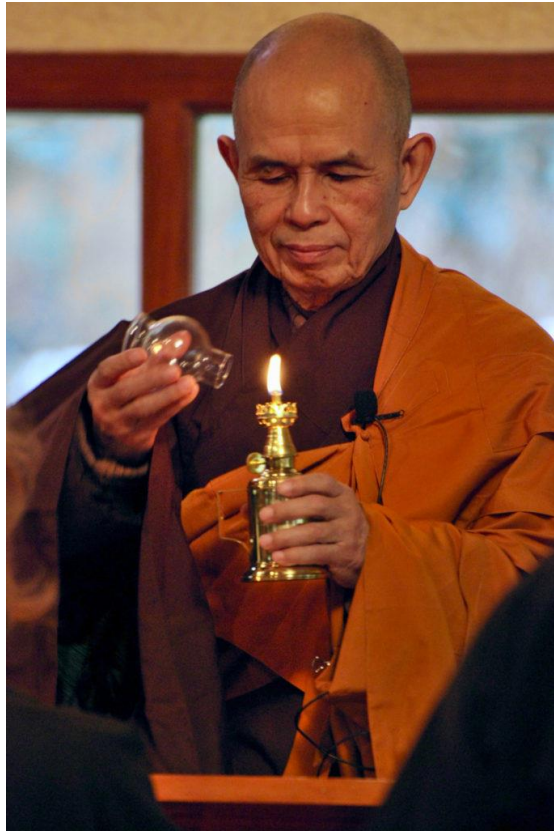


River Valley Sangha

Ecumenical Buddhist Society of Little Rock



Mindfulness Practice

In the tradition of Zen Master Thich Nhất Hạnh



*I take refuge in the Buddha/
the one who shows me the way in this life.*

*I take refuge in the Dharma/
the way of understanding and of love.*

*I take refuge in the Sangha/
the community that lives in harmony and awareness.*

River Valley Sangha
welcomes all to grow in their mindfulness practice
supported by these principles.

Spiritual Space

Sangha is where our loving, spiritual selves are central and encouraged to grow;
our personalities are quieted.

Sacred Silence

We enter the meditation hall mindful of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.
We begin to honor silence when we sit down.

Mindful Discussion

We speak truthfully, peacefully, and thoughtfully from our best, spiritual self
when our question, comment, or response serves the purpose of the Sangha and
not our self.

Meditation

Buddhists everywhere practice meditation, which is the main instruction handed down by the Buddha. It is a form of mental concentration that leads to loving kindness, understanding and ultimately enlightenment.

The Buddha taught many different types of meditation. The two most common are Mindfulness of Breathing and Loving Kindness Meditation. The two are often combined or used one after the other.

In China and Japan, the Ch'an and Zen schools of Buddhism developed the practice of silent sitting. Meditation can be in the form of silent sitting, walking, chanting, or bowing. You may vary your meditation by using guided meditations, contemplative music, or objects of focus.

Place, Posture, and Practice

You can meditate anywhere, but ideally, seek a place that is quiet and simple. Spaces designated for mediation in the home or elsewhere may include inspirational items such as a statue or a meditation bell. The posture should be comfortable. A good posture is to sit with your legs folded, a cushion under your buttocks, your back straight, hands nestled in the lap, and the eyes closed. Alternatively, you can sit in a chair as long as you keep your back straight.

Silent Sitting

To practice sit quietly with your eyes closed and focus your attention on the in-and-out movement of the breath. This can be done by counting the breaths or watching the rise and fall of the abdomen. Distractions will arise such as an itch or stiffness in the legs, perhaps intrusive thoughts such as a to-do list, worry, or replaying events of the day. When this happens, without moving try to keep the body relaxed and focus on the breath. The only way you can deal with this is to patiently keep returning your attention to the breath. If you consistently do this, eventually thoughts will dissipate, your concentration will become stronger, and you will have moments of deep mental calm and inner peace.

Imagine Your Mind as a Jar of River Water

Imagine you have a large jar, and you fill it with river water. The water is cloudy, filled with dirt, debris, and sediment (our cluttered thoughts). The jar is allowed to be still for a while. Notice the sediment settles to the bottom. What is left on top is clear water (clarity).

