

# 普觉 awaken

to Compassion and Wisdom on the journey of life

## Meditation Skills are Life Skills!

They are strength training for the mind so it can  
become stable, bright and clear



齐心协力在同理心与和谐互动中

广钦和尚的苦行与忍辱

心灵鸡汤伴我成长 感受幸福

# 42

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Increasingly, the world seems unsettled and the outlook uncertain. Not only is the boom and bust cycle of the global economy becoming shorter, terrorism is also a major threat, with frequent attacks around the world.

Singapore is not spared from the effects of these international developments, especially the broadening of racial and religious fault-lines. In this age, it is even more imperative for us to strengthen our social harmony amongst the races and religions.

Let me cite a recent example of the vast impact of the power of understanding and kindness.

## Unifying in Understanding and Harmony

The world was recently shaken by the case of 12 Thai boys stranded in an underground cave. People followed the developments closely and rallied to help them in whatever ways they could, regardless of nationality, race and religion.

It is most heartening to witness this extraordinary feat of resilience and strength of the human spirit and what it can do when everyone, out of loving-kindness, comes together in harmony with the common goal of accomplishing the greatest good for all. We may be different in terms of race, language and religion. Yet at the end of the day, we share a common humanity.

This is precisely what the Buddha taught when he showed us the four sights: the commonality that

all of humanity shared regardless of status, race and religion. Only universal love and unbounded compassion can propel humanity to greatness.

Mind is the forerunner of all our action, speech and thought. The Buddha taught us how we can train our mind, and cultivate the ability to introspect and notice harmful thoughts, perceptions and mental habits, which cause suffering to ourselves and others.

Through meditation, we learn to nurture positive mental qualities in our lives, and diminish or eliminate negative ones that do not bring us happiness. With consistent practice, one will eventually achieve greater stability, clarity and peace of mind that allow us to live more wisely and compassionately. Thus, I hope everyone will pick up the beneficial practice of meditation for the good of all.

I wish everyone blessings of wisdom, good health and inner peace always! ☺

Sik Kwang Sheng (Ven)  
Abbot, Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery

## The power of meditation

Recently, news of 12 Thai boys and their football coach trapped in a cave captured the world's attention. This saga touched countless around the world, and many people and organisations banded together to do whatever they could to volunteer, contribute, help and pray for the success of the rescue operation.

As Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said it so well, this rescue operation was a "remarkable display of the strength of the human spirit", and "an inspiring tale of what different nations and groups can achieve by working together." It shows the vast enormity and extent the power of love and goodness has on our world.

When the British divers found the Thai boys who were later rescued one by one, the kids were meditating. Everyone was astonishingly calm, sitting there waiting. No one was crying or fearful. It turned out that the coach had taught the boys to

meditate to keep them calm and preserve their energy throughout their two-week ordeal.

Read how meditation can calm our mind on page 51, and how it is not just a tool to help us relax and ease our stress (pg 70) but also an important life skill to understand our mind and ourselves better with greater awareness and insight (pg 41, 48, 59 & 60).

You can practise meditation anytime and anywhere (pg 58 & 69).

Given the numerous benefits and well-being that meditation brings, the Monastery wishes to widely spread it and develop a meditative culture in Singapore with the establishment of a new building that is solely dedicated to meditation (pg 44).

Elsewhere in this issue, learn a tip or two on how you can guide your kids to develop sensory awareness. As seen in the Thai boys' case, children too can reap the benefits of meditation (pg 65).

May everyone end the year on a meditative note of greater self-awareness, compassion and wisdom. Happy reading! ☺

*Esther Thien*

Yours in the Dharma,  
Sister Esther Thien

## Help your departed loved ones create merits with the 1,001 Bodhisattva Offering

**Singapore** – Now you have another avenue to help your departed loved ones create merits. You can make an offering of a Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva statue for an entire year at S\$108 at the Hall of Filial Piety in Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery on the deceased's behalf, and dedicate the merits to him for his liberation from suffering and good rebirth.

Please contact our Front Office at 6849 5333 for more information.



## Participate in a Grand Offering to Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Celestial Beings this October

**Singapore** – This year the monastery will be conducting a grand offering to Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and celestial beings, in which the *Sutra of Golden Light* will be recited. Participating in this grand offering can bestow immense blessings on the living.

Although Buddhists do not take refuge in the heavenly realms, they respect heavenly beings as these beings take refuge in the Buddha, have vowed to protect the Dharma, uphold virtue, refrain from non-virtue and help to support those who practise and are virtuous.

To show our gratitude to the Triple Gem and these heavenly Dharma protectors, offerings of incense, flowers, lamps and fruits will be made. The heavenly beings will also receive Dharma teachings and take refuge in the Triple Gem in this ceremony. In order to express our highest respect, all offerings and instruments used in the ceremony are solemn, dignified and pure. To participate in this grand offering is most meritorious indeed!

You can opt to participate in the S\$5,000, S\$688 or S\$188 offering categories, and choose from two prayer sessions to attend: the first session is held on 6 October, from 9pm till 6am the next day, or participate in the second session conducted on 13 October, from 9pm till 6am on 14 October.

Please contact our Front Office at 6849 5333 for more information. ☺



Text: Esther Thien

## Developing concentration and insight

In Tibetan, the word “meditation” comes from the same verbal root as “to habituate” or “to familiarise.”

**Thus, in meditation we endeavour to habituate ourselves to valuable ways of viewing the world. We also seek to familiarise ourselves with an accurate view of reality, so that we can eliminate all wrong conceptions and disturbing attitudes.**

Meditation isn't merely chasing all thoughts out of our minds and abiding in a blank state. There's nothing spectacular about a blank mind. Skilfully directed thoughts can help us, especially at the initial levels of meditation. Eventually we need to transcend the limitations of concepts. However, doing so doesn't mean entering a lethargic blank state. It means clearly and directly perceiving reality.

First, we must listen to instructions on how to meditate and what to meditate on. Meditation isn't just sitting with crossed legs and closed eyes. It's directing our minds to a positive object and cultivating beneficial attitudes. We need to listen to instructions from an experienced teacher in order to know how to do this properly.

Second, we think about the instructions: we must understand a subject before we can habituate ourselves with it.

## Understanding Meditation

*Ven Thubten Chodron offers some basic guidance on how beginners can meditate*



This reflection can be done by discussing the teachings with our Dharma friends and teachers. It can also be done alone, seated in meditation position.

When we have some intellectual understanding of the subject, then we integrate it into our minds through meditation. Through familiarising our minds with certain attitudes and views – such as impartial love or the wisdom realising reality – they gradually become spontaneous in us.

### How to begin your meditation

There is a classic meditation position: we sit cross-legged on a cushion, with our bottom higher than the legs. The shoulders are level and the back is straight, as if we were being pulled up from the crown of the heads. The hands are placed in the lap, just below the navel. The right hand is on top of the left, with the thumbs touching. The arms are neither pressed against the body nor sticking out, but in a comfortable position. The head is slightly inclined, the mouth closed, with the tongue against the upper palate.

The eyes are slightly open in order to prevent drowsiness, but they aren't looking at anything. Rather, they're gazing downwards, loosely focused at the tip of the nose or on the ground in front. Meditation is done entirely with the mental consciousness, not with the visual consciousness. We shouldn't try to “see” anything with our eyes during meditation.

It's good to meditate in the morning before beginning the day's activities as the mind is fresher then. By focusing on beneficial attitudes in our morning meditation, we'll be more alert and calmer during the day. Meditation in the evening also helps to settle the mind, and “digest” what happened during the day before going to sleep.

Meditation sessions shouldn't be too long at first. Choose a time that's reasonable for your capacity and your schedule. It's important to be regular in meditation practice because regular repetition is necessary to familiarise ourselves with beneficial attitudes. Meditating 15 minutes every day is more beneficial than meditating three hours one day and then sleeping in the rest of the week.

Because our motivation determines whether what we do is beneficial or not, it's extremely important to cultivate a good motivation before meditating. If we begin each meditation session with a strong motivation, it'll be easier to concentrate. Thus, for a few minutes prior to putting our attention on the object of meditation, we should think of the benefits of meditation for ourselves and others.

**It's very worthwhile to generate the altruistic intention, “How wonderful it would be if all beings had happiness and were free of all difficulties! I would like to make this possible by showing others the path to enlightenment. But, as long as my own mind is unclear, I can't help myself let alone others. Therefore, I want to improve myself – to eliminate my obscurations and develop my potentials – so that I can be of better service to all others. For this reason, I'm going to do this meditation session, which will be one step more along the path.”**

Within Buddhism, there are many kinds of meditations. Basically, they're divided into two categories: those to gain samatha or calm abiding, and those to develop vipassana or special insight. The Buddha said in the sutra, *Revealing the Thought of Buddha*:

*You should know that although I have taught many different aspects of the meditative states of hearers (those on the path to arhatship), bodhisattvas and tathagatas (Buddhas), these can all be included in the two practices of calm abiding and special insight.*

### Calm abiding

Calm abiding is the ability to hold our minds on the object of meditation with clarity and stability for as long as we wish. With calm abiding, our minds become extremely flexible, giving us the liberty to focus on whatever virtuous object we wish. Although calm abiding alone can't cut the root of the disturbing attitudes, it drastically reduces their power. Gross anger, attachment and jealousy don't arise and consequently, one feels more in harmony with the world.

For the mind to abide in a calm state, we must free it from all worries, preconceptions, anxieties, and distractions. Thus, for the development of calm abiding, we do stabilising meditation in which we train our minds to concentrate on the object of meditation.

The Buddha gave a variety of objects upon which we can

focus to develop single-pointed concentration. These include meditating on love as the antidote to anger and on ugliness as the antidote to attachment. We could also meditate on the clear and aware nature of the mind. The image of the Buddha could be our meditation object, in which case we visualise the Buddha in our minds' eye and hold our concentration on this. One of the principal objects used to develop calm abiding is the breath.

To meditate on the breath, sit comfortably and breathe normally. Don't do deep breathing or force the breath in any way. Breathe as usual, only now, observe and experience it fully. Focusing the attention at the tip of the nose, observe the sensation of the breath as you inhale and exhale.

Most of us are surprised and even alarmed when we start to meditate. It seems as if our minds resemble a street in downtown New York — there is so much noise, so many thoughts, so much push and pull. Meditation isn't causing our minds to be this cluttered. Actually, our minds are already racing around, but because our introspective awareness is weak, we aren't aware of it. This internal chatter isn't a hopeless situation, however. Through regular practice, our minds will be able to concentrate better and the distractions will diminish.

### Hindrances to meditation

Laxity and agitation are the two principal hindrances to developing concentration. Laxity occurs when the mind is dull, and if it's not

counteracted, we can fall asleep. When the mind is sluggish, we should apply the proper antidotes to uplift it. We can temporarily stop focusing on the breath as the object of meditation and think about something that will raise our spirits, such as our precious human life or our potential to become a Buddha. It's also helpful to visualise clear light filling the room or bright light flooding into the body. This will enliven the mind and dispel the laxity. Then return to meditating on the breath.

For beginners who get sleepy when meditating, it's helpful to splash cold water on the face before sitting down. Between meditation sessions, looking long distances helps expand and invigorate the mind.

Agitation is the other chief obstacle to developing calm abiding. It occurs when the mind is attracted towards something we're attached to. For example, we focus on the breath for 30 seconds, and then, unbeknownst to us, our concentration strays to food. Then we think about our loved ones, and after that where we'll go on the weekend. These are all instances of agitation.

Agitation is different from distraction. The former is directed towards attractive objects that we're attached to, while the latter takes our attention to other things as well. For example, thinking about the insulting words someone snarled at us five years ago is an example of distraction. So is straying to thoughts of the Buddha's good qualities

when we're supposed to be concentrating on the breath.

Agitation indicates that the mind is too high and excited. Thus, the antidote is to think about something somber. Thus, we can temporarily reflect on impermanence, the ugly aspects of whatever we're attached to or the suffering of cyclic existence. Having made our minds more serious, we then return to meditating on the breath.

Mindfulness and introspective alertness are two mental factors enabling us to prevent and counteract distraction, laxity and agitation. With mindfulness, we remember the object of meditation — the breath. Our memory or mindfulness of the breath is so strong that other distracting thoughts can't enter.

To ensure that we haven't become distracted, lax or agitated, introspective alertness is used to check whether or not we're still focused on the object of meditation. Introspective alertness is like a spy — it occasionally arises and quietly observes whether our mindfulness is still on the breath, or if we're thinking about what we're going to do tomorrow. Introspective alertness also notices if our concentration is lax and not clearly focused on the breath. If introspective alertness finds that we're still concentrating, we continue doing so. If it discovers we're distracted, lax or agitated, we then renew our mindfulness, bringing the mind back to the object of meditation. Or, we apply the antidotes to laxity and agitation described above.

