



Washington
Mindfulness
Community

Sangha Reflections

Newsletter of the Washington Mindfulness Community

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Glue

By Jindra Cekan

I wanted to stick my former partner who longs for a different path than I, perfectly gluing him to the paisley/flowered/solid yellow background of my life. If my colleagues did what I thought they should, their best actions should be cut out as snowflakes and attached, never to change. I want to stick my brother on the pattern too, keeping him from making decisions I think are unwise and dangerous. I want certainly want to individually glue my children's wishes there, especially the days when they wish what I wish/when they do what I want them to do! I don't want them or anyone else to change, except those I don't care for, mind you. Awful and true. That's practice is, for me, about easing some of this grip on those I love. I've painfully learned not to expect myself to completely let go, I'm just aiming for a 50 percent easing....

Letting them live their choices, their karma, especially if it isn't in line with what I Think Is Best has bedeviled me greatly lately, especially in my life as a (single) mom. That Kaja (5) wants to wear a spring coat when it freezes is a choice I must influence, but do I have to influence Erik (3) when he wants to play pirates 10 hours a day? A wise friend asks me, 'what is the harm?' When Erik was seriously ill this year, I desperately wanted to glue him back together the way he had been before... the experience taught me again how to 'sit' with uncertainty.

I really disliked it. I love certainty (yes, illusion, yes, fleeting, but deeply comforting).

Allowing all of this change, with a modicum of grace, has been my task this past year. What other choice do I have, after all? I sometimes rant against it. Yet I try to make myself sit in the midst of the insanity that others are imposing on me (yes, I think some of them are mad) and do the hardest things I can do. Sit. Breathe. Release them. Sit with the changes because, after all, our karma leads us to just where we should be. So I'm trying to shelve the Elmer's, at least for today. Namaste.



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Untitled

In every ought and
should
there is a dream
Each ought a different
call
to the world
to know a way out
to heed the screams of
pain
arising from the earth
and her children
Each should
a fierce assertion
that suffering
need not arise
in the heart or mind
of any being
Life could be this...
Life could be that...
with intention
with consideration

Yet life is messy,
unkempt,
a river polluted with
manufacturing solvents,
candy wrappers,
beer bottles,
sunken rifles,
rust-resistant tanks,
pornographic magazines,
condoms,
needles for drugs,
palm pilots,
lipstick caps,
worn out tires,
rotting muffins,
rusted mufflers,
campaign billboards,

meeting agendas,
styrofoam coffee cups,
"ruffles" dissolving,
the sludge of petroleum,
fish heads,
pesticides,
and the excrement
of a billion cows,

Each clearing of the river
brings another "pollutant"
an-other manifestation
of life in search of
LOVE
unclear in the turbulence
of suffering

In every should
there is hope
for a clear, pure river
something we could drink
from,
feel nourished by,
bathe in,
clean our wounds

The river cries
our cries,
pollutes our bodies
as we've polluted her
body
The river manifests
in forms we've forced
upon her
She is resourceful
She is fragile
She is shape-shifting
She reflects us
She is us
Can we see her as whole?

Pollutants and all?
Can we see the shoulds
as voices of
the life of the river
screaming for attention -
-
Embrace me!
Take care of me!
Keep me safe!

Compassion sprouts in
me
from the willingness
to embrace
to care for
to protect
even the pollutants
even the anger
misplaced towards the
polluters
even the shoulds
even the thoughts
that name and blame and
shame

Far beyond the notions
of polluted and pure
is the consciousness
of all
of these manifestations
arising
in a great dream
of emptiness
Each manifestation
a holographic jewel
in Indra's net
reflecting interbeing

