Plum Village are the arteries and veins, carrying nourishment to the mindfulness communities around the world. We need to insure that nourishment in this circulatory system flows back to the heart itself.

To start strengthening the Sangha, we need to share information. At present there is a difficult situation at Plum Village, and they need our support. To be open to receiving guests this summer, they will need to upgrade their facilities considerably in order to meet the health and safety standards required by the local government. They need to do a major renovation on several buildings and extensive work in the kitchens. This work will be costly—around $120,000 for the work on the Plum Hill dormitory; and $200,000 for the work on the kitchens.

If you can help at this time, please keep Plum Village in your mindfulness practice, and if you can, send financial support as well. This will also help us build our extended Sangha, through networking with our local Sanghas or staying in touch with each other about our efforts.

Many of us wish when we are not at Plum Village that there would be a way we could arrange our lives so that we could be of more support to the Plum Village community. Most of us cannot do that, but we can increase our presence at Plum Village by helping in the ways we can. Money is a form of energy and by making a contribution, we transfer some of our energy to support the community that supports our practice of mindful living. Your contribution now can help support the framework of Plum Village which supports the mindfulness of us all.

Donations can be made directly to Plum Village, Meyrac, 47120, Loubes-Bernac, 47120 France. In the U.S., tax-deductible donations can be made to Plum Village through the Community of Mindful Living, P.O. Box 7355, Berkeley, CA, 94707. All donations received by the Community of Mindful Living for Plum Village are passed on in full to Plum Village. Contributions to help cover the operating expenses of the Community of Mindful Living are also greatly appreciated.

A contribution of any size will let the Plum Village community know that you value their continuation.

A lotus for you,

Tom Holmes
World Wide Web of Mindfulness
by Allan Hunt Badiner

The conversation started by the Buddha, and carried on by the arhats, pratyekabuddhas, and great teachers like Thich Nhat Hanh is continuing in the form of digital impulses crisscrossing the Earth, reaching into bulletin boards, downloading sutras, and conducting Dharma discussions via email. An entire world of Cyberbuddhism has manifested in the ether, with a population that is growing wildly. And while the jury may still be out on whether ultimately the electronic Buddhist world is a distraction or the possibility of a whole new level of experiencing Dharma, mindfulness practice in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh is now among the many Buddhist sites being served on the web.

While we were on pilgrimage with Thây in China last summer, Arnie Kotler took note of my enthusiasm for the potential of the web, and we discussed the possibility of creating an interactive website and online bookstore for Parallax Press. Over the past six months I have worked with a team of artists and programmers, notably Jay Cheroske and Jacqueline Neuwirth, to build a "mindful" corner on the web. In June, at the American Booksellers Association conference in Chicago, Parallax Press will launch the web's first contemplative, full-service online bookstore, which will offer all of its books, audio and video tapes, gifts and meditation supplies, in an environment secure for financial transactions. The URL (address) is http://www.parallax.org

Online customers can search or browse, enjoy slideshows of book covers and photos of Thây and Plum Village, tables of contents, sample chapters, and in the atmosphere of a bookstore. Purchases will be shipped within two days of ordering. The site also includes a fully searchable listing of local bookstores in the United States.

The Parallax Press web site also includes the activities of the worldwide Sangha, including a Sangha directory, retreat schedules, and also homes page for Plum Village and the Community of Mindful Living. The online bookstore will be particularly valuable to people around the world who are not close to bookstores that carry Thây's books. Visitors will be greeted by a bell of mindfulness and a guided meditation by Thây.

Dharma digirati and the just plain curious now have access to a voluminous serving of data and discussion, all lending credence to the idea that Buddhism will not be immune to the virtual explosion of human microprocessing power that is rapidly transforming our lives. The web will not be immune to the mindfulness revolution either.

Please enjoy your visit to Parallax Press on the worldwide web, and remember to enjoy your breathing.

Allan Hunt Badiner, the editor of Dharma Gaia: A Harvest of Essays in Buddhism and Ecology, created the Parallax Press web site.
The Mindfulness Bell
Newsletter of the Order of Interbeing

The Mindfulness Bell is published three times a year by the Community of Mindful Living, students and friends of Thich Nhat Hanh who want to help one another be more mindful in daily life. Please let us know if you've enjoyed this issue or have any ideas for future themes. Please send essays, anecdotes, poems, photographs, or artwork on a computer disk if possible. Please include a brief autobiographical description with your submission. We receive many valuable offerings to The Mindfulness Bell. If we are not able to include your work in the upcoming issue, we would like your permission to hold on to it for possible future use. Portions of your writing may be edited for space and clarity. Please let us know if you would like to see the edited version before it appears.

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☐ $25 for six issues; outside the U.S.: $32 (Is this a renewal? )

☐ In addition, I would like to make a tax-deductible donation to the Community of Mindful Living toward the work of cultivating the practice of mindfulness—including meditation retreats, classes, workshops for veterans, social work in Vietnam, and establishing a land-based residential practice center. I am enclosing $ . For donations of $25 or more, you will automatically receive a one-year (three-issue) subscription to The Mindfulness Bell.

Please send check or money order payable in U.S. dollars to the “Community of Mindful Living.” Thank you very much.

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