

Daily Contemplations

Nurturing A Life Of Natural Awakening

simple presence

daily bread

reverence for life – beyond words and symbols

*May our living serve to deepen awareness,
Ripen the fruits of wisdom,
and
Water the flowers of compassion,
That we may we bring health and joy to all beings.*

In the hermitage of the life-unfolding,
these verses blossomed in my mind.
Though still a work-in-process,
may they benefit many beings.

Tarchin

"Daily Contemplations" is from an as yet unpublished "Treasury of Contemplation" by Tarchin Hearn
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A Circle of Blessing

I pray to the wetlands,
I pray to the deserts,
Include me in your embrace.

I pray to the rainforests,
to the grasslands,
to the tundra, and the boreal forests,
Bless our families with health, curiosity, and great compassion.

I pray to the coral reefs,
to the tidal fringes,
to estuaries, deltas, benthic depths and the great oceanic empty zones,
be firm in the midst of our extending human madness.

I pray to the volcanic hot zones and the boiling mud pools
to the icy caps and mountain peaks,
to rolling hill country,
rills and rivers, creeks and braided waterways,
pray care for this adolescent tribe.
Heal our rambunctious self infatuation,
our tunnel vision and above all,
our blinkered pride.

I pray to the living wind and rain,
to the sun, moon, planets and stars,
all my cousins near and far,
pray wrap us in your solicitude.

My eyes are moist,
this vulnerable striped bareness;
remembering communion deep and wide;
Is it sadness? joy? frustration? awe? confusion? reverence? gratitude? love?
We belong with each other.

Feeling your feeling
Sensing your sensing
We are woven intimacies, through and through.
We are alive.
We are blessed.
We are spacious and luminous.
We gaze at stars and empty vastness, and feel our fluid bones;
a great symphonic cry of longing and joy,
a dancing of solidity, flux and knowing,
histories revealing, stories concealing,
I care for you all.
Each and every part
and every moment of every part
all included, nothing ignored.

We are life,
praying with life,
to life,
for life,
in all its abundance –

We are a circle of blessing.
We are suchness ¹
beyond words.

Silent Prayer

Left Palm <-----> Right Palm
gazing at these wondrous hands.

Form and formless
mind and matter
knower and known
work and play
inner and outer
micro and macro
self and other
one and many
profound and mundane
worldly and spiritual
animate and inanimate
brain and body
individual and community
creature and environment . . .
then,
sensitively, lovingly, gently and respectfully,
bringing them together, at the heart.

Releasing into the mystery of union,
this unbreakable wholeness of life unfolding,
with flowing breath and the profound blessing of healing presence,
we realize our true home.

The Heart of Practice

love . . . not push
presence . . . not future
forgiveness . . . not judgement
humbleness . . . not arrogance
gentleness . . . not jumpy, twitchy, start/stop
breathing now . . . not dreaming of elsewhere
smiling now . . . what else is there?
simplicity now . . . not frantic-ness frationating
watching the sun rise
hearing the bird call
feeling the earth turn
tending the garden . . . one weed, one plant, one leaf at a time
sitting when sitting is good
lying when lying is good
moving when moving is good
flowing with nature
honouring fullness

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smelling the flower
savouring the coffee
answering the phone
embracing the healing
 this wholeness
 this mystery
knowing our roots, our 'back-up', the triple ground of being ²
contemplating the great mystery of the (so-called) ordinary
praying for the well-being of everyone
such is the heart of practice.

Refuge, Life Roots and Profound Sense of Belonging

(Five verses are offered here. What is important is to feel a sense of being deeply and profoundly rooted and at home in the midst of life and living in all its fullness. This way of living is truly meaningful refuge.)³

We take refuge in love and clear seeing.
We live courageously in this world of birthing and dying.
Our hearts embrace all companions
 on the path of lucidity and freedom.

~ ~ ~

In the vast expanse of nature unfolding,
In faith and trust and wonderment,
We give ourselves to this suchness,
This seamless mystery of birthing and dying.

Spacious, loving, with feet solid in the earth,
We nurture the hints at blessedness,
The myriad faces and masks of God.

Moving in this flow of compassion and deepening enquiry,
we engage with all beings in ways that support the integrity,
the stability and the beauty of the entire living world.

~ ~ ~

I realize refuge in the true state of affairs
 the radical inclusivity of life unfolding in all it's fullness,
 the vast ungraspable suchness that is this living world / universe.
This is ever fresh buddha in action.

I recognize, celebrate and cultivate
 the paths, teachings and encouragements
 that support our realizing the true state of affairs.
This is dharma put to good use.

Releasing into a profound sense of being and belonging
 with the entire community of life and living,
 I am home.

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This is the knowing of true sangha,
the fruition of all refuge practice.