~ Erica Hamilton

We Sang As We Walked

By Susan Hadler

We sang as we walked, "Peace, Salaam, Shalom." I sang to Abdullah Abdul-Majeed Al-Shadoon as we walked down 16th Street toward the White House. His name was given to me at the church where we gathered on Monday morning. I wore his name around my neck. Abdullah Abdul-Majeed Al-Shadoon was 26 years old when he died on April 22, 2003. A beloved son, a brother, a friend, maybe a father. I sang to Abdul and I sang to my father who was 25 when he died in April of 1945 in WWII when I was an infant. I sang with the mothers and fathers walking with us whose children were killed so recently in Iraq and Afghanistan. I sang with everyone who knows there are better ways to resolve conflicts than killing. We walked together with our knowledge of war and our message of peace, clergy and lay people of all faiths, code pink women funny and serious at the same time, anarchists dressed in black, Buddhists monks accompanying our steps with drums, brothers and sisters from Alaska to Florida. I walked with the Buddhist affinity group and was so thankful to be part of a community practicing walking, singing, sitting and breathing peace. We walked with the larger Sangha gathered to hold in mind and heart the names of all the dead in the war on Iraq and to present those names with a letter to President Bush as a plea to end the killing and use our resources for helping people live.

We sat down in front of the White House. We did not move when the police told us to leave. We sat peacefully, joyfully. We shared food and water. We were not alone. Our Sangha supporters across the police barrier, Bob and Maia and Bill and Ben and others sent water and smiles.





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The police moved in and picked up Cindy Sheehan whose son was killed in Iraq and carried her to a paddy wagon. They arrested people in batches, handcuffed them, sent them into paddy wagons, and drove off. Those of us who were left sat on the curb and sang peace songs to Mr. Bush and the White House and Congress and to each other. We meditated and we smiled. Walking. Sitting. Singing. Smiling. This is our practice and our practice nourished us and gave us strength. I felt solid and happy and free. The atmosphere within and around us was peaceful, dedicated, generous.

Our turn came. Our Buddhist affinity group stood in a row with our hands on the shoulder of the sister or brother in front of us. Each step was a step for peace, a happy step. When it was my turn I smiled and bowed to the young police officer. I put my hands behind my back, turned around and he attached the handcuffs. Prisoner 5-168, I entered a D.C. Metro Bus borrowed from the city due to the unexpectedly large number of people being arrested, 370 in all. A Police escort led the bus to the park police headquarters in Anacostia.

Our bus was our jail cell for about ten hours. And we were a joyful group of 48 women of all ages and colors and sorts singing, talking, sharing stories and encouragement. We helped each other wriggle out of our handcuffs and those who could scratched the noses of those who couldn't. We fed each other pizza which we managed to have delivered to our cell. The young police officer assigned to our "cell" tried to be tough at first and ended up becoming our friend. As time went on a slight headache worsened and I lay down on the back seat. A woman shared her pillow with me and there were two heads sharing that soft pillow. I followed my breath in and out, in and out and I felt Thay's presence with us, telling us to keep breathing and to keep practicing. He knew where we were and sent us prayers and energy. I began to loosen and relax.

About 1 a.m. we were led inside a garage split into two rooms by a chain link fence, women on one side, men on the other side. Sangha sister Roberta and I began doing mindful movements and a circle formed. We added Chi Gong and a little yoga and kept going for a long time. We had fun and felt better creating a little mindful movement Sangha. One of the officers closed the outside doors and we knew we were locked up in a filthy, greasy place. But our minds were happy and free and we were able to help each other and stay calm.

Finally the police called our affinity group's numbers to be processed. Inside the police headquarters more information was taken and we were put into tiny dirty cells, about seven to a cell. The policemen called us by number to fingerprint us and to take a picture for their files. We were then directed to a table beside a glass door where we were given our property. I looked out the door into the dark night and saw two smiling faces. Maia and Bob of the BPF were waiting to welcome us at 4 a.m. Because we were a Sangha and because we practiced we were peace and we were free and we were home every step of the way.



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Summer Plum Village Retreats

June 1 - June 21: "The Breath of the Buddha," a 21-day retreat, in English

July 11 - August 8: "The Summer Retreat," four one-week retreats, with special programs for families, children, and teenagers.

