THICH NHAT HANH

A GUIDE TO WALKING MEDITATION

translated from the Vietnamese

by

ANH HUONG

edited by

Joseph Bobrow
About the author

Thich Nhat Hanh was born in Central Vietnam in 1926, and he left home as a teenager to become a Zen monk. He founded the School of Youth for Social Services, Van Hanh Buddhist University, and the Tiep Hien Order. In 1966 he was invited by the Fellowship of Reconciliation to tour the United States to describe to us the enormous suffering of his people. Because of his fierce neutrality, he was unable to return home, and he was granted asylum in France, where he is head of a small community of meditators and activists. Nhat Hanh is the author of 66 books in English, French, and Vietnamese.
CONTENTS

You can do it 1
Go without arriving 1
Relaxed steps 2
Let worry fall away 3
Walking in the Pure Land 3
This Earth is the Pure Land 4
This Earth has all the marvels of the Pure Land 4
The seal of a king 5
Your step is your most important act 6
A fresh breeze rises from each footstep 7
Being awake in order to let go 7
Smile as a Buddha smiles 8
A chain of pearls 9
Breath counting and taking steps 9
Pace 10
To take in more air 11
Walking, standing - each action continues the work of realization 13
A lotus flower blossoms from each footstep 14
The miracle is to walk on the Earth 15
Choosing an object of attention 17
Using a phrase as the object of attention 19
The future of human beings depends on your step 19
Let me walk with your feet 21
Walking in order to find peace 22
Walking so that all beings may be peaceful 23
You can love only if you see clearly and understand

Do not obscure half of the Dharma treasure

Choosing Bodhisattvas as our travelling compassions
YOU CAN DO IT

Walking meditation is the practice of meditation while you are walking. It can bring you peace as you are practicing it.

When you practice walking meditation, take slow, relaxed and serene steps, with a half-smile on your face. You should step like the most leisurely and unpreoccupied person in the world. While taking such steps, let all worry and sadness fall away. In order to be at peace, you should be able to take such steps. It is not difficult at all; you can do it. Everyone can do it, if he or she really wants to be at peace.

GO WITHOUT ARRIVING

In this busy life, we often feel rushed by some kind of pressure. We often have to hurry. But where are we rushing to? This is a question we rarely ask ourselves. Walking meditation is like taking a walk; we do not set ourselves the goal of arriving at a particular destination in a particular length of time. The purpose of walking meditation is walking meditation itself. The important point is to walk and not to arrive. Walking meditation is not a means; it is the
end. Each footstep is life, each footstep is peace. That is why we don't have to walk hurriedly. That is why we slow down our steps. Walk, but don't walk - walk but do not be pushed ahead by any purpose whatsoever. In this way, when we walk, a half-smile blossoms on our face.

RELAXED STEPS

In daily life, our steps are weighed down by worry, anxiousness and fear. Our life might only be a succession of months and years of worry. So our steps cannot be relaxed. The earth is so beautiful, with so many wonderful paths on it. There are narrow paths with bamboo trees growing on both sides; there are paths bathed in the fragrance of rice fields, paths lined with beautifully colored autumn leaves. But we are rarely aware of them and often cannot appreciate such paths. It is because we are not relaxed and our steps are not relaxed steps. Walking meditation is practicing how to take relaxed steps again. At the age of about one year and half we start to walk totteringly. Now, by practicing walking meditation, we will take those tottering steps again. After a few weeks of practice, we can take stable, peaceful and natural steps. These words are written to help you begin this practice. I wish you success.
LET WORRY FALL AWAY

If I had a Buddha's eyes, I would be able to look at your footprint and see clearly the traces of worry and sorrow that you leave on the earth's surface as you walk by, just as a scientist uses a microscope to see the microorganisms present in a glass of water taken from the lake. Walk in such a manner that you leave only peace in your footprint; this is the secret of walking meditation. But if you want to walk like this, you should know how to shake off sorrow and worry.

