



# EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF APPLIED BUDDHISM

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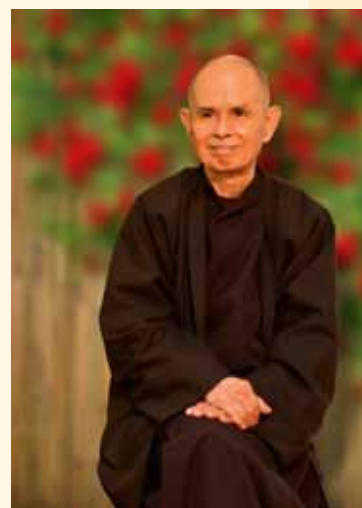
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## 'You don't need to talk in order to teach'

From time to time all monks and nuns join Thay for walking meditation. We can feel his joy to see his disciples and his happiness, to lead the sangha in walking meditation. Thay points to the blue sky, the swaying bamboo, the smile of a brother, directing us to enjoy the present moment. Thay's courage, determination and joy, despite his physical limitations, are a clear teaching for all those present as we walk behind Thay with our two healthy feet.



Many years ago Thay was asked, if he planned to retire as a spiritual teacher at any time. He answered: 'In Buddhism we see that teaching is done not only by talking, but also by living our own life. And since I continue to sit, to walk, to eat, to interact with the Sangha and people, I continue to teach, even if I have already encouraged my students to begin to replace me in giving Dharma talks. In the last years, I have encouraged Dharma teachers, monastics as well as lay disciples, to come up and give Dharma talks. Many of them have given wonderful Dharma talks. I'll continue to teach in my way of sitting, eating, smiling, and interacting with the Sangha. When people are exposed to the practice, they are inspired. You don't need to talk in order to teach. You need to live your life mindfully and deeply.'

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## Words of Welcome from the Mayor of Waldbröl

# Dear reader,

Around seven and a half years ago, on a beautiful autumn day that I can still recall very clearly today, I together with many other residents of Waldbröl greeted the brothers and sisters of the EIAB who had just arrived in the former Academy. At a press conference, with many guests from the surrounding area and Europe, we celebrated the arrival of the nuns and monks. Naturally, this was accompanied by many speeches and words of welcome and also included a variety of previously unknown forms of sitting and walking meditation.

Of course we were all, including the churches, very curious to know how living together as near neighbours would work out. What is Buddhism? Who are the monks? The residents of Waldbröl, the Waldbröler, were filled with great curiosity and a desire for information. Something that was also shared by the Christian community. For this reason the ecumenical Waldbröl, in which the evangelical and catholic church communities, as well as the free evangelical community, are represented, invited everyone to an information evening about Buddhism which many of the new Waldbröler Buddhist brothers and sisters also attended. They were warmly welcomed and we soon settled down to a public, interreligious dialogue with Abbot Phap An. Altogether 150 people came, which shows just how great the interest in the new neighbours was. The factual information and the friendly and respectful behaviour of the nuns and monks certainly helped to counter any possible reservations or fears. The result was further interreligious discussions and contacts.

The initial euphoria accompanying the purchase of a building suitable for the purposes of the EIAB gave way to an awareness of the immense effort needed to comply with the utterly exorbitant requirements and standards demanded by the fire regulations for the building and its surroundings. A defective heating system did nothing to help and led us to fear the worst, especially during the first winter. I had genuine worries that the brothers and sisters would suffer from colds and frost bite by the dozen in the unheated building. That things turned out differently is testimony to their tenacity and unbounded optimism.

More or less unnoticed the brothers and sisters began to overcome the language barriers which had inevitably arisen. At the beginning we were forced to conduct many discussions, here in the Town Hall too, in English. Then it turned out that both Abbot Phap An as well as several brothers and sisters were attending German courses here in Waldbröl. At this point I would like once again to emphasize the genuine efforts to integrate and also to be integrated.

Here in Waldbröl we certainly had to get used to the way that people clad in brown were beginning to change the townscape, and also to witnessing Buddhist driving techniques or to seeing them in intensive sporting activity. At every appropriate occasion they took the opportunity to sing a song entitled: We have arrived, we are home. They did so several times in the Town Hall, at other events or in the town itself.

When at the beginning they stood looking up at the church towers of Waldbröl listening to the sound of the bells, they were rooted to the ground as if awestruck.

Not just this experience, but also the intention to work well together with the churches ultimately led to the Buddhist community truly arriving in Waldbröl.

In our fast-paced aged, which here and there drives people to their limits, it sometimes does us good to slow down and become aware of the things around us. This, for example, is just what happened to me on several occasions when the Buddhists were here in the Town Hall and walked with their slow steps towards the meeting room on the second floor. At such times I had to excuse myself for overtaking them on the stairs as I had other pressing appointments. They answered with a smile and great understanding, and handed over the books of Thich Nhat Hanh about, from their perspective, the true meaning of life.

In my view, one of the greatest challenges for the Buddhist community was to explain to visitors to their courses and retreats just why they had chosen the former Academy building for their work. It is well known that this building has an inglorious history. The mosaics from the National Socialist era and the columns under the entrance gallery from this time are relics from a terrible epoch. With optimism, strength and the resolute will to transform these things, the Buddhist community also succeeded in this. Today the mosaics are viewed accordingly and the col-



umns were transformed by being incorporated into the 25 metre high Stupa.

It is with great respect that I continue to witness the humility of the sisters and brothers, something which provides me with a frequent reminder of what the true meaning of life is.

Since the arrival of the Buddhist community here in Waldbröl a lot of water has flowed through the Waldbröler Bröl, the tributary that flows into the Sieg river, and many things have happened and changed. We are very thankful for the Buddhist community here in Waldbröl and I can no longer imagine the town without them. They help many people of all ages and in all situations. There is no competition between them and our ecumenism, something which reflects both their approach and their wish. Both sides make sincere efforts to live together in respect and openness. This is also shown by the existing interreligious contacts. Under the

heading: Living Buddha - Living Christ, they are endeavouring to collect donations from around the world for a 'Hall of Peace', in order to bring Christian beliefs and the meditative art of Buddhism together here in Waldbröl.

The Buddhist community at the EIAB enriches Waldbröl: it offers help in many different forms, is generous and treats people with total respect. In what have been, in part, tough times they have made their contribution to society through their social commitment to the people in the community, in hospital, in charities, companies and the schools. They also bring economic benefits in the form of the many building projects from which we here in Waldbröl profit.

There is much more that could be mentioned. For example, as a small thank-you for being here they provide us with



Thay Phap An and Mayor Peter Koester

thousands of wonderfully tasty spring rolls every Christmas.

Thanks to the Buddhist community Waldbröl now attracts people from all over the world, people who enjoy being in our wonderful countryside, in our town and in our diverse community.

Dear brothers and sisters of the EIAB, it is wonderful that you are here!

May 2015

*Peter Koester*  
Mayor



## Mindfulness at University – the EIAB on the road

From 10–14 October 2014, a student project week 'Intra Muros' took place at the Peter Behrens School of Architecture, a university for architecture in Düsseldorf. At the invitation of Prof. Oliver Kruse, a group of brothers and sisters from the EIAB were there to lead four days of mindfulness practice.

The days of practice began at 9.30 a.m. with meditation, followed by a Dharma talk and walking meditation. In a separate room we ate vegan meals prepared by the Mensa. After this came deep relaxation, Tai Chi and sharing. The day finished at 6 p.m.

On the final day we all went for a longer walking meditation through the meadows along the banks of the Rhine, after which the students had time to write down their personal experience of our time together. All their comments were combined into a wall newspaper which was then hung up in the university.

This opportunity to have contact with the young students and see their interest in the practice was also a wonderful experience for the brothers and sisters of the EIAB.

### Here are some excerpts from what the students experienced

'To be able to describe the knowledge I have gained in these four days and the insights I've arrived at I would need more than one pen and one empty sheet of paper. ...

It became clear to me with every exercise and every talk that this was about more than simple relaxation and meditation exercises; it was about expanding my own horizons. ...

Our own breath, as an anchor for body and mind, is so much more than what may perhaps appear as the trivial process of keeping the body alive. It can – when mindfully observed – help us ex-

perience the space between both these two fundamental institutions of life and in doing so contribute to a state of relaxation and calm, and a state of being wholly in the present moment. ...

During our studies as well as in all other areas of our lives we tend to waste our energy on thoughts which are of no great use to us. To bundle this energy and channel it into meditation helps us to use it more purposefully. ...

The brothers and sisters of the EIAB have, with warmth and sincerity, ensured that the last few days will remain an unforgettable experience for me for which I would like to thank everyone including also Prof. Kruse for making this possible."

### A second report

'Today, on the last day of our Intra-Muros week, I notice just what good the last few days have done me.

I was able to completely switch off and didn't think either of work or my studies. The meditations were sometimes easy, sometimes more difficult. Today the combination of sitting and walking meditation left me with a real sense of achievement.

I really hope that I can integrate these exercises into my everyday life over the long term and am also able to switch off when things get stressed again.

I have also been able to experience how important it is to unite mind and body.

I notice that I now have a greater motivation to get back to work on my studies. Now when I think of my draft I don't feel any stress or pressure; rather, I am full of ideas and look forward to putting them into practice. ...

I really enjoyed the sense of being part of a group. I was amazed, ... how mindful everyone was with each other.

I am very grateful that I was able to participate in this course and able to get to know the sisters and brothers of the EIAB.'

### Finally the report of Prof. Kruse

'I would like to thank everyone who made this experience possible: the students, who so wholeheartedly participated in both the course itself and the preparations for it; the brothers and sisters of the EIAB, who looked after us everyday for four days from morning to night, and their concentration, mindfulness and friendly and attentive manner towards all the course participants which never ceased for even a moment, our Mensa, which supplied us with fresh vegetarian food daily, and



all my colleagues for their constructive support, friendly words and encouragement.