Patience is another necessary quality for the development of calm abiding. We need to accept ourselves the way we are, and to have the confidence and enthusiasm to make our minds more peaceful. If we push ourselves and expect to receive immediate results, that attitude itself hinders us. On the other hand, if we're lazy, no progress is made. We need to cultivate relaxed effort.

Developing calm abiding is a gradual process that takes time. We shouldn't expect to meditate a few times and have single-pointed concentration. However, if we receive proper meditation instructions and follow them under the guidance of a teacher, and if we persist with joy and without expectation, we'll attain calm abiding. ☺



# Simplicity Begets Stillness:

## The Birth of a Meditation Building

Text : Professor Fung John Chye

### Meditation in Singapore

Meditation has become an increasingly important aspect of Buddhism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Among the reasons is a keen interest from many developed countries in the spiritual practices of the East. The advent of Buddhism globally over the past decades brings with it a corresponding interest in meditation both as a spiritual practice and as an approach to general well-being in physical and mental health. Attending to well-being is a major preoccupation of middle-income urban populace in developed cities and scientific evidence on the health benefits of

meditation is growing. This contributes to boosting a greater interest in meditation as preventive healthcare.

The rapid proliferation of meditation is helped in part by its accessibility, including as a non-religious activity. Basic meditation practices of mind stabilisation may be taught without necessarily referring to Buddhist precepts, and many devout practitioners hail from other religious faiths or are non-religious at all.

### New Meditation Building at KMSPKS

Kong Meng San Phor Kark See (KMSPKS) Monastery has seen its fair share of the increased interest in meditation. Its regular classes for different levels of practice are usually well subscribed, often with a waiting list. Participants include people of all ages from different social, economic, religious and cultural backgrounds. Meditation retreats lasting from a few days to weeks are also becoming popular. In light of the situation, Abbot Venerable Kwang Sheng has envisioned a building dedicated to meditation to meet the surge in demand for meditation classes and practices. Named “Meditation Hall” at the monastery, this new building is purpose-built for conducting concurrent meditation sessions catering to different group sizes, so that resources are utilised efficiently and sustainably. It is envisaged that a comprehensive range of meditation-related programmes could be supported through the realisation of this new facility.

The Meditation Hall can accommodate large classes of about 200 participants each, running simultaneously, for a total capacity of up to

500 to 600 persons. It includes a dedicated space for monastics to carry out advanced meditation practices. The building features a library for self-study and talks, as well as ancillary facilities like a pantry for refreshments, toilets, lockers, etc. No stay-in amenity is provided because retreat participants can rest in other spaces of the monastery.

The Meditation Hall will offer Singapore a modern facility that is conducive for cultivating the practices of meditation. This will bring broad benefits, including promoting greater interest in mental wellness amongst people of all



### About Professor Fung John Chye

Professor Fung John Chye teaches architecture at the National University of Singapore and is a member of KMSPKS Facilities Development Committee.

ages and is an important aspect of the monastery’s many contributions to society. The monastery intends to invite internationally renowned meditation teachers from different faiths to conduct classes in the building so that over time, it becomes an established location for meditation practices. The unanimous consensus of Abbot Venerable Kwang Sheng and members of the Facilities Development Committee is that the new Meditation Hall is an extremely vital aspect of the monastery, crucial to contemporary Buddhism.

### Solitude & Simplicity: The Key for Meditation

The story of Buddha’s enlightenment under a Bodhi tree in Bodhgaya is well-known and retold many times over. Despite its religious significance and powerful liturgical narrative, oftentimes little is said of the simple environment under which the momentous event occurred two and a half millennia ago. One might imagine the rustic setting and natural landscape that still characterise much of rural India today. That enlightenment, the highest achievement of the human mind, could be attained by sitting on an ordinary bed of grass under a shady tree without much fanfare reflects the deep Buddhist teaching to be non-attached to material things. The simplicity of physical environment evokes an invaluable quality—an unadorned stillness that is conducive for training the mind, free of sensorial distractions.

As a core aspect of Buddhist practices, meditation has evolved, and similarly the physical space under which contemporary practices takes place. So, what makes a good place for meditation? Is quietude and tranquillity essential to practice? After all, it is known that some meditators seek out the busiest parts of town for practice, near a noisy street junction

amidst the vibrancy of profane commerce. One might argue that such challenging environments are for advanced practitioners, and it is generally agreed that most people, especially beginners would benefit from a less distracting space for better concentration. Silence and stillness are vital enablers of meditation. Ever since the Buddha’s time, the sangha is known to meditate deep in deep bamboo groves or forests and even venture to secluded mountain caves. The quintessential environment for meditation and Buddhist practices is perhaps well exemplified by numerous renowned temples and monasteries in ancient India, China and Japan, located in distant mountains, forests and caves, far from the maddening crowd. If ever there were a sacred space in Buddhism, the meditation space would certainly qualify as one. Solitude is an invaluable scaffold to meditation, and simplicity is the key to enable it.

## Designing the Meditation Hall

In a dense urban city like land scarce Singapore, how then do we emulate the ideal spacious, secluded and unobtrusive setting? There are certain trade-offs in constructing a place for meditation under such circumstances. Yet, it is precisely for this reason that a purpose-built facility is ever more



crucial. The deep challenge lies in creating an oasis amidst the constant noise and hive of activities in high-density environments. For this reason, the Meditation Hall is sited at the quietest part of the monastery, where the former Dharma Hall was located. Here, the architect conceives a simple box-shaped building with a unique façade of overlapping tubes that emulates the bamboo forest. This 4-storey high vertical screen envelops the entire building like a giant robe, drawing the eyes skyward naturally. An upward curving roof floats gently above the continuous screen of aluminium tubes to create a lightweight, serene but magnificent architecture. At night, the lit interiors emit soft light akin to a gigantic lantern amidst the tranquil setting of the monastery.

## Adopting the Middle Path: Subtleties in Design

The overarching aesthetics is guided by three principles—simplicity, austerity and subtlety—highly pertinent to the function and image of a meditation building. This evokes contrasting responses. An immediate concern may be that the exterior design looks too utilitarian at first glance and doubts may linger despite appealing artist's impressions. Some might suggest a more visually expressive and organic design interpretation

of bamboo rather than in the abstract. Conversely, others might deem it not austere enough as a *Zen* expression. In interpreting the idea of bamboo, one must be mindful not to over- or under-

design to the extremes bordering on the gimmicky or banal. The middle path is just right. It is not the intention for the Meditation Hall to adopt visual acrobatics, but rather the concept of bamboo is evoked using just a plain tubular element. This is *Zen* attitude in action. Getting the right touch is essential as elegance is lost if the tubes are too chunky or, conversely skimpy and skeletal if too thin and light. The architect experimented with layering pipes of different diameters to create a gentle, variegated but non-obtrusive look and feel that alludes to natural bamboo forests.

Its unadorned and understated aesthetics is also consistently applied to the interior design, where uncluttered lines and surfaces echo the *Zen* temples of Japan. A subdued colour palette juxtaposing dark wood trimmings against light colour walls reinforces the *Zen*-inspired minimalist look of contemporary Japanese aesthetics. Spatially, the various meditation halls are sparse and kept uncluttered. They feature a gentle domed ceiling, enclosed by full height cupboards and panelling at the sides. Diffused lighting is introduced through concealed pelmets in the ceiling.

Presently, this new edifice is being realised, and its simple design could well develop into a fine building. If indeed, the minimalist look and feel of *Zen*, as exemplified by Japanese architecture is our ultimate goal, such an approach begs several considerations. Firstly, it requires masterly crafting of fine details through rigorous design exploration, which may be evident only during detailed construction. Secondly, even with good design resolution, getting craftsmen-quality contractors to execute it well is crucial. Thirdly, the threshold between subtlety and banality is very fine, and it is quite easy to end up with the latter. It is extremely difficult to visualise and anticipate just the right touch of restraint, even for experienced architects, let alone the laypersons among us. Still the endeavour is to create a refined architecture full of subtleties.

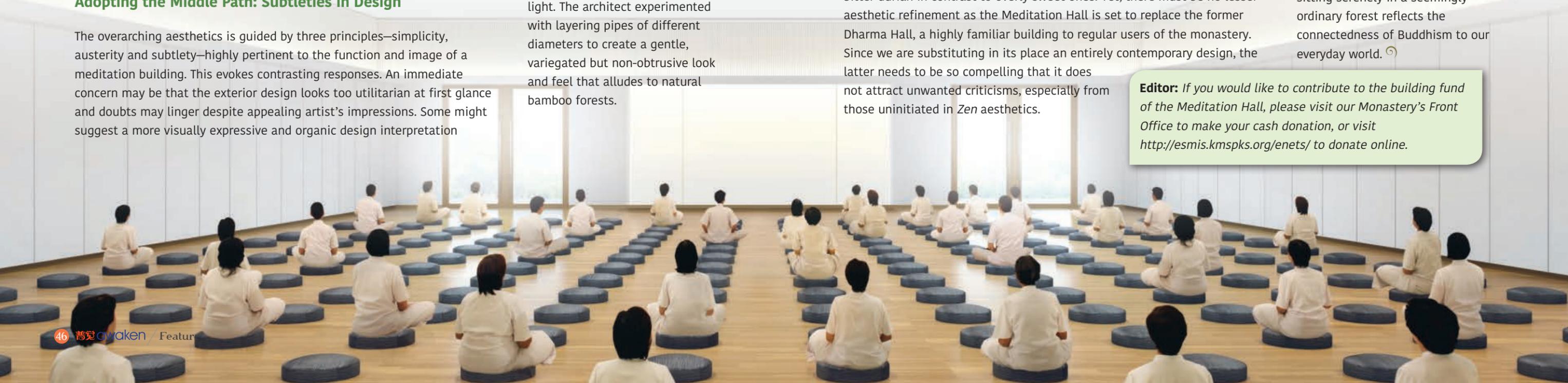
The design must resist a literal representation of the bamboo theme merely by making a random pattern, which might become *passé* and will not endure the test of time. It is imperative to achieve a convincing subtlety whilst still maintaining the integrity of idea that we all seek. The key lies in attaining a good level of human-centred design, thoughtfully-executed simplicity, austerity and subtlety. The refined, restrained look may not go down well with some devotees and visitors because it is not easy to appreciate. It is an acquired taste, sort of like the sophistication of acerbic-bitter durian in contrast to overly sweet ones. Yet, there must be no lesser aesthetic refinement as the Meditation Hall is set to replace the former Dharma Hall, a highly familiar building to regular users of the monastery. Since we are substituting in its place an entirely contemporary design, the latter needs to be so compelling that it does not attract unwanted criticisms, especially from those uninitiated in *Zen* aesthetics.

Nostalgia is a human trait that is extremely difficult to contest, notwithstanding that Buddhists aspire to be detached about emotions.

**The Meditation Hall will have to outlast us, and as such, a timeless design that can endure decades of use is vital to its success. It is poised to contribute immensely in our endeavour to advance meditation as a worthwhile pursuit of contemporary urban societies.**

Even as I write this article fresh from visiting Kyoto, arguably the *Zen* capital of the world with iconic ancient architecture, the deep impressions of mindfully wandering in a bamboo forest awaken the simplicity, serenity and silence of mind. As we wait with bated breath the Meditation Centre's completion at the end of next year, let simplicity beget the stillness befitting a place of meditation. The image of Buddha sitting serenely in a seemingly ordinary forest reflects the connectedness of Buddhism to our everyday world. ☺

**Editor:** If you would like to contribute to the building fund of the Meditation Hall, please visit our Monastery's Front Office to make your cash donation, or visit <http://esmis.kmspks.org/enets/> to donate online.



# Strength Training for the Mind

Text: Thanissaro Bhikkhu

**M**editation is the most useful skill you can master. It can bring the mind to the end of suffering, something no other skill can do. But it's also the most subtle and demanding skill there is. It requires all the mental qualities ordinarily involved in mastering a physical skill — mindfulness and alertness, persistence and patience, discipline and ingenuity — but to an extraordinary degree. This is why, when you come to meditation, it's good to reflect on any skills, crafts, or disciplines you've already mastered so that you can apply the lessons they've taught you to the training of the mind.

As a meditation teacher, I've often found it helpful to illustrate my points with analogies drawn from physical skills. And, given the particular range of skills and disciplines currently popular in America, I've found that one useful source of analogies is strength training. Meditation is more like a good workout than you might have thought.

The Buddha himself noticed the parallels here. He defined

the practice as a path of five strengths: conviction, persistence, mindfulness, concentration, and discernment. He likened the mind's ability to beat down its most stubborn thoughts to that of a strong man beating down a weaker man. The agility of a well-trained mind, he said, is like that of a strong man who can easily flex his arm when it's extended, or extend it when it's flexed. And he often compared the higher skills of concentration and discernment to the skills of archery, which — given the massive bows of ancient India — was strength training for the noble warriors of his day. These skills included the ability to shoot great distances, to fire arrows in rapid succession, and to pierce great masses — the great mass, here, standing for the mass of ignorance that envelops the untrained mind.