Walking Meditation

This is regularly practiced in monasteries and retreats and is part of our weekly practice here at River Valley Sangha. If you are at home, find a quiet place to walk and focus on the movements and sensations associated with walking. If the mind strays to other things, redirect the focus on the walking.

From "Walking Meditation" by Thich Nhât Hanh

The practice of walking meditation opens your eyes to the wonders and the suffering of the universe. If you are not aware of what is going on around you, where do you expect to encounter ultimate reality? Every path can be a walking meditation path, from tree-lined roadsides and fragrant rice paddies to the back alleys of Mostar and the mine-filled dirt roads of Cambodia. When you are awake, you will not hesitate to enter any path. You will suffer, not just from your own worries and fears, but because of your love for all beings. When you open yourself in this way, your companions will be other beings on the path of awakening who share your insight. They will work with you, side by side, to alleviate the world's suffering.

How Long Should I Meditate?

Start with five minutes and add more time each week as you practice. The amount of time is not as important as making the practice a regular part of your daily routine. After a few weeks of regular daily meditation you will notice that your concentration gets better, there are fewer thoughts, and you have moments of real peace and stillness.

What are the Benefits of Doing Meditation?

While the ultimate benefit is spiritual enlightenment, meditation deepens mindfulness and increases peace and happiness. Regular meditation also clarifies thinking and produces positive changes in your daily life. You will find that you are more accepting of yourself, and you will have more compassion toward others. Resentment you may have harbored toward others will dissolve. Your decision-making skills improve with increased clarity. You will find that you are less attached to the things that create suffering in this life and your capacity for love increases immensely.


An Excellent Source of Guidance:


[Peace is Every Step](#) by Thich Nhât Hahn is a wonderful resource for practicing meditation. It can be purchased through the Ecumenical Buddhist Society bookstore as well as through Parallax Press, www.parallax.org/.


First Thursday

The Three Refuges and Two Promises

 Inviting the bell, with gatha (spiritual verse)

 Silent meditation (20 minutes)


 Walking meditation (10 minutes)

 Flower Offering, read by Sangha:

In gratitude, we offer these flowers to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas throughout time and space. May they be as fragrant as Earth herself, reflecting our careful efforts, our wholehearted awareness and the fruit of understanding, slowly ripening.

May we and all beings be companions of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

May we awaken from forgetfulness and realize our true home.

 The Three Refuges and the Two Promises

Sangha Leader: Today the community gathers to recite the Three Refuges and the Two Promises. Students of the Buddha, take refuge in the Buddha, the one who shows us the way in this life; in the Dharma, the way of understanding and love; and in the Sangha, the community that lives in harmony and awareness. Will the entire community please join me, reciting in unison:

Sangha:

I take refuge in the Buddha, the one who shows me the way in this life.

Dwelling in the refuge of the Buddha, I see clearly the path of light and beauty in the world. Taking refuge in the Buddha in myself, I aspire to help all people recognize their own awakened nature, realizing the Mind of Love. (Bell and bow)

I take refuge in the Dharma, the way of understanding and love.

Dwelling in the refuge of the Dharma, I learn to open many doors on the path of transformation. Taking refuge in the Dharma in myself, I aspire to help all people fully master the ways of practice and walk together on the path of liberation. (Bell and bow)

I take refuge in the Sangha, the community that lives in harmony and awareness.

I dwell in the refuge of the Sangha, the shining light that supports me, keeping my practice free from obstruction.

Taking refuge in the Sangha in myself, I aspire to embrace all beings and to support their transformation. (Bell and bow)

Sangha Leader: Students of the Buddha, let us recite in unison the Two Promises that we make with the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

Sangha:

I vow to develop understanding in order to live peaceably with people, animals, plants, and minerals. (Bell)

I vow to develop my compassion in order to protect the lives of people, animals, plants, and minerals. (Bell)

Sangha Leader: Students of the Enlightened One, understanding and love are the two most important teachings of the Buddha. If we do not make the effort to be open, to understand the suffering of other people, we will not be able to love them and to live in harmony with them. We should also try to understand and to protect the lives of animals, plants, and minerals and to live in harmony with them.

If we cannot understand, we cannot love.

The Buddha teaches us to look at living beings with the eyes of love and understanding.