There is a saying in Germany that we can only see other people from the outside. What happens inside is something we can only know within ourselves. We can lose ourselves in the confusion of the many different influences that affect us, or we can maintain our equanimity, dignity and concentration in every moment. The anchor, a possible reference point, is the major physical processes of our body. Body and mind are a unity and they can respond to each other in a wonderful harmony when we focus our awareness and concentration on our breathing, eating and drinking, our walking, sitting, standing, feeling, thinking and speech. We have reduced these elementary processes to the essential minimum and in concentration and stillness we have practiced together, reflected, looked deeply and come to know each other. Every day, in a group of 40 students and nine

teachers we have spent the time between 9.30 a.m. and 6 p.m. together in 2 rooms, the university corridors, the lawns in front of the workshop and the meadows along the banks of the Rhine.

The resonance from the continuous maintenance of physical and mental concentration in the evening discussions has both moved and impressed me. Every type of academic activity begins with concentration and mindfulness and systematic practice is a fundamentally important experience for everyone.

I hope and wish that we will be able to find ways to further cultivate the practice of these fundamental exercises, in which we encounter each other first and foremost as human beings, at our university on a regular basis. The impressions and experiences I have gained in this week will remain with me and strengthen me on our continuing path together: Intra Muros.'



## Teaching at the EIAB

**Giving a mindfulness course at the EIAB is always something very special for me. As soon as I arrive the sight of the young nuns and monks with their freshness, mindfulness and calm fills me with happiness; and I also enjoy their efforts to speak German with me as they seek to improve their language skills.**

Bathing in the collective energy of mindfulness together with the nuns and monks provides both me and the course participants with a solid basis to practice even before I have had time to explain the basic methods. This applies above all to our togetherness at mealtimes, as we walk through the building's broad corridors, and outside during walking meditation or when working in the garden or in the kitchen: when we see how the nuns or monks stop at the sound of the bell in the dining room and return to their breathing in order to come back to the here and now, or when we are outside and see how they take their time when walking, this supports us in our own practice. And because we are so gently inspired to follow their example and stop what we are doing, it helps us to take a break from the habit energy of always being in a hurry to get somewhere. The exchange of energy is a constant process, and it is wonderful to allow ourselves to be carried by this flow of mindful energy and to practice with it once we arrive home again and there is no mon-

**The exchange of energy is a constant process, and it is wonderful to allow ourselves to be carried by this flow of mindful energy.**

astery and no monks and nuns to be found far and wide and we have to rely on the energy of our own efforts.

Being able to experience how people practice together in a community/Sangha over a period of years is also very inspiring for all of us - above all in such an enormous project as the EIAB, which alongside developing and maintaining a course programme and providing accommodation and full board is also constantly confronted with new construction measures. When we think for a moment of the problems we encounter, or encountered, in our

own family or at work, then we can begin to imagine just how many problems can arise in living together in this immense project. Then it becomes even more amazing to experience how the people here live and work together in mindfulness and are still, most of the time, so cheerful and friendly.

The 'Ceremony for the Hungry Ghosts' is also deeply moving. The text for the ceremony does not just express compassion for the victims, but also asks for healing for the spirits of the perpetrators. This ceremony helps the course participants to come into contact with the wider dimensions of deep understanding, limitless love and great compassion at the core of the teachings of the Buddha and of Thay.

Dear nuns and monks of the EIAB, I am so glad that you have arrived here, in the middle of Germany, in the hills and valley of the Bergisches Land.

**Annabelle Zinser**, True Fragrance of the Mindfulness Trainings, Berlin



## 'How do you feel when you give a course at the EIAB?'

After allowing the question to work on me for some time, the words 'healing, enriching, fulfilling and providing hope' occur to me. In this moment people from the course come to mind, those who moved me, who dared to open themselves, who had the courage to confront their fears, and who open rather than close themselves to life and place their trust in others.

Then a remembrance from a course arises in which I was myself a participant. Thay Phap An gave a talk and gave us the message 'New life is possible! New life is possible!' meaning, in my understanding, that we can renew and change ourselves when we find and/or create suitable conditions.

I know of very few places in which I find as many good conditions inviting me to renew myself as at the EIAB. As a course participant there are very few distractions. There is no television or anything similar in the rooms. Instead there are the sounds of the bell continually reminding us to pause and come back to our breathing. Usually, the people around me behave mindfully and are relaxed. Here I find more people

**My personal experience is that I find solutions more quickly in the surroundings of the EIAB, and discover more clarity about myself and my life.**

with a genuine, rather than a feigned, smile on their face. There are many deep and honest conversations. We can admire the calligraphies of Thich Nhat Hanh which hang on the walls with words like 'Be beautiful, be yourself!' Then there are meditations, talks, physical exercises and many other things to do. There are monks and nuns who practice at the EIAB every day, whether courses are taking place or not.

I think that the effect of all this together is much greater than the sum of the parts. I often have the feeling that there is an atmosphere, a power, a posi-

tive field for change, or however you might like to call it, that is somehow present and can have a positive effect on the course participants and on me. This can bring undreamt of forces into motion: we 'coincidentally' come into conversation with another person on the course and discover that it was possible to have a helpful conversation precisely with this person. Things simply 'happen'. Positive 'coincidences' and meetings with others occur increasingly often.

My personal experience is that I find solutions more quickly in the surroundings of the EIAB, and discover more clarity about myself and my life. And this is not just the case with me, but also with many others with whom I speak. Something that moves and fulfills me a great deal, and which gives me hope, is that I meet so many people at the EIAB who have the strong need to turn the inner and outer world into a more peaceful and secure place and who want to contribute to this in whatever way possible no matter how small.

**Jörg Dierkes**, Psychologist and member of the Order of Interbeing

# Mindfulness and Creativity at the EIAB

## Mindfulness and Creativity

Gregor Rinko Stehle

‘For every form of art the same rule applies: it is not possible to express what one has not personally felt.’

Gustie Herrigel

The second ‘Creating Art from Inner Stillness’ workshop at the EIAB in Waldbröl has just ended. I would like to take this opportunity to share the experiences I have gained over the course of many years as a Buddhist monk and artist, and which we have experienced

where every idea and intention sleeps: creating art from inner stillness does not require any inner pictures, associations or concepts. These simply lead us to produce art in conformity with our image of what it should be. For this reason we decide beforehand to mould a Buddha. A Buddha, a human being in a meditative posture, personifies our own formless and selfless body, the living Dharmakaya. Our own inner experience of the meditation posture shows us the way out of emptiness into form. Mindfulness, as complete bodily awareness, helps us to linger in this empty place. Step-by-step, gently and naturally, the earth and clay we model begins to reflect the form of a Buddha. Buddhas which have arisen from our own experience of inner stillness greet us with their gentle smile and their imperturbable posture in the same way the mirror image in clear water reveals our original face to us. The creative process is meditation. Through mindfulness we become ever more aware of ourselves, how we are, what we are, eternal Buddhas, living beings.



## Mindfulness and Creativity in Art Therapy

Jan-Michael Ehrhardt

experienced and discussed together during the courses. I hope it helps inspire each of you and encourages you to continue to explore the open space offered by the stillness and the Dharma in a creative way and, with this vision in your heart, helps you shape and cultivate the awakened culture that is in the process of arising.

To allow art to arise from inner stillness it is necessary to arrive at the place

on. The picture can then arise out of the moment, completely new as a direct expression of life. Sometimes the breathing becomes the focus of attention and determines the course of the lines, sometimes it makes way for the feelings. Within me there remains an attentive witness and observer always calling me back to the tangible present.

I can always take refuge in the here and now, in my breathing, my body or in mother earth. In some therapy sessions I seek this inner refuge several times, breathe, feel the ground and also invite clients to do the same.

Occasionally, after a session in which a lot of suffering has come up, I lie flat on the earth and give up all the suffering I experienced, all the despair I felt, to mother earth, and feel the stability and transformative power of the earth. This practice brings me into contact with a sacred space in which I feel deeply connected with everyone and everything.



## Mindfulness Exercises for Photography

Klaus H.Schick, mindfulphotography@gmx.de

Over Whitsun the first retreat on the topic of ‘Mindfulness and Photography’ took place at the EIAB. As part of the retreat we used ‘mindful photography exercises’, and here is a short extract from them:

‘Supported by our practice we unite body and mind and develop an attitude of inner peace that enables us to live wholly in the present moment and to immerse ourselves in the artistic process of photography ...



Looking ...

We go through the world with wakeful eyes, open for the light they capture. We practice becoming aware of all colours, forms and textures free of preconceived notions or concepts and allow them to act on us. We take a calm, fresh look until an object of our perception invites us to come into resonance with it.

We focus our entire attention on this object, approach it mindfully and feel whether the resonance increases. This enables us to intuitively know that the photographic object has found us.

We explore this object with all our senses. How is it situated in space and time? We observe its colours, forms and textures. What energy is this object sending out at this moment? What kind of relationship exists between us and the object?

These exercises help us create an image in our minds that mirrors those fundamental aspects of the photographic object which connect us with it in this moment.

Only now do we reach for the camera.’



## Mindfulness, Dance and Creativity

Giuseppe Gambardella

When we become aware of our breathing we notice the natural movement and expansion that occurs when we breathe in, and the contraction when we breathe out. If we extend this to include every part of our body then this movement takes on the form of a dance.

Our body, no longer chained to habit energies and the stereotypes that arise from our thoughts, can allow body-mind to find new positions and gestures. As an expression of our innermost nature these body postures and gestures – both pleasant and painful – can release emotions which in turn also influence our movements so that they become the artistic manifestations of these emotions.

It is important to use our body to become aware of our relationship to the elements of the earth and to the ‘chi’,

the vital energy of the universe. We can, for example, create ‘our own Tai Chi’ through the ‘five elements sequence’. The feelings evoked by the different movements are more important than the perfection of the movement.

The core element of ‘original expression’ consists of the ability to perceive and maintain time as expressed in its ‘pulsations’ and regular repetitions. To ensure this experience is creative, transformative and fulfilling, we need to focus our minds on the timing of our feet and our whole body. In this way body and mind can become ‘one’ in the manifestation of time-space we create.



