

# along the Path

Spring 2013

The Newsletter of the Mindfulness Practice Center of Fairfax

## WHY SHOULD WE STOP RUNNING AWAY FROM OUR PAIN?

by Anh-Huong Nguyen

One day, as I was separating slices of frozen bread, the knife accidentally went into my finger. My mother helped to tighten a bandage around the deep cut. Bleeding stopped and I continued making lunch – soup and tofu sandwich. As we began eating, my beloved looked at my finger and said, “The bandage is too tight.” After glancing at my finger, I told him, “It doesn’t hurt. I’ll take care of it after lunch.”

It was a cold morning. I was tired and hungry. Sweet potato soup was one of my favorites. To my surprise, the next spoonful of soup no longer tasted delicious. I stood up to get a new bandage. I had cut my fingers before but this time my fingertip had turned deep purple.

Because of a tight bandage, the wound had become numb and did not hurt. But my finger was suffocating. Suffering was palpating.

As soon as the tight bandage was removed, pressure around the wound was released. Numbness and the intense purple disappeared. I felt deep and sharp pain throbbing through my finger, but I also felt great relief. Tears came to

my eyes. Gentle waves of compassion washed over me.

Mindfulness helps us to stay present with suffering so compassion may arise. I was shocked by my fingertip’s deep purple. Awareness of pain and tendencies to avoid pain: both were present in me. Dominant ancestral energies, however, caused me not to change the bandage at first, but rather to continue eating my

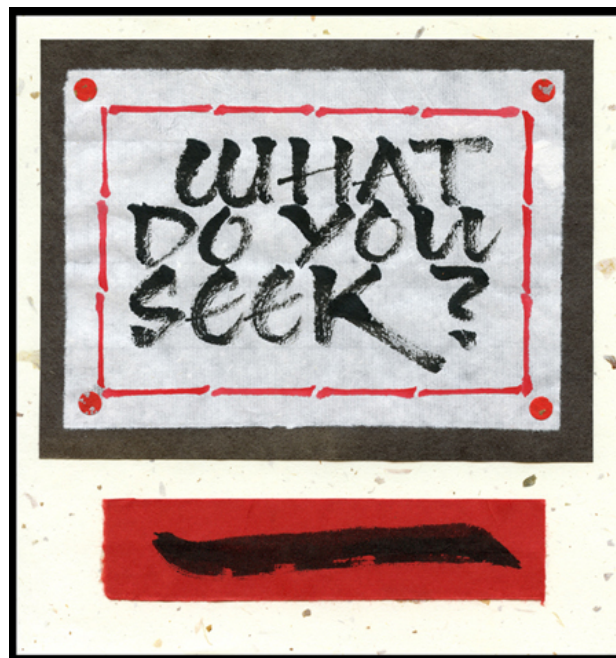
soup. And when the awareness of pain ripened into compassion, my favorite soup no longer hid my pain. In that moment, I had to stop and change the bandage.

Thirty-two years ago, I made a vow to walk the path of compassion. Each time I am able to recognize ancestors’ energies manifesting in me, I feel more humble.

Our pain is like a crying baby who needs to be

embraced. When mother can’t be there for her baby, the baby cries and suffers more. Our pain – physical or emotional – suffocates when we are unable to be present with it. As with happiness, love or hate, pain is in the fabric of life. How can we be truly alive and happy if we run away from our pain?

Fear usually prevents us from being present with our pain. Fear has its root in our human and non-



by Emily Whittle

human ancestors. It is a survival instinct, which protects us from harm and danger, so that we can continue as a species. But when we are afraid of our pain, we lose touch with ourselves. And, it is difficult to feel fulfilled, complete, happy and strong.

When young people are unable to handle their pain, they want to believe that happiness comes from outside, that something or someone else can make them happy. This belief is strengthened by commercial advertisements which can take us down the path of greed, addiction, and suffering.

Fame, power, movies, sex, drugs, the internet, and other kinds of consumption have become a means to numb or escape the pain in us. Consequently, our society has become more violent and sick.

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When my friend was five, her best friend was a young boy. His mother was the victim of gun violence and died. Even though it was her friend's mother who had died, the young girl suffered so much that she refused to talk with him when he called. She told her mother that she did not want to see him again. Thirty years later, the suffering of this five-year-old is still alive in her along with feelings of guilt and shame.