Please learn to practice this teaching.

Upon hearing the sound of the bell, let us bow three times to the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. (Three bells and bows)

 Silent reflection (*A few minutes*)

 Reading and mindful discussion

 Bodhisattva vows, read by Sangha:

Suffering beings are numberless; I vow to liberate them all.

Attachment is inexhaustible; I vow to release it all.

The gates to truth are infinite; I vow to open them all.

The ways of awakening are supreme; I vow to realize them all.


 Words of the Buddha, by Sangha leader:

O Nobly Born, remember the pure, open sky of your own true nature.

Return to it.


Trust it.


It is home. (Bell)


 Closing bells and the two bows (Two bells and bows)
(*Standing, we bow with respect to the Sangha—our community of support, and to the Buddha—our first teacher.*)


Second Thursday

The Five Mindfulness Trainings

 Inviting the bell, with gatha (spiritual verse)

 Silent meditation (20 minutes)


 Walking meditation (10 minutes)

 Flower Offering, read by Sangha:

In gratitude, we offer these flowers to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas throughout time and space. May they be as fragrant as Earth herself, reflecting our careful efforts, our wholehearted awareness and the fruit of understanding, slowly ripening.

May we and all beings be companions of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

May we awaken from forgetfulness and realize our true home.

 The Five Mindfulness Trainings

Sangha Leader: The Five Mindfulness Trainings represent the Buddhist vision for a global spirituality and ethic. They are a concrete expression of the Buddha’s teachings on the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path, the path of right understanding and true love, leading to healing, transformation, and happiness for ourselves and for the world.

To practice the Five Mindfulness Trainings is to cultivate the insight of interbeing, or Right View, which can remove all discrimination, intolerance, anger, fear, and despair. If we live according to the Five Mindfulness Trainings, we are already on the path of a Bodhisattva. Knowing we are on that path, we are not lost in confusion about our life in the present or in fears about the future.

 ***Reverence For Life***.....

Sangha: Aware of the suffering caused by the destruction of life, I am committed to cultivating the insight of interbeing and compassion and learning ways to protect the lives of people, animals, plants, and minerals.

I am determined not to kill, not to let others kill, and not to support any act of killing in the world, in my thinking, or in my way of life.

Seeing that harmful actions arise from anger, fear, greed, and intolerance, which in turn come from dualistic and discriminative thinking, I will cultivate openness, non-discrimination, and non-attachment to views in order to transform violence, fanaticism, and dogmatism in myself and in the world.



True Happiness.....

Sangha: Aware of the suffering caused by exploitation, social injustice, stealing, and oppression, I am committed to practicing generosity in my thinking, speaking, and acting.

I am determined not to steal and not to possess anything that should belong to others; and I will share my time, energy, and material resources with those who are in need.

I will practice looking deeply to see that the happiness and suffering of others are not separate from my own happiness and suffering; that true happiness is not possible

without understanding and compassion; and that running after wealth, fame, power, and sensual pleasures can bring much suffering and despair.

I am aware that happiness depends on my mental attitude and not on external conditions, and that I can live happily in the present moment simply by remembering that I already have more than enough conditions to be happy.

I am committed to practicing Right Livelihood so that I can help reduce the suffering of living beings on Earth and stop contributing to climate change.



True Love.....

Sangha: Aware of the suffering caused by sexual misconduct, I am committed to cultivating responsibility and learning ways to protect the safety and integrity of individuals, couples, families, and society.

Knowing that sexual desire is not love, and that sexual activity motivated by craving always harms myself as well as others, I am determined not to engage in sexual relations without mutual consent, true love, and a deep, long-term commitment. I resolve to find spiritual support for the integrity of my relationship from family members, friends, and sangha with whom there is support and trust.

I will do everything in my power to protect children from sexual abuse and to prevent couples and families from being broken by sexual misconduct.

Seeing that body and mind are interrelated, I am committed to learn appropriate ways to take care of my sexual energy and to cultivate the four basic elements of true love—loving kindness, compassion, joy, and inclusiveness—for the greater happiness of myself and others. Recognizing the diversity of human experience, I am committed not to discriminate against any form of gender identity or sexual orientation.

Practicing true love, we know that we will continue beautifully into the future.