## Mindful and Healing Singing

Klaus Nagel and Susanne Mössinger; singing teachers and songwriters; [www.sovielhimmel.de](http://www.sovielhimmel.de)

For me mindful singing means:

- Being in the here and now when singing; using singing as a means to arrive in the here and now. Listening to both my voice and the voices of



A Buddha out of silence



\*

... and understanding

others at the same time. Seeing myself as part of the whole. Consciously hearing individual tones whilst also being aware of the whole.

- Connecting myself with the text I am singing, making it into my own text. Perhaps changing it for myself so that I can express exactly what I want to express in this moment.
- Being aware of how I feel at this moment. Being aware of my feelings and emotions and allowing them to be as they are.
- Expressing myself, my being, my 'exactly-as-I-am-at-this-moment' in my voice and in song. For me singing is an important source of energy in life. It helps me to cope with difficulties and to overcome difficult situations. When singing I can allow space to everything that is present in that particular moment. Despair and suffering as much as joy and love of life.

My experience: when I give space to my hurt, pain or sorrow in my singing then I can live through it, reconcile myself with it and let go of some of it.

Singing supports me in developing the qualities of which I sing: joy, feeling alive, alertness, inner peace. For me singing, meditation and the practice of mindfulness are inseparable. They belong together and nourish and strengthen each other.



### The Embodied Spirituality of the Dance of Universal Peace

Wali and Ariënné van der Zwan: 'Nourishing the Heart: Dances of Peace – Unity in Diversity', 10.–13. December 2015

Dances of universal peace are a mixture of mantric yoga and vipassana walking meditation, combined with the body prayers of the Middle East and spiced with mantras and sacred words from all traditions. In effect they are 'sung body prayers', embodied spirituality.

The form helps us to learn to focus; although the dances appear simple they require deep awareness. They are genuine forms of Zen practice. And with the practice your joy will become stronger and stronger.

When we teach these dances as a path of inner and outer spiritual growth towards freedom, we concentrate on three basic aspects: technique, cultivating a peaceful and joyful state of mind, and awareness.

Awareness comes first. The important thing is not whether you take a step or make a turn, rather it is your awareness of what you do and of how and why you do it. In this way the dances become mindfulness practice.

When you chant the 'Gate Gate' of the Heart Sutra, you become a Buddhist monk proclaiming the wisdom of the chant in a way that helps everyone to touch the meaning of the mantra.

When we ask whether the dances are a spiritual practice, not every course participant can give an answer: the dances are often full of joy, and spiritual practice is often regarded as not being joyful, unless one is an experienced practitioner. But soon everyone understands. How can a practice of focus, awareness and cultivating a peaceful and joyful state of mind not be a spiritual practice?

# In the Footsteps of the Buddha

From 12 to 24 October last year there was an EIAB Pilgrimage with Shantum Seth, to the sites at which the historical Buddha lived and taught. 60 practitioners from 9 countries, including 8 brothers and sisters from the EIAB and Plum Village formed a travelling Sangha body that journeyed through north India for 12 days in 2 buses: Rajgir/Vulture Peak-Nalanda-Bodhi Gaya-Varanasi/Sarnath- Kushinagar-Lumbini-Sravasti.

Our journey is integrated into a programme of sitting and walking meditation, chanting, Shantum's talks and stories, and 'Strucks', a form of Dharma sharing. Accompanied by Shantum – at times also by his family – and a wonderful Indian team we create a Sangha body which helps us to come to terms with the reality of life in India.

The flood of colours, forms, smells and noises, the beauty, poverty, the sparkle in so many eyes, begging children and air-conditioned hotel rooms, concealed living and dying, all the contradictions play on the heart and mind – and each of us must learn to deal with them in our own way.

Every day is an invitation to look deeply with compassion – into the reality of life in India and our reactions to it. Every day is an invitation to be truly present – for the energy of the sacred sites and the resonance within ourselves, for our own bodies, feelings and mental states, and for each other.

The travelling is both demanding and wonderful, humour our companion 'How much longer?' 'Between 5 and 15 hours'. Nobody can escape the typical sicknesses, and medicines and treatments do the rounds. We are silent in

the bus, we sing in the bus, we share in the bus, travelling in this form creates the power for Sangha building.

In the 'Strucks' we share what touches us: great joy, connectedness, dismay, pain, peace, compassion, gratitude – we touch our deepest aspiration and time and again also our limits. We support each other.

In our pilgrim's Sangha the living Dharma – the path of understanding and of love – becomes tangible.

Shantum's talks and stories of the Buddha's life and teachings, his clarity, knowledge, and the warmth with which he shares it in these historical places, helps us to see the Buddha as a human being with a personal history, and to open ourselves to the energy of these places. We sit and are fully present 'Thus I have heard'.

We are deeply moved:

- sitting on the Vulture Peak reciting the Heart Sutra,
- in Bodhi Gaya, meditating at the Bodhi tree as the sun rises, surrounded by the chanting of different traditions and the chanting of the birds 'all proclaiming the Dharma',
- in Uruvela walking through rice fields and kusa grass,
- in Varanasi chanting at dawn in a boat on the Ganges,
- in Kushinagar feeling the deep peace of the Hiranyavati river,
- in Jetahain receiving or renewing the 5 mindfulness trainings that great power and deep emotions we have experienced from the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha!



Vulture peak



At the Ganges



In Sravasti



Bettina Romhardt



There was a time when meadow,  
grove and stream  
The earth and every common sight  
To me did seem  
Apparelled in celestial light  
The glory and the freshness of a dream

William Wordsworth



## Children discover the art of touch and listening

### Children in Nature

Moving along a narrow path we push our way between dense bushes and ferns until we come to a clearing. The first beech leaves glow wonderfully in the morning sun. We continue beneath the high, dark green crowns of the spruce trees until we reach a small pond. A few fish touch the surface and then disappear again.

We stand on the banks observing the surface of the water, in which the trees opposite are reflected, for a long time. The children scream with delight as a shoal of fish comes very close.

It gives me immense pleasure to experience nature with children. For me it is extremely important to rediscover my enthusiasm for the cycles and balance of nature. To do this I have to stop, allow myself to become calm and to let go of the purposeful gaze of the forester that focuses on efficiency. Amazement and enthusiasm are the basis for bringing children closer to the wonders of nature.

This is not always so easy, as many children are so overloaded with the sensory stimulation of their everyday life that they often cannot notice the fine and subtle tones of nature and are constantly looking for new attractions. But nature has a healing effect, and this is sustained and without side-effects. Lying still on the forest floor looking up at the treetops, or listening to the stillness of the forest for a minute with closed eyes can soon awaken their perceptive minds.

It is also important to me that alongside peace and concentration the children have a chance to move and be active. Almost all children (as well as adults) get insufficient exercise. Here too nature offers a variety of possibilities: we run up a hill and back down again, climb a steep embankment or balance on a tree trunk.

The children can run, scream and leave the paths. But as soon as I give the signal, we all come together and then only one person speaks at a time. Just as nature is an endless space, so every child should be given the space he or she needs. Each question receives an answer, and every child can say what is in their heart.

It makes me happy when on hikes I can share my joy of nature with the monks and nuns of the EIAB and the children and also experience it myself. I learn an awful lot from the children. Their openness, their laughter and amazement at the wonders of nature are infectious.

---

Johannes Thomm  
Literature:  
Richard Louv, Last Child in the Woods  
Joseph Cornell, Sharing Nature

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### Children sail into a room of inner peace on the sound boat

During the summer retreat 2014, the leader of the children's programme, Elmar Vogt, invited the children for a trip in his sound boat. We were a bit uncertain about how they would react.

First of all they agreed with Elmar that the children who found it most difficult to keep still could be the first to get into the boat. Our journey together begins: the first child gets in, lies down comfortably gently covered by a silk curtain as a canopy. Elmar begins

to softly play the strings on the bottom of the boat. All the strings, as for a monochord, are tuned to the same note.

The boat is an invitation to not only listen with the ear, but with the entire body, and to feel safe and supported. Hung from hemp ropes, the boat slowly begins to rock. All the children are lying on mats in the boat, the dimmed light sends out a warm glow.

Although we are all lying very close together, everyone has their own space and the possibility to be by themselves whilst also feeling connected to everybody else.

At the end I discover, to my surprise and joy, that many have fallen asleep and a palpable stillness fills the room.

What has happened? Words can only hint at it. The boat has carried us to distant shores. The instrumental and everyone in the room have themselves become the instrument able to experience deep peace and love – a wonderful gift for us all.

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Michael Schweitzer

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### Unheard of!

Children do not have it easy in our technologised world. With the spread of the virtual media their sensory perception is becoming more and more dulled. Today noise is taken for granted and stillness has become rarer and rarer.

Consequently, in my course I want children to once again be able to playfully discover the world of sound. I am a sound artist and have developed many different sound objects and music instruments. I invite the children to play these, let their fantasy run riot and make music together. There is a great deal to be discovered. Sound bodies – whether made of wood, glass, metal or stone – that can be struck, stroked, rubbed or blown into, always produce new, unexpected sound qualities that both astonish and do us good – just like the subsequent stillness.

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Jochen Fassbender  
<http://wp.klangkunstfassbender.de/kurse-konzerte/kurse/>

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### Easter bunny handicraft

I was once again asked to participate in the Easter Retreat children's programme. I used the days beforehand to think about ideas for the topic of Easter, and then made the corresponding stencils. In order to be able to show the children examples, I tried out the stencils and made prototypes in advance.



By Good Friday everything was ready. The children were full of enthusiasm and eager to create Easter bunnies, baskets, birds and more from paper. Once this was done, everything was colourfully painted.

I was extremely satisfied with 'my children' and can only say that without exception they were all extremely creative. With the support of the nuns and monks the children really enjoyed the painting and crafts programme.

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Barbara Niesen

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## Learning to let go in community life

**For many years an aspiration has been growing among young people to create a lay community in the Plum Village tradition. During the 21-day retreat in 2014, we decided to start a seedling community within an existing practice center, in order to learn about community life, and to investigate sustainable and wholesome livelihood. We would take the first steps towards new communities.**

We decided to spend a 3 month period in Dharma Gaia in New Zealand – a small practice center established by Sister Shalom – where we could learn from the existing community, and receive guidance from the two resident Dharma teachers. We would offer our presence, practice, and skills to Dharma Gaia, working to support and maintain the center. At the end of December we started as a group of 9 practitioners from all over the world – the ‘Young Bamboo Community’.