So even if you've been pumping great masses instead of piercing them, you've been learning some important lessons that will stand you in good stead as a meditator. A few of the more important lessons are these:

## READ UP ON ANATOMY.

If you want to strengthen a muscle, you need to know where it is and what it moves if you're

going to understand the exercises that target it. Only then can you perform them efficiently. In the same way, you have to understand the anatomy of the mind's suffering if you want to understand how meditation is supposed to work. Read up on what the Buddha had to say on the topic, and don't settle for books that put you at the far end of a game of telephone. Go straight to the source. You'll find, for instance, that the Buddha explained how ignorance shapes the way you breathe, and how that in turn can add to your suffering. This is why most meditation regimens start with the breath, and why the Buddha's own regimen takes the breath all the way to nirvana. So read up to understand how and why.

## START WHERE YOU ARE.

Too many meditators get discouraged at the outset because their minds won't settle down. But just as you can't wait until you're big and strong before you start strength training, you can't wait until your concentration is strong before you start sitting. Only by exercising what little concentration you have will you make it solid and steady. So even though you feel scrawny when everyone around you seems big, or fat when everyone else seems fit, remember that you're not here to compete with them or with the perfect meditators you see in magazines. You're here to work on yourself. So establish that as your focus, and keep it strong.

## ESTABLISH A REGULAR ROUTINE.

You're in this for the long haul. We all like the stories of sudden enlightenment,

but even the most lightning-like insights have to be primed by a long, steady discipline of day-to-day practice. That's because the consistency of your discipline is what allows you to observe subtle changes, and being observant is what enables insight to see. So don't get taken in by promises of quick and easy shortcuts. Set aside a time to meditate every day and then stick to your schedule whether you feel like meditating or not. The mind grows by overcoming resistance to repetition, just like a muscle. Sometimes the best insights come on the days you least feel like meditating. Even when they don't, you're establishing a strength of discipline, patience, and resilience that will see you through the even greater difficulties of ageing, illness and death. That's why it's called practice.

**AIM FOR BALANCE.** The “muscle groups” of the path are three: virtue, concentration, and discernment. If any one of these gets overdeveloped at the expense of the others, it throws you out of alignment, and your extra strength turns into a liability.

## SET INTERIM GOALS.

You can't fix a deadline for your enlightenment, but you can keep aiming for a little more sitting or walking time, a little more consistency in your mindfulness, a little more speed in recovering from distraction, a little more understanding of what you're doing. The type of meditation taught on retreats where they tell you not to have goals is aimed at (1) people who get neurotic around goals in general and (2) the weekend warriors who need to be

cautioned so that they don't push themselves past the breaking point. If you're approaching meditation as a lifetime activity, you've got to have goals. You've got to want results. Otherwise the whole thing loses focus, and you start wondering why you're sitting here when you could be sitting out on the beach.

## FOCUS ON PROPER FORM.

Get your desire for results to work for you and not against you. Once you've set your goals, focus directly not on the results but on the means that will get you there. It's like building muscle mass. You don't blow air or stuff protein into the muscle to make it larger. You focus on performing your reps properly, and the muscle grows on its own. If, as you meditate, you want the mind to develop more concentration, don't focus on the idea of concentration. Focus on allowing this breath to be more comfortable, and then this breath, this breath, one breath at a time. Concentration will then grow without your having to think about it.

## PACE YOURSELF.

Learn how to read your pain. When you meditate, some pains in the body are simply a sign that it's adapting to the meditation posture; others, that you're pushing yourself too hard. Some pains are telling the truth, some are lying. Learn how to tell the difference. The same principle applies to the mind. When the mind can't seem to settle down, sometimes it needs to be pushed even harder, sometimes you need to pull back. Your ability to read the difference is what exercises

your powers of wisdom and discernment.

Learn, too, how to read your progress. The meditation won't really be a skill, won't really be your own, until you learn to judge what works for you and what doesn't. You may have heard that meditation is non-judgmental, but that's simply meant to counteract the tendency to prejudge things before they've had a chance to show their results. Once the results are in, you need to learn how to gauge them, to see how they connect with their causes, so that you can adjust the causes in the direction of the outcome you really want.

## VARY YOUR ROUTINE.

Just as a muscle can stop responding to a particular exercise, your mind can hit a plateau if it's strapped to only one meditation technique. So don't let your regular routine get into a rut. Sometimes the only change you need is a different way of breathing, a different way of visualising the breath energy in the body. But then there are days when the mind won't stay with the breath no matter how many different ways of breathing you try. This is why the Buddha taught supplemental meditations to deal with specific problems as they arise. For starters, there's goodwill for when you're feeling down on yourself or the human race — the people you dislike would be much more tolerable if they could find genuine happiness inside, so wish them that happiness. There's contemplation of the parts of the body for when you're overcome with lust — it's hard to maintain a sexual fantasy when you keep

thinking about what lies just underneath the skin. And there's contemplation of death for when you're feeling lazy — you don't know how much time you've got left, so you'd better meditate now if you want to be ready when the time comes to go.

When these supplemental contemplations have done their work, you can get back to the breath, refreshed and revived. So keep expanding your repertoire. That way your skill becomes all-around.

**TAKE YOUR UPS AND DOWNS IN STRIDE.** The rhythms of the mind are even more complex than those of the body, so a few radical ups and downs are par for the course. Just make sure that they don't knock you off balance. When things are going so well that the mind grows still without any effort on your part, don't get careless or overly confident. When your mood is so bad that even the supplemental meditations don't work, view it as an opportunity to learn how to be patient and observant of bad moods. Either way, you learn a valuable lesson: how to keep your inner observer separate from whatever else is going on. So do your best to maintain proper form regardless, and you'll come out the other side.



**WATCH YOUR EATING HABITS.** As the Buddha once said, we survive both on mental food and physical food. Mental food consists of the external stimuli you focus on, as well as the intentions that motivate the mind. If you feed your mind junk food, it's going to stay weak and sickly

no matter how much you meditate. So show some restraint in your eating. If you know that looking at things in certain ways, with certain intentions, gives rise to greed, anger, or delusion, look at them in the opposite way. As Ajaan Lee, my teacher's teacher, once said, look for the bad side of the things you're infatuated with, and the good side of the things you hate. The same principle applies to all your senses. That way you become a discriminating eater, and the mind gets the healthy, nourishing food it needs to grow strong.

As for your physical eating habits, this is one of the areas where inner strength training and outer strength training part ways. As a meditator, you have to be concerned less with what physical food you eat than with why you eat. If you're bulking up for no real purpose, it's actually harmful for the mind. You have to realise that in eating — even if it's vegetarian food — you're placing a burden on the world around you, so you want to give some thought to the purposes served by the strength you gain from your food. Don't take more from the world than you're willing to give back. Don't eat just for the fun of it, because the beings that provided the food didn't provide it in fun. Make sure the energy gets put to good use.

**DON'T LEAVE YOUR STRENGTH IN THE GYM.** If you don't use your strength in other activities, strength training becomes largely an exercise in vanity — aimed at impressing yourself or others, but the impression is rarely deep or lasting. The same principle applies to your meditative skills. If you

leave them on the cushion and don't apply them in everyday life, they never make a deep impression on the mind, and you don't get as much out of them as you really should. The ability to maintain your centre and to breathe comfortably in any situation can be a genuine lifesaver, keeping the mind in a position where you can more easily think of the right thing to do, say, or think when your surroundings get tough. As a result, the people around you are no longer subjected to your greed, anger and delusion. And as you maintain your inner balance in this way, it helps them maintain theirs. So make the whole world your meditation seat, and you'll find that meditation both on the big seat and the little seat will get a lot stronger. At the same time, it'll become a gift both to yourself and to the world around you.

**NEVER LOSE SIGHT OF YOUR ULTIMATE GOAL.** Mental strength has at least one major advantage over physical strength in that it doesn't inevitably decline with age. It can always keep growing to and through the experience of death. The Buddha promises that it leads to the Deathless, and he wasn't a man to make vain, empty promises. So when you establish your priorities, make sure that you give more time and energy to strengthening your meditation than you do to strengthening your body. After all, someday you'll be forced to lay down this body, no matter how fit or strong you've made it, but you'll never be forced to lay down the strengths you've built into the mind. ☸

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# Calming the Mind with Meditation

By Ajahn Chah

**To** calm the mind means to find the right balance. If you try to force your mind too much it goes too far; if you don't try enough it doesn't get there, it misses the point of balance.

Normally the mind isn't still, it's moving all the time. We must strengthen the mind. Making the mind strong and making the body strong are not the same. To make the body strong we have to exercise it, to push it, in order to make it strong, but **to make the mind strong means to make it peaceful, not to go thinking of this and that. For most of us the mind has never been peaceful, it has never had the energy of samādhi, so we must establish it within a boundary.** We sit in meditation, staying with the 'one who knows'.

If we force our breath to be too long or too short, we're not balanced, the mind won't become peaceful. It's like when we first start to use a pedal sewing machine. At first we just practise pedalling the machine to get our coordination right, before we actually sew anything. Following the breath is similar. We don't get concerned over how long or short, weak or strong it is, we just note it. We simply let it be, following the natural breathing.

When it's balanced, we take the breathing as our meditation object. When we breathe in, the beginning of the breath is at the nose tip, the middle of the breath at the chest and the end of the breath at the abdomen. This is the path of the breath. When we breathe out, the beginning of the breath is at the abdomen, the middle at the chest and the end at the nose tip. Simply take note of this path of the breath at the nose tip, the chest and the abdomen, then at the abdomen, the chest and the tip of the nose. We take note of these three points in order to make the mind firm, to limit mental activity so that mindfulness and self-awareness can easily arise.

When our attention settles on these three points, we can let them go and note the in- and out- breathing, concentrating solely at the nose tip or the upper lip, where the air passes on its way in and out. We don't have to follow the breath, just to establish mindfulness in front of us at the nose tip, and note the breath at this one point — entering, leaving, entering, leaving.

There's no need to think of anything special, just concentrate on this simple task for now, having continuous presence of mind. There's nothing more to do, just breathing in and out.

Soon the mind becomes peaceful, the breath refined. The mind and body become light. This is the right state for the work of meditation.

When sitting in meditation the mind becomes refined, but whatever state it's in we should try to be aware of it, to know it. Mental activity is there

together with tranquillity. There is *vitakka*. *Vitakka* is the action of bringing the mind to the theme of contemplation. If there is not much mindfulness, there will be not much *vitakka*. Then *vicāra*, the contemplation around that theme, follows. Various weak mental impressions may arise from time to time but our self-awareness is the important thing — whatever may be happening we know it continuously. As we go deeper we are constantly aware of the state of our meditation, knowing whether or not the mind is firmly established. Thus, both concentration and awareness are present.

To have a peaceful mind does not mean that there's nothing happening, mental impressions do arise. For instance, when we talk about the first level of absorption, we say it has five factors. Along with *vitakka* and *vicāra*, *pīti* (rapture) arises with the theme of contemplation and then *sukha* (happiness). These four things all lie together in the mind established in tranquillity. They are as one state.

The fifth factor is *ekaggatā* or one-pointedness. You may wonder how there can be one-pointedness when there are all these other factors as well. This is because they all become unified on that foundation of tranquillity. Together they are called a state of *samādhi*.

They are not everyday states of mind, they are factors of absorption. There are these five characteristics, but they do not disturb the basic tranquillity. There is *vitakka*, but it does not disturb the mind; *vicāra*, rapture and happiness arise but do not disturb the mind. The mind is therefore as one with these factors. The first level of absorption is like this.

We don't have to call it first *jhāna*, second *jhāna*, third *jhāna* and so on, let's just call it 'a peaceful mind'. As the mind becomes progressively calmer it will dispense with *vitakka* and *vicāra*, leaving only rapture and happiness. Why does the mind discard *vitakka* and *vicāra*? This is because, as the mind becomes more refined, the activities of *vitakka* and *vicāra* are too coarse to remain. At this stage, as the mind leaves off *vitakka* and *vicāra*, feelings of great rapture can arise, tears may gush out. But as the *samādhi* deepens rapture too, is discarded, leaving only happiness and one-pointedness, until finally even happiness goes and the mind reaches its greatest refinement. Only equanimity and one-pointedness remain, all else has been left behind. The mind stands unmoving.

Once the mind is peaceful this can happen. You don't have to think a lot about it, it just happens by itself when the causal factors are ripe. This is called the energy of a peaceful mind. In this state

the mind is not drowsy; the five hindrances, sense desire, aversion, restlessness, dullness and doubt, have all fled.