 ***Loving Speech and Deep Listening***.....

Sangha: Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful speech and the inability to listen to others, I am committed to cultivating loving speech and compassionate listening in order to relieve suffering and to promote reconciliation and peace in myself and among other people, ethnic and religious groups, and nations.


Knowing that words can create happiness or suffering, I am committed to speaking truthfully using words that inspire confidence, joy, and hope.

When anger is manifesting in me, I am determined not to speak. I will practice mindful breathing and walking in order to

recognize and to look deeply into my anger. I know that the roots of anger can be found in my wrong perceptions and lack of understanding of the suffering in myself and in the other person. I will speak and listen in a way that can help myself and the other person to transform suffering and see the way out of difficult situations.

I am determined not to spread news that I do not know to be certain and not to utter words that can cause division or discord.

I will practice Right Diligence to nourish my capacity for understanding, love, joy, and inclusiveness, and gradually transform anger, violence, and fear that lie deep in my consciousness.

 ***Nourishment and Healing***.....

Sangha: Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful consumption, I am committed to cultivating good health, both physical and mental, for myself, my family, and my society by practicing mindful eating, drinking, and consuming.

I will practice looking deeply into how I consume the Four Kinds of Nutriments, namely edible foods, sense impressions, volition, and consciousness.

I am determined not to gamble, or to use alcohol, drugs, or any other products which contain toxins, such as certain websites, electronic games, TV programs, films, magazines, books, and conversations.

I will practice coming back to the present moment to be in touch with the refreshing, healing, and nourishing elements in me and around me, not letting regrets and sorrow drag me back into the past nor letting anxieties, fear, or craving pull me out of the present moment.


I am determined not to try to cover up loneliness, anxiety, or other suffering by losing myself in consumption.


I will contemplate interbeing and consume in a way that preserves peace, joy, and well-being in my body and consciousness, and in the collective body and consciousness of my family, my society, and the Earth.

Read by Sangha Leader:

Dear Sangha, we have recited the Five Mindfulness Trainings, the foundation of happiness for the individual, the family and society. We recite them regularly so that our study and practice of the Trainings can deepen day by day. Upon hearing the sound of the bell, please bow three times to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha to show your gratitude.

(Three bells and bows)

 Silent reflection and mindful discussion


 Bodhisattva vows, read by Sangha:

Suffering beings are numberless; I vow to liberate them all.

Attachment is inexhaustible; I vow to release it all.

The gates to truth are infinite; I vow to open them all.

The ways of awakening are supreme; I vow to realize them all.

 Words of the Buddha, by Sangha leader:


O Nobly Born, remember the pure, open sky of your own true nature.

Return to it.

Trust it.

It is home.

(Bell)


 Closing bells and the two bows


(Two bells and bows)


(Standing, we bow with respect to the Sangha—our community of support, and to the Buddha—our first teacher.)


Third Thursday

The Three Gems and Gratitude to the Bodhisattvas

 Inviting the bell, with gatha (spiritual verse)

 Silent meditation (20 minutes)


 Walking meditation (10 minutes)

 Flower Offering, read by Sangha:

In gratitude, we offer these flowers to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas throughout time and space. May they be as fragrant as Earth herself, reflecting our careful efforts, our wholehearted awareness and the fruit of understanding, slowly ripening.

May we and all beings be companions of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

May we awaken from forgetfulness and realize our true home.

 Recitation of the Three Gems and Gratitude to the Bodhisattvas

Sangha:

The fully Enlightened One, beautifully seated, peaceful and smiling, the living source of understanding and compassion, to the Buddha I go for refuge. (Bell)

The path of mindful living, leading to healing, joy and enlightenment, the way of peace, to the Dharma I go for refuge. (Bell)

The loving and supportive community of practice, realizing harmony, awareness, and liberation, to the Sangha I go for refuge. (Bell)

I am aware that the Three Gems are within my heart. I vow to realize them, practicing mindful breathing, smiling, and looking deeply. I vow to understand living beings and their suffering, to cultivate loving kindness and compassion, and to practice joy and equanimity. (Bell)

I vow to offer joy to one person in the morning and to help relieve the grief of one person in the afternoon. I vow to live simply and sanely, content with just a few possessions, and to keep my body healthy. I vow to let go of all worries and anxiety in order to be light and free. (Bell)

I am aware that I owe so much to my parents, teachers, friends, and to all beings. I vow to be worthy of their trust, to practice wholeheartedly so that understanding and compassion will flower, helping free living beings from their suffering. May the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha support my efforts. (Three bells)

Sangha Leader: We give gratitude to the Buddha and to the Bodhisattvas, those beings committed to enlightening themselves and others, so that all may be liberated from suffering.

