

# along the Path

Summer 2010

The Newsletter of the Mindfulness Practice Center of Fairfax

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## MEDITATION ON THE PAST

Transcription of a guided meditation by  
Anh-Huong Nguyen

(Three sounds of the bell)

Please sit comfortably.  
Close your eyes and  
breathe with ease.

Feel your abdomen rise  
and fall slowly with your  
in-breath and out-breath.  
There is no rush. Let your  
breath penetrate, calm and  
soften your body.

Smile to parts of your body that are tense in  
order to release the tensions.

See if you can smile gently. Through this  
gentle smile, touch your deep desire to be free  
from old pain and old habits, which continue to  
pull you and those you love into place of  
misery.

Relax and breathe calmly. We enjoy breathing  
together for a few minutes while we feel rested,  
calm and confident.

(Pause)

Now, please bring to your mind a moment or a  
period in your life, especially in the early years,  
when you felt like a small boat tossing on a

high sea. You were scared, confused and  
helpless. No one was there for you.

You are safe here. Please relax and take this  
opportunity to smile to the situation that  
happened to you in the past. You need not be  
afraid because we are going through this  
together. Feelings that are arising in you have

already arisen  
many times  
before. They  
come, last for  
some time,  
and go away  
like clouds in  
a windy sky.

You are much  
more than

your feelings. Our community supports and  
protects you. You are no longer that fragile and  
helpless child. Please let your smile of  
compassion open the heart and mind of the little  
one in you to this new understanding, so that  
she can heal and grow.

Breathing in, I feel embraced by the  
community's love and support

Breathing out, I smile with compassion to the  
little child in me

Please have a soft gaze at our loving circle here.  
Continue to relax into your breathing in order to  
maintain calmness and ease, so that your  
feelings can flow into the river of your breath.

At this time, you may notice in some areas of  
your body where there is pain, tightness, heat,

cold, numbness, or a tingling sensation. It's all right. Allow your breath to move into these areas in order to massage and relax them. You can say out loud "calming feelings" with your breathing in, and "relaxing body" with your breathing out. Let us practice like this for a few minutes.

(Pause)

Our practice in this moment is to rebuild our grounding and to cultivate calm, ease and stability. With this, we are able to take hold of the difficult situation and not to fall into fear, anger, or despair. As we breathe in, we feel solid and grounded in our community. As we

Hurts and wounds of the past are often stuck in our body-mind in the form of energies. These energies have been calmed and relaxed by the energy of mindfulness. Let us continue to breathe deeply to dissolve and release these stuck energies of the past.

Breathing in, calming the past  
Breathing out, releasing the past  
(Follow this exercise for 2 minutes)

The door of our heart is open. We are breathing in morning sky and the loving energy of our community. We are breathing out and knowing that healing is happening in us right now. This is not a dream.



breathe out, we feel calm and our heart is open to healing. Please say in your heart "grounding" with your in-breath, and "opening" with your out-breath.

Breathing in, grounding  
Breathing out, opening  
(Follow this exercise for 2 minutes)

After we breathe in, let us say out loud, "space."

Please say it in a way that helps you to connect with the space within and allow it to expand. After we breathe out, let us utter "healing," and smile to our new beginning.

Continue to enjoy your breathing and feel nourished by the fresh air and the loving support of our community.

Breathing in, space  
Breathing out, healing  
(Follow this exercise for 2 minutes)

Breathing in, nourishing  
Breathing out, healing  
(Follow this exercise for 2 minutes)

(Two sounds of the bell)

You may wish to practice this meditation every day at home. It helps us to feel more alive, free and stable. When we have more stability and freedom in our life, we are so much happier.