But if mental energy is still not strong and mindfulness weak, there will occasionally arise intruding mental impressions. The mind is peaceful but it's as if there's a 'cloudiness' within the calm. It's not a normal sort of drowsiness though, some impressions will manifest - maybe we'll hear a sound or see a dog or something. It's not really clear but it's not a dream either. This is because these five factors have become unbalanced and weak.

The mind tends to play tricks within these levels of tranquillity. 'Imagery' will sometimes arise when the mind is in this state, through any of the senses, and the meditator may not be able to tell exactly what is happening. "Am I sleeping? No. Is it a dream? No, it's not a dream..." These impressions arise from a middling sort of tranquillity; but if the mind is truly calm and clear we don't doubt the various mental impressions or imagery which arise. Questions like, "Did I drift off then? Was I sleeping? Did I get lost?..." don't arise, for they are characteristics of a mind which is still doubting. "Am I asleep or awake?..." Here, the mind is fuzzy. This is the mind getting lost in its moods. It's like the moon going behind a cloud. You can still see the moon but the clouds covering it render it hazy.

It's not like the moon which has emerged from behind the clouds clear, sharp and bright.

When the mind is peaceful and established firmly in mindfulness and self-awareness, there will be no doubt concerning the various phenomena which we encounter. The mind will truly be beyond the hindrances. We will clearly know everything which arises in the mind as it is. We do not doubt because the mind is clear and bright. The mind which reaches *samādhi* is like this.

Some people find it hard to enter *samādhi* because they don't have the right tendencies. There is *samādhi*, but it's not strong or firm. However, one can attain peace through the use of wisdom, through contemplating and seeing the truth of things, solving problems that way. This is using wisdom rather than the power of *samādhi*. To attain calm in practice, it's not necessary to be sitting in meditation, for instance. Just ask yourself, "Eh, what is that?" and solve your problem right there! A person with wisdom is like this. Perhaps he can't really attain high levels of *samādhi*, although there must be some, just enough to cultivate wisdom. It's like the difference between farming rice and farming corn. One can depend on rice more than corn for one's livelihood. Our practice can be like this, we depend more on wisdom to solve problems. When we see the truth, peace arises.

The two ways are not the same. Some people have insight and are strong in wisdom but do not have much *samādhi*. When they sit in meditation they aren't very peaceful. They tend to think a lot, contemplating this and that, until eventually they contemplate happiness and suffering and see the truth of them. Some incline more towards this than *samādhi*. Whether standing, walking, sitting or lying, enlightenment of the *Dhamma* can take place. Through seeing, through relinquishing, they attain peace. They attain peace through knowing the truth, through going beyond doubt, because they have seen it for themselves.

Other people have only little wisdom but their *samādhi* is very strong. They can enter very deep *samādhi* quickly, but not having much wisdom, they cannot catch their defilements, they don't know them. They can't solve their problems. But regardless of whichever approach we use, we must do away with wrong thinking, leaving only right

view. We must get rid of confusion, leaving only peace. Either way we end up at the same place. There are these two sides to practice, but these two things, calm and insight, go together. We can't do away with either of them. They must go together.

That which 'looks over' the various factors which arise in meditation is *sati*, mindfulness. This *sati* is a condition which, through practice, can help other factors to arise. *Sati* is life. Whenever we don't have *sati*, when we are heedless, it's as if we are dead. If we have no *sati*, then our speech and actions have no meaning. *Sati* is simply recollection. It's a cause for the arising of self-awareness and wisdom. Whatever virtues we have cultivated are imperfect if lacking in *sati*. *Sati* is that which watches over us while standing, walking, sitting and lying. Even when we are no longer in *samādhi*, *sati* should be present throughout.

Whatever we do we take care. A sense of shame will arise. We will feel ashamed about the things we do which aren't correct. As shame increases, our collectedness will increase as well. When collectedness increases, heedlessness will disappear. Even if we don't sit in meditation, these factors will be present in the mind.

And this arises because of cultivating *sati*. Develop *sati*! This is the quality which looks over the work we are doing in the present. It has real value.

We should know ourselves at all times. If we know ourselves like this, right will distinguish itself from wrong, the path will become clear, and cause for all shame will dissolve. Wisdom will arise.

We can bring the practice all together as morality, concentration and wisdom. To be collected, to be controlled, this is morality. Firmly establishing the mind within that control is concentration. Complete, overall knowledge within the activity in which we are engaged is wisdom. The practice in brief is just morality, concentration and wisdom, or in other words, the path. There is no other way. ☺

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**Notes:** *Samādhi* is the state of concentrated calm resulting from meditation practice. *Jhāna* is an advanced state of concentration or *samādhi*, wherein the mind becomes absorbed into its meditation subject. It is divided into four levels, each level progressively more refined than the previous one. Shame: This is a shame based on knowledge of cause and effect, rather than emotional guilt.

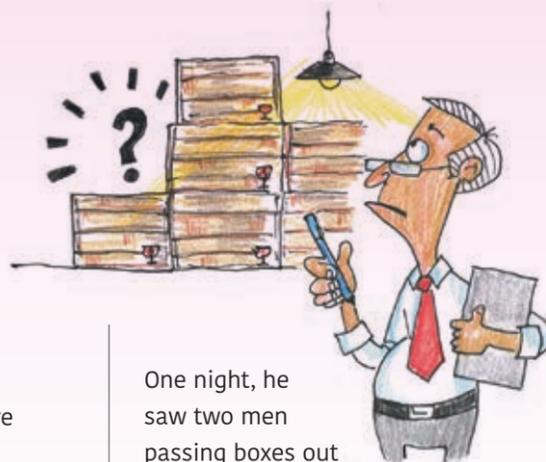


# Wisdom Guides the Way

Retold by Esther Thien  
Illustration: Robert Yeo

Once, a company owner started experiencing the loss of goods from his warehouse. He had been adept at managing both his staff and business and everything had been going well. The employees were generally satisfied and there had been no problems with theft before.

Although the value of the missing goods was not high, the owner wanted to stop the theft before it grew out of hand. So, he started monitoring the warehouse after dark secretly.



One night, he saw two men passing boxes out of a side window and he recognised them to be employees he had always thought highly of. They came from poor backgrounds, but both had always been diligent and seemed completely reliable.

It took the boss some time before he could calm his feelings of anger and betrayal. As he forced himself to ponder carefully about the situation, he had to admit that the value of what had been stolen wasn't that much.

When he thought about the two employees and how hard they had worked for the company, he allowed himself to consider the possibility of extenuating circumstances, so he decided to give them a second chance. If it worked out, he would avoid ruining two men's careers, while keeping two good employees.



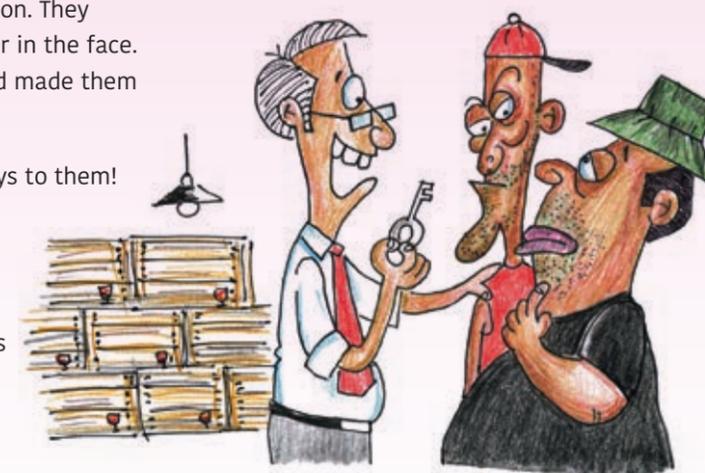
The next day...

"Over the last few weeks, I notice a growing problem with theft from the warehouse. There's no one I trust more than the two of you, so I am putting you in charge of the warehouse to solve this problem. Here are the keys."

The two men found themselves in an awkward position. They were so ashamed they could barely look at the owner in the face. They felt bad about stealing, but mounting debts had made them desperate.

Yet now, the owner had entrusted the warehouse keys to them! They silently vowed to take their responsibility for the warehouse very seriously and to become the trustworthy staff the owner thought they were.

They devoted themselves to running the warehouse's operation, and came up with several innovations that improved how things were done. Consequently, other employees felt they were trusted too and the company prospered more than ever.



What would have been the outcome for the company and employees if the owner had been fixated on punishing them? If he had yelled and fired them, it's likely that they would start to hate him instead of reflecting upon their own negative actions. Then this would spiral into a vicious cycle of harmful thoughts, blame and revenge, whereupon each party despises and tries to hurt the other endlessly.

In truth, most such cases can be avoided if those involved are a bit more generous and broad-minded from the beginning. Even a single thought can alter the entire course of what happens next.

The business owner in this story understood that if you can change the way people think, change their mind, this is always better than just punishing them. He unconsciously entrusted everything to the non-dual foundation, the Buddha-nature, that connects all of us.

People with this kind of faith in their foundation can't be hurt or overcome by others. Our faith in our foundation causes a spiritual light to grow within the other person, naturally making them repent their wrongdoings and inspiring them to live a new life. We have to entrust things to our foundation just like the owner entrusted the keys and warehouse

completely to the two men. Feeling a sense of empowerment and increased job responsibility, they focused their energy and ability on doing it well.

Your foundation, your Buddha-nature, is the one that can truly solve everything, so believe in it to the very end. Entrust everything that confronts you in your daily life to your foundation and have steadfast faith. With true faith, you will never waver. Never forget that your fundamental mind, your foundation, is a priceless treasure that embraces everything throughout this world and the universe.

- Zen Master Daehuang

# LETTING GO

Retold by Esther Thien  
Illustration: Robert Yeo

A long time ago, a traveller was embarking on a journey home along a treacherous path in the high mountains. Clouds were drifting between the peaks, and the mountains seemed to vanish into nothingness, only to reappear moments later.

At times the clouds would close in so he could see only a few misty paces in front of him, with only the sound of the river far below. It was all very beautiful, in its own way, but soon his thoughts turned to his family. As he was not being mindful, he stepped a bit too far off the trail. With a sickening rush, the ground gave way under his foot.

Toppling sideways into the abyss, he managed to grab a tree root as he fell. Clinging to it, he tried to pull himself back up, but there was nothing above the root to grab on to. He was stuck there, teetering on the side of the cliff. The clouds had closed in again and he couldn't see very far, but he heard the river and imagined the long fall to the rocks below.

"Help! Help! Is anyone there who can help me?" the man cried out.

Someone answered and moments later, an elderly Buddhist nun poked her head out over the cliff.

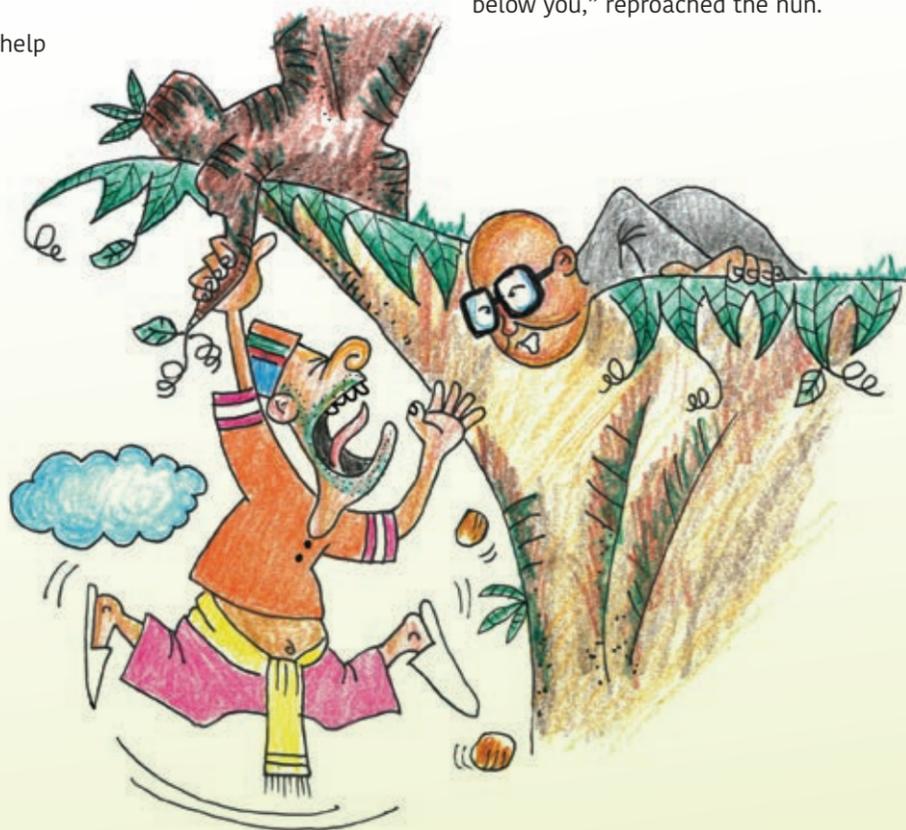
"Thank goodness! Pull me up please," he shouted.