Gradually, buddha, dharma and sangha
merge and mingle until each
one contains and reveals the other two.
This is a wondrous three-in-one refuge.
It's where we belong.

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I take refuge in wisdom, compassion and non-clinging awareness.  
I take refuge in the full richness of here.  
I take refuge in the ever present immediacy of now.  
Truth is all-pervading.  
It is the thusness of this moment,  
the suchness that we are.  
My refuge, home and beingness is to live in and as the Truth. <sup>4</sup>

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I take refuge in the multi-dimensional ground of being / becoming.
I take refuge in spacious openness and engaged presence,
the nature and activity of this ground.
I take refuge in this planet-wide communion of life-unfolding.
Together, may we cultivate:
generosity, wholesome relating,
patience, skilled use of energy,
a continuity of caring and enquiry,
and profound understanding.
May all beings realize awakening,
for the sake of everything and everyone.

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I take refuge in Buddha;  
pure and total presence.  
I take refuge in Dharma;  
love, compassion and clear seeing deepening everywhere.  
I take refuge in Sangha;  
the diverse ecology of bodhisattva<sup>5</sup> activity.  
Through actively cultivating the six parami,<sup>6</sup>  
may I be the Sangha, practising Dharma,  
realizing the innate Buddha mind  
for the wellbeing of everyone.

*Smiling, breathing, present, appreciating, and offering* <sup>7</sup> –  
*settling in the knowing of refuge, exploring life roots and a profound sense of belonging.*  
(gong)

## Heart Aspiration <sup>8</sup>

Beings and phenomena are innumerable  
I aspire to meet them with kindness and interest.  
States of suffering are inexhaustible,  
I aspire to engage them with patience and love.  
Dharmas are immeasurable,  
I aspire to explore them deeply.  
The ever-present mystery of inter-being is beyond words and symbols,  
I aspire to surrender within it fully.

From this moment on, with wisdom and compassion as my lamp and staff,  
I dedicate all my life energies to the welfare of all beings.

*Resting with this aspiration – smiling, breathing, present, appreciating, and offering.*  
(gong)

## Five Wholesome Life Trainings

I will train myself to support and appreciate  
the life of all living beings.

I will live with a sensitive and responsible awareness  
for the whole ecology of life. (gong)

I will train myself to dwell more and more  
in the mind of spontaneous generosity.

Daily I will give material support, emotional support,  
and an example to others of awakening in action. (gong)

I will train myself to use the senses to further awakening,  
explore Dharma, and to come to know the world  
more profoundly and more compassionately. (gong)

I will train myself to listen deeply and speak truthfully;  
to commune with others in a skilful and compassionate manner. (gong)

I will train myself to be ever more directly aware  
of how nutriment affects the mind and body.

I will eat and drink and nurture myself and others,  
in ways that support awakening.

*Activating these five trainings – smiling, breathing, present, appreciating, and offering.*  
(gong)

## The Wisdom of Embodiment

*(Two forms are offered here. Use the one that speaks to you most directly.)*

This body of mine is composed of atoms born in stars,  
molecules, cells, tissues and organs.  
It is a union of uncountable viruses, bacteria, fungi, plants and animals.  
It is conditioned by families and societies, by thoughts and dreams.  
It is moulded by sun and gravity and the whole of the ecosphere.

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It is an inter-being of all these processes from micro to macro.  
Wondrous! Transient! May it teach me wisdom!

~ ~ ~

The ancients said, look at that body.  
Foul, corrupt, full of filth,  
A bag of faeces, urine and blood,  
of vomit, gases, fats and oils.  
And so they did, those monks of old,  
And came to release all lustful selfish clinging  
to this walking breathing corpse.

Today the teachers say, look at this body / mind / community.  
And looking in, I find the entire universe;  
Miraculous voyagings of stardust atoms,  
Water cycles, chemical cycles, symbiotic  
dancings of plants and animals,  
molecules, cells and organs.  
My breath is the breath of the rainforest.  
My excretions the banquet of others.  
My muscles and tissues, blood and bone are  
the temporary arrangement of carrots,  
fish and herbs on the way to being worms,  
insects, birds and trees. How vast and wondrous!

And so they do, those contemplative-scientists of today  
And come to release all self-ish clinging  
to a separated "me"  
And take a few more steps  
on the way to home we never left.

*Smiling, breathing, present – opening into this constantly evolving mystery of embodiment.  
(gong)*

### Impermanence: the Birthing / Dying Matrix of Responsive Relating

Life is a boundless matrix of dynamic relationships.  
Ultimately, every action reverberates throughout the universe.  
I responding to you.  
You responding to me.  
This responding to that.  
That responding to this.  
*Smiling and breathing, enter into this contemplation.*

Responsiveness is the living heart of being and becoming.  
Atoms, molecules, organs and organisms, families and societies;  
entire ecosystems, biospheres, planets and galaxies;  
all shifting, responding, constantly changing.  
Each birthing of this is a dying of that.  
Each dying of that is a birthing of this.  
Responsive change is the very nature and fabric of what is.

