

# The Analysis of Metaphors Used in Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life By Thich Nhat Hanh

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Phra Yee Silasangwaro (Vongpaseuth)<sup>1</sup>, Sornchai Mungthaisong<sup>2</sup>, Natthaphon Santhi<sup>3</sup>

## Abstract

The research aimed to analyze the metaphors used in the book “Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life”. The researcher applied Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) a qualitative analysis theory; there are eight steps; (1) prepare the data, (2) define the unit of analysis, (3) develop categories and perform coding, (4) test the coding scheme on text samples, (5) code all the texts, (6) Assess coding, (7) Draw conclusions from the coded data, and (8) Report findings. Afterwards, 25 types of metaphor presented by Adisorn Thammachai (2010) was employed as analysis model. On investigating metaphors, the whole chapters of the book were read carefully then grouped them into appropriate metaphorical types. To proof the metaphorical accuracy and its types, the results were validated by two experts. Then, the revision was carried out and categorized into groups before describing in narrative style for summary and reporting. The findings showed that 112 metaphors within 17 types were found. The top three metaphors were Simple or Tight Metaphor (17.21%), Extended Metaphor (12.29%), and Root Metaphor (10.65%). The rarest metaphors were Dormant Metaphor, Structural Metaphor, and Dead Metaphor (0.81% in each metaphor).

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<sup>1</sup> นักศึกษาหลักสูตรมหาบัณฑิต โปรแกรมวิชาภาษาตะวันตก คณะมนุษยศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏเชียงราย (Master's program students Western Language Program Faculty of Humanities Chiang Rai Rajabhat University)  
e-mail: vongpaseuth2010@hotmail.com

<sup>2</sup> อาจารย์ประจำ โปรแกรมวิชาภาษาตะวันตก คณะมนุษยศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏเชียงราย (Western Language Program Lecturer Faculty of Humanities Chiang Rai Rajabhat University)

<sup>3</sup> อาจารย์ประจำ โปรแกรมวิชาภาษาตะวันตก คณะมนุษยศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏเชียงราย (Western Language Program Lecturer Faculty of Humanities Chiang Rai Rajabhat University)

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## Introduction

The book entitled “Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness of Everyday Life” written by Thich Nhat Hanh is a famous book. First, it is forwarded by the most well-known Buddhist monk; The Fourteenth Dalai Lama. His Holiness the Dalai Lama firstly promoted the essential of peace then declared the book *Peace Is Every Step* as the exact guidebook for the journey to peace. He explained that even though it is difficult to bring peace to the world through changing peoples’ minds, it is only a path. He also teaches peace wherever he goes and all people should learn it. He also believes that the basis of peace comes from love, compassion, and honesty. When these characteristics have grown within a person, he can build an atmosphere of peace and harmony. Next, the book is ranked as No.1 of the ten best books of Best Mindfulness Meditation Books proposed by Hesselink (2017), a mindfulness trainer in the Netherlands. This book also became one of the four bestseller books on BBC website (2017). The BBC claimed that Thich Nhat Hanh is a writer who has published over a hundred books with four best sellers i.e. *Peace Is Every Step*, *The Miracle of Mindfulness*, *Living Buddha*, and *Living Christ and Anger*. As the book is very popular, it must contain very interesting and well communicated language to readers. The researcher, therefore, paid a strong intent to embark on investigating the book with an aim that the results of the investigation could encourage readers to read more Dhamma books in English. Moreover, the results may shed light on how Buddhism in terms of teaching concepts are embedded within the text.

However, the language used in religious discourse seems difficult for comprehension as many readers encounter difficulty while reading religious texts. Dweik & Shakra (2011: 8) pointed out the difficulty of translation between religious texts to Arabic as he mentioned the specificity of certain words, and Arabic culture is observed as the key factor causing barriers to the translation. Putra (2013) in his study at Sriwijaya State Buddhist College, Tangerang, Banten, Indonesia, investigated the difficulties and strategies in translating common Buddhist texts. The results showed that students encountered four prominent difficulties during the path of translation that included (1) The SL texts contains single word but has complex semantic meaning, (2) The SL written in idiomatic expressions,

(3) The SL has large philosophical ambiguity, and (4) The SL contains of lot number of peculiar glossaries. Therefore, the analysis of “Peace Is Every Steps” is expected to reveal the expansion of the knowledge for a better understanding of religious text especially Buddhism text.