"I am not strong enough," the nun replied.

"But if you just let go, you'll be fine. The ground is right there below you."

"Are you nuts? I can hear the river! I'll be crushed on the rocks – if I don't drown first!"

"No, really!" she told him.



"The ground is right below your feet. Just look down."

The man looked down but couldn't see anything due to the thick fog and his fear.

"There's nothing there! Are you trying to kill me?"

"Now listen, you asked me to save you, and now I am trying to. Calm your fears and let go of that branch. You're just wearing yourself out, grasping and yelling like that. The ground is right there below you," reproached the nun.

Hearing this, the man thought, "Let go? I still can't see anything, and I am still afraid. But I can't hang here much longer too. The nun seems pretty confident that I'll be okay."

He closed his eyes, let go of his grip and hit soft earth!



What the man was clinging to, besides the tree root, was simply the fear of death. Mixed in with that were all his attachments to his possessions, to fame and recognition, and aversion and disappointments over things that didn't go well; and of course his concern and love for his family. So you can imagine how much courage it must have taken for him to let go of that branch.

It's a lot easier to talk about letting go than it is to actually do so, especially when it's wrapped up with your family, children, pride and self-respect. But this letting go is so essential – it is the foundation of all spiritual practices.

Ironically, we are letting go of every moment! We naturally let go of every moment and go forward; even with an act as simple as walking, as soon as we take a step, we leave that behind and take another step. Even when we are breathing, as soon as we complete exhaling, we just naturally inhale. The reason we can let go like this is very simple: because we deeply believe that we

can. Not a single cell in your body doubts for an instant that it is possible.

So don't get caught up with "I have to let go" Just know that your foundation, your true self, can completely take care of everything.

Thoroughly trust your foundation. Keep working on this until it becomes as natural as breathing in and breathing out, and you'll know what it means to live a true life!

- Zen Master Daehuang

Meditation is not obscure, difficult, or out-of-reach for the ordinary person. It is the most natural state of being human. What separates us from all other animals is the ability to reflect and change our patterns at the level of the mind. Meditation is the method.

The life of the modern householder and city-dweller is a whirlwind of information and emotion, and that's just the beginning. Just as the body needs nutrition and exercise, the mind needs its own nourishment to stay balanced. Meditation provides that nourishment.

How can we find time to meditate amidst the whirlwind? Once we reflect on our daily routines, we can find many pockets of time, many moments to meditate. Seize the moments.

Looking at your mobile phone on public transport? Meditate. Waiting for your turn at an appointment? Meditate. Sitting around and stressing over the day's problems? Meditate. Mental focus is a limited resource. It's better to spend it on nourishing the mind rather than worrying over things beyond our control.

Meditation at the basic level need not take place at a quiet, secluded place far from noise and distraction. The mind can calm itself and introspect whenever we sit, stand, or lie down – at a place and time of our choice.

There is only one fundamental thing to do: let go. Let go of tensions in the body; they will go away. Let go of thoughts or emotions that intrude your mind; they will pass like clouds. Let go of even the need to achieve certain milestones, postures, or abilities in meditation; such accomplishments will emerge naturally.

Therefore, meditation is not about sitting still for long stretches of time and being completely still. Even a rock can do that! Meditation is a dynamic, living practice. It is both a human legacy and privilege. ☺

## Everyday Zen Seizing the Moments



Text & Illustration : Johnny Tay  
facebook.com/everydayzencartoons

Meditation skills are life skills. During meditation, we train ourselves to become sensitive to the arising of distraction and agitation, and learn how to calm the mind.

We train ourselves to become sensitive to the arising of dullness and laziness, and learn how to encourage and uplift the mind.

We train ourselves to become sensitive to the arising of greed and aversion, and learn how to dwell in equanimity.

For instance, we feel envy when we desire to enjoy something that someone else is enjoying. We think that if only we had that thing, that experience, that kind of relationship, then we would be truly happy. We feel jealousy and are upset when we observe someone else is enjoying something that we would like to enjoy, or – even more painfully – something we once enjoyed but have now lost. Envy is rooted in greed. Jealousy is rooted in aversion.

To master greed, the wise turn their mind towards endings. They fully experience the feeling between the ending of one thing and the beginning of another. Every single experience we have ever had or ever will have has come to an end or will do so. Nothing lasts. How simple a truth! How profound an insight!

Observing endings allow us to see envy and jealousy as simply impermanent mental states, and allows us

to let go of our identification with them. Reviewing them, we see how toxic they are, particularly jealousy. Jealousy can become obsessive, almost a kind of madness. Jealous people destroy their own happiness far more effectively than the person they are jealous of could ever do. It is vital that people prone to jealousy should see its danger and wholeheartedly cultivate the meditation on sympathetic joy.

Behind the different forms of craving lies a basic discontent. We feel that there is something wrong with the present moment. Sometimes we feel that

something is missing, something that we need to get hold of. At other times we feel that there is something present that should not be, something that we need to

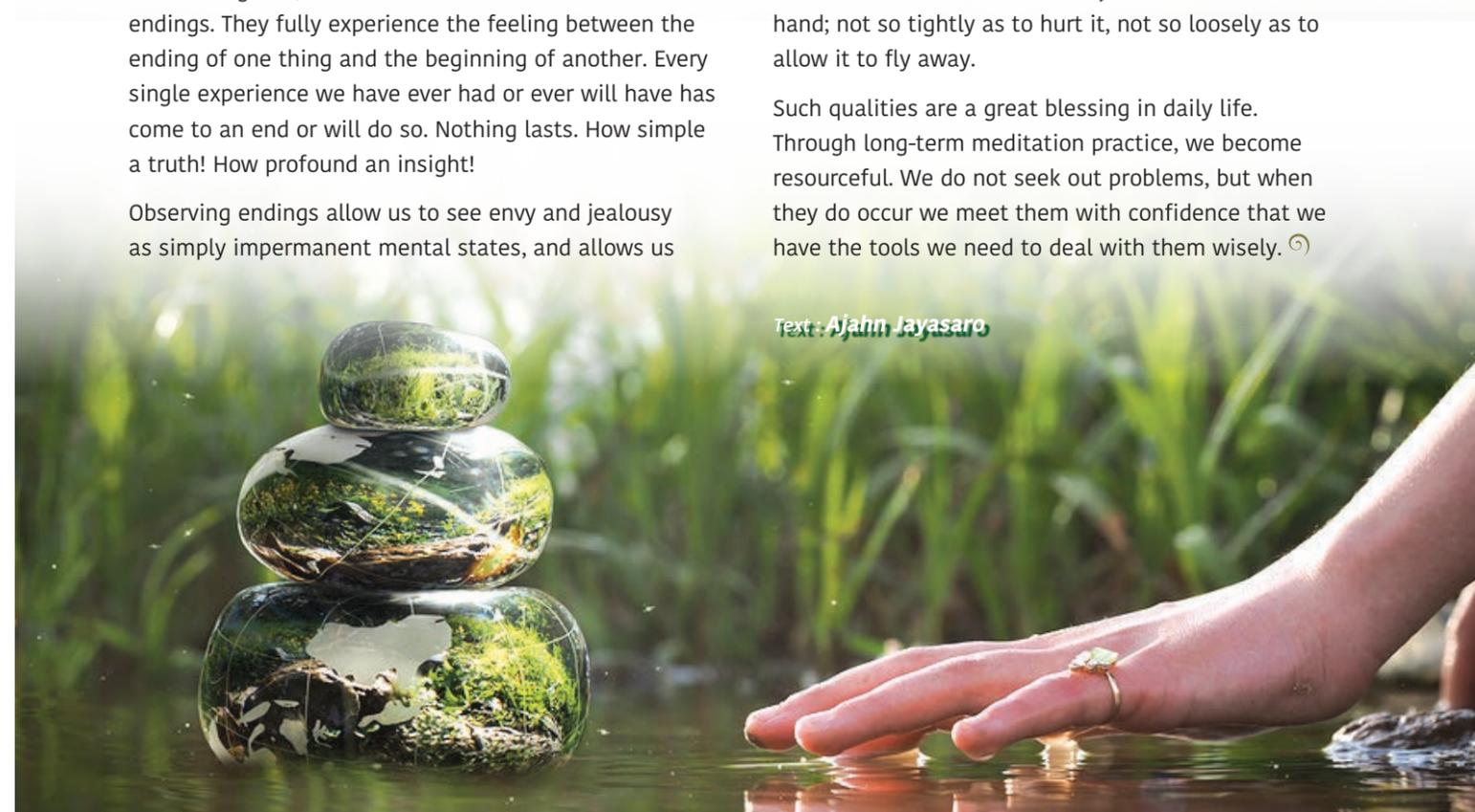
get rid of. Learning to be content with a meditation object, we learn how to be content with the present moment. Being content with the present moment, we see much of our craving to get and get rid of, simply falling away.

We train ourselves to balance effort and relaxation, until we are able to hold the object like a bird in the hand; not so tightly as to hurt it, not so loosely as to allow it to fly away.

Such qualities are a great blessing in daily life. Through long-term meditation practice, we become resourceful. We do not seek out problems, but when they do occur we meet them with confidence that we have the tools we need to deal with them wisely. ☺

## Meditation Skills are Life

Text : Ajahn Jayasaro





## Attaining special insight from meditation



**Q: What is special insight, and how can we attain it from meditation? – C.P.**

**A:** Special insight is the correct discernment of the object of meditation coupled with the single-pointed concentration of calm abiding. To train in it, we need to develop the ability to analyse the meditation object. While stabilising meditation is emphasised in the development of calm abiding, analytical meditation is instrumental to gain special insight. However, analytical meditation may also be used in the development of calm abiding, and stabilising meditation contributes to special insight. In fact, special insight is a combination of analytical meditation and calm abiding.

Analytical or discerning meditation doesn't mean that we're constantly conceptualising, thus getting lost in mental chatter. Rather, by understanding the object of meditation well, we'll be able to experience it fully. We aren't necessarily involved in discursive thought during analytical meditation. We may use more subtle thought to help us correctly discern the object. Then we concentrate on what we've discerned to make it firm and to integrate it with our minds. Eventually, our conceptual understanding will turn into direct experience. Thus the end product of analysis is non-conceptual experience. In *The Sutra Requested by Kasyapa*, the Buddha said:

**O Kasyapa, just as fire arises when two pieces of wood are rubbed against each other, so analytical wisdom arises from the conceptual state. And just as the fire increases and burns away all the wood, analytical wisdom increases and burns away all conceptual states.**

There are two basic types of analytical meditation. In one we aim to transform our attitude. For example, when meditating on love, we change our attitude from anger or apathy into genuine affection. In the second, we analyse the meditation object in order to understand and perceive it. The meditations on impermanence and emptiness are examples.

In the first type of discerning meditation, we seek to transform our attitude. When meditating on love, the object of meditation is other beings. We consider their kindness towards us in the past, present and future. Letting ourselves absorb the profound implication of the fact that all others want to have happiness and to avoid suffering as intensely as we do, we then reflect on how wonderful it would be if they could have happiness.

As a result of this, our minds are filled with deep and impartial love for all others. A powerful feeling – the wish for others to have happiness – arises inside us. Having developed a loving attitude by using analysis, we then maintain this deep experience of love using stabilising meditation. Some people may continue to meditate on love and develop calm abiding on it.

In the meditation on impermanence, analysis helps us to understand the transitory nature of our world. We can take something we're attached to – music, for example – and contemplate its quality of change. A melody has a beginning, middle and end. It doesn't continue forever. Even while it lasts, it's continuously changing. Each sound lasts a split second, and even in that short moment, it too changes.

When we consider impermanence deeply, we'll understand that our universe is always in motion. Although it appears firm and stable to our ordinary perception, in fact, it's transient. Understanding this helps us avoid attachment and the pain and confusion which accompany it. Recognising impermanence, we'll be able to appreciate things and experience them fully while they last. When they disappear, we won't mourn them. This automatically soothes mental turmoil in daily life.

When meditating on emptiness, we analyse the ultimate nature of people and phenomena. We investigate whether our ordinary assumptions about how people and phenomena exist are correct. When we analyse carefully, we find that they are empty of all false projections of inherent existence. At this point, we've correctly discerned emptiness.

To attain special insight on emptiness, we conjoin our correct understanding of emptiness with calm abiding. This allows our minds to remain focused on emptiness for a long time. By concentrating on reality in this way, our minds are purified of obscurations.

We can do analytical meditation on rebirth and cause and effect to understand how they function. Contemplating the kindness of others and the disadvantages of selfishness, we'll generate love and the spontaneous wish to benefit others. In short, everything the Buddha taught is food for meditation.