Sangha:

Teaching and living the way of awareness in the very midst of suffering and confusion, Shakyamuni Buddha, the Enlightened One, to whom we bow in gratitude. (Bell and bow)

Cutting through ignorance, awakening our hearts and minds, Manjushri, the Bodhisattva of Great Understanding, to whom we bow in gratitude. (Bell and bow)


Working mindfully and joyfully for the sake of all beings, Samantabhadra, the Bodhisattva of Great Action, to whom we bow in gratitude. (Bell and bow)


Responding to suffering, serving beings in countless ways, Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion, to whom we bow in gratitude. (Bell and bow)

Seed of awakening and loving kindness in children, sprouts, and all beings, Maitreya, the Buddha to be born, to whom we bow in gratitude. (Bell and bow)

Showing the way fearlessly and compassionately, the stream of ancestral teachers, to whom we bow in gratitude. (Two bells and bows)

 Silent reflection (*A few minutes*)

 Reading and mindful discussion


 Bodhisattva vows, read by Sangha:

Suffering beings are numberless; I vow to liberate them all.

Attachment is inexhaustible; I vow to release it all.

The gates to truth are infinite; I vow to open them all.

The ways of awakening are supreme; I vow to realize them all.

 Words of the Buddha, by Sangha leader:


O Nobly Born, remember the pure, open sky of your own true nature.

Return to it.

Trust it.

It is home.

(Bell)


 Closing bells and the two bows


(Two bells and bows)


(Standing, we bow with respect to the Sangha—our community of support, and to the Buddha—our first teacher.)


Fourth Thursday

Heart of the Prajnaparamita

 Inviting the bell, with gatha (spiritual verse)

 Silent meditation (20 minutes)


 Walking meditation (10 minutes)

 Flower Offering, read by Sangha:

In gratitude, we offer these flowers to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas throughout time and space. May they be as fragrant as Earth herself, reflecting our careful efforts, our wholehearted awareness and the fruit of understanding, slowly ripening.

May we and all beings be companions of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

May we awaken from forgetfulness and realize our true home.

 Heart of the Prajnaparamita

Sangha:

The Bodhisattva Avalokita, while moving in the deep course of perfect understanding, shed light on the Five Skandhas and found them equally empty.

After this penetration, he overcame ill-being. (Bell)

Listen , Śāriputra,

form is emptiness, emptiness is form.

Form is not other than emptiness; emptiness is not other than form.

The same is true with feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness. (Bell)

Listen Śāriputra,

all dharmas are marked with emptiness. They are neither produced nor destroyed,

Neither defiled nor immaculate, neither increasing nor decreasing.

Therefore, in emptiness there is neither form, nor feelings, nor perceptions, nor mental formations, nor consciousness. (Bell)

No eye, or ear, or nose, or tongue, or body, or mind.

Nor form, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, no object of mind. No realms of elements (from eyes to mind consciousness),

no interdependent origins and no extinction of them (from ignorance to death and decay). No ill-being, no cause of ill-being, no end of ill-being, and no path.

No understanding, no attainment. (Bell)

Because there is no attainment, the Bodhisattvas, grounded in perfect understanding, find no obstacles for their minds.

Having no obstacles, they overcome fear, liberating themselves forever from illusion and realizing perfect nirvana.

All Buddhas in the past, present and future, thanks to this perfect understanding arrive at full and right, universal enlightenment. (Bell)


Therefore, one should know that perfect understanding is the highest mantra, the unequalled mantra, the destroyer of ill-being, the incorruptible truth.