WALKING IN THE PURE LAND

If I had Buddha's feet, I would take you to Amitabha Buddha's Pure Land, or in Christian terms, I would take you to the Kingdom of God. The scenery up there is very beautiful and peaceful. But once you get there, how will you walk? Are you sure that you will not leave behind traces of worry and sorrow of this worldly life in your footprints on the Pure Land? If you bring sorrow and worry with you and imprint them on the Pure Land, you will make the Pure Land impure. To be able to live in a peaceful world, you should be capable of taking peaceful steps right here on Earth.
THIS EARTH IS THE PURE LAND

One thing I would like to whisper to you is that you can take peaceful steps right here on earth, then you no longer need to reach the Buddha Land or the Kingdom of God. Worldliness and purity are just products of our mind. Once you are free and at peace, worldliness is purity, purity is worldliness, and there is nowhere you need to go. No need to use the Buddha's marvellous feet even if you have them.

THIS EARTH HAS ALL THE MARVELS OF THE PURE LAND

In order to be free and at peace, you should learn to let worry and sorrow fall away. First, you have to observe carefully and see that this very world has all the wonders of the Pure Land. It is the worry and the sorrow that make us incapable of seeing these wonders. I often think that I would prefer this world of ours to the Pure Land. It is because there are things on earth that I like very much, such as grapefruit trees, lemon trees, banana trees, orange trees, pine trees and willow trees. I have been told that in the Pure Land there are precious lotus ponds, precious trees, paths covered with gold and silver and precious singing birds. I am not very fond of them. I do not like to step on paths paved with gold and sil-
ver, or even on paths lined with marble here on earth. I like the sandy paths with green grasses growing on both sides. I like each one of the pebbles and the leaves which fall on the paths. I like the bushes, the streams, the wall-like bamboo hedges and the ferry boat docks. Once when I was a young novice, I told my teacher; "Teacher, I will not go to the Pure Land if it does not have lemon trees and grapefruit trees."

My teacher shook his head and smiled. He probably thought that I was a somewhat stubborn student. But he did not say whether I was wrong or right.

Now, knowing that worldliness and purity are just products of the mind, I am very happy. I am happy because I know that there are grapefruit trees and lemon trees in the Pure Land and also red sand paths with green grasses on both sides. I know that if I open my eyes mindfully and take peaceful stable steps, I can see the Pure Land. That is why I practice walking meditation every day.

**THE SEAL OF A KING**

Choose a smooth path so you can practice; the river bank, park, terrace, forest, or small, tree-lined path. There are people who practice walking medita-
tion in concentration camps, even right inside narrow, dark prison cells. It is good if the path is not rough or too steep. Slow down your steps and focus your attention on those steps. Be aware of each step you take. Step carefully and serenely. Step like a Buddha steps. As you step, imprint your foot on the earth's surface carefully, yet confidently, just as a king places his seal on an imperial edict.

The king's seal on the imperial edict can bring peace to his people or it can make them suffer. Your step is also like that. A peaceful world depends on whether you can take peaceful steps or not. Everything depends on a single step of yours. If you can take a peaceful step, you are capable of taking two peaceful steps. And you can take 108 peaceful steps.

YOUR STEP IS YOUR MOST IMPORTANT ACT

What act of yours is the most important one in your life? Passing an exam, buying a car, buying a house, getting a promotion? Many people have passed exams, bought cars and gotten promotions, but they are not at peace, they are not fulfilled. So the most important thing in life is to be at peace with yourself and to share that peace with other living beings. But in order to have peace you should be
aware of each of your steps. Your step is your most important act. It decides everything. I light an incense stick, join my palms into a lotus bud and wish you success.

A FRESH BREEZE RISES FROM EACH FOOTSTEP

In one monastery, at the beginning of the walking meditation path, there is a big stone with five words carved on top: bồ bồ thạnh phong khôi. It means "A fresh breeze rises from each footprint." Isn't that beautiful? This fresh breeze is joy, peace and liberty which blow away the sorrow of life and death and bring back the freshness of peace to our mind. Taking such steps you can help the world.

BEING AWAKE IN ORDER TO LET GO

Worry and sorrow always cling to us during our life. How can we let them fall away? Take relaxed and stable steps: be awake and strong-willed. Be awake so that you can see that you are carrying the heavy luggage of worry and sorrow. Be strong-willed so that you can resolutely let it fall away. Worry and sorrow arise when you are preoccupied with the past and the future. Once we see our worry
and sorrow, we are awake. Let us then have compassion for ourselves. We have compassion for ourselves when we see that we are bound to the framework of time, bound to worry and sorrow. If we want to, we can let them go now, just as when we take off our raincoat, shake it, and let all the clinging drops run off.