Both calm abiding and analytical meditation are important. If we just have the ability to concentrate, but we can't correctly analyse meditation objects such as emptiness, then we lack the ability to cut the root of ignorance. On the other hand, if we correctly understand emptiness, but are unable to maintain our concentration on it, then our understanding won't have a deep impact on our minds and our ignorance won't be totally abolished. When we've conjoined calm abiding and special insight, then we're firmly on the path to freedom. ☺

– Ven Thubten Chodron

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## PLANT-BASED FUSION MEALS AT *Cozy Corner*



The vegan food scene in Singapore is getting more popular. Even the quiet and unassuming Macpherson estate is blessed with a café that serves plant-based fusion meals. Named *Cozy Corner*, the café which started operating in January 2018, is accessible via the Mattar MRT station. It takes about eight minutes by foot from the station.

Although the café has only less than 30 seats, the menu is rather extensive. It serves a variety of pizzas, pasta, burgers, sushi, rice sets, soup & side dishes, desserts, organic and homemade beverages. It is amazing how a small café is able to handle a total of about 60 items on their menu. Most items are homemade from scratch by their in-house chef. Vegans can be assured that no animal product, alcohol, onion, garlic, dairy and honey is used in their food.

What should you try on your first visit?

**1. Mala Pizza (S\$15.90)** – this is a must-try for spicy food lovers. The pizza is thin and crispy, and topped with generous amount of eggplant, green pepper and king oyster mushroom. Using a mix of tomato puree, spicy chilli sauce and chilli padi, the pizza comes in three level of spiciness: mild, medium and extreme. Be warned

– medium level might already be a challenging level to begin with. Think thrice before you take up the extreme-level challenge!

**2. Purple Sweet Potato Smoothie (S\$5.90)** – although this is classified under “dessert”, my personal opinion is that this can be taken as a light meal. The visually-appealing smoothie is made from Japanese purple sweet potato with organic rice milk and

Singapore is the quiet and blessed with a

organic soy milk, topped with purple rice crunch toppings! Not only is this a healthy option, the smoothie is beautifully presented in a wooden bowl and spoon.

**3. Maoshanwang durian ice cream (S\$5.90)** – the ice cream is made without the use of flavouring and retains the true flavour of the King of Fruits. It is creamy and not too sweet. This is a very addictive dessert without the use of additives!

To enjoy the food at the comfort of your home, delivery service is also available. Details on delivery order is available on the café’s website. ☺

### Overall Rating:

Food: 8.5/10  
Ambience: 8/10  
Service: 7.5/10

### Address:

86 Circuit Road #01-1003,  
Singapore 370086

### Opening Hours:

Tuesday to Friday,  
5pm to 10pm  
Saturday & Sunday,  
12pm to 10pm  
Closed on Monday unless it  
is a public holiday

[www.cozycornersg.com](http://www.cozycornersg.com)

Text & Photo: *Jos Tan*

## Korean Vegetarian Café *in the West!*

I have to lament that it is difficult to find healthy and tasty vegetarian food in the West, so I was so excited to discover *Oh My Café* has a Korean (East-meet-West) vegetarian menu at Westgate in Jurong.

One of the signature dishes in their menu is the **Korean Temple Food (S\$13)**. It is served with grilled eggplant and Korean Lotus Tea. As it is limited to 30 portions per day, do call up to check its availability before rushing down to the café.

For a cheaper option, you may order the **Korean Temple Food Weekday Lunch at S\$8.80**, the rice is served with pumpkin with miso paste on top, together with eight kinds of wild herbs, vegetables, and side-dishes with its own seasoning.

The café also serves other Korean vegetarian options such as Summer Truffle Noodle (New Dish), BiBim Bowl Vegan. It also serves *instagrammable* drinks, such as light bulb drinks and delicious-looking cakes.

I would recommend *Oh My Café* to those who love to *instagram* and enjoy healthy Korean food. However, friends who love the piping hot Kimchi Soup Ramen will be disappointed as the café only offers modern fusion cuisine. ☺



Korean Temple food



Summer Truffle



Menu 1



Menu 2

### Overall Rating:

Food : 7.5/10  
Ambience: 6/10  
Service: 5/10

### Address:

Westgate #B1-01 3 Gateway  
Drive Singapore 608532

### Opening Hours:

10am to 10pm  
Tel: 8650 9292

<https://www.facebook.com/ohmysingapore/>

Text & Photo: *Chloe Huang*



*Health is wealth* Yet these days, many are afflicted by chronic diseases and their complications. What we eat impacts not just our health but also the environment. Apart from “Reducing, Reusing and Recycling”, we can also do our part for the environment by consuming less meat, or abstaining from it totally.

Below is a nutrient-packed plant-based whole-food recipe that is beneficial for you and the environment.

• **Level:** Easy • **Preparation time:** 15 minutes • **Cooking time:** 100 minutes

**Ingredients (Serves three):**

3 medium leaves ~ Organic kale  
100g ~ Organic carrot  
9pcs ~ Organic multigrain rice  
(or quinoa or rye) crackers

**Seasonings:**

3 tbsp ~ Organic balsamic  
vinegar  
2 tbsp ~ Organic cold pressed  
olive oil (or coconut oil)

**Toppings:**

2 tbsp ~ Crushed natural  
walnuts and dried organic  
cranberries

## Kale Salad with Multigrain Rice Crackers

**Method:**

- 1) Wash the kale leaves and cut in thin strips; use the stem and remnant leaves for soup. Nothing goes to waste!
- 2) Wash the carrot and shred finely. (*Note: Do not peel the carrot if it looks fresh so as to retain the vitamins and antioxidants*)
- 3) Mix well the kale leaves and carrot in a mixing bowl.
- 4) Marinade with the seasonings for two minutes.
- 5) Toss in the crushed walnuts and cranberries.
- 6) Place the salad on top of the multigrain rice crackers.
- 7) The dish is now ready to be served.

*Did you know*

Kale, the “**Queen of Greens**”, belongs to the cruciferous vegetable family. It is the prime food source of glucosinolates, which offer cancer-preventive benefits. A superfood for detoxification, the vegetable is also rich in Vitamins K, A, C, E and folic acid, along with other vital nutrients, Omega 3 and 6 as well as antioxidants such as lutein and zeaxanthin which enable healthy vision, and support heart health and brain development. Kale also lowers bad cholesterol (LDL) and increases the good cholesterol (HDL).



Recipe & photo provided courtesy of Vinitha Ang, NutriHub Culinary Art.

More nutritious plant-based whole food recipes can be found from “**Get Healthy and Save \$\$\$ thru’ Vegan NutriMeal**” available at the Awareness Hub, Bras Basah Complex, #03-15.

You can also call Awareness Hub a 6336 5067, or turn to page 72 for more details on our vegetarian cooking classes.

## Sound in Space Game

Becoming aware of the physical world is also part of cultivating mindfulness. Noticing what comes through the sense doors is the first step in developing sensory awareness. Then, notice how your mind and body respond. Notice the sensory experience from the perspective of a friendly observer.

For example, when you hear the sound of water on rocks, you feel good, react with pleasure and your body responds by relaxing, your breath deepening and mind quieting.

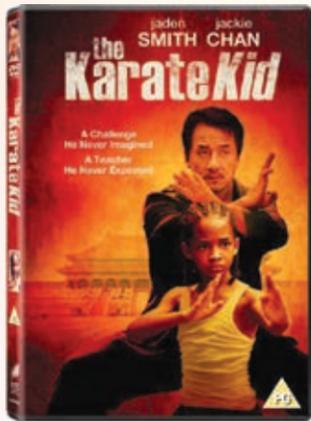
Or when you hear a leaky faucet, you feel negative, react with aversion and your body responds with a headache, feeling overwhelmed and mind dull and tired.

Here’s a game that will help kids get attuned to their senses from the stance of a friendly and impartial spectator:

- Get a pencil or pen and a worksheet, containing a table with three columns listing tone bar, drum and bell. For very young children, use only the tone bar.
- Ring the instrument several times, and ask the children to count the number of times they hear it ring.
- For older children, you can add a drum and jingle bells. Or use any instruments you have handy.
- With hands on bellies, feel the movement of the breath in the body, then lead the children through the following sequence:

- “Breathe with hands on belly, look at your focus rocks, and listen for sounds.”
- Ask the children to pay attention to how many times they hear each sound.
- After each round, get children to jot down on their worksheets how often they hear each sound.
- There are no right or wrong answers in this game. The question is simply how many times the children heard the bell, not how many times it actually rang.
- The answers are not always the same and can provide you with an opportunity to talk to your children about why they may not have heard the bell every time, “Did their mind wander? Where was their attention? Where’s their attention now?” ☺

by Susan Kaiser Greenland, author of *The Mindful Child*. ([www.susankaisergreenland.com](http://www.susankaisergreenland.com))



### The Karate Kid (2010)

Directed by: Harald Zwart  
Starring: Jackie Chan, Jaden Smith, Taraji P. Henson

Dre Parker is a twelve-year-old boy, who has just arrived in China from the United States, with his mother. On first appearances, it is a great culture shock for him and he quickly finds himself getting into deep water when he has to face a gang of haughty kids. Aggravated by him making advances on a pretty classmate, he is beaten to the ground, which naturally causes him to adopt an attitude of fear towards his surroundings, both in and out of school.

It turns out that the members of this gang are Kung-Fu students and even though Dre is very athletic and nimble, he's no match for their expertise in the art. When he tries to exact revenge on them on his own, he ends up getting so badly beaten up that they almost finish him off, until Han (played by Jackie Chan) directly intervenes and pulverises all of them to the ground with little effort.

Dre asks Han to come with him to meet the slightly brazen Kung-Fu teacher of the gang members and ask him to control his students. Their teacher replies that the only way to honourably repair the damage is for Dre to take part

in the up and coming Kung-Fu championships. But Han tells Dre that these boys are not being taught proper Kung-Fu, because Kung-Fu is not at all about fighting. At the same time, he agrees to train Dre in its correct expression.

Dre is extremely enthusiastic, but Han's lessons are not at all what he was imagining Kung-Fu lessons should be like and not at all what he has seen the multitudes of students practising in the courtyard of the Kung-Fu school in Beijing. He wonders why day in, day out, Han has set him the same, seemingly unrelated and meaningless task and when he's at the limit of frustration at not having received one lesson in contact, he almost leaves.

But Han grabs him by the wrist and shows him in a few moves what the purpose of his training so far has been, saying, "Kung-fu lives in everything we do... in how we treat people... Everything is Kung-Fu." Han then begins teaching him more advanced techniques and takes him on a trip to a mountain top monastery where he is instructed to drink deeply from the dragon well, the water of which will make him a Kung-Fu Master. But it's there that Dre sees highly trained Kung-Fu masters at work with their art, unlike the factory-like mass production of martial arts techniques being taught in the common Kung-Fu schools of Beijing. This, beyond everything, inspires Dre to understand what he is working towards.

But Dre also has something to offer Han, who has suffered a terrible personal story of his own. **Provoked to bring out the most courageous, determined and compassionate part of his spirit, Dre is challenged to awaken his potential to its fullest and understand that the real sense of purpose behind his mission to learn Kung-Fu is not specific techniques in themselves, but to focus one-pointedly on everything occurring around him.**

These qualities are what will eventually lead him to go beyond his fear and are the fuel for him to ultimately cause all things in his confrontation, to be in balance. By emptying his mind of chatter and through extreme concentration, he can become highly sensitive to his environment, and awaken his potential to its fullest. ☺



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## Want Your story to be heard too?

Are you touched by the stories and interviews featured in this magazine?

Perhaps you too have a story to tell, a story of how the Buddha and His Teachings so inspired you to walk the Buddhist path, or maybe a simple account of the little treasures and blessings in life? Or perhaps you are a budding poet who would like to share a prose and a verse or two about how the Dharma changed your life forever?

Whatever your story or poem may be, we welcome you to write in to us. Share your inspiring tale of faith and awakening with the rest of the world.  
Send your entries to  
[awaken@kmspks.org](mailto:awaken@kmspks.org) or:

AWAKEN, The Executive Editor  
Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery  
Dharma Propagation Division  
88 Bright Hill Road Singapore 574117

Please include your full name, address and contact details.  
We reserve the right to edit the stories and letters for space and grammar considerations.



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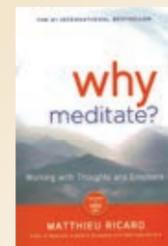
Where did you obtain this magazine?

\*We will contact you solely for donation issues related to KMSPKS publishing matters. Please refer to www.kmspks.org/privacy/ for more information on Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA).

Issue 42 / Sep 2018

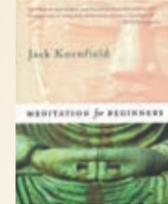
READ

Heighten gratitude, inner peace and insight to life with mindful practices Text: Esther Thien



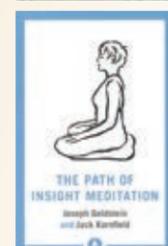
Why Meditate? By Matthieu Ricard S\$25.90

One of my favourite teachers, Matthieu Ricard explains plainly why by meditating on a daily basis, we can change our understanding of ourselves and the world around us.