A mantra of Prajnaparamita should therefore be proclaimed:


GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SVAHA
GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SVAHA
GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SVAHA (Two bells)
(*Gone. Gone. Gone beyond. Gone completely beyond. Enlightenment, Hail!*)

 Silent reflection (*A few minutes*)

 Reading and mindful discussion of the Heart Sutra

 Bodhisattva vows, read by Sangha:
Suffering beings are numberless; I vow to liberate them all.
Attachment is inexhaustible; I vow to release it all.
The gates to truth are infinite; I vow to open them all.
The ways of awakening are supreme; I vow to realize them all.

 Words of the Buddha, by Sangha leader:
O Nobly Born, remember the pure, open sky of your own true nature.
Return to it.
Trust it.
It is home. (Bell)

 Closing bells and the two bows (Two bells and bows)
(Standing, we bow with respect to the Sangha—our community of support,
and to the Buddha—our first teacher.)

The Insight that Brings Us to the Other Shore

Avalokiteshvara,
while practicing deeply with The Insight That Brings Us to the Other Shore,
suddenly discovered that all of the five skandhas are equally Empty,
and with this realization he overcame all ill-being. (Bell)

Listen Śāriputra,
this body itself is Emptiness, and Emptiness itself is this body.
This body is not other than Emptiness, and Emptiness is not other than this body.
The same is true of feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness. (Bell)

Listen, Śāriputra,
all phenomena bear the mark of Emptiness;
their true nature is the nature of no birth, no death; no being, no non-being; no defilement, no
immaculacy; no increasing, no decreasing. (Bell)

That is why in Emptiness
body, feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness are not separate self-entities.
The Eighteen Realms of Phenomena, which are the six sense organs,
the six sense objects, and the six consciousnesses, are also not separate self-entities. (Bell)

The Twelve Links of Interdependent Arising
and their extinction are also not separate self-entities. Ill-being, the causes of ill-being, the end
of ill-being, the path, insight, and attainment are also not separate self-entities.
Whoever can see this no longer needs anything to attain. (Bell)

Bodhisattvas who practice The Insight That Brings Us to the Other Shore
see no more obstacles in their mind, and because there are no more obstacles in their mind,
they can overcome all fear, destroy all wrong perceptions, and realize perfect Nirvana. (Bell)

All Buddhas in the past, present and future,
by practicing The Insight That Brings Us to the Other Shore are all capable of attaining authentic
and perfect Enlightenment. (Bell)


Therefore, Śāriputra,
it should be known that The Insight That Brings Us to the Other Shore is a great mantra,
the most illuminating mantra, the highest mantra, a mantra beyond compare,
the true wisdom that has the power to put an end to all kinds of suffering.
Therefore, let us proclaim a mantra to praise The Insight That Brings Us to the Other Shore.


Gate, gate, paragate, parasamgate, Bodhi Svaha
Gate, gate, paragate, parasamgate, Bodhi Svaha
Gate, gate, paragate, parasamgate, Bodhi Svaha


(Two bells)


["The Insight that Brings us to the Other Shore" translation by Thich Nhât Hanh is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-commercial 4.0 International License. Changes in format, capitalization, and punctuation were made to facilitate recitation and this printing.]

Fifth Thursday

 Inviting the bell, with gatha (spiritual verse)

 Silent meditation (20 minutes)


 Walking meditation (10 minutes)

 Flower Offering, read by Sangha:

In gratitude, we offer these flowers to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas throughout time and space. May they be as fragrant as Earth herself, reflecting our careful efforts, our wholehearted awareness and the fruit of understanding, slowly ripening.

May we and all beings be companions of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

May we awaken from forgetfulness and realize our true home.

 Reading and mindful discussion

 Bodhisattva vows, read by Sangha:

Suffering beings are numberless; I vow to liberate them all.

Attachment is inexhaustible; I vow to release it all.

The gates to truth are infinite; I vow to open them all.

The ways of awakening are supreme; I vow to realize them all.

 Words of the Buddha, by Sangha leader:


O Nobly Born, remember the pure, open sky of your own true nature.

Return to it.

Trust it.

It is home.

(Bell)

 Closing bells and the two bows

(Two bells and bows)

(Standing, we bow with respect to the Sangha—our community of support, and to the Buddha—our first teacher.)

The Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings

The Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings are the very essence of the Order of Interbeing. They are the torch lighting our path, the boat carrying us, the teacher guiding us. They allow us to touch the nature of interbeing in everything that is, and to see that our happiness is not separate from the happiness of others. Interbeing is not a theory; it is a reality that can be directly experienced by each of us at any moment in our daily lives. The Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings help us cultivate concentration and insight which free us from fear and the illusion of a separate self.

The First Mindfulness Training: *Openness*

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

The Second Mindfulness Training: *Non-Attachment to Views*

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

The Third Mindfulness Training: *Freedom of Thought*

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

The Fourth Mindfulness Training: *Awareness of Suffering*

Aware that looking deeply at the nature of suffering can help us develop understanding and compassion, we are determined to come home to ourselves, to recognize, accept, embrace and

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

The Fifth Mindfulness Training: *Compassionate, Healthy Living*

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

The Sixth Mindfulness Training: *Taking Care of Anger*

Aware that anger blocks communication and creates suffering, we are committed to taking care of the energy of anger when it arises, and to recognizing and transforming the seeds of anger that lie deep in our consciousness. When anger manifests, we are determined not to do or say anything, but to practice mindful breathing or mindful walking to acknowledge, embrace, and look deeply into our anger. We know that the roots of anger are not outside of ourselves but can be found in our wrong perceptions and lack of understanding of the suffering in ourselves and others. By contemplating impermanence, we will be able to look with the eyes of compassion at ourselves and at those we think are the cause of our anger, and to recognize the preciousness of our relationships. We will practice Right Diligence in order to nourish our capacity of understanding, love, joy and inclusiveness, gradually transforming our anger, violence and fear, and helping others do the same.

The Seventh Mindfulness Training: *Dwelling Happily in the Present Moment*

Aware that life is available only in the present moment, we are committed to training ourselves to live deeply each moment of daily life. We will try not to lose ourselves in dispersion or be carried away by regrets about the past, worries about the future, or craving, anger, or jealousy in the present. We will practice mindful breathing to be aware of what is happening in the here

and the now. We are determined to learn the art of mindful living by touching the wondrous, refreshing, and healing elements that are inside and around us, in all situations. In this way, we will be able to cultivate seeds of joy, peace, love, and understanding in ourselves, thus facilitating the work of transformation and healing in our consciousness. We are aware that real happiness depends primarily on our mental attitude and not on external conditions, and that we can live happily in the present moment simply by remembering that we already have more than enough conditions to be happy.

The Eighth Mindfulness Training: *True Community and Communication*

Aware that lack of communication always brings separation and suffering, we are committed to training ourselves in the practice of compassionate listening and loving speech. Knowing that true community is rooted in inclusiveness and in the concrete practice of the harmony of views, thinking and speech, we will practice to share our understanding and experiences with members in our community in order to arrive at collective insight.

We are determined to learn to listen deeply without judging or reacting, and refrain from uttering words that can create discord or cause the community to break. Whenever difficulties arise, we will remain in our Sangha and practice looking deeply into ourselves and others to recognize all the causes and conditions, including our own habit energies, that have brought about the difficulties. We will take responsibility for all the ways we may have contributed to the conflict and keep communication open. We will not behave as a victim but be active in finding ways to reconcile and resolve all conflicts however small.

The Ninth Mindfulness Training: *Truthful and Loving Speech*

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

The Tenth Mindfulness Training: *Protecting and Nourishing the Sangha*

Aware that the essence and aim of a Sangha is the practice of understanding and compassion, we are determined not to use the Buddhist community for personal power or profit, or transform our community into a political instrument. As members of a spiritual community, we should nonetheless take a clear stand against oppression and injustice. We should strive to change the situation, without taking sides in a conflict. We are committed to learning to look with the eyes of interbeing and to see ourselves and others as cells in one Sangha body. As a true cell in the Sangha body, generating mindfulness, concentration, and insight to nourish ourselves and the whole community, each of us is at the same time a cell in the Buddha body. We will actively build brotherhood and sisterhood, flow as a river, and practice to develop the three real powers – understanding, love, and cutting through afflictions – to realize collective awakening.