The decision not to talk to her friend was not entirely made by the five year-old girl. Her ancestral energies were driving the decision-making. How does one know how much hurt, pain and confusion there is in the heart of her friend, the five-year-old boy?

Let us close our eyes, relax, and breathe calmly with these innocent and fearful five-year olds. We continue to follow our breathing so that energy of compassion may envelop them as well as the five-year old in each of us.

In our loving sangha, my friend was able to connect with her childhood pain for the first time

and began to cry. The block of pain that was stuck in her heart for more than thirty years has softened. Her tears are nectar of compassion that can encourage healing for both children and their ancestors, because their pain is inseparable.

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Our ancestral tendencies to escape suffering are rooted in the discrimination between suffering and happiness. In Buddhist teaching, true happiness cannot be found outside of suffering just as garbage is used as compost for growing flowers. With mindfulness, suffering can be transformed into happiness. We do not need to be afraid of pain -- both joy and pain are organic by nature.

When an emotional pain is mistaken for harm and danger, we learn to fear the pain and run away from it. This misperception, ironically, can propel an unattended emotional pain which may lead to doing harm, creating more suffering.

My friend also told me that the preschool she and her friend went to was thirty minutes from Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, where the recent shooting had killed 20 children. When she visited her hometown during this past holiday season, she learned that her childhood friend's mother had been killed in a shooting in May of 1983, not in a robbery as the five-year-old girl had imagined.

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There have been widespread reports that the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting has sparked a nationwide surge in gun sales. When the pain inside is not cared for, fear and doubt gradually become the central energies of our lives, which manifest into our thoughts, words and actions. Fear can become epidemic.

By holding our pain tenderly with mindfulness, understanding and compassion will naturally arise. Compassion can help heal wounds, building trust as well as peace and safety.

## TRANSFORMING MY PROJECT ENERGY

by Diana Hawes

One of the practices that I enjoy the most when attending retreats at one of the monasteries is work meditation. I am nourished by the collective energy of mindfulness as we work together as an organism, by the understanding and connection that grow when we practice with our differences in personal and cultural styles of working, and by the joy of contributing to the well-being of the collective sangha body.

Thay speaks often of practicing mindfulness so that we are not swept away by our projects. This has been a challenging practice for me. My habit energy of drivenness, unwholesome striving, and stubborn independence was well shaped by my family, by what has been labeled the Protestant work ethic, and by the American culture with its flavor of competition and workaholicism.

I do have in my store consciousness a strong inherited seed of mindful work. My dad was one of 11 children, raised on a farm in rural West Virginia. My grandfather was a gentle and loving man, and the catalyst in his community for collective labor. When someone in the

community was in need of support in building a barn or a corral for animals, or some tending when someone was ill or injured, or didn't have enough help at harvest time, he rode from farm to farm to bring the community together.

The date would be set. The wagons would come rumbling down the road filled with tools and men and women and children, with food and neighborly concern. The men would work, the children would run errands, the women would cook. The job was done as a kind of working meditation. At the end of the day, all were tired but happy and nourished by good food and good company. The day ended with hymns of praise.

Then came World War II. The sons, including my father and my uncles and the neighbor boys, left the farms. Many -- far too many -- never came home. Or came home as ghosts. The farms were lost and so was the community work ethic.



Frosted Leaf  
photo by Emily Whittle

Men, like my dad, moved to the city in search of work. They worked long hours in small offices in competitive environments. Projects were done on the weekends. Usually alone. The age of the Do-It-Yourself project arrived and, fueled by advertising, amplified the sense of independence and separation.

In my own family, my dad, deeply scarred by the War, engaged in life as though it were a battle. In this environment, my mother became ill and unable to attend to our home or her children. We children, all girls, took on the cooking, cleaning, and other chores. We ran to school in the morning (literally) and ran home at night to get dinner on the table before my tired, overworked and irritable father returned home. On weekends, we helped him with the other projects that needed to be done. We rose on Saturdays to my dad's angry words: "Get your lazy ass out of bed. There's work to be done." Stretched to the limit he cursed, he screamed, he hit. He kept himself and us at it until we were exhausted and traumatized.

I took this energy forward and applied it to my life. For working long, brutal days at my profession, I was praised and sometimes rewarded. At home, I always had projects. Often the only thing that stopped me was becoming so tired that I seriously hurt myself and was laid up for awhile. My sisters both wound up hospitalized intermittently for serious injuries sustained by working at various projects until harming themselves.