I remember sharing our dreams for how our community would manifest in Dharma Gaia and how we envisioned our time: how we would work together on projects; how we would connect with local schools and New Zealand Sanghas; how we would share about and nourish our aspirations about community life; and how we would work towards manifesting a community once we left Dharma Gaia.

Daily life in the community turned out quite differently. With many work periods spent in the garden weeding and tidying up, and hours spent digging, I began to wonder why I was there. Why was I living 3 months in this communi-

ty? How was this so different from my previous job that did not allow space or freedom to express creativity?

I was becoming increasingly critical of the structure and of others. I was distancing myself from the community. Everything seemed ‘off’. There seemed to be a heavy air, which would dissipate as soon as I walked to the neighboring paddock. Wherever I looked I saw difficulties. And these difficulties were spilling over into my relationship with my partner, where we reinforced each others’ uncertainties. ‘The centre is at fault! The practice isn’t right. The food isn’t right. The sleeping arrangements make life hard.’ I was struggling, and was unable to reach out for help. With this building up, I decided to take a few days away to try to find some balance in myself.

It was strange leaving the community – taking time alone to rediscover the connection with myself – but time alone helped me to see with different eyes. I learned the nourishment that can be found in solitude, and the necessity of some ‘alone time’. I felt the air lighten and found my strength and solidity returning.

I also saw that I was holding on to an idea of how a ‘good practitioner’ should be. I had stopped doing things that brought me joy – including reading novels and watching movies. I came to realize that I needed to remain true to ‘myself’ whilst incorporating the practice into my life.

Coming back felt like returning home. However, the difficulties I perceived as ‘in the community’ remained – as did the difficulties in my relationship. As the distance seemed to grow between my partner and me, old pain from my childhood resurfaced. There were still parts that needed to heal before I could be truly present for either myself or others. The difficulties came to a head on the last evening of the February mindfulness weekend, culminating in a true panic attack.

This moment became a turning point. Reaching the bottom showed me the love that was in the community. Despite the distance I had created, and my sometimes childish lack of co-operation, the entire community embraced me fully. The inner child, who had always felt so isolated and so alone, could let go of his need for certainty,



and just be with what there was. He was home, and he was safe.

As we set off, a few days later, for a week at the beach – to vision on our future and to just be together – I felt more stable and could open more to the community. The perceived distance between my partner and I lessened as I became stronger and more centered. Following a workshop that some of us attended, I could finally let the inner child take his rightful place and allow the man to step forward to be present. This was truly liberating and embodying. I could let go of the trauma from my past and become whole again.

As I opened more to the community in the last weeks, I began to let go

of many of my preconceptions about life, love, friendship, and community – which often prevent me from being truly present. I began to learn about the true nature of intimacy – a healthy expression of love that is not limited to couples; that does not ask but gives; that respects boundaries, even during physical contact. I learned about relationship – that space and distance are not the same; that closeness is not love; that (even intimate) nourishment cannot always be sought from only one source. And I began to slowly open the door to brotherhood.

In the last days before leaving we created a banana grove in the hollow, which we were filling with the earth we had been digging out; we laid the foun-

dation for a new shed; and the gardens and center looked neat and tidy. I can see the fruits of our labors, even if they felt pointless at the time.

Slowly the focus has been returning to my life – the aspiration to create healthy, sustainable, and nourishing communities and ecosystems; the aspiration to live in the world and to work towards a healthy future for all.

**Barry Wright** is practicing mit der Wake-UP-Sangha Freiburg

# Deathlessness – the Buddha's innovative and meaningful approach to our existence

'Bhikkhus, a practitioner remains established in the observation of the body in the body, diligent, with clear understanding, mindful, having abandoned every craving and every distaste for this life.'

Buddha



I will always remember the lady who told the Sangha that she came to Plum Village to see how Thay opens and closes the doors.

She had learned of a talk Thay gave about his experience as a novice attending to his teacher. That day, Thay brought something to his teacher, but he did not open and close the door behind him mindfully. After Thay entered the room, his teacher gently told him: 'Oh, my dear, you did not enter the room with mindfulness. Please go and close the door again mindfully.'

Thay learned the important lesson of mindfulness that day, and since then, he's always remembered to open and close doors in mindfulness.

This is the seventh year that we are here at the EIAB. During these years, I have observed many friends opening and closing the door. Most opened the door and let it close by itself or closed it unconsciously, so that there was a loud, harsh noise when the door snapped back into its place. This past Easter Retreat, I invited friends to be a continuation of Thay in opening and closing the door. As we pass through a door, our hand holds the door's handle in complete mindfulness; after passing through; we turn our body and close the door with our hand in complete mindfulness. Many friends practiced that, and the whole retreat was very peaceful with the silent opening

and closing of the doors. Some friends shared that they were so happy with so much more silence and peacefulness. Some shared that they have closed many different kind of doors in their life, very often without mindfulness, and that has caused a lot of pain and sorrow. They expressed happiness and gratitude for the deepening of their experience of practicing mindfulness with opening and closing doors.

This practice is called **mindfulness of opening and closing the door in opening and closing the door**. It is the essential practice given in the sutra on the Four Establishments of Mindfulness. The Buddha taught, 'Bhikkhus, a practitioner remains established in the observation of the body in the body, diligent, with clear understanding, mindful, having abandoned every craving and every distaste for this life.'<sup>1</sup> This is called **mindfulness of the body in the body**.

The essence of the practice is that we follow our act completely, from the beginning to the end, with our clear awareness, attention, and mindfulness and with a joyful feeling of having finished an act completely. With this training, we learn to allow our mind to be open, malleable, flexible, and ready for understanding and insights into our life. We can practice this teaching from the beginning to the end of every activity in our daily life such as folding a blanket with gratitude, arranging a

mat or cushion with full awareness in a meditation hall after a sitting session, drinking and cleaning our cups with care and attentiveness, preparing and cooking our foods with love and gentleness and so on....

Many times we begin an act, let's say, act A. Not having completed act A, our mind runs on to the next, act B, and then C, and so on (see figure 1). Most of our life consists of a sequence of never-finished acts, whose accumulated energies of incompleteness remain in our sub-consciousness without ever being resolved and slowly form the underlying impulses for our unhappy, unsatisfactory and never-fulfilled life.

Practicing **mindfulness** of act A in act A is to follow its trajectory from the beginning to the end with complete awareness, attention and mindfulness, as in figure 2.

This practice is the essence of Buddhist meditation, even though it appears to be simple. It is actually a practical ap-

plication in our daily life of the Buddha's insight into the problem of human existence. The Buddha told his Bhikkhus, those who have not known the deathless directly are the ones who have not directly known mindfulness directed to the body. Those who have known the deathless directly are the ones who have directly known mindfulness directed to the body.<sup>2</sup> The Buddha claims that his **Dharma is visible, of the present life (sanditthika), not connected with death, but connected to deathlessness (akalika), inviting all, even children, to come and see (ehipassika)**.<sup>3</sup> In presenting his Dharma or Truth about existence in this way, the Buddha redefined the way we understand meditation, suffering and human existence.

Some people of the Buddha's time, the Jainas, regarded liberation as something that takes place at the moment of death for advanced practitioners.<sup>4</sup> Others saw liberation as the understanding of a permanent, absolute Self.<sup>5</sup> Meditation was the means to reach these goals

through fasting, self-mortification or deep concentration. After six years of experimenting with different kinds of meditation and practices, the Buddha found the way to liberation by recalling his experience as a young boy peacefully sitting under a rose apple tree in the springtime, free from unwholesome thoughts and activities.<sup>6</sup>

## Namarupa – Body mind

Contemplating this youthful experience and experimenting with a new meditation technique, the Buddha came to understand the problem of suffering and attained his goal of living a life of supreme peace. The Buddha discovered a reality hitherto unknown to the people of his time, a psychophysical reality which he named using a compound noun, namarupa. He also discovered that consciousness is not a reality independent of namarupa, but namarupa conditions consciousness, and vice versa, consciousness conditions namarupa.<sup>7</sup> There exists no absolute independent reality of any kind, not

Figure 1

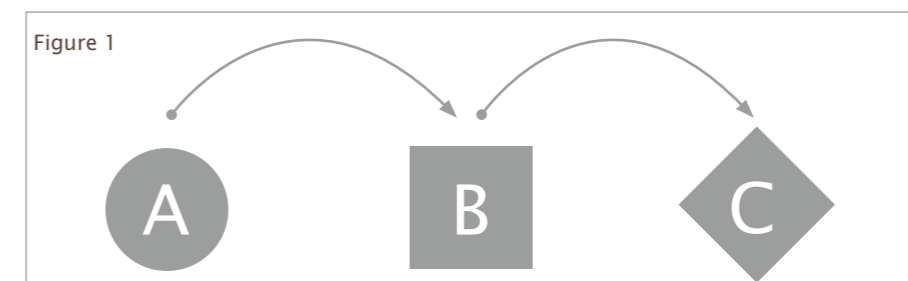
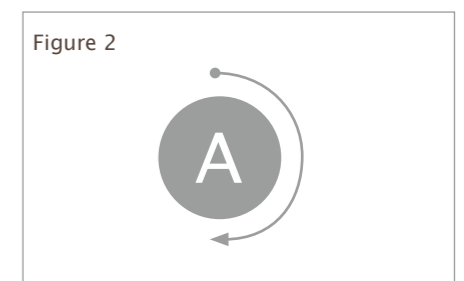


Figure 2





even consciousness. Suffering is a process of the becoming of our consciousness, a process in which we are deeply involved and trapped in the reality of namarupa and thus lose our balanced perspective of a unified, connected whole. This way of living in turn conditions namarupa, our psychophysical being, into a state of disharmony and pain. Liberation is a natural state of our existence. Liberation is not a goal to be attained but a way of living to be rediscovered, one we lost through our confused way of facing the challenging world.