## MEDITATION ON THE PAST

*Breathing in, grounding  
Breathing out, opening  
(Follow this exercise for 2 minutes.)*

*Breathing in, calming the past  
Breathing out, releasing the past  
(Follow this exercise for 2 minutes.)*

*Breathing in, space  
Breathing out, healing  
(Follow this exercise for 2 minutes.)*

*Breathing in, nourishing  
Breathing out, healing  
(Follow this exercise for 2 minutes.)*

## CRANE STANDING ON ONE LEG

By Jill McKay

We begin by standing with our weight evenly distributed on both feet. Feet are shoulder-width apart, knees over feet, hips over knees, knee and hip joints loose. Shoulders over hips, neck straight, crown of head held as if by an imaginary thread connecting to the heavens. We loosen our lower back by tipping the tailbone forward just a little. We relax our shoulders; arms are loose; there is space between our arms and our body. Elbows, wrists, hands, fingers are relaxed. Our face and jaw are relaxed; teeth are slightly apart allowing the tip of our tongue to rest against the upper palate. Our tongue and throat are relaxed. Our eyes have a soft gaze.

We stand in this way, aware of our breathing. On the in-breath we allow the diaphragm to sink down so that the belly relaxes as the air goes deep into our lungs. A pause at the top of the in-breath allows us to be in touch with no time, no space: the ultimate dimension. As we breathe out, we feel the diaphragm rise, the belly sinks in, and the air flows out. Again the pause. Timeless moment. Very gentle. Very enjoyable.

Standing in this way, our shoulders, arms and face are relaxed, and our feet become heavy. The energy flows through our body, connecting deep into the earth. Our head, shoulders, arms,

and hands are light and free, connected by the invisible thread to the energy of the cosmos. I am solid. I am free.



We stand in this way, enjoying our breathing. The heaviness and the lightness inter-are. Now we are ready to begin.

Bending down, we cross our hands in front of our knees, one wrist over the other. A gesture of bowing to the earth. A gesture of gratitude and humility: “Mother Earth, I know you are here for me.” As we straighten we uncross our arms in a gentle, flowing gesture, brushing away the cloud of misperception. As our arms reach shoulder

height, we turn our hands outward allowing the energy to flow from the tips of our fingers out into the cosmos. All gestures are soft, flowing, as if floating on the air. Awareness of the energy flow moves our arms. Our shoulders open and our heart expands to embrace the vastness of the cosmos.

At the same time as our arms move in an unfolding arc, we shift our weight onto one leg. We become aware of the subtle shift of hips and shoulders to one side as our back straightens and our arms float upward and outward. When we are fully rooted on the standing leg and our other leg is empty of weight, we are ready to bend the knee and lift our foot off the earth. It is an act of balance and concentration. And it is also an act of trust and commitment. We say to our standing leg and foot: “I entrust all my weight to you. I know you can and will hold me. I know that Mother Earth will support us.”

Now the in-breath is complete. We pause. We are rooted and we are free. We are heavy and we are light.

As we begin the out-breath, we relax our shoulders and let our arms float down on the air; elbows, wrists, hands, fingers relax one after the other in a gentle flow of energy. Our foot lowers gently to the earth; weight shifts; now we are evenly balanced on two feet again. Connected, balanced. We made it safely home.

We continue the forward bend as we come to the end of the out-breath. We are small, connected to the earth, energy is concentrated within ourselves. We are here, on the earth. Grateful. Timeless moment, wonderful moment.



We begin again. Breathing in. Shifting weight to the other foot. Arms lifting. Reaching up, opening out. Then the out-breath. Contracting, connecting, turning inwards once more.

In-breath and out-breath. Left and right. Expanding and contracting. Reaching outwards and folding inwards. One foot and two feet. We participate in the rhythm of life.

Entrusting our whole self to those few inches where our foot makes contact with the floor, arms reaching out into the cosmos, we hold nothing back. We know: Mother Earth is there for us.

## GREAT FALLS

by Jill McKay

On a Sunday morning in early May, 20 friends from MPCF, the Boat of Compassion and other area sanghas along with their partners, spouses, children and grandchildren, met at Great Falls Park to walk by the river and explore part of the Billy Goat Trail. It was a lovely, fresh, sunshine-filled morning. We saw birds, butterflies, insects, and snakes. We admired the fresh green trees, many of which were filled

with fragrant blossoms. In sheltered areas the spring ephemerals could still be seen. We were in awe of the massive logs and other debris that had been thrown high up onto the banks and into the trees during the snow-melt flooding. We stood on the bridges and marveled at the skill and courage of the kayakers dodging their way through rocks and whirlpools. In short, we were like any other group of friends enjoying each other's company in one of

Washington's favorite recreation spots.