It has taken years of devoted and consistent practice to begin to transform this energy. After each retreat, I would make significant changes in how I worked.

At the office, I shortened my days. I made sure that I began each day with meditation, qi gong and a mindful and healthy breakfast. I committed myself to beginning each client session on time and remaining mindful to end the session on time. I lengthened my lunch time and made sure to go outside to get fresh air and sunshine. I later added 15 minutes of walking meditation after each client. My clients got healthier and so did I. I was now offering them not just my professional skills, but also my mindfulness and my freshness.

Still, home projects could sweep me away. The father within me was still irritable and abusive. I continued to practice with these energies and saw gradual change.

Recently, after returning from the 21-day retreat in Plum Village, I approached a home repair project in a whole new way. I sat down BEFORE beginning and asked how I could support my mindfulness. I then: Set my computer to offer me a bell of mindfulness at regular intervals so that I would stop and calm. I asked a friend to call me to ask how my mindfulness was going -- not how the project was going. I set an alarm to have lunch at a time that would keep my blood sugar supported. I took breaks every couple of hours and did Deep Relaxation for 15 minutes. And, I had another friend come to my home to check on me in the afternoon. When she arrived, we agreed I should stop (though I wasn't finished) and we went together to do walking meditation.

I ended the day happy with my project progress and with my mindfulness. I could feel my grandfather within smiling and my father within transforming. I offered my gratitude to my teachers and to my sangha for helping me to continue to transform this energy of deep suffering in me and in my family and my world. I am learning true working meditation. It is another practice of True Love.



Winding Trails

## FIRST STEP OUTSIDE THE COMFORT ZONE

by Garrett Phelan

I feel a strong need to control. Where does that come from? How does that manifest in my life? What suffering does it cause to myself and to others? I meet regularly with a sangha friend, and we have begun a practice of journal writing together. We decide on a topic and then we write non-stop for 10-15 minutes. Recently, my friend suggested we write on a question Anh-Huong asked during a recent Dharma talk: “What would be your first step out of your comfort zone?”

We have been looking deeply at our ancestors and what of them is in us. Part of the story of all my ancestors is about emigrating from a

poverty-ridden Ireland. I know some of the story of my grandmother on my father’s side, Jane -- or Granny, as we called her. She lived on a small hardscrabble farm outside a rural Irish village. They were extremely poor and uneducated.

She traveled across the sea alone and arrived in the USA in 1904 with \$1.50. She became a servant. Stories suggest that those who stayed behind held funerals in Ireland for people who emigrated, because those who remained knew

they would never see family members and friends again. Maybe such a funeral was held for the young single woman when she left behind her little village, her parents and siblings.

She married a fellow emigrant, Patrick. In their new country they brought up six children during WWI, The Great Depression, and WWII. My grandfather worked on the railroad in Hartford, Connecticut. My father, the eldest child, left school in 8<sup>th</sup> grade to help support the family. Family legend has it he used to dance tap and

soft shoe down at the railroad station and workers would toss him extra coal to bring home to heat the house. Two of my uncles joined the army early, partly because they could not find work. At nineteen years old, Uncle Dan was captured in the Philippines during the Bataan Death March and was a prisoner of war under the Japanese. While he was in a prisoner of war camp, his father -- my grandfather -- died. He never knew that his son survived and came home.



Emigration of the Ancestors

Even as my parents worked very hard to make their children’s lives better, they suffered greatly.

When our family moved out of the city so we, the children, could go to better schools, we left much behind that we couldn’t have realized at the time: our extended family -- Granny, along with Aunt Julia and Aunt Peg who lived above us in our two-story house and were our second parents. We could go upstairs any time, and Granny would say, “Calico tea is good for ye.”

She'd prepare tea and I'd sit down and tell her how my day had been.

We lost close contact with Aunt Mary and Uncle Louie and my cousins who lived a few blocks away. Uncle Louie worked at the drug store on the corner. We could go down and get a free piece of candy or a yo-yo. We missed my Uncle Joe and Frieda and their kids. Uncle Joe and Uncle Dan, back from the war, lived in the housing put up for returning vets. Wherever we kids went, relatives or neighbors -- everyone knew everyone and everyone watched over us and took care of us.

My father never adjusted to the suburbs or the separation from his family. I didn't realize it at the time, but I didn't completely adjust to the separation from my extended family either.