**SMILE AS A BUDDHA SMILES**

As you let worry and sorrow fall away, let a smile blossom, just a half-smile, and maintain that half-smile on your lips, like a Buddha. Learn to step as Buddha steps, to smile as a Buddha smiles. You can do that. Why should you wait until who knows when in order to become a Buddha? You can be the Buddha right at this very moment.

Many times in *The Miracle of Mindfulness*, I mentioned the half-smile and its benefits. This half-smile is not only the fruit of mindfulness and peace, it also has the effect of nourishing and preserving them. It is a true miracle. Please remember not to ignore it. It is your treasure of happiness. It brings you peace and mindfulness and makes those around you peaceful and awake. It turns the earth into the Pure Land. While practicing walking meditation please remember to maintain that half-smile; it makes your step more
relaxed, more serene and more awake.

A CHAIN OF PEARLS

The half-smile and the peaceful steps can be considered as shining and distinct pearls. Your breath is a string bringing these pearls together into a chain; there is no separation between any two pearls.

Please breathe mindfully as you practice walking meditation. Being aware of your breath is a wonderful way to maintain mindfulness and peace. In this way, you nourish each step.

BREATH COUNTING AND TAKING STEPS

Mindful breathing is different from regular breathing. Mindful breathing means that when you breathe, you know that you are breathing. When you take a long breath, you know that you are taking a long breath, and similarly when you take a short breath. When you breathe gently you are aware that you are breathing gently. You may ask how you can pay attention to both your breathing and your walking at the same time. It can be done if we unite the breath and the step. We can do that by the method of counting. We count the footsteps. In other words,
we measure the length of the breath by the number of steps: how many steps we take as we inhale and how many steps we take as we exhale.

This is the method I began to use about fifteen years ago; I would like to share it with you so you can experiment. Slow down your step, but not too slow, and breathe normally. Do not try to extend the length of your breath. Continue in the way for a few minutes. Then begin to notice how many steps you take as you inhale. In this way, your attention includes both your breathing and your walking simultaneously. Your half-smile is closely connected to the serenity of your footsteps and your breathing. It is both the way to maintain attention and peace, and an object of attention itself. After a few hours of practicing seriously, you will see all four-breath, number, footstep and half-smile - blend together in an attention, relaxed state. That is awareness, that is wisdom.

PACE

Let me tell you more about the method of counting. In order to count easily, you should adjust the pace of your footsteps. For example, if you find your breath cannot be extended to three steps but only to two-and-a-half, you can either step a little faster so
your breath can measure exactly three steps, or step a little slower so it can measure exactly two steps. Then maintain that rhythm in counting and breathing. Your exhalation may be longer than your inhalation, especially for new practitioners. Observing for a while, you will discover the length of your normal breath. For example 3-3, or 2-3. In the first case, exhalation and inhalation are of equal length (3-3). In the second case, the inhalation is shorter than the exhalation. If you take two steps for each inhalation and three for each exhalation, note that 2-3 is the pattern of your normal breathing as you walk. Breathing at this rate suits your lungs and makes you feel comfortable. You can breathe like that for a while without feeling tired. The first number, 2, is the number of steps taken during one inhalation, the second number, 3, is the number of steps taken during one exhalation. When you are climbing up a grade or going down a slope, the length of each breath is shortened and is not your normal breath. Please follow your normal breath.

TO TAKE IN MORE AIR

After a few days of practicing you can experiment with the following method: while walking and breathing normally, increase by one step the length of your exhalation. For example, if your
normal breath is 2-2, try to practice 2-3 for four or five breaths, then go back to 2-2. Practicing in this way may feel comfortable because when your exhalation is longer, your lungs are contracted a bit more and more of the deoxygenated air can be exhaled. When we breathe normally the deoxygenated air in the bottom of your lungs is not exhaled completely. By extending the exhalation by one step this air will be exhaled. Four or five such breaths are enough since you may become tired otherwise. Take four or five breaths like this and then return to your normal breathing. In about five minutes you can do it again. This time too, take only four or five such breaths, then return again to your normal breathing. Please remember to extend only the exhalation by one step, not the inhalation.