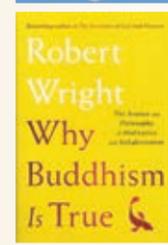
Meditation for Beginners By Jack Kornfield S\$24.90

Meditation for Beginners is another book most suited for those who have thought about trying meditation but don't know how to get started.



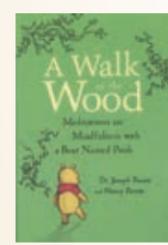
The Path of Insight Meditation By Joseph Goldstein & Jack Kornfield S\$19.50

In this book, Jack Kornfield pairs up with Joseph Goldstein to talk about the Buddhist precepts at the heart of meditation.



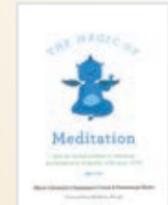
Why Buddhism is True By Robert Wright S\$29.80

In Why Buddhism is True, Robert Wright, a New York Times bestselling author and Pulitzer Prize winner, writes about his personal journey that began with Wright's landmark book on evolutionary psychology, The Moral Animal.



A Walk in the Woods: Meditations on Mindfulness with a Bear named Pooh By Dr Joseph Parent & Nancy Parent S\$26.90

In our frenetic world, who better to guide readers through the transformative practice of mindfulness than a long-beloved bear who has perfected the art of simply being? As Pooh said it so well, "just two things to do to truly be Pooh - just be present and kind."



The Magic of Meditation By Marie-Christine Champeaux-Cunin & Dominique Butet S\$25.90

The Magic of Meditation is a really handy book for parents who would like to school their kids in the beneficial practices of meditation.



Breathe Like a Bear By Kira Willey S\$22.90

Breathe Like a Bear is a beautifully illustrated book comprising techniques on 30 Mindful Moments for kids to feel calm and focused anytime, anywhere.

All books are available at Awareness Place stores.

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# Heard

Shower of unconditional love and blessings Text: Esther Thien



**Buddha Activity Collection**  
By Guo Heng Qi  
S\$33.90



**Misty Rain: Piano Collection**  
S\$19.90



**Fragrance**  
By Wong Wing Tsan  
S\$19.90

Produced in Taiwan by Wind Music, the *Buddha Activity Collection* album comes with a thick, glossy book featuring a mixture of inspiring monochromatic and full-coloured photos. Flip through and allow the cascading images to imprint its quiet meditative *Zen* perspective in your mindstream. Comprising 12 tracks of mantras and prayers sung by Guo Heng Qi, the music vibrates to a deep spirituality conveying the pure, unconditional love and blessings that all Buddhas and bodhisattvas are always bestowing on us. My personal favourite is track five.

*Misty Rain* is a collection of 13 piano tracks, averaging between two and three minutes. The music is melancholic and soulful, in alignment with the elegiac vibes expressed of a misty, rainy day.

The last CD, *Fragrance*, is encased in a design of natural tapestry of delicate greenery and white marigold flowers. Containing 10 tracks, the orchestral music in this CD is haunting and tugs at your heart-strings. It is like experiencing the gentle caress of a summer breeze in a meadow when you are feeling down, reassuring you that everything will be okay.

All three CDs are available at Awareness Place stores. ☺

Connecting you to the wisdom of the Dharma 24/7 Text: Esther Thien

# Dharma Apps



**Meditate, Sleep, Relax**  
Calm.com, Inc  
Free

This app, which made it to the Editors' Choice list on Google Play, was also featured in *the New York Times*. Rated by more than 110,000 users, it is reportedly the number one app for mindfulness and meditation.

Not only is it a good meditation app for beginners, it also offers hundreds of programmes for intermediate and advanced meditators. Guided meditation sessions are available in 3, 5, 10, 15, 20 or 25 minutes so you can choose the perfect duration to fit your schedule.

You can learn to calm anxiety, manage stress and enhance deep sleep; or meditate upon gratitude, loving-kindness, forgiveness, non-judgement, self-esteem and happiness to improve health and wellness. You can also select meditation programmes on body scan for relaxation, or do focus and concentration, or walking meditation.

There is a new 10-minute daily programme called *Daily Calm* to help you ease into the day or unwind before bedtime, or you can choose to play more than 25 types of soothing nature sounds and scenes for more restful sleep.

If you prefer open-ended and unguided, timed meditation, or wish to track your progress, these options are available too. *Calm* is completely free to download and use, and there are no ads. However, some content is only available through an optional paid subscription.



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Available on Google Play and Apple Store.



**The Mindfulness App**  
Mind App  
Free

The *Mindfulness App* is a freemium app that offers a five-day guided introduction course to mindfulness. You can select guided and silent meditations varying between three and 30 minutes. It is also customisable to your preference with guided instructions, bells and nature sounds. In addition, you receive prompts and notices which remind you to be mindful throughout the day, and a log that tracks your meditation journey.

If you opt for the premium subscription, besides the free-for-all content, you get to access more than 200 guided meditations and courses taught by some of the world's most influential teachers on topics such as stress relief, focus, sleep, emotions, children and teens, mindfulness at work and relationships.

A handy tool for anyone who wishes to live more in the present moment, and experience life more fully in a positive way!

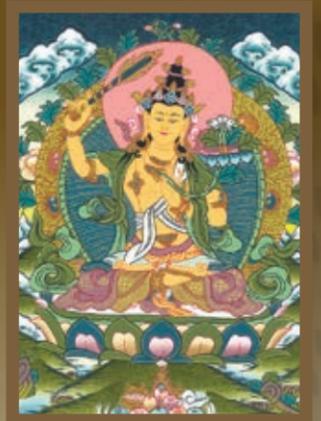
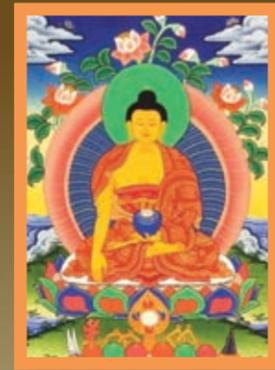
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# WHAT'S NEW

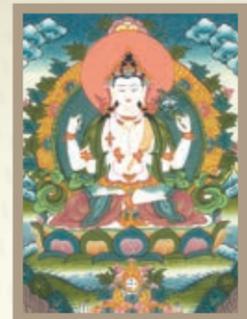
Text: Esther Thien



## Delightful Buddhist Art for Prayers and Meditation

Do you appreciate Buddhist art? Then you may be delighted with this breathtaking collection of intricately painted images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, measuring 30cm by 39cm in sizes.

Meticulously drawn and coloured by Nepali monastics in Tibetan Buddhist style, you can opt to bring home an image of Shakyamuni Buddha, Medicine Buddha, Guru Rinpoche, Vajrasattva, Manjusri Bodhisattva, Chenrezig or Guanyin Bodhisattva, White Tara, and Yellow Dzambhala.



You can use these images for greater concentration in your meditation practice, devotional prayers, or simply just relish their artistic, cultural or religious beauty.

To find out more about this collection, please call Awareness Place stores at 6337 7582 or 6452 1732. ☺

# Calendar of Events 2018

09 Sep 12 Dec



## DHARMA

### ◆ CEREMONY | PRAYERS

#### Medicine Buddha Prayer

15-20 Oct | Mon - Sat | 7.30pm  
Venue : Pagoda of 10,000 Buddhas  
21 October | Sun | 9am  
Venue : Hall of Great Compassion  
Registration of names :  
6 names - \$100 / 2 names - \$50 / 1 name - \$10  
Registration : 1 Aug onwards till fully registered  
Enquiry : 6849 5333



#### Grand Offering to Buddha and Celestial Beings

6 Oct | Sat | 9pm - 7 Oct | Sun | 6am  
13 Oct | Sat | 9pm - 14 Oct | Sun | 6am  
Venue : VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form  
Fee: \$5,000 / \$688 / \$188  
Registration : 1 Aug onwards till fully registered  
Enquiry : 6849 5333 | g\_fo@kmspks.org

#### Threefold Refuge & Five Precepts Ceremony

Through taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, one enters the Buddhist path, whilst undertaking the precepts (basic guidelines of moral conduct) helps one to develop mindfulness.  
21 Oct | Sun | 11.45am - 2.30pm  
Venue : VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form  
Registration :  
1) Online: www.kmspks.org  
2) Reception Office@KMPSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
(Please bring along your NRIC for registration)  
Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sed@kmspks.org



#### The Grand Prayer that Blesses and Benefits All Sentient Beings

One of the grandest and most meritorious Chinese Buddhist Pujas to liberate all sentient beings, including the deceased, from suffering. Generating extensive merit through the offering of food and the Dharma, sentient beings can attain happiness and enter into the path of Buddhahood.

Consecration: 9 Dec | Sun | 2pm  
Prayers: 10-15 Dec | Mon - Sat  
Sending Off: 16 Dec | Sun | 1pm  
Venue : KMPSPKS

Registration of names:  
Inner Shrine :  
\$36,000 / \$21,000 / \$11,000 / \$5,600 / \$3,200

Grand Shrine:  
\$2,000; \$1,000

Shrine of Various Sutra:  
\$300 (5-6 names) / \$200 (1-4 names) / \$20 (1 name)

Pureland Shrine:  
\$300 (5-6 names) / \$200 (1-4 names) / \$20 (1 name)

Food Offering to Triple Gem:  
\$3,000 / \$2,000 / \$1,000 / \$500 / any amount  
Registration : 1 Sep onwards till fully registered  
Enquiry : 6849 5333

### Usher in 2019 with prayers and 108 "Bell Resonance"

Join us to make wholesome aspirations in our prayers and offerings.  
31 Dec | Sun | 10pm - 2am  
Venue : Hall of Great Compassion  
Enquiry : 6849 5300

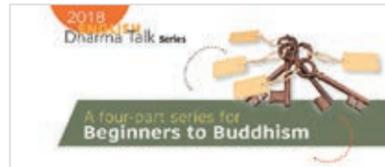
### ◆ TALKS | WORKSHOPS | COURSES

#### Threefold Refuge & Five Precepts Preparatory Class

Teachings on the Observance of Threefold Refuge & Five Precepts  
21 Oct | Sun | 9.00am - 10.30am  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom  
Free Admission  
Registration:  
1) Online: www.kmspks.org  
2) Reception Office@KMPSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | sed@kmspks.org

#### Sunday Dharma Practice

Sunday Dharma Practice includes short chanting, guided meditation and Dharma sharing led by a Venerable.  
2 Sep - 30 Sep | Sun | 2pm - 3.30pm  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom 5 & 6  
Free Admission  
Registration:  
1) Online: www.kmspks.org  
2) Reception Office@KMPSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | 6849 5345 | ded@kmspks.org



#### English Dharma Talk - The Three Higher Trainings (by Venerable Thubten Chodron)

- Ethics
- Concentration
- Wisdom

6 Dec | Thu | 7.30pm - 9.30pm  
Free Admission (Limited seats, Registration required)  
Venue: Awareness Hub

#### English Dharma Talk - The Three Studies

- The Study Of The Precepts
- The Study of Meditation
- The Study of Wisdom

13 Dec | Thu | 7.30pm - 9pm  
Fee: A nominal donation of \$5  
Venue: Awareness Hub

Venue: Awareness Hub

Registration:

1) Online: www.kmspks.org/lifestyle  
2) Reception Office@KMPSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
3) Awareness Hub | 11.30am-6pm  
Enquiry: 6336 5067 | awarenesshub@kmspks.org



## LIFESTYLE

### ◆ ART



#### Zentangle (Beginner)

A mindfulness meditative art to facilitate and enhance relaxation, focus and self-discovery  
14 Oct | Sun | 2pm - 6pm  
Fee: \$70  
Material Fee: \$15 (payable to instructor)  
Venue: Awareness Hub



### 100 Bliss Blanket Workshop

Let us rekindle a tradition that delivers and expresses love through the 100 bliss blanket to people we love and care about.  
6 Sep & 27 Sep | Thu  
Grp 1: 2pm - 4pm | Grp 2: 7pm - 9pm  
Fee: \$40 (two sessions)  
Material Fee: \$48 (payable to instructor)  
Venue: Awareness Hub

### Western Floral Arrangement and Hand Bouquet (I)

- Four different geometric designs
- Four basic hand bouquet styles

12 Oct - 30 Nov | Fri | 7pm - 9pm  
Fee: \$140 (eight sessions)  
Material Fee:  
\$25 (per session, payable to instructor)  
Venue: Awareness Hub

### Rhythm Rejuvenation

Group drumming has health benefits such as stress reduction, mood improvement and boosting of immune system.  
29 Nov | Thu | 7pm - 9pm  
Fee: \$30  
Venue: Awareness Hub