I have carried with me an emigrant's fear of loneliness, of abandonment, passed on through my ancestors and through my parents.

To keep up in the suburbs, both my parents worked hard so we would not be embarrassed by the "rich kids." To earn a higher salary, my father worked the night shift. So I "lost" my father during my pre-teen and teen years, rarely seeing or being with him. It also meant my mother and father had little time together.

When I look back I feel very blessed because my ancestors and my parents passed on their stamina, perseverance, and desire for a better life for themselves – and for their children. Although I carry these traits, I also carry their loneliness, a sense of abandonment or separation within me, that sense of not being good enough.

Within two generations, poor and starving Irish illiterate hardscrabble farmers became successful and comfortable: a Vice-provost of a major university, a family therapist, and teacher and high school principal. Quite an

accomplishment. But we continued to carry the sadness, loneliness, feelings of loss, and for too many, the disease of alcoholism.

As I sat writing with my friend, I felt that my fear of loneliness and separateness is the essence of this need to control. If I can control the situation, whether my environment be home, work -- or even the sangha -- then maybe I won't feel lonely or separate. If I "let go" I might disappear. That feeling of loneliness may creep in and overwhelm me. Letting go of control feels the way Granny must have felt, so young, so alone, getting on that ship coming to America, not knowing what to expect, what would happen. She had to let go of Ireland, let go of mother and father, let go of brothers and sisters. She let go of so much. I was compelled to hold on to everything, afraid of letting go.

Anh-Huong shared with us that even though the sangha is a safe place, one aspect of our practice is to push ourselves outside our comfort zone. If we don't, how can we face our fears? She did say, however, that it is a gentle step out of your comfort zone, holding the hand of the sangha. I hold out my hand to the sangha.



Spring Buds

## AN OCEAN VOYAGE

by Jill McKay

A very dear friend and teacher once told me this story.

She had been a medical missionary in India and was returning home to Scotland by ship in the 1930s. As they left the coast of India, some passengers became afraid. They had lost sight of their homeland, and all around them was ocean with no landmark, no way to orient themselves. She took them

to the stern of the ship and pointed to the wake. “Do you see the path which we have traveled? The Captain of this ship can see the path in front just as clearly. We cannot see it but he can, and he will

bring us safely to England.” The passengers trusted her so they calmed down and enjoyed their journey, and in time they arrived safely in Southampton.

This story has had a deep impact on me because it is about calming fear, caring for others, and trusting the wisdom of our chosen path. The Captain’s ability to see the path ahead came from his skill in using the navigational tools available at the time, his own training and experience, the skill and experience of his crew, and above all the knowledge of the sea, winds and currents that have been passed down through the ages from one navigator to another. I can go so far as

to say that the Captain took refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha of the sea to bring the ship safely home.

The ship was taking my friend home to Scotland, and it was taking the Indian passengers to a new and unknown land. She was coming home; they were leaving home, and both had to let go of the safety and sight of dry land to reach the new shore. My friend could have ignored the suffering of her fellow passengers, but she reached out and calmed their fears. Although they could see some of the path on which they

had traveled, they had to trust that the path ahead was equally clear. Even my friend had to trust that the Captain and his crew would succeed in getting them safely to their destination. When the passengers understood that the Captain had the skill to get them across the ocean, they stopped worrying and

enjoyed the journey.

For me, this story is a kind of parable. I am aware of some of the conditions that have brought me to this point in my life. I can see some of the “wake” behind me. And like those Indian passengers, I am somewhat afraid to leave the familiar shore of the past. The habits I have evolved to cover painful feelings feel safe and comfortable to me, and I don’t always want to let them go.

I live at that point balanced between the pull of the past, with its joys and pain, and my hopes and fears for the future. I know that our



mindfulness practice helps us to be alive to what is present now, and I am deeply grateful for all that Thay teaches us about how to “dwell happily in the present moment.” We come to this beautiful practice with our own experiences and our own lessons learned and the wisdom of the Five Mindfulness Trainings forms the basis of our own navigation charts. It is a great gift that we have received.

The journey from India to England took many weeks in the 1930s. My friend spent that time resting, caring for her fellow passengers, and trusting that she would arrive home safely. I am thankful for the wisdom that Thay brings us in the form of the Five Mindfulness Trainings, and I aspire to walk in my friend’s footsteps of courage, compassion, and faith. I know that the journey takes time, and I put my trust in the truth of Thay’s words: “If we live according to the Five Mindfulness Trainings, we are already on the path of a bodhisattva. Knowing we are on that path, we are not lost in confusion about our life in the present or in fears about the future.”