August 19 - 26: "Mindfulness Retreat for Scientists in the Field of Consciousness," a convergence of science and meditation

More about these retreats, plus general information about Plum Village, can be found at www.plumvillage.org. If you are planning to attend a Plum Village retreat this summer and would like to be in contact with others from the Washington Mindfulness Community who are going, please send an e-mail to info@mindfulnessdc.org.

Only Being With

Everyone feels loneliness.
Sit with it.
As you need with any feeling.
Lullaby it.
See its roots, its essence.
What feeds them?

Know too the river of feelings,
Flows night and day,
Without end.
Sit on the bank
and watch.
Or be carried under
and drowned.

This is how it is.
There is no feeling problem.
Only being with
constant change.

~ Bill Menza, Nov. 11, 2005

Mindful Paradise

To live in mindfulness
Is to be in paradise.
Why is this?
To be truly aware of what is
In the present moment
Is to be in the realm of suchness
And its ultimate dimension.
And not lost in images,
Representations,
Reminiscences,
Memory habits
With their feelings of fear,
Anger, blame, bitterness,
And deep sadness.
Please help me toss away
My old dead thoughts.

~ Bill Menza, July 16, 2004

Mindfulness in Education

by Richard Brady

"Sentient beings are numberless. I vow to awaken them." This is the first of the four great bodhisattva vows. Whether or not we aspire to be bodhisattvas, once we embark on the Buddhist path we realize that we are practicing not only for ourselves, but for the world. As an educator working with young people, I've been particularly aware of the tremendous opportunity I have to help others awaken. For many years I talked with other educators during retreats and in local Sanghas who had the same dilemma I had. We wanted to share mindfulness practice with our students but lacked skillful means for doing so. During the summer of 2001 Thich Nhat Hanh extended a special invitation to educators to attend his two US retreats. During these retreats we had opportunities to meet in educator interest groups and share our thoughts about promoting mindfulness in our educational institutions. We also formed the Mindfulness in Education Network (MiEN).

MiEN's first endeavor was the creation of a listserv, which now includes 325 participants ranging from kindergarten teachers to university professors and adult educators. Participants use the listserv to share their successes, challenges and advice. More recently, the MiEN Website was developed. It contains articles on mindfulness in education, a mindfulness bibliography, instructions on how to join the MiEN listserv, and free software that installs a mindfulness bell in personal computers.

In 2004 the Garrison Institute, through its Program on Contemplation and Education, began exploring ways to promote contemplative pedagogy in K-12 settings. In April, 2005 it held a symposium on Contemplation and Education and in October, 2005 released "Contemplation and Education, A Survey of Programs Using Contemplative Techniques in K-12 Educational Settings: A Mapping Report." This report describes a number of existing contemplative K-12 programs, presents an overview of the April symposium, and has a supplement on relevant scientific research issues. The report is available on the Garrison Institute's web site.

The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society has been supporting contemplative pedagogy in higher education since the early 1990's. The education section of their web site contains papers related to contemplation in education, syllabi of higher education courses that have a contemplative component and information about their programs for educators, including the Contemplative Practice Fellowship Program cosponsored by the Center and the American Council of Learned Societies and a summer workshop on creating higher education courses which employ contemplation as one form of pedagogy.

If you are an educator or have an interest in education, I encourage you to visit these Websites and share them with others.

FIND OUT MORE ON THE WEB!

Mindfulness in Education Network
-> www.mindfulled.org

Center for Contemplative Mind in Society's education section
-> www.contemplativemind.org/programs/academic/index.html

"Contemplation and Education, A Survey of Programs Using Contemplative Techniques in K-12 Educational Settings: A Mapping Report," from the Garrison Institute

-> www.garrisoninstitute.org/programs/mapping_Report.pdf

For Jackie on Her Way to Deer Park

Heart of understanding
Steps of the Buddha
She touches the earth
And shows us the way.

We stood there in the room
Where he brought his teacher tea
And learned to close the door
With the gentleness of a monk.