After practicing like this for a while, you may also feel like extending the inhalation by one step. Your lung chambers seem to be telling you that if you now take one more step for each inhalation (3-3), it can feel very good. Only when you have this sense should you extend your inhalation. It will feel quite good. However, do not practice like this for more than four or five breaths. Remember to return to your normal breathing, 2-2 for example. A few minutes after that, if you want, you can again extend your inhalation (2-3), then your inhalation (3-3). A few months later, your lungs will be healthier and
your blood will be better filtered. Your normal breathing may change. For example, it may become 3-3 from 2-2. Breathe normally when you practice walking meditation. The pace at which you walk becomes your own.

WALKING, STANDING - EACH ACTION CONTINUES THE WORK OF REALIZATION

I have already suggested that you walk as a Buddha walks and take steps like those that a Buddha takes. Each step carves your peace and relaxation into the earth's surface. The earth you step on becomes sacred. In 1968 I had the chance to visit Linh Thuu Mountain where Shakyamuni Buddha dwelled. I had the opportunity to walk mindfully by myself along those same paths where Sakyamuni had walked. I stood on the piece of land where, centuries ago, his quiet hut had been built. I sat on the block of stone where he had sat and looked at the same red sun sinking below the horizon, that he had also watched so long ago. I felt that if I did not walk, did not stand, did not look at things as he had done, I could not continue his work. So it is with you. If you do not walk, stand, sit and look at things as the Buddha does, you cannot continue the Buddha's work for the sake of all beings. It is not by preaching on Sūtras that we perpetuate the way of awareness and
wisdom, but by our daily way of walking, standing, sitting and seeing. There is no enlightenment outside daily life.

A LOTUS FLOWER BLOSSOMS FROM EACH FOOTSTEP

When an artist draws a picture or sculpts a statue of the Buddha sitting on a lotus, it is not only because he wants to honor him. The artist wants to show that the Buddha is sitting in peace and awareness. Each of us sits down many times every day, but very few of us can sit peacefully like a Buddha. For many of us, when we sit down, it is as if we had sat on a bed of smoldering coals; as soon as we are seated we think of something else and pop up again. Although the Buddha may be portrayed sitting on a block of stone, he is serene as if sitting on a lotus. When I first became a monk, I was taught that before sitting down I should evoke this thought: Chánh thân đạo tòa, đường nguyên chứng sanh, tòa bồ đề tòa, tâm vô sở trước.

This means, "As I sit down I wish that all living beings may be seated on the throne of perfect enlightenment, their minds free from illusion and from all mistaken views." After evoking this thought we were to sit down mindfully. This is learning how to sit like a Buddha. I want to remind those who wish to enter the Pure Land: Please sit on a lotus right now. Do
not wait until you arrive in the Pure Land. Please be reborn in a lotus at this very moment. By being reborn in a lotus flower and sitting on a lotus seat at this very moment, you no longer need to doubt the Pure Land's existence. The same is true with walking. The newborn Buddha is commonly shown taking seven steps. With each step a lotus flower blossoms from the imprint in the earth. We should be able to take steps that are so peaceful that a lotus flower can blossom beneath each of these steps. Next time when you practice try this - let a lotus flower blossom under each footstep, just like a newborn Buddha. You don't need to feel inferior or inadequate to the task. If your step is serene, it is worthy of having a lotus blossom from it. You, too, are a Buddha like everyone else. It was the Buddha who said that. He said that every living being has the potential to awaken. To practice walking meditation is to practice living in mindfulness. Mindfulness and enlightenment are one.

THE MIRACLE IS TO WALK ON THE EARTH

Taking peaceful and relaxing steps on the earth, that is a miracle. Some people say that only walking on burning coals, on spikes or on water should be called a miracle. But I think that walking on the earth is already a miracle. Neige Marchand, when translating the book The Miracle of Mindful-
ness into French, chose the title Le Miracle, c'est de
marcher sur terre, (The miracle is to walk on the
earth). I like this title very much. Imagine that you
and I are astronauts. We have landed on the moon
and cannot get back to earth because our spaceship's
engine is broken and we have no way to fix it. The
control center back on earth cannot send up another
spaceship in time to rescue us, and we know very
well that in two more days we shall die from lack of
oxygen. In that moment you and I wish for nothing
more than to be able to return to our beautiful planet
and take peaceful steps together. Knowing that death
is inevitable, we now can see that steps taken on the
green earth are precious.