Cut Tree Trunk

## STONE IN MY SHOE

by Chris (Deep Listening of the Heart)

At the beginning of Thay’s book, *Fear*, he introduces the concept of Original Fear, caused by the trauma of birth after leaving the Palace of the Baby. For me, the fear base is judgment by people: irrational fear of people saying things that make me feel so unworthy I just want to die because it hurts too much to go on and I don’t deserve to be here.

It comes from having an insecure, emotionally abusive and narcissistic mother who would act nurturing one moment, then become wildly angry with no warning. She was terrified that she wasn’t worthy and spent all her parenting energy having us be perfect to make her look good enough so she would not be judged.

The lessons were clear, if you wanted to stay safe:

- Alone is safe.
- Trust no one, because even Mommy could turn on you and make you feel like dying at any moment, no matter how sweet she is being.
- Always be vigilant, someone may be judging. Manipulate everything so you appear to be OK, and no one can attack you for making a mistake.

The attending coping mechanisms which served me so well in this incredibly unsafe family -- perfectionism, isolationism, never making waves, medicating to keep the anxiety under control -- became demons in adulthood, driving me into addiction, failed relationships, and always maintaining masks. "I am OK if you think I am."

In the late 1980’s, working with a wonderful therapist in North Dakota, Sharon Wegscheider Cruse, I began to address a lot of this, first by understanding how it was all a self-preservation mechanism. I researched my family history as far back as I could to understand how my parents



were victims of a pathology that my ancestors passed on because they weren't lucky enough to have teachers like Sharon, Anh- Huong, Thu, and Thay, who could gently guide them to heal themselves. Identifying many of those behaviors I had trained myself in -- old friends who had served me well but were harming me now -- I was very clear that the "self" I had created was what was causing me suffering. I committed to changing it completely, whatever it took.



I got hugely better, able to lead a relatively normal life. Relative, because I was not in a world of pain or driven by demons -- but true happiness seemed unobtainable. I was willing to settle for not living in a world of fear and anxiety. Neutral seemed pretty good by comparison. I got as far as I could get using the tools I had found. I was relentless and diligent. But that form of healing could not set me totally free.

I tried to build a normal life, layering in all the architecture of marriage, career, and parenting. I went through the motions, marking time, feeling it would be pretty much of a relief when it ended.

Twenty years later, I began the next stage of the journey. A stranger I met with whom I felt a strong connection said to me, "Chris, I have a book I think you really need to read. I have a feeling it will completely change your life."

The book was Thay's *You Are Here*.

After reading the very first chapter, I was certain I had found a practice that could take me further down the road to healing. After twenty years, I

was finally waking up into the possibility of real happiness, whatever that was: a new teacher who could take me farther, new tools... Wow -- at last! I began a practice of daily meditation the next day.

I knew from recovery in Alcoholics Anonymous

and my work with Sharon that I had to be fearless and diligent to achieve real healing, to surrender myself to the teachings and do what my teacher suggested. But

what has really taken me by surprise is the almost miraculous healing power of the sangha.

I began again to work with my fear. I practiced mindful breathing often. Holding my fear as a mother should hold a child, with no judgment, just presence and kindness, I began to share my fear in family sharing at Sangha and at retreats, trusting to let the Sangha hold my fear with its presence and kindness. I began to understand fear as a seed, arising out of a place deep within me.

Even though Sharon taught me that this fear comes from my mother and other ancestors, knowing that intellectually was not enough. I finally realized I had to heal their wounds before I can truly heal, to let go of my anger at my mother for all the hurtful and unjust things she had done to me and by some miracle, forgive her: understand that she too was suffering.

I have meditated on her suffering. At first, just my old anger and hurt manifested. Eventually I had an insight that she must have felt horrible about the things she said and did to us, the uncontrollable and wild outbursts. No one would

ever do that to their child if they could help it. She only knew to treat her pain and remorse with alcohol. She spent her entire life, trapped in a cycle of anger, regret and drunkenness, desperately trying to make everything look perfect. She had no teacher, no Sangha, no practice.

I have, in the last year or so, developed some compassion and forgiveness for my mother. I am just starting to cry for her, a little girl who grew up to lead such a painful sad life. I try to water these seeds of compassion whenever I am aware of them.

