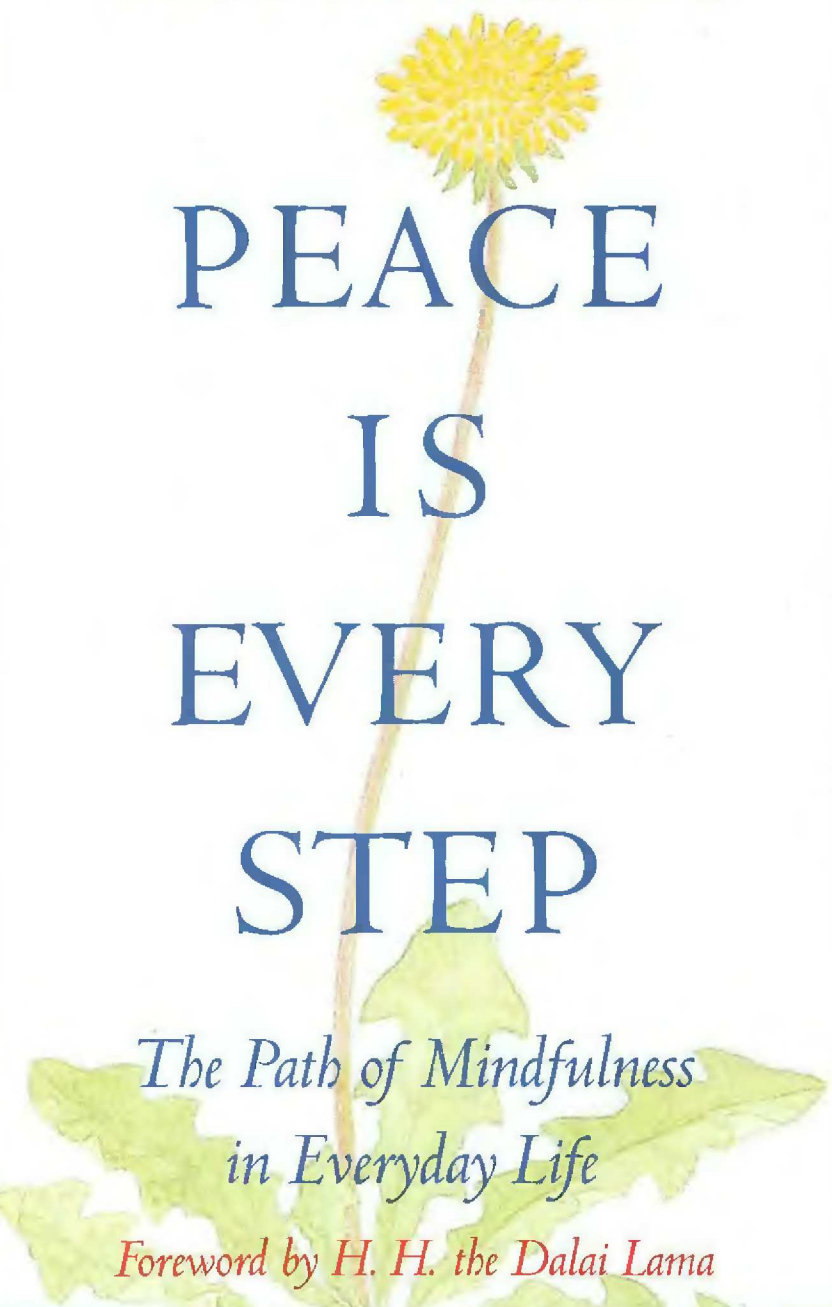


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## Foreword

BY H. H. THE DALAI LAMA

Although attempting to bring about world peace through the internal transformation of individuals is difficult, it is the only way. Wherever I go, I express this, and I am encouraged that people from many different walks of life receive it well. Peace must first be developed within an individual. And I believe that love, compassion, and altruism are the fundamental basis for peace. Once these qualities are developed within an individual, he or she is then able to create an atmosphere of peace and harmony. This atmosphere can be expanded and extended from the individual to his family, from the family to the community and eventually to the whole world.

*Peace Is Every Step* is a guidebook for a journey in exactly this direction. Thich Nhat Hanh begins by teaching mindfulness of breathing and awareness of the small acts of our daily lives, then shows us how to use the benefits of mindfulness and concentration to transform and heal difficult psychological states. Finally he shows us the connection between personal, inner peace and peace on Earth. This is a very worthwhile book. It can change individual lives and the life of our society.

## *Editor's Introduction*

As I walked slowly and mindfully through a green oak forest this morning, a brilliant red-orange sun rose on the horizon. It immediately evoked for me images of India, where a group of us joined Thich Nhat Hanh the year before last to visit the sites where the Buddha taught. On one walk to a cave near Bodhi Gaya, we stopped in a field surrounded by rice paddies and recited this poem:

*Peace is every step.  
The shining red sun is my heart.  
Each flower smiles with me.  
How green, how fresh all that grows.  
How cool the wind blows.  
Peace is every step.  
It turns the endless path to joy.*

These lines summarize the essence of Thich Nhat Hanh's message—that peace is not external or to be sought after or attained. Living mindfully, slowing down and enjoying each step and each breath, is enough. Peace is already present in each step, and if we walk in this way, a flower will bloom under our feet with every step. In fact the flowers will smile at us and wish us well on our way.

I met Thich Nhat Hanh in 1982 when he attended the Rev-

# T H I C H N H A T H A N H

erence for Life conference in New York. I was one of the first American Buddhists he had met, and it fascinated him that I looked, dressed, and, to some extent, acted like the novices he had trained in Vietnam for two decades. When my teacher, Richard Baker-roshi, invited him to visit our meditation center in San Francisco the following year, he happily accepted, and this began a new phase in the extraordinary life of this gentle monk, whom Baker-roshi characterized as “a cross between a cloud, a snail, and a piece of heavy machinery—a true religious presence.”

Thich Nhat Hanh was born in central Vietnam in 1926 and was ordained a Buddhist monk in 1942, at the age of sixteen. Just eight years later, he co-founded what was to become the foremost center of Buddhist studies in South Vietnam, the An Quang Buddhist Institute.

In 1961, Nhat Hanh came to the United States to study and teach comparative religion at Columbia and Princeton Universities. But in 1963, his monk-colleagues in Vietnam telegraphed him to come home to join them in their work to stop the war following the fall of the oppressive Diem regime. He immediately returned and helped lead one of the great nonviolent resistance movements of the century, based entirely on Gandhian principles.

In 1964, along with a group of university professors and students in Vietnam, Thich Nhat Hanh founded the School of Youth for Social Service, called by the American press the “little Peace Corps,” in which teams of young people went into the countryside to establish schools and health clinics, and later to re-