#### Four stages of liberation

The Buddha shared with us a 4-stage process (the jhana meditation<sup>8</sup>), which led him to liberation. The first stage consists of leaving behind the world of unwholesome conditions and coming back to our namarupa, allowing our thinking process to slow down. Thus we slowly take root in the awareness of our physical body. As we connect more to our body, joy and happiness slowly arise. The process continues to the second stage in which we feel more serene, with a sense of being collected, unified, with more joy and a growing sense of satisfaction in our physical body. As

we allow ourselves to sink deeper into our body, in the third stage, we experience more awareness, mindfulness, and equanimity and enjoy a sense of happiness and satisfaction in the body. By the fourth stage, we grow into a state of natural openness of our mind, which is called the purity of equanimity-mindfulness (*upekkhasatiparisuddhim*). The first two stages harmonize, balance and heal our psychophysical being. They help to still our confused mental states and to transform the different symptoms of mind-body related illnesses. The last two stages open our mind up to possible new choices concerning our world view and perspective; we come to understand the process of change in life and can act accordingly. The Buddha rediscovered in himself the natural state of equanimity-mindfulness that we all possess, but we have lost the capacity to maintain our mind in this state due to our way of living during the process of growing up and facing the challenges of life.

#### No-death as freedom from suffering

With this clarity and openness of mind, the Buddha reached his goal of supreme peace and went beyond the

entanglement of confusion, suffering, and the process of the becoming of our consciousness (or birth and death). He experienced deathlessness. He understood the matter of birth and death in terms of suffering. To experience birth and death is to experience suffering, as suffering is a process of becoming entangled and of being stuck in every moment of our life because we cannot maintain the purity of equanimity-mindfulness within our mind. The Buddha had solved the problem of human existence in the temporal dimension, the infinite cycles of birth and death. The solution exists in the moment. Unlike Rene Descartes, who, in saying “I think, therefore I am”, defined existence in terms of the certainty of the thinking process, the Buddha defined existence in terms of suffering: I suffer, therefore I am. What we call ‘I’ is our identification and entanglement with the process of suffering – that is to say, ‘I’ is the sense of a separate self that arises in the moments when we lose equanimity-mindfulness, and which we then hold on to. Instead of expressing this insight negatively as the Buddha had done, another way of expressing it positively in the later Buddhist generations of the Mahayana Buddhism is: I am happy or I am con-

nected to all, therefore I am not. I am in all and all is in me. I inter-am.

The people of Buddha’s time were looking for liberation in the context of an infinite number of repeated cycles of birth and death and an arena of infinite space. The deity Rohitassa appeared to the Buddha when he was at Savatthi in Jeta’s Grove and asked him whether by travelling to the end of the cosmos, he could solve the problem of existential suffering. Instead of looking for a solution by going out to the furthest stretches of infinite space, the Buddha helped to change Rohitassa’s perspective by declaring that in this physical body, with its perceptions and its mind, we can already find the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world, and the way leading to the cessation of the world.<sup>9</sup> For the Buddha, the spatial dimension of the world can only be meaningfully defined in terms of suffering, in other words, the existential problem of being trapped in the limited world is merely a projection of the suffering from within.

Thus, the Buddha found a meaningful answer to a very complicated, interconnected problem of existence stretching throughout time and space by reducing

Liberation is a natural state of our existence.

Liberation is not a goal to be attained  
but a way of living to be rediscovered,  
one we lost through our confused way  
of facing the challenging world.

it to a local cessation of suffering in the here and now. Suffering defines time and space. When suffering ceases, one is able to perceive the ultimate truth of interconnected existence. He proclaimed what can be called the principle of general relativity of existence --- this is because that is. One’s existence is deeply connected to all others’ existence. This principle governs all existential phenomena from the microscopic to macroscopic level, including consciousness. Losing this perspective and allowing one’s mind (including perceptual, emotional as well as physical cognition) to move and to be trapped in the wrong perspective will give rise to the need for an existential answer.

#### Relativity – Interconnectedness

The Buddha’s use of the concept of locality, of the moment in time and space, has a parallel in the formulation of the modern theory of gravitation. This year marks 100 years since Albert Einstein announced the principle of general relativity of gravitation to the world.<sup>10</sup> Einstein proposed that the apparent separation between the absolute, independent dimensions of space and time is only an approximation. At a deeper level of reality, time,

space, matter and energy are deeply interconnected. Gravitation is a manifestation of the local interaction between them. Space-time tells matter and energy how to move, and matter and energy tell space-time how to curve. In a similar way, consciousness conditions namarupa and namarupa conditions consciousness. With confusion about this interaction, the mind gradually gravitates into the direction of creating suffering and a subjective temporal and spatial experience of the world. Even though the Buddha and Einstein both had ideas about general relativity, the Buddha had a different purpose in formulating and sharing his ideas. Einstein expressed his idea mathematically in his gravitational field equations and attempted to solve this very complex and difficult non-linear problem in order to understand the expression of physical phenomena. On the other hand, the Buddha wanted to go beyond the reality of all non-linear (that is to say complexly interrelated) entanglements in human existence in order to experience a supremely peaceful life by spiritual training. Therefore, in his time, the Buddha proposed a simple solution to this problem in terms of understanding and responding to our daily, moment to moment experiences.<sup>11</sup>

For the Buddha, meditation becomes a way of life;  
with equanimity-mindfulness,  
we take care of the way we relate to ourselves and  
to the world every moment of our lives.

Buddhist psychology

The approach of the Buddha provides a simple model of Buddhist psychology, one that gives just enough guidance for us to be able to go beyond our entanglements. Later generations of Buddhist thinkers and philosophers, working to systematize the Buddha’s teaching, undertook a major shift in philosophical direction, trying to propose a full solution to this non-linear problem. Since then, there have continued to be numerous new developments in Buddhist thought. Ideas and schools arose such as the theory of karmic retribution, the linguistic philosophy of the Middle Way or the school of Sunyata (Emptiness), the theory of subliminal consciousness of the Yogacara School, the experiential realization of the school of Zen<sup>12</sup> as well as other old and modern developments. In the language of Zen, equanimity-mindfulness is our ‘Original Face’. From the Buddha’s re-discovery of equanimity-mindfulness in himself while practicing the jhana meditation to the experiential realization of this Original Face in the practice of Zen, Buddhism has gone through a full circle of development from the meditative experience of the Buddha to a rich multiplicity of intellectual and philosophical speculations in Buddhist thought and back to the simple experiential living in the moment of the Zen tradition. This multiplicity of world

views arises from the openness of the fourth stage of the jhana meditation, which makes the mind malleable, flexible and open. Those who have studied quantum physics can think of it as being like the different possibilities of the quantum states, once the wave function collapses. Similarly, once we are liberated from the illusion of a separate self, we acquire the freedom to choose between multiple possible ways of viewing the world. In Mahayana Buddhism, different realms of existence are only the magical manifestation of our mind due to our past conditioning. But with a bodhisattva aspiration or vow, we can also positively construct our own world.

For the Buddha, meditation becomes a way of life; with equanimity-mindfulness, we take care of the way we relate to ourselves and to the world every moment of our lives. Equanimity-mindfulness, a natural state of our mind, was rediscovered and described by the Buddha. Our task is to use it, cultivate it and benefit from it in our process of living. Then we can live a life of meaningful existence in the visible, immediate present (*sanditthika*) and not be connected to death (*akalika*). Equanimity-mindfulness is not something that needs to be discovered again in the jhana meditation, but is to be lived again moment by moment, a Buddhist understanding of meditation

applied to our daily life. Meditation is not an activity apart from the living process.

Path of liberation

Allowing the mind to settle down and come back to take root in the physical body (the 4-stage process or jhana), the Buddha discovered a way to go beyond this non-linear interaction between consciousness and namarupa, beyond our ordinary existence as we are used to experiencing it. He entered into a domain of liberation. The Buddha named this domain Deathlessness, the Space outside of space, the Time outside of time. This is an innovative idea of liberation. It is very profound. Yet the path of the practice is simple enough to attract and to invite everyone to come and see directly for himself/herself (ehipassika), and the fruits of the practice are visible in this immediate, present life (*sanditthika*). He reformulated this simple path of salvation in different ways and in different forms, including the practices of Mindfulness Trainings for lay friends (5 Precepts) and for the monastic community (250/348 Monastic Precepts), of the Full Awareness of Breathing (the application of the first two stages of the jhana meditation), of the Four Establishments of Mindfulness (the third and fourth stage of the jhana meditation), of the Awareness of the Body (the third



jhana), the Noble Eightfold Path (all four stages applied to all aspects of our life) and so on ... With these practices, we can live our life with the openness of equanimity-mindfulness. We have enough peace and solidity. With an open mind of limpid clarity, we have the possibility of choice in this world. Birth and death now have a new meaning; our experience of birth and death arises from our suffering in the moment, when we are trapped in the process of the becoming of our consciousness, when our consciousness becomes deeply and complexly entangled with our namarupa. The Buddha discovered an ancient path to liberation, seemingly naively simple but spiritually very profound.

Open and close the door

And how does one practice **mindfulness of an act in an act**? The Buddha instructed his disciples: when going forward and returning he acts knowing clearly what he is doing; when looking ahead and looking away he acts clearly knowing; when flexing and extending his limbs he acts clearly knowing; when wearing his robes and carrying his outer robe and bowl he acts clearly knowing; when eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting he

acts clearly knowing; when defecating and urinating he acts clearly knowing; when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent he acts clearly knowing.<sup>13</sup>

So please, open and close the doors with full and clear awareness. Enjoy

drinking a cup of tea with full and clear awareness. Try to walk every step with full and clear awareness. Practice to abide joyfully with any act from the beginning to the end with complete awareness, attention and mindfulness. It is possible for all of us to experience deathlessness in the here and now.

**Thay Phap An** is the director and Dean of Studies of the EIAB. He was ordained in 1992 and still continues to learn and grow, offering new dharma doors combining Chi Kung (Qigong), Tai Chi and meditation, among many others.