The Eleventh Mindfulness Training: *Right Livelihood*

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

The Twelfth Mindfulness Training: *Reverence for Life*

Aware that much suffering is caused by war and conflict, we are determined to cultivate nonviolence, compassion, and the insight of interbeing in our daily lives and promote peace education, mindful mediation, and reconciliation within families, communities, ethnic and religious groups, nations, and in the world. We are committed not to kill and not to let others kill. We will not support any act of killing in the world, in our thinking, or in our way of life. We will diligently practice deep looking with our Sangha to discover better ways to protect life, prevent war, and build peace.

The Thirteenth Mindfulness Training: *Generosity*

Aware of the suffering caused by exploitation, social injustice, stealing, and oppression, we are committed to cultivating generosity in our way of thinking, speaking, and acting. We will practice loving kindness by working for the happiness of people, animals, plants, and minerals, and sharing our time, energy, and material resources with those who are in need. We are determined not to steal and not to possess anything that should belong to others. We will respect the

property of others, but will try to prevent others from profiting from human suffering or the suffering of other beings.

The Fourteenth Mindfulness Training: *True Love*

[For lay members]: Aware that sexual desire is not love and that sexual relations motivated by craving cannot dissipate the feeling of loneliness but will create more suffering, frustration, and isolation, we are determined not to engage in sexual relations without mutual understanding, love, and a deep long-term commitment. We resolve to find spiritual support for the integrity of our relationships from family members, friends, and sangha with whom there is support and trust. We know that to preserve the happiness of ourselves and others, we must respect the rights and commitments of ourselves and others. Recognizing the diversity of human experience, we are committed not to discriminate against any form of gender identity or sexual orientation. Seeing that body and mind are interrelated, we are committed to learning appropriate ways to take care of our sexual energy and cultivating loving kindness, compassion, joy, and inclusiveness for our own happiness and the happiness of others. We must be aware of future suffering that may be caused by sexual relations. We will treat our bodies with compassion and respect. We are determined to look deeply into the Four Nutriments and learn ways to preserve and channel our vital energies (sexual, breath, spirit) for the realization of our Bodhisattva ideal. We will do everything in our power to protect children from sexual abuse and to protect couples and families from being broken by sexual misconduct. We will be fully aware of the responsibility of bringing new lives into the world, and will meditate regularly upon their future environment.

Source: <https://plumvillage.org/mindfulness/the-14-mindfulness-trainings>

Sanskrit Words

Glossary

Avalokiteshvara

(ah-vah-lo-KEE-tesh-vara) The Bodhisattva of Great Compassion.

Bodhisattva

(boh-dee-SAHT-vah) A being who has the wisdom and power sufficient to become a Buddha, but who refrains from doing so in order to help others find liberation.

Buddha

(BOO-dah) A being who has attained complete enlightenment (nirvana), the highest level of perfection within the Buddhist spectrum of existence.

Buddhism

(BOO-dizm) A religion or philosophy founded by an Indian prince in the 5th century B.C. in which followers seek to attain enlightenment, a state of complete spiritual freedom known as nirvana. In so doing, they escape the endless cycle of samsara as well as pain and suffering associated with life.

Dharma

(DAR-mah) The nature of reality that is regarded as a universal truth taught by the Buddha; the teaching of Buddhism.

Mahayana

(MAH-hah-yah-nah) "The Greater Vehicle," a form of Buddhism that developed in India around the time of Christ and spread to China, Korea, Tibet, and Japan by the 7th century.

Maitreya

(mye-TRAY-ah) The Buddha of the future.

Manjusri

(mahn-JOO-shree) The Bodhisattva of Wisdom.

Mantra

(MAHN-truh) A word or phrase repeated to aid concentration in meditation.

Nirvana

(neer-VAH-nah) Enlightenment, the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice. Nirvana is the state in which all illusions and desires binding humankind to the cycle of samsara are extinguished.

Samantabhadra

(sah-mahn-tah-BAHD-rah) The Bodhisattva of universal goodness and great action.

Samsara

(suhm-SAHR-uh) The cycle of death and rebirth to which life in the material world is bound.

Sangha

(SAHN-gah) The Buddhist community; it is the men, women, and children who follow the teachings of the Buddha.

Sariputra

(shah-ree-PU-trah) The first chief disciple of the Buddha, foremost in wisdom.

Shakyamuni

(SHAHK-yah-moo-nee) The Historical Buddha, who lived in the 6th century B.C.