We didn't sit in meditation. We didn't walk particularly slowly. There was no dharma talk. And yet, it was different. They likes to remind us that the Kingdom of Heaven, or the Pure Land, is right here if we can be fully present. Walking with friends who share a love for and commitment to the practice of mindfulness made it easier to be open and present to the beauty and wonder around us. Being with friends who wish to have an open heart made it safe to be open and present to the joy, friendship and beauty all around. For those few hours, it was nothing special, and yet it was paradise on the banks of the Potomac.

## EGO AND GENEROSITY

by Garrett Phelan

Two seeds sprouted for me when I was young: the instinct that I had to fight to survive in my family, and continual fear that I was not good enough. Survival was the main force driving my developing being. Building a big ego fed my survival and feelings of self-worth.

These two seeds developed into a fierce need to project a strong confident self to protect myself from perceived humiliation inside and outside the family.

Developing a tough and cocky ego gave me the illusion of an impassable moat around what was actually a crumbling castle. To make the castle I had to create a powerful, fearless persona who could tough out anything. Anger and No Fear were my tools for building the castle. With so much energy and focus on protecting my ego, I was not capable of generosity -- or true happiness.

Comfortably married, safe and secure to all outward appearances, I was successful.

Confident and self-assured, I used to say to myself that if other people had trouble dealing with me, it was because I liked myself and who I was and they didn't like themselves. They were jealous.

But I was not authentically happy.

At most my heart was just ajar. It was shriveled up like a little piece of dried up leather. That's what survival did. That's what a protective ego had done to my heart.

How could I be generous and open-hearted when I felt I had to fight, argue and defend myself all the time? My ego was my "conditions for happiness." I could be a

powerful, angry and fearless person, especially when I felt threatened in any way.

I had created a prison cell around my heart with no room for generosity.

I turned to meditation to try to calm my anger, not even considering

looking at my ego. I felt I could meditate by myself. It calmed me, seemed to give me more confidence and calm during stressful or insecure moments. It would quiet my anger. I certainly didn't need a teacher. I was a teacher! I was smart. So my practice of meditation did little for me at first. It did not connect me to others; it did not open my heart more and expose me to joy, happiness, love. It was another tool to protect my ego.

When I found the Mindfulness Practice Center, I found that inside the sangha was a safe place to reconstruct myself and learn how to water seeds to create authentic happiness consisting of an open heart, true love, and generosity.

The Mindfulness Practice Center gave me a place to rest. It calmed me. I needed a loving,



patient community to help me nurture my own true self. I was incapable of giving anything back those first few years.

I am not sure why I kept coming Thursday nights and eventually, some Saturdays. One reason was my wife, Jane. I loved

her deeply, in my limited capacity to love, and I wanted to love her more. She was committed to coming and this gave us a quiet, calm, and safe place to be with each other. I was especially uncomfortable with the sharing. Some people would share very personal and disturbing experiences they had. Sometimes I felt this was a pity party of sharing misery with each other. These revelations did not look like the road to happiness to me -- and I had difficulty believing them. What did they know? Nobody suffered more than I did!

Nor did I believe the people who shared all the happy moments they attributed to mindfulness. They were making it up. People could not find that peace and calm. Impossible. But still, the safe open non-judgmental environment enticed me to keep returning.

I am not sure when or how, when one night I realized that the people sharing their suffering were sharing *my* suffering. They were putting not only their suffering, but my suffering into the gentle embrace of the community. In that moment the sangha had gently pried open my heart enough for me to see and experience openness, safety, calm, and generosity. Slowly, through dedication to the sangha and the

*“...one night I realized that the people sharing their suffering were sharing my suffering. They were putting not only their suffering, but my suffering into the gentle embrace of the community. In that moment the sangha had gently pried open my heart ...”*

practice, I began to rebuild myself so all those beautiful qualities I had within my own heart began to develop and to be expressed. I could let my ego go. It certainly needed a rest.

Even when I felt uncomfortable in the sangha, I knew it was a safe place to be myself. It was quiet: no perceived threats. No judgments. Even as I held back, I continued going each week. My teacher, Anh-Huong, had the insight to be patient with me--to embrace me and at the same time, she respected my need for space.