*This article is dedicated to the 100th anniversary of Einstein’s Theory of General Relativity, which helps me to more deeply understand the concept of Deathlessness proposed by the Buddha to our problem of existence, birth and death. And the teaching of the Buddha helps me to understand the ideas developed by Einstein and other modern physicists more deeply.*

Endnotes  
1. Thich Nhat-Hanh, ‘Transformation and Healing – Sutra on the Four Establishments of Mindfulness’  
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3. Johannes Bronkhorst, ‘Akalika in the Buddhist canon’, Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik 10 (1984 [1985]), pp. 187–190  
4, 5. Johannes Bronkhorst, ‘The Two Traditions of Meditation in Ancient India’. 1986, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden. (Alt- und Neu-Indische Studien, 28.)  
6. Bhikkhu Bodhi, ‘Majjhima Nikaya, The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha’, Mahasaccaka Sutta: Sutta 36, i 247–31, p. 340.  
7. Bhikkhu Nanamoli, ‘The life of the Buddha: according to the Pali canon’, p. 26  
8. Walpola Rahula, ‘Zen and the Taming of the Bull’, Chapter 10: A Comparative Study of Dhyanas according to Theravada, Sarvastivada and Mahayana  
9. Bhikkhu Bodhi, ‘The connected discourses of the Buddha: a new translation of the Samyutta Nikaya, Rohitassa, SN 2–26, p.157  
10. Albert Einstein, ‘Relativity: the special and the general theory – introduced by Nigel Calder’, Penguin classics  
11. Sue Hamilton, ‘Early Buddhism: A New Approach – The I of the Beholder’  
12. Johannes Bronkhorst, ‘Buddhist teaching in India’  
13. Analayo, ‘Satipatthana, The direct path to realization’, [Activities], p. 5



## Our environment

It is a lovely day in May in Waldbroel. How lucky we are to have eyes that can enjoy the wonderful colours and forms of spring and two good legs to take us out into the woods and pastures and the time to enjoy the beauties of nature. We do not need more than this to make us happy.

Plum Village has many centres with a monastic presence: 2 in France (including the mother house with five hamlets, 1 in Germany, 3 in the United States, 1 in Thailand, 1 in Hong Kong, 1 in Indonesia and 1 in Australia. Each centre lies in a different natural setting but all are guided by the teachings of the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh concerning the

practice of mindfulness, concentration and insight. These centres are 'micro-environments' which become a refuge for many people.

In Buddhism we talk about retribution. There are two kinds of retribution: the main retribution and the retribution of the environment. The main retribution is our body, feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness. The environment retribution is what it sounds to be: the surroundings we live in. The two are closely connected. Our body and consciousness produce feelings and perceptions which in turn create our environment.

It is very fortunate that all the great faiths in our world have ethical guidelines. If humans did not have the capacity for ethical behaviour they would have destroyed themselves and other species already. The Venerable Nhat Hanh with the help of the Plum Village community have revised the Five Mindfulness trainings to make them the Buddhist contribution to a global ethic. Someone who practises these trainings already begins to change his or her thoughts and feelings and actions and so changes the environment. Thoughts and actions of compassion and loving kindness, joy and inclusiveness take us to live in places that are beautiful and light. Thoughts of hatred,

Thoughts and actions of compassion and loving kindness, joy and inclusiveness take us to live in places that are beautiful and light.

greed and the criminal actions take us to live in places that are dark and heavy. Our feelings and our environment are closely related. We can make our environment better just by the thoughts and feelings that we have. Say that we are in Waldbroel on a beautiful spring day and we have hating thoughts. We cannot enjoy or even really see our beautiful environment. So it is very important, as far as we can, to choose the kind of thoughts and feelings that we have. The practice of mindful breathing and walking helps us to do this. Whenever you do not feel happy remember to breathe and to walk mindfully, enjoying every step. Every step can be pleasant if you walk in the present moment. Ask yourself when you feel bad, if there is any good reason for feeling bad and turn the bad feeling into something better. Do you feel bad because you are worrying about the future or regretting the past? Sometimes even a pleasant feeling is based on thinking something pleasant will happen to you, but this is not a truly happy feeling because it is not based on reality only on an imagination. Stop and breathe and look at the flower and smile. Look at others as fellow human beings who have the capacity to be enlightened. Be fully grateful for everything you have and fully there for anyone you are with and you will immediately feel better.

Simple daily activities like eating a meal are a chance for you to make a beautiful environment. The fifth of the five contemplations for eating reads: "We accept this food in order to nour-

ish our brotherhood and sisterhood." When you eat, the food will be digested in order to produce energy. If you have loving thoughts and happy feelings of gratitude as you eat you are digesting your food along with your feelings. Be aware as you eat of the kind of spiritual energy you want to arise from the food. Make the deep aspiration as you eat that you will use the food's energy in order to produce loving thoughts, words and actions. There is no way to compassion. Compassion is the way and so you do not have to wait for the food to be digested to produce the energy of love for your brothers and sisters. You can do it as you eat and when you have finished eating the energy of compassion will still be there in you and in the environment.

Our environment is the realm where we are living. It can be heaven or it can be hell and these realms do not come from outside of our consciousness. We have the freedom to choose our environment by the way we act, think and feel. Say you are sitting in front of your television screen, holding the remote control. You can change the channel very quickly by pressing a button. Your mind also has different channels which you can change by the practice of mindfulness. Mindfulness means that you recognise what is happening in your mind, you recognise whether it is creating a good or a bad environment for you and if it is creating a bad environment you bring yourself back to the present moment with your breathing and walking and make something better.

In Waldbroel in the Institute we have a ceremony once a week. It is called "Giving Food". The food that we give is the food of our compassion to those spirit presences who are hungry for understanding and love. We recognise the suffering that has existed in this locality from about 75 years ago. We know that some of those feelings of hatred, fear and feeling the victim of great injustice are still tangible and we want to transform them by giving rise to feelings of love. Some of the feelings of fear and being treated unjustly have not yet come to rest. They still wander around in an invisible form, searching for love and an end to the suffering. It is very important during the ceremony that we concentrate and feel compassion for those feelings in order to make our environment lighter. We talk to them and with concentration offer them the food of love (which is present on the table in the form of edible food and, in our mind, in the form of understanding and compassion). Such ceremonies help transform our environment so that the atmosphere is lighter and loving thoughts and happy feelings can more easily arise.

There is a bodhisattva (a being of great love and understanding) by the name of Kshitigarbha who has made the great vow over many lifetimes to be present in the places of the greatest suffering in order to bring light and liberation to those places. When we are solid and strong in our practice we can vow to go to those places to bring relief by means of our positive and compassion-



Mindfulness means that you recognise what is happening in your mind, you recognise whether it is creating a good or a bad environment for you.

ate thinking and feelings. It is much easier and more effective if we go as a sangha, a community, because the collective energy of compassion is much greater than the sum of its parts.

It is wonderful when in a place that has been torn apart by war we can establish an oasis of peace and compassion where people of different faiths can live together with respect and harmony; living a simple, communal life so they do not have to consume too much and have time to be in nature, to listen to each other and to fulfil their deepest aspiration. It may be that people who are intent on war will want to destroy that oasis but they cannot destroy the

feelings of deep happiness and compassion that were in the people who lived there.

One of the reasons why the site of the EIAB was chosen was so that the sangha would have the chance to transform the energy of fanaticism, cruelty, injustice and intolerance into one of inclusiveness, tolerance and compassion. On the outskirts of Waldbroel there is a wall that was built in the Nazi era. Later people painted in large letters on it: 'nie wieder Krieg (no more war)'. It is not enough, however to write these words or even to chant them. We have to live in such a way that we produce an environment in which war is not

possible and we can only do that by the way we think, feel and act in our daily lives. At every moment we have the chance to sow the seeds of peace rather than war by the practice of mindfulness, concentration and insight.

**Sister Annabel** (Chan Duc) is the Dean of Practice in the EIAB. She originally comes from England, where she was a teacher for 15 years. In 1988, in India, she was the first Western woman to be ordained as a nun by Thich Nhat Hanh.

Endnote:

<sup>1</sup> The EIAB offers offers daily walking meditation in the neighbouring park.

## In search of the mindful organisation

Mindfulness has become mainstream. Interest in this topic is clearly increasing on the whole and this includes all types of companies and organisations. In recent years I have got to know a variety of people and organisations with a great longing for a new type of company and entrepreneur able to live mindfulness in everyday life, and show how it is possible for a mindful economy to function.

In my opinion we should act with humility, patience and sincerity with regard to this topic. Companies that embody mindfulness and carry it in their organisation's DNA are not created overnight. We know from our own individual practice that we cannot change our habit energies overnight. Changing a large organisation, a group or even a collective view of economics is immeasurably more difficult. The integration of Buddhist values, practices and views in our society and its organisations is a project that will extend over centuries.

The central question is: How can the spark of mindfulness in individuals jump over to groups, whole organisations or even the entire economy?

Economic transformation can begin and move forward in many ways, here are a few examples from friends from the Netzwerk Achtsame Wirtschaft e.V (Network of Mindful Economics):

- A self-employed dentist reduced her private fixed costs by 40% and as a result gained greater freedom with her time which she used for the benefit of her mindfulness practice and patients.
- After many years of struggle and hanging on, an employee resigned from his job and is now on a long



Working meeting of the Network for Mindful Economics at the EIAB (above)



Walking meditation in the city centre of Vienna (below)



retreat to gain clarity about the path ahead.

- A businessman donates a large part of his annual profit to good causes.
- A person who waived his right to inherit the family company and instead developed ideas about a mindful financial system.
- The managing director of a management consultancy sold his stake in the company and became self-employed with mindfulness-based consultancy.
- A socially engaged association offered its 100 employees training on the topic of 'Mindful work and communication'.
- An IT manager started a meditation group in his company.
- An administrative worker dared to allow others to become aware of her

mindfulness practice in an open plan office, and in doing so initiated a talk on the subject.