### **Research Question**

To what extent are metaphorical languages used in “Peace Is Every Steps”?

### **Objectives of the Study**

- (1) To investigate the types of metaphors embedded in “Peace Is Every Step” and
- (2) To identify the meanings of metaphorical languages found in “Peace Is Every Step”

### **Language and Culture**

Language and culture are inevitably related and they work together side by side. Many scholars have presented the importance and relationship between language and culture. For example, Sapir (1970 cited in Elmes, 2013: 3) expressed that language is the words people utter in referring to common experience, expressing facts, ideas or events that are communicable because they refer to a stock of knowledge about the world that other people share. Words also reflect the authors’ attitudes and beliefs, their point of view. In both cases, language expresses cultural reality. Elmes (2013: 12) further added that language is a part of the culture and it is from gathering of social inheritance of the practices and faith that set our lives’ texture. Kramsch (1998: 3) claimed that “language is a system of signs that is seen as having itself a cultural value. Speakers identify themselves and others through their use of language and they view their language as a symbol of their social identity. The prohibition of its use is often perceived by its speakers as a reflection of their social group and their culture. Thus, we can say that language symbolizes cultural reality. Jiang (2000: 328) pointed out that language is reflected in the culture and it influences and shapes the culture. Therefore, language shines not only the broadest historical and cultural background but also the ways how people think and how they live. Hence, language and culture are interrelated and obviously culture is inseparable from language. In other words, language is a part of culture.

## Metaphor

Metaphor is a type of figurative language. It is a comparison device between two different things to make a better understanding of difficult matters. The use of metaphor is quite similar to Simile (another type of figurative) but what prominently distinct is metaphor uses a comparison without words like, as, than, seem, or as if. Countless scholars have offered definitions of metaphor. For example, Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 115) saw metaphor as an extension of the ordinary conceptual system. When there are lots of important concepts and they are an abstract or not clear description by our experiences such as emotions, ideas, and time, it is necessary to deal with their meaning by using other concepts that offer clearer understanding like spatial directions and objects. Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 453-454) further contended that metaphor functions as a tool for people to use in poetic imagination and rhetorical flourishment – a happening of uncommon more than normal language. Metaphor is widely used in daily life, not only by language itself, but also by thought and action. It seems like the systematic concept of people's common behavior, thinking and action is naturally based on metaphor. Kövecses (2010: 4) defined metaphor as to understand one conceptual territory about another conceptual territory, for instance, talking and thinking about life as a journey, arguments as war, love also as journeys, theories as buildings, ideas as food, organizations in society as plants. Therefore, metaphor is a concept of territory A in a concept of territory B which is called conceptual metaphor. Cambridge Dictionary (2017) defined that metaphor is “an expression, often found in literature, that describes a person or object by referring to something that is considered to have similar characteristics to that person or object. For example, the mind is an ocean and the city is a jungle. In sum, metaphor is a figurative branch that is used to compare two different things. The aim of a metaphor is creating a better comprehension of abstract and difficult concepts. Kövecses (2010:5) proposed the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) developed by the Pragglejaz Group which involved the processes as shown in Figure 1 below.

1. Read the entire text-discourse to establish a general understanding of the meaning.
2. Determine the lexical units in the text-discourse:
3. (a) For each lexical unit in the text, establish its meaning in context, that is, how it applies to an entity, relation, or attribute in the situation evoked by the text (contextual meaning). Take into account what comes before and after the lexical unit.
- (b) For each lexical unit, determine if it has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts than the one in the given context. For our purposes, basic meanings tend to be
  - More concrete (what they evoke is easier to imagine, see, hear, feel, smell, and taste)
  - Related to bodily action
  - More precise (as opposed to vague)
  - Historically older.