Let us now think of ourselves as astronauts
who have survived and are able to get back to earth.
We are happy to walk peacefully on our green planet.
We carry out the miracle with each of our steps.
That is what is meant by a lotus flower blossoming
from each footnote. Please practice and be aware that
you are taking miraculous steps on the earth's sur-
face. The earth will emerge in front of your eyes and
beneath your feet as a wonder. With that mindful-
ness, with that method of concentration, you can walk
happily and freely on the earth.

Try standing as a child might stand while it is
playing, keeping only one foot on the ground. You
can see the whole round earth beneath your foot. While walking, you also can look down and see clearly ahead the ground you are going to put your foot on. Walking mindfully on that ground, you are aware, at the same time, of both your foot and the earth. In your mind's eye, you can see that your foot is a king's seal. As you walk in the meditation hall, you can use each of these phrases "the seal of a king", "a lotus flower blossoms from each footprint", and "the earth emerges" as themes for meditation.

**CHOOSING AN OBJECT OF ATTENTION**

Walking meditation aims at mindfulness and peace. Mindfulness and peace need to be maintained in a continuous way, so we use breathing, walking, counting and keeping a half-smile. These four elements make possible the development of niệm and định. Niệm means awareness, mindfulness; định means one-pointedness, the opposite of dispersion. Walking meditation creates mindfulness, concentration and peace.

The four elements - breathing, counting, walking and keeping a half-smile - need not always be practiced together. There are times when just walking is enough. Following your breathing, counting and the half-smile are useful when mindfulness is difficult to sustain. Everyone can coordinate breath-
ing, counting and walking. But if you focus too much on, let’s say, walking, your awareness of your breathing and counting may become weaker. This is like a light bulb which dims when the electric heater is plugged in. You may ask whether by focussing exclusively on walking you can still see other wonders like the cool paths shaded by palm trees, still smell the fragrance of freshly cut grass. Yes, your attentiveness does tend to decrease as the field you are focussing on becomes wider. Nonetheless, it is fine if you are able to maintain mindfulness while walking. If you choose to focus on the lotus flower blossoming, you should focus just on that. If you choose the image of the earth emerging before you, then only pay attention to the earth as it emerges in front of you as you step. When you place your foot on the ground, you see the whole earth beneath your foot, immediately. Your foot and the whole green earth can be seen simultaneously.

If you want to pay attention to the smell of the grass, the shade of the trees, the sky or the clouds, stop walking. Then, while maintaining your breathing, watch attentively. Let a half-smile blossom and maintain it naturally, without strain. After a while, continue your walking meditation and pay attention to the walking.
USING A PHRASE AS THE OBJECT OF ATTENTION

In addition to counting the number of steps you may also use a phrase as your focus. For example, if your rhythm of breathing is 3-3 and you are meditating on "a lotus flower blossoms from each footstep", then you can silently repeat to yourself, "lo-tus blooms/lo-tus blooms". If your breathing is 2-3 then you can say to yourself, lo-tus/lo-tus blooms". If you want to meditate on the green earth, then you can say, "walk on the green earth/walk on the green earth" (5-5), or "walk on the green earth/I walk on the green earth" (5-6). Remember to look for the phrase with the appropriate number of syllables. If your efforts are directed towards realizing the Pure Land, you can repeat silently "A-mi-ta-bha/A-mi-ta-bha" (4-4), or "Na-mo-A-mi-ta-bha/Na-mo-A-mi-ta-bha" (6-6). This method is easy for those people whose language is monosyllabic. Such phrases connect your breath with your step and at the same time make the great earth emerge.

THE FUTURE OF HUMAN BEINGS DEPENDS ON YOUR STEP

While practicing walking meditation, step naturally, you don't have to join your palms into a
lotus bud or be too formal. Choose relatively silent stretches of path in a park or along a river bank. At the Zen Center you can practice anytime. Whoever sees you will recognize that you are doing walking meditation and will not disturb you. Meeting a person on the meditation path, you need only to join your palms into a lotus bud in front of your chest, then continue your walking practice.