I did not have to survive in the habitual ways. I was accepted and safe. My heart could begin to open—at first to love myself.

Jane and I were never happier. Even as we continue to let go of so many of our old habits, we know only too well they are still there and crop up periodically. With an open, calm and generous heart, with conscious breathing and mindfulness, I am more capable of working through these times and not allowing those feelings to become me. My ego doesn't need to be defended anymore.

Mindfully breathing, sitting, walking, eating and yes, even sharing were the cornerstone on which I rebuilt myself, and opened my heart. As part of a community that accepted without judgment or criticism, I was not being tested or assessed. I could breathe calmly, maybe for the first time in my life. With a heart now open, I was a member of the sangha who could share my suffering so that others might benefit -- giving for the first time, being authentically generous. With that cell door to my heart unlocked and opened, my own true self could emerge full of generosity and there waiting was love, compassion and true happiness.

## CHICKEN PALACE

By Joyce Bailey

When I first heard the Fifth Mindfulness Training, I realized it would be easy for me to fall back into the unproductive habit of judging; this is good and this is bad. I am good person; now I am bad person. I knew from experience that this old, deeply imbedded habit was a dead end but the habit is strong in me. So as I began practicing this training, I had to be very gentle with myself and just let things bubble up to the surface on their own.



At first, I found my attention drawn to what I was eating. What did it taste like? How did I feel after I ate? When was it time to stop? Gradually I found my eating preferences transform into something more suitable for me but again, I had to be very gentle with this process. Otherwise, the judges would come out and I would find myself on the witness stand. Choosing what to eat became a gentler, more thoughtful process. I found myself pausing more before taking a serving and stopping more frequently to appreciate what I was eating.

All this led me to think about where the food came from. I have almost always had a vegetable garden. To me, it is part of setting up a home. As I sit here and write this, there is a blizzard raging outside my window and little

pots of lettuce seedlings growing on the radiator. When you grow some of your own food, planting seeds becomes the first step in meal preparation, and picking lettuce is like opening the vegetable bin in the refrigerator.

We also raise laying hens and it was around then that I had to admit there was a problem. I had designed a coop for them to live in that was just too small and I could tell they were not content. They would complain to me when I went to get eggs in the morning and glare at me if it was raining out and they all had to crowd together into the cramped coop. So I went chicken coop shopping, which by the way, can still be done if you live in the country. I found a beautiful, barn red one with two small windows trimmed in white, five private nesting boxes inside and a transom near the ceiling for cross ventilation. I really liked it

but hesitated because of the cost. About a month later I came home from a weekend retreat with the MPCF and found that same chicken coop sitting in my yard – a surprise gift from my husband who knew how distressed I had become over the chicken situation. So we moved the chickens in, christened it the Chicken Palace, and now have a happy flock of chickens.

But consumption is more than what we put in our mouth. It is the sounds we invite to enter our ears, where we choose to rest our eyes, what thoughts we entertain. My husband works out of town during the week, so that means at night I come home to two dogs, a flock of poultry, and an empty house. What I am reflecting on now are the choices I make about

how I spend those evening hours. After a long, stressful day of work, how do I unwind from the day? What do my habits draw me to do? How satisfying are these activities? After dinner is made and the chores are done, do I head for the TV or do a deep relaxation? How does that make me feel? Do I read the news or go for a walk? Do I walk around caught in my own thoughts, letting myself be consumed by conflicts, anger and insecurities? Stopping, breathing, and resting is difficult for me to do after rushing around all day. The Fifth Mindfulness Training invites me to gently pause and consider what I am doing. Over time, I find myself more peaceful, more satisfied; it is easier to live with myself.

You may have been fortunate enough to read one of Thay's books called "Teachings on Love." In it are several beautiful verses including these lines:

May I be peaceful, happy and light in mind  
and body.

May I be able to recognize and touch the  
seeds of joy and happiness in myself.

May I identify and see the sources of anger,  
craving and delusion within myself.

These verses help me move towards more nourishing, healing, and fulfilling ways of consumption. We are interconnected with everything. There is no escaping that reality. I am slowly learning ways to connect with the positive elements in my life and am grateful to have a supportive community of friends who are trying to do the same.