Permanence is a mental abstraction.  
*Breathing with this deeply.*

Suffering arises through trying to fix or make permanent  
what is essentially a seamless fluid process.  
*Resting for a moment in silence.*

May we cease grasping at permanence and  
with heartfelt confidence, love, enthusiasm and wide awake sensitivity,  
enter fully the great birthing/dying matrix of responsive relating;  
this ineffable, un-pin-down-able, present suchness of now.

*Contemplating thus – smiling, breathing, present, appreciating, offering.*  
(gong 3xs)

### **The Four Immeasurables: Lovingkindness, Compassion, Empathic-joy and Serenity**

May all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness.  
May all beings be apart from sorrow and the causes of sorrow.  
May all beings be filled with joy  
    when sensing the wholesome activity of others.  
May all beings be graced with the serenity of  
    unshakable mindfulness and loving presence.

Smiling, breathing, present, appreciating, and offering.  
As you breathe, imagine in your heart, a jewel-like flower or a soft globe of light,  
radiating loving-kindness, compassion, empathic-joy and equanimity to every part of  
your body/mind/community.

As feelings of easefulness, spaciousness and clarity flower in your experience, send  
the light of these four radiant states in all directions, touching beings throughout the  
universe, supporting their health and unfolding.

With each inhalation, invite all suffering to rest in your heart,  
    a heart of love, forgiveness, understanding and reverence.  
With each exhalation, share your strength and good qualities with all beings.

*Abiding thus – smiling, breathing, present, appreciating, and offering. (gong)*

### **The Essential Practice of Awakening**

Recognising that the experience of awakening is not something read about in books  
or learned from others but something realized and manifested in each moment of my  
life; for the rest of this day, I will cultivate the Four Foundations of Mindfulness  
(awareness of body, awareness of feelings, awareness of states of mind, and  
awareness of all other phenomena).

Frequently I will pause to breathe mindfully and recontact a mode of being which  
embodies simplicity, openness, clarity, connectedness and caring.

I will endeavor to bring a continuum of compassionate awareness into all my life's  
activities.

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Frequently I pause  
Mindfully I breathe  
Simplicity, Openness, Clarity,  
Connection and Caring  
Flowering forth.

*Sitting quietly with awareness of breathing for at least five minutes. (gong)*

## Dedicating to All Beings

By the power of these wholesome activities,  
May our lives be rich with awakening.  
Living thus, may we abandon all unwholesomeness.  
Through the endless storm of birth, illness, old age and death,  
May we help all beings to be free from suffering.

All is Blessing

## Endnotes

1 **suchness** => a Mahayana Buddhist term [*tatha* (Skt)], used to point out the radically inclusive wholeness of everything and everyone. In a universe where everything is ultimately interdependently inter-being with everything else, it is impossible to accurately name, in a simple positive way, what something actually is. The term *suchness*, or *thusness* is a way of hinting at this vast dynamic of inter-beingness that each and everyone of us is, poetically referred to in the *Avatamsaka Sutra* with the phrase, 'worlds interpenetrating worlds without obstruction'.

2 **"Triple Ground of Being"** The ground of being/becoming is where our roots find strength and sustenance. Triple ground refers to the ecological ground, the ancestral ground and the ground of inspiration, mentorship and wise guidance. Each one of these three can be found in the interbeingness of the other two. To explore this more completely, see "Touching the Earth in Six Prostrations" – in the web site [www.greendharmatreasury.org](http://www.greendharmatreasury.org) under Writings/Practices

3 **Many other refuge verses** along with a considerable exploration of the meaning and importance of this central contemplation can be found in "*True Refuge*" by Tarchin Hearn

4 **Truth, with a capital 'T'** => Ultimate Truth or 'Truth' embraces everything. It is radically inclusive, fundamentally un-pin-downable and utterly beyond concepts and verbal constructs. In some Buddhist teaching the primary character of Truth is indicated as having "One Taste". (For more on this, see *The Samdhinirmochana Sutra*)

5 **bodhisattva** => *bodhi*: awakening, unfolding + *sattva*: being. In this sense all living beings are bodhisattvas in action.

6 **six parami** => six perfections: generosity, wholesome relating, patience, skilled use of energy, a continuity of caring and enquiry, and profound understanding

7 Each section of contemplation is followed by a variation of *smiling, breathing, present, appreciating and offering*. Supported by these five, allow the theme of the contemplation to suffuse your currently arising body / mind / community. This is a fundamental practise.

8 This **"Heart Aspiration"** is a variation on what is traditionally called The Bodhisattva Vow.