He's here. Smile and bow.
Young and old, war and peace,
Together in one place, one moment;
True connection beyond time and space.

Letting go of books, bags and bags of books
Stories and lessons like yesterday's steps, breath of
the past
Giving books, selling books, eating books. Yum!
Letting go to go beyond.

Heart of understanding
Steps of the Buddha
She touches the earth
And shows us the way.

~ Love and peace with every breath, Susan Hadler

Jackie Randolph update:

After a potluck send-off from the Washington Mindfulness Community last month, Jackie reported in early January that she has arrived safely for her extended stay at Deer Park Monastery, in Escondido, Calif. "It is wonderful to be here," Jackie says. "I deeply appreciate the words and hugs of compassion and good luck."

Jackie can be reached at
Clarity Hamlet
2499 Melrue Lane
Escondido, CA 92026
cell: 202-409-2730
e-mail: j.g.randolph@att.net

WMC Calendar

WMC Meditation and Dharma Discussion: Every Sun., 7-9:15 p.m., at the Buddhist Vihara, 5017 16th Street NW, Washington, DC. Sitting and walking meditation, taped dharma talk by Thich Nhat Hanh, followed by discussion. Everyone is welcome. More info: 301-681-1036; www.mindfulnessdc.org

Specific Sunday schedule:

- *First Sunday of the month:* "Touching the Earth" Practice; 5:45 p.m. at the Vihara.
- *Second Sunday of the month:* Live Dharma! During regularly scheduled 7 p.m. sangha meeting, the WMC welcomes dharma teachers to give a talk in place of our usual study and discussion period. The evening begins with a potluck at 5:15.



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WMC Calendar (continued)

- *Third Sunday of the month:* Dharma Class, a chance for sangha members to share their wisdom; 5:30pm at the Vihara; speakers and topics vary.
- *Fourth Sunday of the month:* Newcomer Orientation; 6 p.m. at the Vihara.

Second Body Practice: A wonderful way to strengthen mindfulness practice and build deeper relationships with one another in the sangha. More info: Steve Sidley at (301) 655-2605 or secondbody@aol.com.

WMC Study Groups: Groups of 6-8 people meet for six weeks to discuss a book by Thich Nhat Hanh or another dharma teacher. Start times, locations and topics vary and are regularly announced on the WMC listserv.

WMC Newcomer Orientation: Last Sunday each month, 6-7pm, before the regular sitting. Open to all, especially newcomers. Informal orientation available on other Sundays; call or e-mail to arrange.

WMC Retreats: At Charter Hall, on the Susquehanna River; three times per year, dates to be announced on WMC listserv.

DC Area Sanghas

Mindfulness Practice Center of Fairfax (MPCF): At the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton, Va. Morning sitting & walking meditation: Mon.-Fri., 8:15 a.m. Mid-day meditation: Thurs., noon. Mindful movement: Tues., 4:15 p.m. Evening meditation: Thurs., 7:30 p.m. Please call 703-938-1377 to confirm. More info: www.mpcf.org.

- **Practicing the Art of Mindful Living (MPCF):** Full-day and half-day workshops with Anh-Huong and Thu Nguyen; donation: \$30-50. Full-day workshops Feb. 25, March 18, half-day workshops Feb. 11, Mar. 25.
- **The Practice of Happiness:** A Weekend Retreat with Meditation Teachers Anh-Huong Nguyen and Thu Nguyen. **February 17-19**, at Claymont Court, Charles Town, West Virginia. Info: www.crpcv.org/mpcf/Retreat-2006-February.html
- **Deep Relaxation and Healing Movements:** with Thu Nguyen, MPCF. Wednesday evenings, **March 1 to April 5**, at Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax. Info: www.crpcv.org/mpcf/MPCMovementBT.html

Still Water Mindfulness Practice Center: Sitting meditation and reading: Mon., Wed., Fri., 6:30-7:30 a.m.; Practice evening: Thurs., 7:30 p.m.; at Crossings - Center for Healing Traditions, 8505 Fenton Street, Suite 202, Silver Spring, Md. (above Whole Foods Market). Contact Mitchell Ratner, 301-270-8353, info@StillwaterMPC.org, www.stillwatermpc.org