### Pastel Nagomi Art: Colours & Life of Nature

A healing touch of heart through the Japanese way of painting using finger touches and pastels  
16 Dec | Sun | 10am - 5pm  
Fee: \$155  
Starter Kit : \$45 (payable to instructor)  
Venue: Awareness Hub

### Pastel Nagomi Art: Pastel Calligraphy Art

Experience the gentle painting style of Nagomi Pastel Art infused with unique Japanese calligraphy.  
21 Dec | Fri | 7pm - 9pm  
Fee: \$60  
Starter Kit : \$45 (payable to instructor)  
Venue: Awareness Hub

Venue: Awareness Hub

Registration:

1) Online: www.kmspks.org/lifestyle  
2) Reception Office@KMPSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
3) Awareness Hub | 11.30am-6pm  
Enquiry: 6336 5067 | awarenesshub@kmspks.org

### ◆ CHILDREN



### Children's Art - Colours of Life

This programme is specifically designed for children between 4 and 12 years old.  
6 Oct - 8 Dec, 15 Dec - 2 Mar 2019  
Sat | 2.30pm - 4.30pm  
Fee: \$60 for 10 sessions (excluding art materials)  
Venue: Awareness Hub

Registration:

1) Online: www.kmspks.org/lifestyle  
2) Reception Office@KMPSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
3) Awareness Hub | 11.30am-6pm  
Enquiry: 6336 5067 | awarenesshub@kmspks.org

### Rainbow Child Yoga

Develop a happy, and healthy child with fun yoga routines!  
Term 5: 16 Sep - 14 Oct | Sun  
10am - 11.30am (ages 4 - 7 yrs)  
11.30am - 1pm (ages 8 - 11 yrs)  
Fee: \$110 (5 sessions)  
Venue: Awareness Hub

### Rainbow Child Yoga - School Holiday Series

Adding expressive and therapeutic arts into yoga  
18 Nov - 9 Dec | Sun  
10am - 11.30am (ages 4 - 7 yrs)  
11.45am - 1.15pm (ages 8 - 11 yrs)  
Fee: \$132 (4 sessions)  
Venue: Awareness Hub

Venue: Awareness Hub

Registration:

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2) Reception Office@KMPSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
3) Awareness Hub | 11.30am - 6pm  
Enquiry: 6336 5067 | awarenesshub@kmspks.org

### ◆ COMMUNITY

#### Nursing Home Visit

Play your part for the community! Join us for outings with seniors, listen to their words of wisdom and engage in loving communication.  
9 Sep & 4 Nov | Sun | 9am - 12pm  
Venue: Bright Hill Evergreen Home  
Enquiry: 6849 5359 | community@kmspks.org

#### Food Ration

Play your part for the community! Join us to deliver food to low-income families.  
16 Sep, 21 Oct, 18 Nov & 16 Dec | Sun | 9am - 11.30am  
Venue: KMPSPKS  
Enquiry: 6849 5359 | community@kmspks.org



#### Blood Donation

Donate Blood, Save Lives.  
30 Dec | Sun | 9am - 3pm  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | community@kmspks.org

### ◆ CULINARY



### Singapore Shioh Food III (The Vegan Style)

7 Oct | Sun | 3pm - 6.30pm  
• Brown rice nasi lemak with homemade sambal chilli  
• Vegetarian tofu otak-otak  
• Avocado chendol  
Fee: \$80 (includes ingredients)  
Venue: Awareness Hub

### Korean NutriVegan Cuisine

4 Nov | Sun | 3pm - 6.30pm  
• Danmuji (Korean pickled radish)  
• Brown rice kimbab (Korean rice roll)  
• Hangwa (Korean confectionary)  
Fee: \$85 (includes ingredients)  
Venue: Awareness Hub

### Chinese New Year Vegan Cuisine

2 Dec | Sun | 3pm - 6.30pm  
• Fruit enzyme Yu Sheng  
• Whole grain cabbage roll  
• Shark fin melon soup  
Fee: \$85 (includes ingredients)  
Venue: Awareness Hub

Venue: Awareness Hub

Registration:

1) Online: www.kmspks.org/lifestyle  
2) Reception Office@KMPSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
3) Awareness Hub | 11.30am - 6pm  
Enquiry: 6336 5067 | awarenesshub@kmspks.org

### Chinese New Year Vegan Baking

9 Dec | Sun | 3pm - 6.30pm  
• Eggless pandan cake  
• Gluten-free whole grain cashew cookie  
• No-bake rice cake  
Fee: \$85 (includes ingredients)  
Venue: Awareness Hub  
Registration:  
1) Online: www.kmspks.org/lifestyle  
2) Reception Office@KMPSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
3) Awareness Hub | 11.30am - 6pm  
Enquiry: 6336 5067 | awarenesshub@kmspks.org

### ◆ TOUR



### KMPSPKS Guided Tour

Join us on a guided tour around KMPSPKS and get to know more about Buddhism, its history and arts.  
30 Sep | Sun | 10am - 12pm  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 (Ju Yuan Fang)  
Free Admission  
Registration:  
1) Online: www.kmspks.org  
2) Reception Office@KMPSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | guidedtour@kmspks.org

### ◆ WELLNESS

#### DIY Acupressure Part IV - The "Medicine Cabinet"

Within You: Leg and feet points  
11 Nov | Sun | 3pm - 4.30pm  
Fee: \$30 (Limited to 20 pax only)  
Venue: Awareness Hub



### Foundational Laughter Yoga Workshop

9 Sep | Sun | 10am - 6pm  
Fee: \$300  
Venue: Awareness Hub



### Beginners' Tea Workshop - Let's Drink Tea!

18 Oct | Thu | 7.30pm - 9.30pm  
Fee: \$25  
Material Fee: \$40 (Tea brewing set, payable to instructor)  
Venue: Awareness Hub

### Basics of Healthy Vegetarian Diet

26 Sep, 19 Nov & 21 Nov | Mon & Wed | 1pm - 5pm  
Fee: \$125 for 3 sessions  
Venue: Awareness Hub

### Yin Yoga Elementary

4 Sep - 13 Nov, 20 Nov - 19 Feb | Tue | 6.15pm - 7.15pm  
Fee: \$160 for 10 sessions | Walk-in \$22 per lesson  
Venue: Awareness Hub

### Yin Yoga

4 Sep - 13 Nov, 20 Nov - 19 Feb | Tue | 7.30pm - 8.45pm  
8 Sep - 10 Nov, 17 Nov - 16 Feb | Sat | 11.45am - 1pm  
Fee: \$170 for 10 sessions | Walk-in \$23 per lesson  
Venue: Awareness Hub

### Yoga for Diabetes

8 Nov - 24 Jan | Thu | 10am - 11am  
Fee: \$120 (10 sessions) | Walk-in \$15 per lesson  
Venue: Awareness Hub

### Hatha Yoga for Beginners

12 Oct - 28 Dec | Fri | 10.30am - 12pm  
22 Sep - 24 Nov, 1 Dec - 2 Mar | Sat | 6.30pm - 8pm  
Fee: \$180 for 10 sessions | Walk-in \$25 per lesson  
Venue: Awareness Hub

### Yoga Flow (Hatha)

3 Oct - 5 Dec, 12 Dec - 20 Feb | Wed | 6.30pm - 7.30pm  
Fee: \$160 for 10 sessions | Walk-in \$22 per lesson  
Venue: Awareness Hub

### Hatha Yoga

I: 10 Sep - 19 Nov, 26 Nov - 18 Feb | Mon | 8pm - 9.30pm  
II: 2 Oct - 18 Dec | Tue | 10.30am - 12.00pm  
III: 21 Nov - 23 Jan | Wed | 7.45pm - 9.15pm  
IV: 29 Sep - 1 Dec, 8 Dec - 23 Feb | Sat | 9.30am - 11am  
Fee: \$180 for 10 sessions - Walk-in \$25 per lesson  
Venue: Awareness Hub

### Lunch-time Hatha Yoga

2 Oct - 18 Dec | Tue | 12.10pm - 1pm  
Fee: \$140 for 10 sessions | Walk-in \$18 per lesson  
Venue: Awareness Hub

### Gentle Hatha Yoga

2 Oct - 18 Dec | Tue | 2.30pm - 4pm  
16 Nov - 18 Jan | Fri | 2.30pm - 4pm  
Fee: \$160 for 10 sessions | Walk-in \$22 per lesson  
Venue: Awareness Hub

### Chair Yoga

16 Nov - 18 Jan | Fri | 12.30pm - 1.30pm  
Fee: \$160 (10 sessions) | Walk-in \$22 per lesson  
Venue: Awareness Hub

### Yoga to Light Up Your Life (Sun Salutations) Workshop

20 Dec | Thu | 7pm - 8.30pm  
Fee: \$35  
Venue: Awareness Hub

Venue: Awareness Hub

Registration:

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2) Reception Office@KMPSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
3) Awareness Hub | 11.30am - 6pm  
Enquiry: 6336 5067 | awarenesshub@kmspks.org

### ◆ ENVIRONMENTALISM

#### Gratitude Corner - Sorting of Recyclables

Assist us in sorting out items that can be recycled and reused for sale at the thrift shop.  
Every Tue, Thu, Sat | 9am - 4pm  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 Outside South Wing Office

#### Gratitude Shop

Check out our thrift shop for cheap and good deals.  
Sundays - Fridays | 10am - 3pm  
Saturdays | 12pm - 4.30pm  
Venue: Next to Awareness Place Convenience Store

#### Mobile Kiosk

Every 27th of the Lunar Month | 9am - 1.30pm  
Venue: Corridor between Dining Hall & Front Office  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | gratitude@kmspks.org



### Ven Hong Choon Museum

10am - 3pm  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 3  
Free Admission  
On:  
27th of each lunar month  
Qing Ming (5 Apr)  
Vesak Day (29 May)  
Ullambana Festival (25 Aug)  
Birth anniversary of Ven Hong Choon (11 Oct)  
Death anniversary of Ven Hong Choon (15 Dec)

KMPSPKS = Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery  
VHCMH = Venerable Hong Choon Memorial Hall  
Programmes & venues are subject to change. Details are correct at the time of printing

Like us on facebook.com/kmspks



宏船老和尚圆寂廿八周年紀念

启建法界圣凡冥阳两利

# 水陆

## 普度大斋胜会

报名日期  
2018年  
9月1日起  
至牌位满额为止

· 报名日期：2018年9月1日（农历七月廿二起至牌位满额为止）  
· 报名地点：光明山普觉禅寺一寺务处  
· 法会地点：光明山普觉禅寺

水陆普度大斋胜会此殊胜功德，超度十方法界、四生六道、水陆空行一切孤魂，并为十方信众超度各姓门中历代宗祖、六亲眷属、冤亲债主、一切亡灵。以此胜福功德，庄严十方施主合家眷属，消灾免难、福慧增长、身心安乐、如意吉祥。更为祈祷：世界和平，国泰民安。普愿十方善信，同赴胜会，共沾法喜，利乐有情。登记立位，功德无量。

净坛

9/12/2018  
农历十一月初三  
(星期日·下午2时)

法会

10-15/12/2018  
农历十一月初四至初九  
(星期一至星期六)

送圣

16/12/2018  
农历十一月初十  
(星期日·下午1时)

### 内坛·大坛·供斋·超荐功德金表

#### 一 内坛功德主

\$36,000 以上  
\$21,000  
\$11,000  
\$5,600  
\$3,200

#### 二 大坛功德主

\$2,000  
\$1,000

#### 三 诸经坛 | 消灾植福

\$300 (5-6个名)  
\$200 (1-4个名)  
\$20 (限1个名)

#### 四 净土坛 | 附荐超度

\$300 (5-6个名)  
\$200 (1-4个名)  
\$20 (限1个名)

#### 五 供斋香积金类别

上堂大斋 \$3,000  
福寿大斋 \$2,000  
如意斋 \$1,000  
罗汉斋 \$500  
随缘

**水陆法会**是佛教中最隆重、最殊胜的一种经忏佛事法会。全名是：**法界圣凡水陆普度大斋胜会**。  
**法界**：是指诸佛与众生本性平等，理常一故，通称法界。**圣凡**：是指十法界中，有四圣界即佛、菩萨、缘觉、声闻；有六凡界是天、人、阿修罗、地狱、饿鬼、畜生。**水陆**：是指在水、陆中三界众生居住受报之处。空中飞行之众生，须依陆地而休息，故属于陆地，加上水中生灵，共称水陆。**普度**：是指悉皆度化六道众生，使之解脱六道轮回之痛苦。**大斋**：是指不限量的给予众生饮食。**胜会**：是法施之意。除布施众生饮食外，又有诵经持咒之法施，令受苦众生心开意解，得法水之滋润，故名胜会。**会者**：聚集之意，教渡者与被教渡者集会于一堂。**即是说**：藉此启建水陆法会普度大斋之功德，超度六道中受苦众生，使之离苦得乐，趣入佛道。