Basic meanings are not necessarily the most frequent meanings of the lexical unit.
- (c) If the lexical unit has a more basic current-contemporary meaning in other contexts than the given context, decide whether the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it.
4. If yes, mark the lexical unit as metaphorical. (Pragglejaz Group, 2007, p. 3)

Figure 1: Metaphor Identification Procedure (Kövecses, 2010:5)

## Methodology

This study applied qualitative content analysis based on Zhang and Wildemuth (2009). They proposed eight stages of qualitative content analysis which were (1) Prepare the data; (2) Define the unit of analysis; (3) Develop categories and a coding scheme; (4) Test the coding scheme on a sample of text; (5) Code all text; (6) Assess coding; (7) Draw conclusion from the coded data; (8) Report method and findings.

The data source is the book *Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life*. It is a Dhamma book written by the Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh. The book was published in March 1, 1992 by Bantam Books within 134 pages. The book *Peace Is Every Steps* is sectioned into 3 chapters: Present Moment on Breathing, Changing and Healing, and Every Step Contains Peace. The book consists of commentaries and meditations, personal anecdotes and stories from the author's experiences as he is a peace activist, teacher, and community leader. It begins by showing how the present moment of deep meditative presence is available. It reminds readers where they already are i.e. in the kitchen, office, driving a car, walking, mindfulness is everywhere. Then, the author furnishes exercises to increase awareness of the reader's

body and mind through conscious breathing. By breathing of consciousness, joy and peace are brought to us immediately. Eventually, it is shown reader to be aware of relationship between people and the world around them, its charm and also its pollution and unfairness. The practices of this book encourages the reader to work for peace in the world as one continues to work on sustainable inner peace by turning from mindless into the mindful.

The data analysis implemented the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) as the analysis framework as proposed by Kövecses (2010:5). The data analysis processes involved 1) Read the text for understanding its general idea; 2) Clarify meaning according to culture meaning; 3) Reread for examining the frequent words and sentences that occur in the text of each meaning unit; 4) Create the themes and categories of the frequent words and sentences that found in the text; 5) Validation; (5.1) Validate the accuracy on types of metaphor; (5.1.1) Experts for validation were (1) Guest Lecturer Steven Epstein, Bachelor Degree in Philosophy, University of California at Los Angeles, Master Degree in Teaching English to Students of Other Languages, United States International University (now Alliant University), currently working as a lecturer at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Chiang Mai Campus, Thailand; (2) Stuart Weeks, Level Three Diploma, Integrative Counselling Psychology (Psychodynamic, Humanistic and CBT) Guildford College, England, Introduction to Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy - Guild of Psychotherapists, England, Bachelor of Arts (Hons), Music Technology Southampton Solent University, England, Yoga Gita Teacher Training (200 hours) Mysore, India; (5.2) Revise the analysis in accordance to the experts' comments; (5.3) Report the results.

## Examples of metaphorical analysis

### 1.Simple metaphors found in Present Moment on Breathing (Chapter 1)

**Excerpt 1:** The following was extracted from the topic Present Moment, Wonderful Moment in which smile is a symbol of your happiness.

**“Wearing a smile on your face** is a sign that you are master of yourself.” p.10

The phrase **“wearing a smile”** are a metaphor. Smile is a human behavior which is shown when we are happy; it cannot be taken. The author is communicating that we should practice smiling because it has the potential to make us happy. This phrase signifies a simple metaphor since it is easy to understand.

**Excerpt 2:** The following was extracted from the topic Thinking Less: Conscious breathing practice helps us stop over thinking.

**“We recover ourselves,** and we can encounter the beautiful things around us in the present moment”. p.12

**“We recover ourselves”** is seen as a metaphor of the text. The author compares our consciousness to sickness. It is as fresh as when we feel better from being sick. This type of metaphor belongs to a simple metaphor.

## 2.Extended metaphors found in Changing and Healing (Chapter 2)

**Excerpt 3:** The following was extracted from the topic Walking Meditation: Walking should be made mindfully and peacefully.