I used to practice walking meditation in the early morning and evening when I was living in Sceaux, France. The neighbour's dog used to come out and bark at me. While at the Zen Arts Center in Mount Tremper in northern New York State, I was showing the American Zen students how to do walking meditation. One morning, a dog was once again barking. In America, as well as in France, dogs are not accustomed to the relaxed and silent manner of walking. If you walk very quickly they think it's normal and pay no attention. I told the students "Next year if I come back here to do walking meditation with you, perhaps this dog won't bark at us as we walk by. You will practice walking meditation throughout the year and the dog will become familiar with your way of walking mindfully". Everyone agreed with me. Sometimes I think that our way of walking, standing, sitting and looking at things does have effects on the animal and plant worlds. How many species of animals and plants have become
extinct because of the harm we have caused the living environment? That environment is now turning back to harm us. The polluted drinking water and air have begun to harm human beings. At this time, over 50,000 nuclear warheads have already been manufactured, and that is enough to exterminate dozens of earths. Yet we still continue to manufacture more and more and it seems that we cannot stop. Mankind is now like a sleepwalker, not knowing what we are doing or where we are heading. Whether human beings can wake up or not depends on whether each of us can take conscientious and mindful steps. That is why the future of mankind as well as the future of all life on this earth, depends on your steps.

LET ME WALK WITH YOUR FEET

The Vietnam war caused innumerable injuries to our minds and bodies. There are many Buddhists who lost an arm and are no longer able to join their palms together to pray to Buddha or to greet each other. There are many Buddhists who have lost a leg and can no longer sit in the lotus or half-lotus position to meditate, and can no longer practice walking meditation. Last year there were two such people who came to Phuong Van temple to practice during the retreat period. We had to try different ways so they could practice. They sit in chairs placed
near the corner of the meditation hall while the others sat on their cushions and pads on the wooden floor in lotus or half-lotus positions. I showed them how to practice walking meditation in the meditation hall, suggesting that they choose a person who was actually doing walking meditation and follow that person, become one with that person, follow that person's step in mindfulness. In this way they can take peaceful and serene steps on the wooden floor. In this way those who cannot walk can make lotus flowers blossom from their footsteps. These people have practiced this method and have found it fruitful and effective. The first time they practiced in this way I saw tears falling from their eyes. You are the person who have two arms and two legs; you can join your palms into a lotus and practice sitting and walking meditation easily and in a relaxed manner. You should see how fortunate you are. Let us be that meditative walker, practicing for ourselves and for our friends who are sitting on the chair and following our steps. Do you realize that you are walking for many of your fellow beings?

WALKING IN ORDER TO FIND PEACE

You can practice walking meditation with another person, walking together without talking, though it is easier to focus while practicing alone. I
wake up early every morning to do walking meditation, and during the day I practice whenever I have from five minutes to half-hour of free time. Walking meditation can bring peace, awareness and much happiness. Let us turn every path on this earth into a path for walking meditation. If you don't practice walking meditation, you do not benefit, I do not benefit, and the lives of all beings do not benefit. In the first few days of practice, slow down your steps; they may be unstable, like a baby's steps when it first learns to walk. Follow your breathing, focus on your steps and you will find that they become more stable. Have you ever observed a tiger as it walks slowly? The cow takes very neat and stable steps. The tiger takes gentle and supple steps. Practice walking meditation regularly, and you will find that your steps too become precise, stable and supple.

WALKING SO THAT ALL BEINGS MAY BE PEACEFUL

The air is more likely to be cool and clean in the morning or at night. No source of energy is more nourishing than pure air. While practicing walking meditation, you take in that energy and feel stronger in your body and mind. Practicing regularly, you will recognize a change in your daily life. Your movements will become more easy-going, not pre-
cipitous, and you will become more aware of what you are doing. While engaging in daily activities you will realize that you become calmer, see things more deeply, and look at the world more compassionately. Every species, familiar or strange, big or small - from the moon and the stars to the leaves and the caterpillars - all will become peaceful because of the steps you take.