May we all be peaceful, happy, and light.

## **THE HOUSE OF BELIEFS**

**by Elisabeth Dearborn**

It's time for the house of beliefs  
left over from childhood to go  
and, after that, to jettison  
those all night attempts from our twenties  
to construct the meaning of life  
by thinking about it.  
Also in the garbage by now  
is that compelling decade, the thirties.  
We bore children, worked hard, slept little.  
The meaning of life  
wasn't in the conversation much,  
though we heard it murmuring.  
Having clean laundry and catching a movie out  
got our attention.

By our forties we were walking the dog,  
the sun rising and setting,  
assurance, like compost, of larger cycles.  
Getting groceries and a brake job for the car  
took precedence.

By fifty, some of us were slowing down and  
recovering the wonder of listening to trees.  
Others floundered through menopause  
making beds and meals,  
catching planes to relax.  
Gradually, necessity peeled back  
and there it was: the fresh cornfield of the  
sixties.

Once again or maybe for the first time,  
"meaning of life" occurs in our journals  
occupying the landscape near death we now  
live in.

What luck, we say, to be alive today,  
to thirst and drink and stretch our bones.  
What joy to be old and sing.

## SANGHA FLOWER IN CHINA compiled by Garrett Phelan

James Harkin, long time practitioner with the MPCF, safely arrived in China on Thursday May 27<sup>th</sup>. The MPCF sangha had a tea party to celebrate the change in his life and wish him well. James has been a quiet and dedicated member of the MPCF community since 2003. A professional musician and teacher, James will be living in Guangzhou and teaching at the Xinghai Conservatory. Guangzhou is the capital of Guangdong (Canton) province.

Before James departed he shared:

*It was a strange feeling, coming to my last Thursday night meditation before moving to China. Even now, two days before the flight, it's still strange. So much of my life is up in the air that the things that are happening, and the tasks to complete, seem not quite real. In Buddhist teaching, that's what life really is -- things are happening, yes, but the "story" we weave around those things is vapor. Maybe life should feel like this more of the time!*

*As surreal as it all seems -- am I really getting on a plane, not to return for several months or a year or more? -- I find myself not especially bothered by the "unreal-ness." That's a real, concrete benefit of long-term practice: when circumstances disrupt the "storyline," the mind puts up a lot less of a fight than it would without the experience in meditation of thousands of story lines dissolving under the*

*illumination of the clear breath. It's chaotic, crazy at times, but it's OK.*

*Thursday nights have helped tremendously to remind me weekly about staying in the present. I won't have the same consistent support overseas. One of my challenges, then, will be to renew a daily practice. I'll also be looking for a tai ji quan or qigong group (with, ideally, a more spiritual focus) to keep bringing mind and body together.*



*I'll certainly miss Thursday nights, but this is a lesson too: it's in the nature of practice to change. The form will be different, but the calm and insight continue. It won't be the same without seeing my dharma friends every week, but you've affected me just as I've affected you. That will come with me, no matter the place.*

*Of course -- if you should ever find yourself in South China, don't hesitate to contact me!*

James's passion for music and computers has been a fascinating journey. When he began to practice, that journey took a new path that integrated all three interests: music, computers and mindfulness. He created a performing name, dewdrop world. On his webpage he relates the origin of the name **dewdrop world** : live computer music for meditation and dancing.

*Dewdrop world is the performing name of James Harkins, musician and long time computer enthusiast who seeks to combine*

*these two passions into live performance works for computer and other instruments with the*

*aim of opening the senses, awakening the mind, and inspiring joy, compassion and hope.*

*The name comes from a haiku by Issa:*

*This dewdrop world  
Is the dewdrop world.  
And yet ... and yet ...*

*A gentle and powerful teaching about impermanence and our engagement with impermanence. This name is a reminder of the fragility and beauty of this world, which, like a dewdrop, will one day dissolve.*

In a later section of his artist's statement, James relates why mindfulness practice was integrated into his work:

*Bringing the technology into a social space and responding to the energy in the room--interacting with the audience through the medium of the computer--humanizes the technology while I realize a full, complex musical vision with my own two hands. I do not want my music to be disembodied. The technology has advanced to the point where it is possible to create social and spiritual relationships through the technology. This is what I seek to do.*

*Along the way is the guiding influence of Buddhist practice. There's so much alienation and suffering in the world, and so much avant-garde electronic music celebrates this alienation with musical techniques that seek primarily to destroy source materials. Some such musicians make it to the next step of building something compelling and*

*enlightening out of the shards. Most simply present the destruction and alienation, possibly justified as music that diagnoses the 21st-century human condition. If we artists are to make the most of our intuition, we must move beyond diagnosis into healing. Out of this realization, a second stream in my work is emerging: meditative, atmospheric works to invite calm and peace. My practice helps me hold my center and hold this vision in clear sight.*

For the 8<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Mindfulness Practice Center, James created a piece **Sangha Flower**: xiao flute and computer. This piece uses granular synthesis based on xiao flute samples recorded live during the performance. Please feel free to listen to this piece and read and hear about James and his music at [www.dewdrop-world.net](http://www.dewdrop-world.net).

Although James will not see his Dharma friends every Thursday, he can feel deeply supported and connected knowing we are sitting and breathing every Thursday in community -- and no matter that James is living in China, he is a brother in our community.

## **GROUNDING IN GROUNDLESSNESS**

**By Bill Menza**

Grounded in groundlessness  
With its ambiguity and uncertainty,  
There is nothing to hold on to,  
Because everything is changing.  
Getting it all together will never happen.  
My empty self goes with the changing flow.

## 5 REMEMBRANCES, 4TH MINDFULNESS TRAINING, 3 JEWELS, 2 PARENTS, AND 1 DAUGHTER

by Jane Phelan

My father sat slumped in a chair at the kitchen table. "I wouldn't care if I dropped dead during the night," he said.

That would be a blessing. At ninety-five years old, infuriated about facing further decline, wouldn't it be a blessing if he were to go peacefully in his sleep? What would be more benign than a quiet transition, for a nonagenarian with one kidney, a heart condition, diabetes, two cancers, and a disposition that inspired him when he was a much younger man to create the mantra, "Be grim and bare it."

What could I say? I drew two circles. Within one circle I wrote "PAST" and in the other, "FUTURE." I drew a diagonal line inside the circles to cross out PAST and FUTURE. "What's left?" I asked him.

"Nothing," he said.

"The present," I suggested, wondering if he would be able to identify the self-inflicted trap he lives in. "What's *the* cause of suffering?" I ask.

"Fear," he says, in a rare moment of genuine vulnerability.

Then I drew a hexagonal STOP sign. How could I help him wake up to the pain of expectations as the roots of suffering?

My mother had fallen, landing on her coccyx. She walked away -- miraculously, given that at ninety years old, her osteoporosis is quite advanced. Within the following forty-eight hours, mother began to suffer from incapacitating pain and was taken by ambulance to the emergency room at a local

hospital where x-rays revealed nothing. So she wasn't admitted; they sedated her for the pain and sent her home the next morning. A hospital bed was installed in the living room and Medicare provided home nursing care for a few hours each day. Her pain, she lamented continually, was unbearable. Incapacitated, her ultimate fear for her old age, she found herself helpless and completely dependent on others.

"I would like to go to sleep and never wake up," she said.

"You will die," my father said. "People over ninety who don't get out of bed are dead within two months."

*"Being of a nature to get sick, I know I cannot avoid being ill. Being of a nature to grow old, I know I cannot escape growing old."* How could I invoke the five remembrances to my suffering mother or my father -- who have never heard of them? Not particularly soothing for them, to be reminded that suffering illness is unavoidable, that there is no way to sidestep old age, and that death is staring them in the face.

Choosing a route of encouragement, I focused

on watering the wholesome seeds of my mother's very slow progress. For the first few weeks of suffering from this newly chronic and excruciating pain, she could not even sit up. The physical therapist, very skilled, and thoughtful, was continually gentle with Mom.

He would remind her, without criticism, that she *would* soon be able to sit up, and eventually, she did.

Then she could stand up, holding onto him first, and then the walker. And little by little, she came to trust his suggestions.