**“Although we walk all the time, our walking is usually more like running.** When we walk like that, **we print anxiety and sorrow on the Earth.** We have to walk in a way that **we only print peace and serenity on the Earth”** p.28

The metaphorical language of this text is **“we walk all the time, our walking is usually more like running”** **“we print anxiety and sorrow on the earth”** and **“we only print peace and serenity on the Earth”**. To walk like running is the walking without awareness and caring. Printing anxiety and sorrow on the earth refer to unpleasant feeling. Then, printing peace and serenity on the earth means happy feelings. This is an Extended metaphor.

**Excerpt 4:** The following was extracted from the topic Driving Meditation: Meditation is an important factor when driving a car.

**“Before starting the car, I know where I am going. The car and I are one. If the car goes fast, I go fast.** p.31

The words **“The car and I are one”** and **“If the car goes fast, I go fast”** are metaphorically used. The car and I are one shows the idea of being in the present moment or awareness. It reminds readers to driving mindfully. It is another Extended metaphor.

## 3.Compound metaphors found in Every Step Contains Peace (Chapter 3)

**Excerpt 5:** The following was extracted from the topic Looking Deeply: The suggestion of looking deeply into a thing in order to understand it well.

“When a swimmer enjoys the clear water of the river, he or she should also be able to be the river.” p.104

The words showing metaphor are “a swimmer enjoys the clear water of the river... be the river”. The swimmer in a flow of clarity and peaceful water suggest to look at water deeply in order to understand it well such as value of clear water, protection of clean water etc. This is a compound metaphor.

**Excerpt 6:** The following was extracted from the topic Looking Deeply: Presentation of non-dual perspective. For instance, when we need well comprehension of river, we have to meditate that we are the river.

“If you are a mountain climber or someone who enjoys the countryside, or the green forest, you know that **the forests are our lungs outside of our bodies**, just as **the sun is our heart outside of our bodies**.” p.105

The following sentences “**the forests are our lungs outside of our bodies**” and “**the sun is our heart outside of our bodies**” are metaphors. The forests and the sun are needed for the sustainable life. Forest is referred to lung and breath while the sun is the heart or love. They are associated with two comparisons, so their metaphorical type belongs to the compound metaphor.

All metaphors found in the 3 chapters (Present Moment on Breathing, Changing and Healing, and Every Step Contains Peace) were categorized based on the 25 types of metaphors model proposed by Thammachai (2010: 16-30) which involved (1) Extended or telescoping metaphor or conceit (2) Mixed metaphor (3) Metonym (4) Absolute metaphor (5) Implied metaphor (6) Dead metaphor (7) Dormant metaphor (8) Synecdoche metaphor (9) Root metaphor (10) Active metaphor (11) Conventional metaphor (12) Dying metaphor (13) Conceptual metaphor (14) Pataphor metaphor (15) Simple or Tight metaphor (16) Implicit metaphor or submerged metaphor (17) Primary metaphor (18) Compound or Loose metaphor (19) Complex metaphor (20) Literary metaphor (21) Creative metaphor (22) Grammatical metaphor (23) Ontological metaphor (24) Structural metaphor and (25) Visual metaphor.

## Results

The results answered the research question regarding to what extent are metaphorical languages used in “Peace Is Every Steps”? The book was analyzed for metaphors found in three chapters of the book which included Chapter 1: Present Moment on Breathing; Chapter 2: Changing and Healing, and Chapter 3: Every Step Contains Peace as shown in Table 1, 2, 3, and 4. Table 1 outlined the summary of the overall analysis, while Table 2, 3, and 4 reported analysis results of the individual chapter.