YOU CAN LOVE ONLY IF YOU SEE CLEARLY AND UNDERSTAND

Before closing I would like to confide something. I have told you that this world of ours contains every marvel of the Pure Land. But I haven't reminded you that our earth has one thing that the Pure Land does not have: the presence of suffering. If I hesitate and do not want to enter the world of Pure Land, it is not only because the Pure Land does not have grapefruit and lemon trees, but also because there is no suffering. The first and most basic thing a Buddhist should see is the presence of suffering. If you do not recognize this, as Sakyamuni Buddha pointed out in the first of the Four Noble Truths, then you cannot truly become a Buddhist. It is the awareness of suffering that generates compassion and the will to go on with our way of living. Compassion and wisdom are one. If you do not see clearly, then

-24-
your love is not yet love. When I returned to Europe after trying to help the boat people, I felt that Western life was not my life. After witnessing the refugee's suffering on the seas, I landed at the airport in Paris. Driving home I passed cities and supermarkets with colorful lights. It was like walking in a dream. How could there be such a disparity between the two situations? On the one hand, the plight of people on the seas being pursued, robbed, raped and killed, and on the other hand, the situation of people who seemed to keep searching of pleasure from glasses of liquor and colored lights. All the sacred teachings can't replace direct awareness of suffering. During the Vietnam war, those in the West could watch as scenes of the war passed on their television screens. I wonder whether they could really grasp the situation from looking at the images on a screen. I too have seen those pictures and I do not think they can convey the real suffering.

DO NOT OBSCURE HALF OF THE DHARMA TREASURE

I see our daily lives on this earth as the best ground from which to learn how to live peacefully. Mahayana teachers sometimes identify the Dharma treasure with the good and beautiful. In the saying "Violet bamboo and yellow flowers are none other
than the Dharma treasure, white clouds and the moon display the whole truth", half of our essential nature is obscured. The true face of our essential nature is also the mud - the greed, hatred, ignorance - the suffering and the killing between human beings. In the Pure Land, the song of the birds becomes the voice of the Dharma. On earth too, the singing of birds can reveal our essential nature. (A teaching once said: "From the beginning, all things are neither born nor destroyed". He offered a poem as a comment, "When Spring comes, a thousand flowers celebrate and the golden bird sings in the green willow tree.") For us the singing of birds often expresses joy, beauty and purity; it evokes our love of life. But looking more deeply, we can see that bird-song can also create suffering. One day while sitting quietly in the forest, I suddenly trembled when I heard a bird's call. I could see that the worms, hiding under leaves or in the hollow of a tree, trembled just as I did. The call of birds can make worms and insects afraid, just as humans become afraid when we hear the tiger's roar. The song that expresses beauty can also inspire fear and suffering.

CHOOSING BODHISATTVAS AS OUR TRAVELLING COMPASSIONS

Practicing walking meditation helps us to open
our eyes to many wonders in the universe. It turns the earth into the Pure Land. It helps us to let sorrow and worry fall away, and brings peace. But walking meditation also helps us to see the suffering of life. I often tell Zen students: "If you can't see what's happening in front of and around you, how could you expect to see your own nature? It is not by closing your eyes that you can see your own nature. On the contrary, you have to open your eyes and wake up to the real situation in the world - that is being able to see completely your whole Dharma treasure, your own Dharma body. The bombs, the hunger, the pursuit of wealth and power - these are not separate from your nature."

The country roads with the smell of fragrant hay, paths shaded by oak trees, paths covered with beautiful falling leaves - these are your walking meditation paths; please enjoy them. They do not lead you into forgetfulness, but rather, as you step, you can remember, you can awaken so that you can see the real suffering in the world. Then, every path, every street - from the back alleys of Beirut to the roads of Vietnam where undetonated mines lay buried and still explode, taking the lives of children and farmers - every path in this world is your walking meditation path. Once you are awake you will not hesitate to go onto those paths. You will suffer, but not from doubt, worry or fear for yourself. You will
suffer with all being, in kinship as you feel the compassion of an awakening person, a Bodhisattva.
“Wherever the Buddha’s teachings have flourished,
either in cities or countrysides,
people would gain inconceivable benefits.
The land and people would be enveloped in peace.
The sun and moon will shine clear and bright.
Wind and rain would appear accordingly,
and there will be no disasters.
Nations would be prosperous
and there would be no use for soldiers or weapons.
People would abide by morality and accord with laws.
They would be courteous and humble,
and everyone would be content without injustices.
There would be no thefts or violence.
The strong would not dominate the weak
and everyone would get their fair share.”