So, instead of seeking for a phenomenal story of transformation it is better if we attend to the many small and medium sized seeds of mindfulness that we sow in our own lives. Then step by step we can ourselves become the change that we want to see in the world.

**Kai Romhardt**

More information: [www.achtsame-wirtschaft.de](http://www.achtsame-wirtschaft.de) 17.-20.09. GATEWAYS TO A MINDFUL ECONOMY – How we can create a healthy economy together. Community-meeting of the Achtsame Wirtschaft (mindful economics) network with Dr. Kai Romhardt and active members of the Achtsame Wirtschaft (mindful economics) network



## A Sangha of Families in the Netherlands

**At the large retreats in the Netherlands, parents regularly asked about the possibilities for practice for families with children. It wasn't until 2012, a month after the Dutch retreat with Thay in Waldbroël, that we were in a position to offer the first day of mindfulness for families in Vriendenhuis Nooitgedacht ('friends' house never imagined') in Tricht\*.**

### Family Mindfulness Days

The programme is structured on the basis of the family retreats in the Plum Village tradition, and the children's activities take place in parallel with those of the adults. The retreat is supported by wonderful members of staff who both practice themselves and know how to make the practice interesting for children between 4 and 12. The programme for adults focuses on the topics of parenting and education. Walking meditation, tea breaks and lunch

is practiced in family groups. Children and parents spend the rest of the day apart from one another.

Since 2012 we have organised days of mindfulness for families four times a year. In the meantime the list of those interested has tripled.

### Practicing in Family Groups

A number of the families take part regularly which gives them the chance to get to know each other better. This in

turn leads to friendships between both children and parents.

Although the days of mindfulness are experienced as very nourishing, parents and children frequently express the wish for more time together – both in family groups and as parents amongst themselves. Some parents want to attend part of the children's programme so that they remain in contact.

To meet these needs, joint parent-child exercises have been incorporated into

the programme, such as 'mindful listening to the experiences of children' and 'singing together'.

The day now begins with everyone together in the children's room, so that the energy is focused and everyone can truly arrive.

In the development phase our Sangha was inspired by Steffie Höltje and Margret de Backere, who have been working with families for many years. The way in which they try to strengthen the family from within is very impressive and fits in well with ideas about family life in the Netherlands.

It is clear that more activities for the whole family are necessary to ensure that the practice can be more deeply integrated into everyday family life. Ideally this would mean a retreat lasting several days in a supportive environment.

### Family Retreats

During the Dutch retreat with Thay in June 2013 at the ELAB the opportunity arose to make this dream come true: at Ascension 2014 the first Dutch family retreat 'Family as Sangha' was held. This retreat took place for the second time at the beginning of May 2015.

At the family retreats parents and children sometimes practice together and sometimes apart. Before the retreat both parents and children fill out a questionnaire. At the last retreat they wrote down what made them happy (the lotus), what is difficult in their family (the mud) and how they deal with it. These issues were then addressed at the retreat. The answers giv-



en by the parents and families proved to be universal. Cooperation and love for one another makes the family members happy, whilst arguments and frustration are painful.

At the retreats families and staff practice walking meditation in the woods, make music, eat in silence with the monks and nuns, relax in deep relaxation, create works of arts from branches and pine cones and play a great deal of football. In addition, parents and their children acknowledge all the good things they see in one another.

Alongside this we also take a look at the difficult side of family life, e.g. rage and sometimes also outbursts of anger. How can parents remain calm in such turbulence? How can we give children a firm base and serve as a role model in dealing with anger?

We consider this topic in talks and family exercises. A family exercise could be one in which the parents undertake a working meditation together with their children or need to find agreement about a joint activity that is enjoyable for all members of the family. During these exercises both happiness and anger sometimes arise. With the support of the staff, the parents, and sometimes also the children, practice allowing the joy to last for as long as

possible and embracing strong emotions. These experiences make the families better equipped to continue their practice once they return home. The book "Ruimte maken" (English: 'Making Space. Creating a home meditation practice') by Thich Nhat Hanh can also help.

### Parents and Children build a Sangha

Since the first day of mindfulness in 2012 the wish has arisen to help motivate parents, and to support them in practicing together with their families. Now a group of parents, who share this desire for contact and mutual support, meets regularly. The Sangha building has already begun. Once a month a parents' group meets online to practice together. After a test period the group would like to slowly expand.

The children also meet regularly as an online Sangha. At the beginning a member of staff supported the children. The goal of the parents is to support the children themselves in the coming months.

In the meantime the demand for activities for older children (12-16) has increased, as the age of the loyal participants in family days and family retreats also rises. This is the next challenge facing the Dutch Sangha!

**Marjolijn van Leeuwen and Tineke Spruytenburg**

\*"Vriendenhuis Nooitgedacht" is located to the south of Utrecht and is half an hour by car from Utrecht. It was founded so that the Dutch Sangha would have a place for days of mindfulness and for retreats.

# Natural Grace: Sister Hao Nghiem

I was born on 25 October 1987 in a village near Hue as the fourth of eight children. My parents are farmers, however alongside this my father also drove a motorcycle taxi and my mother sold fruit at the market.

From a young age I had to take care of my brothers and sisters and help my mother in the house, the reason why I didn't have much time to play as a child.

At the age of five I already had to look after the cows with my older brother. When I was nine I had to look after two cows alone. These are happy memories.

Once one of the cows was pregnant and I was alone with her, only my small friends were there with me. Then the cow came really close to my face as though it wanted to give me a nudge. At first I didn't react, but as she turned away I noticed that she was about to give birth to the calf and that something wasn't right. Because I had observed my mother with the animals throughout my childhood, I knew instinctively what to do. I was able to successfully help and then had to carry the new born calf home in my arms. It was very heavy and the way was long.

At age eight I went to school. I was soon able to help the younger children in the village to learn to read and write the alphabet and a few words. I also always enjoyed sewing, above all for my dolls.

I really enjoyed going to school, reading and sport were my favourite subjects, but I didn't like arithmetic at all. When I reached fourteen my school-days ended.

At fifteen I wanted to learn sewing to be able to make clothes for my parents

and siblings. I asked a friend of my brother to take me to a tailor where I could learn to sew. However, after being there a month I went to Saigon. At first my parents didn't want to allow me to go, but I finally got my own way. I learnt to sew and worked for a total of five years at a tailors. During the day I worked in the shop and in the evening I helped the owner and his wife with housework or sold the clothes we



had made at the local market. Sundays were my free days.

My older brother had become a monk and sent me books by Thay. At twenty I then went to my first retreat at the Bat Nha monastery. I liked it a lot. I had wanted to be a nun since my childhood, so I asked for permission to remain at the monastery. One year later, in February 2008, I was ordained.

I spent three years at Bat Nha. This was the happiest time of my life and during this time I learned an enormous amount. The older sisters taught us how to eat, walk, fold our clothes and

do our washing mindfully. From the very beginning I was happy to wear the nun's robe. I loved the togetherness with the other sisters from the same ordination family. I felt that this was truly my family.

As we couldn't remain in the monastery for political reasons I felt a lot of fear, even panic. However, I remembered that Thay had said that the Sang-

ha is everywhere. If we have faith in the Sangha, even when we are separated from it, then we will find a way to come together again. We had to leave Vietnam in small groups to go to Thailand. As we arrived there I was overjoyed to once again see almost all the brothers and sisters.

I remained for just about one year in Thailand. Although our makeshift accommodation was hopelessly overcrowded at the beginning, we followed our daily schedule and, despite some adversity, we were very happy to have each other. It helped us to learn to val-

ue the daily practice and the Sangha even more.

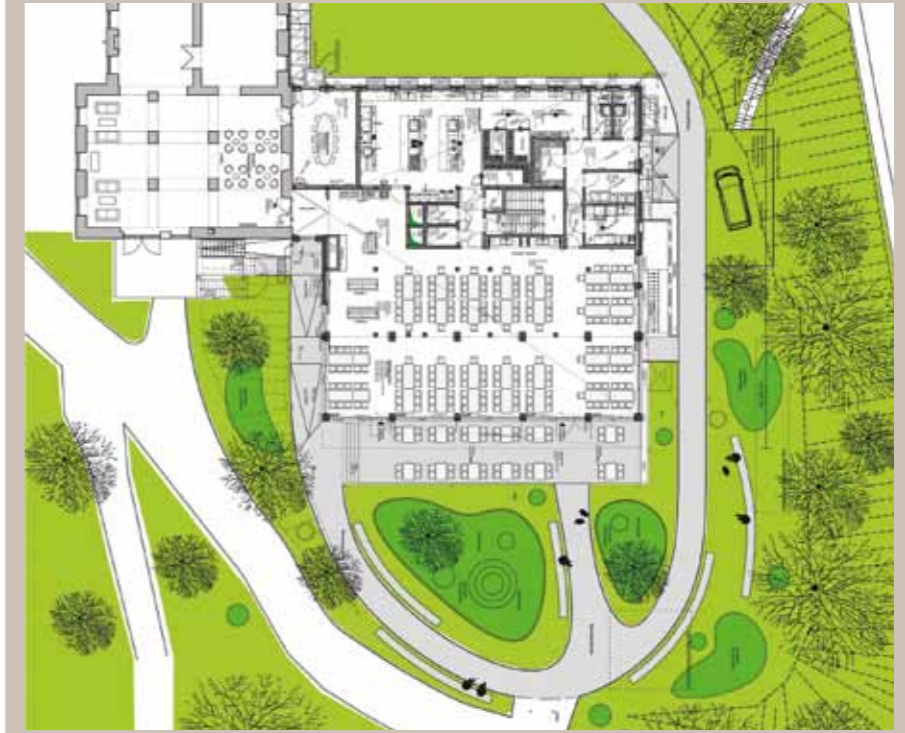
When after this I came to Germany and the EIAB in 2012, I was at first surprised above all by the size of the building. It wasn't difficult for me to adapt to the climate and the food. I enjoyed being in Germany, got to see snow and was grateful to be able to learn German at school so that I could understand our guests a little. The Institute is organised differently from the monastery in Vietnam, but here too I feel the joy and concentration of the practice.