**Table 1: Summary of Metaphors Found in Peace Is Every Step**

Metaphorical Types		Frequency				Percentage
		Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Total	
1	Simple or Tight metaphor	6	10	5	21	17.21
2	Extended metaphor or telescoping metaphor or conceit	8	5	2	15	12.29
3	Root metaphor	5	8	-	13	10.65
4	Compound metaphor	-	7	5	12	9.83
5	Implicit metaphor or submerged metaphor	5	2	3	10	8.2
6	Active metaphor	6	2	2	10	8.2
7	Mixed metaphor	1	5	4	10	8.2
8	Conceptual metaphor	4	4	1	9	7.37
9	Complex metaphor	-	6	-	6	4.92
10	Implied metaphor	1	2	1	4	3.27
11	Dying metaphor	2	-	1	3	2.45
12	Ontological metaphor	1	1	-	2	1.64
13	Conventional metaphor	1	1	-	2	1.64

14	Literary metaphor	-	-	2	2	1.64
15	Dormant metaphor	1	-	-	1	0.83
16	Structural metaphor	-	1	-	1	0.83
17	Dead metaphor	-	-	1	1	0.83
<b>Total</b>		<b>41</b> (33.60%)	<b>54</b> (44.26%)	<b>27</b> (22.14%)	<b>122</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 demonstrated the summary of metaphors discovered in Peace Is Every Step. The total metaphors were 17 types namely Simple or Tight metaphor, Extended or Telescoping metaphor or Conceit, Root metaphor, Compound metaphor, Implicit metaphor or Submerged metaphor, Active metaphor, Mixed metaphor, Conceptual metaphor, Complex metaphor, Implied metaphor, Dying metaphor, Ontological metaphor, Conventional metaphor, Literary metaphor, Dormant metaphor, Structural metaphor, and Dead metaphor. The top three used metaphors were Simple or Tight metaphor (17.21%), Extended metaphor (12.29%), and Root metaphor (10.65%) while the infrequently used metaphors were Dormant metaphor, Structural metaphor, and Dead metaphor accounting only for 0.83% individually.

**Table 2: Metaphors Found in Present Moment on Breathing (Chapter 1)**

No.	Metaphorical Types	Frequency	Percentage
1	Extended or telescoping metaphor or conceit	8	20
2	Simple or Tight metaphor	6	15
3	Active metaphor	6	15
4	Root metaphor	5	12.5
5	Implicit metaphor or submerged metaphor	5	12.5
6	Conceptual metaphor	4	10
7	Dying metaphor	2	5
8	Ontological metaphor	1	2.5
9	Implied metaphor	1	2.5
10	Mixed metaphor	1	2.5
11	Dormant metaphor	1	2.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2 revealed that 11 metaphorical types were appeared in Present Moment on Breathing (Chapter 1). They were Extended or telescoping metaphor or conceit, Simple or Tight metaphor, Active metaphor, Root metaphor, Implicit metaphor or submerged metaphor, Conceptual metaphor, Dying metaphor, Ontological metaphor, Implied metaphor, Mixed metaphor, and Dormant metaphor. The highest occurrences were Extended or telescoping metaphor or conceit (20%), followed by Simple or Tight metaphor (15%) and Active metaphor (15%) respectively, while the lowest used metaphors were Ontological metaphor, Implied metaphor, Mixed metaphor, and Dormant metaphor only accounting for 2.5% individually.

**Table 3: Metaphors Found in Changing and Healing (Chapter 2)**

	Metaphorical Types	Frequency	Percentage
1	Simple or Tight metaphor	10	18.52
2	Root metaphor	8	14.82
3	Compound metaphor	7	12.96
4	Complex metaphor	6	11.12
5	Extended or telescoping metaphor or conceit	5	9.25
6	Mixed metaphor	5	9.25
7	Conceptual metaphor	4	7.4
8	Implicit metaphor or submerged metaphor	2	3.7
9	Active metaphor	2	3.7
10	Implied metaphor	2	3.7
11	Conventional metaphor	1	1.86
12	Ontological metaphor	1	1.86
13	Structural metaphor	1	1.86
<b>Total</b>		<b>54</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3 outlined 13 metaphors found in Changing and Healing (Chapter 2) which were Simple or Tight metaphor, Root metaphor, Compound metaphor, Complex metaphor, Extended or telescoping metaphor or conceit, Mixed metaphor, Conceptual metaphor, Implicit metaphor or submerged metaphor, Active metaphor, Implied

metaphor, Conventional metaphor, Ontological metaphor, and Structural metaphor. The highest occurrences were Simple or Tight metaphor (18.52%), followed by Root metaphor (14.82%), and Compound metaphor (12.96%) respectively, while the less frequently used metaphors were Conventional metaphor, Ontological metaphor, and Structural metaphor accounting only for 1.86% individually.