~THE BUDDHA SPEAKS OF
THE INFINITE LIFE SUTRA OF
ADORNMENT, PURITY, EQUALITY
AND ENLIGHTENMENT OF
THE MAHAYANA SCHOOL~
The Teachings Of Great Master Yin Guang

Whether one is a layperson or has left the home-life, one should respect elders and be harmonious to those surrounding him. One should endure what others cannot, and practice what others cannot achieve. One should take others’ difficulties unto oneself and help them succeed in their undertakings. While sitting quietly, one should often reflect upon one’s own faults, and when chatting with friends, one should not discuss the rights and wrongs of others. In every action one makes, whether dressing or eating, from dawn to dusk and dusk till dawn, one should not cease to recite the AMITABHA Buddha’s name. Aside from Buddha recitation, whether reciting quietly or silently, one should not give rise to other improper thoughts. If wandering thoughts appear, one should immediately dismiss them. Constantly maintain a humble and repentful heart; even if one has upheld true cultivation, one should still feel one’s practice is shallow and never boast. One should mind one’s own business and not the business of others. Only look after the good examples of others instead of bad ones. One should see oneself as mundane and everyone else as Bodhisattvas. If one can cultivate according to these teachings, one is sure to reach the Western Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss.

Homage to Amitabha! Amitabha!
LIVING IN A
GRATEFUL WORLD

Be grateful to those who have
hurt or harmed you,
for they have reinforced your determination.

Be grateful to those who have deceived you,
for they have deepened your insight.

Be grateful to those who have hit you,
for they have reduced your karmic obstacles.

Be grateful to those who have abandoned you,
for they have taught you to be independent.

Be grateful to those who have made you stumble,
for they have strengthened your ability.

Be grateful to those who have denounced you,
for they have increased your wisdom and concentration.

Be grateful to those who have made you
Firm & Resolute
and Helped in your Achievement.

~ From the Teachings of
Ven. Master Chin Kung ~
With bad advisors forever left behind,
From paths of evil he departs for eternity,
Soon to see the Buddha of Limitless Light
And perfect Samantabhadra's Supreme Vows.

The supreme and endless blessings
of Samantabhadra's deeds,
I now universally transfer.
May every living being, drowning and adrift,
Soon return to the Pure Land of Limitless Light!

~The Vows of Samantabhadra~

I vow that when my life approaches its end,
All obstructions will be swept away;
I will see Amitabha Buddha,
And be born in His Western Pure Land of
Ultimate Bliss and Peace.

When reborn in the Western Pure Land,
I will perfect and completely fulfill
Without exception these Great Vows,
To delight and benefit all beings.

~The Vows of Samantabhadra
Avatamsaka Sutra~
NAME OF SPONSOR
助印功德芳名

Document Serial No: 105026
委印文號: 105026

Book Title: A Guide to walking meditation 行禪之導引

Book No.,書號：EN187

N.T.Dollars：

8,000：《Maha Bodhi Buddhist Information Inc.、
[張華堂、林玉華、陳彪、蘇金好、陳志堅、柯麗玉、
柯志明、陳明路、柯權偉、柯權忠、李真姬、Lim Tac It、
Lim Sin Fa .].

32,000：佛陀教育基金會。

Total: N.T.Dollars 40,000；5,000 copies.
以上合計：新台幣 40,000 元；恭印 5,000 冊。
DEDICATION OF MERIT

May the merit and virtue
accrued from this work
adorn Amitabha Buddha’s Pure Land,
repay the four great kindnesses above,
and relieve the suffering of
those on the three paths below.

May those who see or hear of these efforts
generate Bodhi-mind,
spend their lives devoted to the Buddha Dharma,
and finally be reborn together in
the Land of Ultimate Bliss.

Homage to Amita Buddha!

NAMO AMITABHA

南無阿彌陀佛

財團法人佛陀教育基金會 印贈
台北市杭州南路一段五十五號十一樓

Printed and donated for free distribution by
The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation
11F., 55 Hang Chow South Road Sec 1, Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C.
Tel: 886-2-23951198, Fax: 886-2-23913415
Email: overseas@budaedu.org
Website: http://www.budaedu.org
Mobile Web: m.budaedu.org

This book is strictly for free distribution, it is not to be sold.
Printed in Taiwan
5,000 copies; February 2016
EN187-13879