I find that when I am truly present, right here, right now, I am nourished and content and without fear. But though I practice, I am not able to stay present that well yet, and the fear of judgment is still there. Fear of other people's anger is still there, a diminishing echo. I work with it a lot. The seed is smaller now, and I can mostly watch it without reacting. But it is still there and still pretty big, more like a stone in my shoe rather than a knife at my throat.



*True love and prayer are learned  
in the hour when love becomes impossible  
and the heart has turned to stone.*

THOMAS MERTON

by Emily Whittle

## DNA OF DISCONTENT

by Elisabeth Dearborn

Recently I became aware of a tendency toward self-improvement. An orientation toward a ceaseless desire to 'be better.' For the years I've been practicing meditation, this subtle undertone has been present. What now? I opened my awareness and sat, breathing in, breathing out, inviting but not directing the inquiry. At first I just felt the excitement of a fresh perception, a discovery, also the oldness of the habit. These habits of mind have a strong ancestral thread, at least mine did. I waited, aware of several coming to mind, and trusting that what I needed would appear.

After some time, a fresh gatha came along.

*May I accept things as they are.*

Wow, I thought, this is just right. Fresh. Joyful. Reassuring. Organic. I begin by walking the gatha.

*May I , step,  
accept, step,  
things, step,  
as they, step,  
are, step,  
waiting & breathing, step.*

A lot happens. Doing it slowly feels entirely consistent with my inner condition. Some days I start off and for the first two minutes, my life being quite full, I find myself saying it all in just two steps. Then, my body slows down. Body and mind begin to work together. Deep, slow breathing occurs. I start to taste each word. My foot, my leg become entirely entwined with each single word. I drop into deep attention, mind and body one.

*May* is a gentle way to dispossess the personality. *Accept* is humbly dynamic, it directs me toward softening. *Things as they are* can apply both

to interior and exterior conditions. Since the habit is present in both, perfect. *Things as they are*: such a comprehensive phrase and so variable. It feels delicious.

Attitudes inside myself? Can I accept them? Circumstances outside myself? Can I slow down and observe them? Can I cease tinkering with them and wishing them different? Can I learn to use this moment to accept them?

I loved the questions. Looking deeply at the root perception in myself was refreshing. Feeling refreshed was helpful to my whole practice.

Taking up a gatha so lovingly addressing the underlayer was nourishing. Reassuring. I began to see how habitual self-improvement had

become. It made me laugh to begin anew with myself. Now I smile when I see myself doing it, then return to *May I accept things as they are*.

*Thank you, I say to the ancestors. I see your discontent is with me, also your perseverance, your loving self kindness.*

*Thank you, I say, to my brothers and sisters in the practice, I am relying on you, your nutriments along with mine.*

*Thank you, I add, to the ocean waves. You show me eternal freshness.*

*If you look deeply into the palm of your hand, you will see your parents and all generations of your ancestors. All of them are alive in this moment. Each is present in your body. You are the continuation of each of these people.*

*Thich Nhat Hanh*



## UPCOMING EVENTS

*(Please visit the MPCF website for updates 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, Taiji and Qigong.

Thursday 9:15-10:00 am

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

Thursday 12:00-12:45 pm

#### **Thursday Evenings Meditation:**

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

#### **First Thursday of month: Recitation of the Five Mindfulness Trainings and Dharma talk by Anh-Huong.**

Tea and cookies 6:45-7:25pm. Sitting begins at 7:30pm. Before meditation you are invited to join us for tea and cookies any time between 6:30 and 7:20 pm.

### *Workshops & Classes*

#### **Weekend Retreat in West Virginia in 2013 led by Anh-Huong and Thu Nguyen May 24-26**

**From 6:00 pm Friday to 3:00 pm Sunday.**  
Practicing mindfulness in a rural setting for the whole weekend, together with a loving and supportive community.

#### **Days and Half Days of Mindfulness led by Anh-Huong and Thu Nguyen**

(see website for details)

**Saturdays at the MPCF in Oakton, Virginia (in the Chapel) March 16 (half day), April 20 (full day), May 11 (full day).**

#### **Special Days of Mindfulness**

- **March 30th. Day of Mindfulness in Baltimore**
- **April 13th. Day of Mindfulness in Philadelphia**

### *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.

Send submissions to Garrett Phelan at:

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## Along the Path

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