**Table 4: Metaphors Found in Every Step Contains Peace (Chapter 3)**

	Metaphorical Types	Frequency	Percentage
1	Simple or Tight metaphor	5	17.85
2	Compound metaphor	5	17.85
3	Mixed metaphor	4	14.28
4	Implicit metaphor or submerged metaphor	3	10.72
5	Literary metaphor	2	7.15
6	Active metaphor	2	7.15
7	Extended or telescoping metaphor or conceit	2	7.15
8	Dying metaphor	1	3.57
9	Dead metaphor	1	3.57
10	Implied metaphor	1	3.57
11	Conceptual metaphor	1	3.57
12	Conventional metaphor	1	3.57
<b>Total</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4 showed 12 metaphors found in Every Step Contains Peace (Chapter 3) which were Simply or Tight metaphor, Compound metaphor, Mixed metaphor, Implicit metaphor or submerged metaphor, Literary metaphor, Active metaphor, Extended or telescoping metaphor or conceit, Dying metaphor, Dead metaphor, Implied metaphor, Conceptual metaphor, and Conventional metaphor. The highest occurrence of metaphors were Simple or Tight metaphor and Compound metaphor (17.85%), followed by Mixed metaphor (14.28%), and Implicit metaphor or submerged metaphor (10.72%) respectively, while the lowest used metaphors were Dying metaphor, Dead metaphor, Implied

metaphor, Conceptual metaphor, and Conventional metaphor accounting only for 3.57% individually.

## Conclusion

The metaphorical analysis of the book entitled *Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life* employed mixed-method approach based on qualitative analysis by Zhang and Wildemuth (2009), Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) by Kövecses (2010:5), metaphors categorization by Thammachai (2010). The results revealed 17 types of metaphorical language used in the book. Among these metaphorical types, the most frequently used metaphor was Simple or Tight metaphor (17.21%), followed by Extended metaphor (12.29%) and Root metaphor (10.65%). The less frequently used metaphors were Dormant metaphor, Structural metaphor, and Dead metaphor accounting for 0.81% individually. Also, similarities and differences of metaphors were found among across three chapters of the book. Regarding the similarities, seven common metaphors were frequently used across three chapters i.e. Simple or Tight metaphor, Extended or Telescoping metaphor, Active metaphor, Implicit metaphor or Submerged metaphor, Conceptual metaphor, Implied metaphor, and Mixed metaphor. In terms of differences, six frequently used metaphors were Dying metaphor, Dormant metaphor, Complex metaphor, Structural metaphor, Literary metaphor, and Dead metaphor. The most frequently used metaphors can be interpreted that the author probably aims to communicate with the readers for three purposes: (1) to create an easy understanding of peace; (2) to make a clarification of the difficult phenomenon; and (3) to construct new metaphors by comparing the local objects with the world experience. The similarities of metaphors used in all three chapters of the book can be assumed that they could facilitate the readers' comprehension and interpretation to understand and interpret the way in which the author aims to teach mindfulness and wisdom to the readers by means of metaphorical strategies. The similarities indicate that these common metaphors probably used in different contexts and cultures. The differences of metaphors used in all three chapters of the book showed that the author probably has no purposes to use objects as a metaphorical style to represent the characteristic of human behavior. Therefore, metaphors play a significant role in English Dhamma language. Obviously, it could be summarized that the author of *Peace Is Every Steps* employs different types of metaphors to create powerful devices on

helping readers to understand the complexities of mental objects and explaining the Buddhist philosophy.

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