Straight away in my first year in Germany I had the chance to take part in a Tai Chi retreat with Master Hang Truong. Tai Chi has helped me a lot: before had my health was poor, but now it is much better. This woke the desire in me to learn more Tai Chi to be able to help others, and it helps here that I can speak a little German.

In the morning I get up at 4 a.m. and practice about fifteen minutes of Tai Chi after which I listen to a Dharma talk by Thay until time for sitting meditation at 5.30 a.m. I also like to practice Tai Chi once again in the evening too.

When Thay Phap An accepts an invitation to a retreat outside the EIAB then he always takes several brothers and sisters with him: not just so that we can help with these retreats, but also because it is a good opportunity to learn new things. We get to experience new countries and come together with people who speak different languages. Nevertheless, I have come to understand that we don't always have to use language to communicate: we can also communicate with our practice, with our presence.

## A Modern Kitchen and a Spacious Dining Room



Since the EIAB first began, the situation in the kitchen and dining room has been extremely difficult for our guests and all the cooks. For seven years all we have had is the tiny kitchen and the cramped dining room of the former school for civilian service.

Thanks to generous international support, we were able to begin with the construction of a modern kitchen and a spacious dining hall in April of this year.

Good progress continues to be made with the construction work. The structural work on the 795m<sup>2</sup> wing of the building had almost been completed by the beginning of July. And at the end of July the glass facades and windows will be installed so that guests for the retreats in August will already be able to see the building in its final external form.

It fits into the landscape between the main building, Great Compassion Temple and stupa wonderfully. The old recycling station and the prefabricated garages have been demolished with the result that there is now an unobstructed view of the landscape and orchard. Now the new building, with its open facades, stands in the landscape like a pavillion; the garden area in front of the building will be used for meditation, retreats and other open-air events and as a result will soon become a major feature of life at the EIAB.

In future the kitchen will be able to offer an average of 100 to 200 meals per sitting.

We are looking forward to opening the new kitchen and dining room by the end of the year – just in time for the Christmas celebrations and the New Year retreat.

Thay Phap An and Dieter Comes, Architect

# At the EIAB with the Basel Sangha

## A Personal View

In previous years during Whitsun we rented a house in the mountains, decided on a topic, invited a Dharma teacher and organised a four-day retreat ourselves. This became a fixed part of our annual schedule. And then suddenly the idea sprang up: why don't we travel together to the EIAB?

And so I found myself, with our Basel Sangha, at the EIAB, this extraordinary place in Waldbühl. There are 16 of us. Most of us have already been here before, but for a few of us it is the first time. We are welcomed with Vietnam-

EIAB? What will my Sangha brothers and sisters think? Is it bad manners? Is it allowed?', asks the inner child in me. 'What do I really need? Why am I really here?', the adult asks in reply.

Walking meditation in the woods. The contact with nature in full bloom nourishes me. I give myself permission to take time for myself when I need it, and also feel how the energy of the EIAB gives me strength and how I become more and more present, clearer and stronger from day to day and am able to also participate more in the group.

deeply moved, by the integrity with which she lives the practice and how coherently she can express it. I am also deeply impressed by what an enormous difference it makes whether I read a text for myself or hear the same theme addressed in a Dharma talk in the group and subsequently deepened in a sharing.

We are convinced that Sister Annabel must have known something. But she didn't. Nonetheless, in her first Dharma talk she speaks words that deeply move us, because she brings 'unfinished



ese cheerfulness, provided with accommodation and food. And we are allowed to immerse ourselves in the timeless practice of the monks and nuns of the EIAB, to swim with them in the great stream of mindfulness that is also able to carry along plenty of debris without being diverted from its course. Everything in me automatically slows down, steps, actions, chewing, as though this is what my organism had been longing for; it remembers. Here everything is so natural, so simple. Wistfully I ask myself why it is so difficult to maintain this energy at home.

I feel drained and exhausted, in need of peace and quiet, and more in need of a sleep than touching the earth in the early morning. Should I skip a morning meditation? 'What will they say at the

The 'inner child' has been the central topic in our Sangha in Basel for the last few months. Every Sunday we meet for two hours and practice together: sitting meditation, walking meditation, reading a text from the book 'Reconciliation: Healing the Inner Child' by Thich Nhat Hanh, sharing, sitting meditation. A photo of every Sangha member lies in the middle. In addition, everyone has a 'second body'. So every fourteen days I take the time to share with someone else about my experiences and practice.

We would like the retreat at the EIAB to deepen our mindfulness practice and the encounter with the inner child further. It is a great gift that Sister Annabel gives a Dharma talk on this subject every day. She shares her own personal experiences with us. Once again I am

business' in our Sangha to the surface. Two important members of our Sangha, practitioners for many years, have recently withdrawn from the Sangha. Until now we have not had the time or the setting in which to discuss this. Sister Annabel offers us the right setting in which everyone can express their thoughts and feelings. The heaviness that spreads itself and weighs on the group is palpable. What does the Sangha need now? Sister Annabel proposes 'flower watering'. In the circle everyone says what they particularly value about the person to their right. The words fill the room and refresh the soul. The energy changes. We are once again connected with ourselves and our strength. On top of this Sister Annabel gives us valuable suggestions for the journey home.

# Building relationships through loving communication

From 11 to 14 June 2015, Thay Phap An and monks and nuns from the EIAB visited the course centre Domicilium in Weyarn for the third time. At the retreat organised by the Community for Mindful Living Bayern e.V. they, together with fifty three participants, explored the practice of loving speech and deep listening.

What better way to describe the atmosphere of this retreat than through the contributions of a few of the participants:

*'These days were a time of arrival, in myself and in the community. At the beginning Thay Phap An recommended practicing one thing above all: being honest with oneself. This open and accepting attitude towards ourselves also extended to the sharings. By deeply and honestly sharing our innermost thoughts with each other it became possible to experience the support of the community and the feeling of being held by it in a wonderful and new way. One sentence from Thay Phap An that particularly touched me was: 'Your life is your message.' We do not communicate just with words, but through our whole being. In some situations it is perhaps not possible to help another person with words. We can, however, decide to stand in the world with love and compassion. Then our life becomes a message of healing*

Continuation from S. 30

One sentence from her that particularly sticks in my mind: 'The Sangha is never perfect'. Precisely here are the key points for joint practice. One thing is also clear to me: 'the Sangha' does not exist as something independent of me, something permanent. Our Basel Sangha has experienced many changes and a lot of growth. For years we were a relatively small and constant group, then

*and peace which can also provide others with inspiration.'*

*'We were able to draw on the riches offered by the practice of mindfulness. Sitting and walking meditation, the practice of touching the earth, deep relaxation and Qi Gong helped us to come into contact with compassion on a physical, mental, emotional and spiritual level, and to feel connected.'*

*'The daily schedule for the retreat was organised by the monks and nuns. Immediately after our arrival in Weyarn*

*deep Buddhist wisdom as well as specific methods that could be immediately put into practice. During the sharings with the whole group we were able to share with complete openness and trust. This helped us grow closer. Everyone contributed. On the last day Thay Phap An dealt intensively with all the questions of the participants - with healing words, by recounting his experience. May we be able to welcome our differences and find ways to use our deep connection with each other as a source of compassion and understanding.'*



*we were able to immerse ourselves in the inviting, friendly atmosphere. In his own special way Thay Phap An helped us to understand the practice of loving speech on a number of different levels. Thanks to his memorable and clear explanations combined with moving personal experiences he was able to convey*

In the spirit of interbeing, and in gratitude to everything and everyone, we allowed the wonder of this retreat to unfold in just the way it did. On behalf of the retreat Sangha

The Retreat Sangha

a number of new members joined, also some who still had no real connection with Plum Village. And for a number of different reasons there were members who left us. This is the reason why our Sangha has now reached the point where it needs to reflect on fundamental issues and deal with them afresh. This is a challenging process. Plum Village does not provide us with a 'Handbook for Running Lay Sanghas'. We do

not have a Dharma teacher in the vicinity. We have no hierarchy. We organise ourselves. We learn and develop as a group. This is both appealing and demanding at the same time. This makes it all the more important, and a gift, that we can dock with the 'mothership EIAB' and find all the good will and support we need. Heartfelt thanks.

Peter Itin, member of the Baseler Sangha

## Additional Courses at the EIAB 2015 (these courses are not in the programme brochure)

- 15.-18.10.** 'HOW TO MASTER LIFE CRISES AND DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIPS: THE ART OF EMBRACING LIFE' Course with Dr. Phil. Rodica Meyers and Sr. Song Nghiem
- 16.-18.10.** 'QI GONG COURSE TO REGULATE BLOOD PRESSURE, PREVENT STROKES AND STRENGTHEN THE SPINE, NECK AND SHOULDERS' Course with Le Thuan Nghia, Qi Gong Master and practitioner of traditional Vietnamese medicine
- 17.-20.09. a. 26.-29.11.** TAI CHI CHUAN – 8 AND 16 YANG STYLE – HEALTH AND VITALITY THROUGH INNER MARTIAL ARTS Course with Br. Phap Cu und Sr. Song Nghiem
- 02.10.-18.12.** (every Friday 18:00 bis 20:00 Uhr) TAI CHI CHUAN – 16 YANG STYLE – HEALTH AND VITALITY THROUGH INNER MARTIAL ARTS Course with Br. Phap Cu (fee: 15 Euro per evening)

## Here following once more the dates for our popular family retreats 2015

- 08.-11.10.** AUTUMN RETREAT With the monks and nuns of the EIAB
- 27.12.2015 – 03.01.2016** CELEBRATING LIFE – NEW YEAR RETREAT With the monks and nuns of the EIAB

The EIAB Course Program for 2015 is available upon request and can also be found on our website: [www.eiab.eu](http://www.eiab.eu).

In December the 2016 Program will be available. Please check our website this autumn for information about 2016 courses.

Registration for all retreats:

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Tel.: +49 (0)2291 907 13 73



Registration by email:

[registrar@eiab.eu](mailto:registrar@eiab.eu)

Other questions:

[info@eiab.eu](mailto:info@eiab.eu)



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