My mother apologized for not being good-natured; she felt that I was dismissing her intense pain and *she* did not feel as if she were making strides towards wellness, so how dare I pronounce her as progressing "beautifully." I saw her point though. I wasn't practicing being present; I was practicing trying to cheer her up.

On the other hand, my father glowered at her expressions of pain, turning abruptly to leave

the room. His rage eats him up; his fears that he has lost control. Although he knows without any doubt that he will one day die, mother's struggles strike at the core of his panic.



Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful words, I struggled to find ways to communicate with my father without criticizing or trying to shame him. Before I came to know the three jewels and to find the peacefulness of this mindfulness practice, my own judge would have "let him have it" -- lambasted him with a verbal picture of his lack of compassion, his self-absorption and inconsiderateness.

This transformation -- from judgment to awareness -- lies at the heart of conditions for happiness. The unrelenting prison of negative thinking holds each of us in a

trap out of which we have no idea how to escape without the support of the three jewels: the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha. Breathing mindfully, practicing with a sangha, we take the first steps on the journey out of the trap of denying the Five Remembrances, and moving with each step towards wholeness and well-being.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*(Please visit the MPCF website for updates, suggested donations, and directions.)*

### *Ongoing Activities in the UUCF Chapel (Program Building)*

#### **Morning Guided Sitting Meditation:**

Opportunity to relax, sit quietly and comfortably. Practice enjoying each moment of sitting and mindful walking.

Monday to Friday 8:15-9:15 am (except Thursday)

Thursday 8:00-9:00 am

#### **Morning Mindful Movement:**

Learn to be mindful with movements. Improve one's health and vitality with soft physical exercises, Tai-Chi and Qigong. Thursday 9:15-10:00 am

#### **Noon Guided Sitting Meditation:**

Thursday 12:00-12:45 pm

#### **Thursday Evenings Meditation with Anh-Huong:**

A peaceful evening of meditation, mindful movements, walking meditation and dharma talk or dharma sharing. Every Thursday from 7:30-9:00 pm

#### **First Thursday Tea and Cookies before Meditation and the Recitation of the Five Mindfulness Trainings**

On the first Thursday of every month at meditation we read together The Five Mindfulness Trainings. Before meditation you are invited to join us for tea and cookies any time between 6:15 and 7:20 pm.

### *Workshops & Classes*

#### **Weekend Retreat in West Virginia led by Anh-Huong and Thu Nguyen June 25 - 27, 2010**

**from 6:00 pm on Friday to 2:00 pm on Sunday**

Practicing mindfulness in a rural setting for the whole weekend, together with a loving and supportive community.

#### **Days of Mindfulness**

**led by Anh-Huong and Thu Nguyen**

***Saturdays at the MPCF in Oakton, Virginia (in the Sanctuary):*** Jul. 10, Aug. 21, Sept. 11, and Oct. 23, 2010 from 9:15 am-4:30 pm

#### **Half Days of Mindfulness**

**led by Anh-Huong and Thu Nguyen**

***Saturdays at the MPCF in Oakton, Virginia (in the Chapel)*** June 19, Jul. 17, Aug. 14, Sept 25, and Oct. 9, 2010 8:45 am-1:00 pm

#### **Fall Weekend Retreat in West Virginia**

**led by Anh-Huong and Thu Nguyen**

**October 15-17**

**From 6:00 pm Friday to 2:00 pm Sunday**

Practicing mindfulness in a rural setting for the whole weekend, together with a loving and supportive community.

### *Submission Guidelines*

**Along The Path** is a newsletter of the art of mindful living. Practicing mindfulness cultivates understanding, love, compassion, and joy. This practice helps us to take care of and transform suffering in our lives and in our society.

**Along The Path** is intended as an inspiration and teaching resource for those practicing mindfulness in daily life.

Writers please submit stories, poems, photos, art and teachings on mindfulness, based on your direct experience of transformation through the practice of mindfulness. Instead of giving academic or intellectual views, the teachings emphasize simple and successful ways to transform the difficulties and limitations in our lives so that each day becomes an experience of peace, happiness, and freedom.

#### *Along the Path*

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Contributions are tax-deductible and may be sent to the above address.