Still Water Mindfulness Practice Center (continued)

- **Companions for the Journey, Nourishing our Deepest Aspirations:** A workshop to explore our spiritual lives, meets every other Monday evening, **Jan. 30 to May 22**, in Takoma Park.
- **Settling into Silence:** Silent retreat with Still Water MPC, **Feb. 24 – 26**, at Charter Hall, near Perryville, Md.
- **Spiritual Cinema Club:** "Travelers and Magicians," directed by the Bhutanese lama/film director Khyentse Norbu, 7 p.m., March 10, home of Annie and Paul Mahon in Chevy Chase, D.C. Info and to RSVP: Annie at annie@buddingyogis.com.

Boat of Compassion (Thuyen Tu) Sangha: Mindful day, first Sat. each month, 10-5 p.m., except April and October, when mindful retreat is held. Giac Hoang Temple, 5401 16th St. NW; more info: 703-938-9606, 301-294-7966, www.crcpv.org/thuyentu.

Capitol Hill Mindfulness Practice: Sitting meditation: Wednesday evenings, 7:30-8:30 p.m., Healing Arts of Capitol Hill 320 G Street NE (3 blocks from Union Station). Call 202-544-9389 ext. 3 for more information.

Arlington Mindfulness Practice: Practice Evening: Monday, 7:30 p.m.
Contact: Peter Guerrero, 703-820-1524, pfguerrero@aol.com.

Annapolis Mindfulness Practice: Practice Evening: Thursdays, 7-8:30 p.m., and Sundays from 11a.m. until noon, at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis, 333 Dubois Rd.
Contact: Art Hansen, 410-216-9551, arthansen@comcast.net

Columbia Mindfulness Practice: Practice Evening: first Monday of month, 7-8:30 p.m. Kittamaqundi Community Church, 5410 Leafreader Way. Contact: Judy Colligan, 410-730-4712.

Baltimore Mindfulness Practice (Fresh Breeze Sangha): Practice Day: Saturday, 8:30-10:30 a.m., at Govans Presbyterian Church, 5824 York Road, in Baltimore. Call or email for directions. Contact: Carol Fegan, 410-323-2180, freshbreeze@earthlink.net.

Other Retreats, Classes & Workshops

Meditation Class For Stress Management: With Brigitte Pichot, Mondays, **Feb. 13 - March 20**, in Dupont Circle. \$20 per class for 6-week package; \$25 drop-in rate. Info: 202-332-3501 or [.tulsiliving.com/holistic.htm](http://www.tulsiliving.com/holistic.htm).

Meditation Class for Mindful Eating: With Brigitte Pichot, Mondays, **Feb. 13 - March 20**, in Dupont Circle. \$20 per class for 6-week package; \$25 drop-in rate. Info: 202-332-3501 or www.tulsiliving.com/holistic.htm.



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Other Retreats, Classes & Workshops (continued)

Zen of the Body: Experience your Body's Strength, Wisdom & Ease. A one-day mindfulness workshop offered by Jeanine Cogan, PhD., **March 4**, in suburban Maryland. Info: 301-270-0053 or JeanineCogan@aol.com. Next retreat: **May 6**.

Pre-Passover Mindfulness Meditation Retreat: Opening the Heart Through Daily Jewish Practices and Mindfulness Meditation, led by Line Fine, Roberta Wall and Rabbi David Ingber. **April 6-9**, Accord, N.Y. Info: 800-398-2630 or www.jewishretreatcenter.org/retreats/prepassover_mindfulness_meditation_retreat

Willow Branch Sangha mindfulness retreat: "Peace in Oneself, Peace in the World," led by monastics from Green Mountain Dharma Center and Maple Forest Monastery in Vermont. **May 19-20**, Aston, Penn. Info: Nancy Mattila, willowbretreat@verizon.net.