

2016 新加坡佛学院招生简章

英文部 | 中文部

- 1 本院宗旨：**培养一批精通中、英双语，有能力从事弘法管理和学术研究的僧伽人才，为汉传佛教的可持续性发展提供人力资源。
- 2 学制及学习内容**
 - 2.1. 英文部：六年全日制学习——两年预科主攻英语，四年本科全英文攻读佛学学士课程，修满规定学分后，学生将获颁泰国摩诃朱拉隆功大学学士文凭。
 - 2.2. 中文部：四年全日制学习中文佛学学士课程，修满规定学分后，学生将获颁泰国摩诃朱拉隆功大学学士文凭。
- 3 师资阵容：**本院拥有一支强大和资深的教学队伍。其中教授佛学科目的教师，都是获得硕士/博士学位、精通佛法的比丘和居士。
- 4 生活待遇：**学院将提供免费食宿、学习及生活的基本用品，并在学习期间每月发给一定的生活费。
- 5 毕业去向：**原则上，毕业后回原寺院。有志于从事佛学研究的毕业生，可以报读本院硕士课程或受到国外深造。
- 6 报考资格**
 - 6.1. 不限国籍，年龄为18至35岁的佛教僧人。
 - 6.2. 信仰虔诚，出家一年以上。
 - 6.3. 具有高中或同等学历。
(如高级水准、中专或初中毕业加三年佛学院)
 - 6.4. 身体健康、无残(隐)疾(如梦游、癫痫)和传染病。
 - 6.5. 无犯罪记录。
- 7 报考程序**
 - 7.1. 即日接受报名。
 - 7.2. 来信索取或从网上http://www.bcs.edu.sg/forms/ba_registration2016.docx下载学士《报名表》。如实填写，字迹工整。请务必提供有效电话号码和电子邮件地址，以便及时联络。
 - 7.3. 把填好的《报名表》跟下列材料一同寄至本院注册部。
 - a. 两封推荐信，可由报考者的师父、常住寺院的住持/师长、以前就读佛学院时的法师/老师提供。
 - b. 已获得的最高学历证书和成绩单的复印件。
 - c. 身份证和/或护照的复印件。
 - d. 申请者三个月内正面免冠照片3张
照片要求：彩色、白底、粗面、僧服。
尺寸：35×45mm
 - e. 县级以上医院体检表格。
(包括血检、肝检、胸透)
- 8 录取程序和名额**
 - 8.1. 中、英文班共招收60名学生。
 - 8.2. 统一考试，择优录取。
 - 8.3. 考试科目：英文部考**中级英语**；中文部考佛学、语文和**初级英语**，并统一面试。
 - 8.4. 被录取的考生，签证由我院办理。
 - 8.5. 录取结果将通过电话、电子邮件和本院网站同时通知，敬请留意。
 - 8.6. 根据本国移民厅政策，外籍学员需交纳担保金，本院为学员承担一半，另一半由学员自付。具体金额请查阅本院网站。http://www.bcs.edu.sg/forms/security_deposit.docx
- 9 一旦被录取，必须在2016年8月20日报到。**
- 10 开课日期：2016年9月5日**
- 11 欲知详情，请来函或来电咨询。**

备注：

本院只负责支付学生来新入学和毕业离校的单程机票

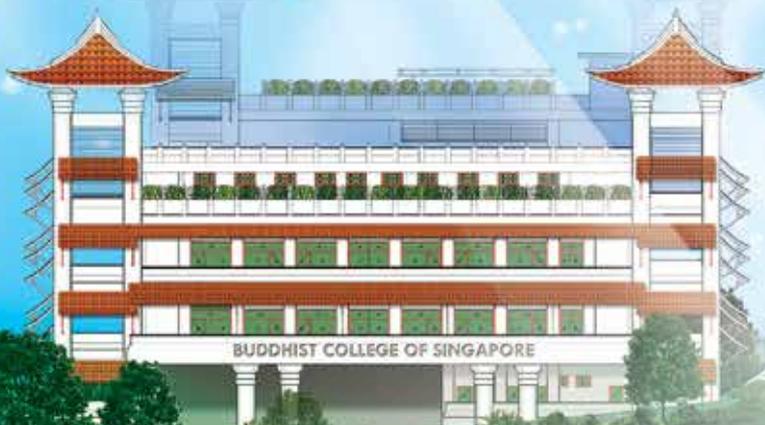
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Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University
Thailand

Our Mind is the Window to Our Well-being

Since the 19th century, Buddhism has increasingly been associated with science. Buddhism shares with science a common commitment to unveil the truth about the world, drawing sharp discrepancy between the way things appear, and the way they really are.

One of my Master's teachers, Venerable Master Taixu once commented, "In general, what is a gain to science is a loss to religion. Those religions with doctrines of gods and souls fundamentally lack the stability of truth and are easily shaken. But Buddhism benefits from the discoveries of science. The more science progresses, the clearer Buddhism becomes, for Buddhism explains the truth concerning the universe... Science helps us to understand Buddhism by offering suitable analogies."

The recent discussion on the compatibility between Buddhism and science has made inroads to focus on the various types of meditation, particularly mindfulness meditation, and their relations to neuroscience and psychotherapy.

There is increasing scientific evidence to show that Buddhist meditation bestows numerous health benefits. The use of mindfulness psychotherapy has been demonstrated by countless studies to be successful and effective in treating various mental disorders, attesting to the efficacy and timelessness of the Buddha's teaching of mindfulness and compassion.

Even though the teachings were given more than 2550 years ago, today's scientific investigation is affirming their practicality in cultivating mental resilience, with some scholars considering Buddhist meditation to be an "inner science," or a "science of the mind".

Truly as the Buddha expounded in the Dhammapada, the mind is the forerunner of all mental phenomena, and the window to our well-being and happiness.

*If with an impure mind a person speaks or acts,
suffering follows him like the wheel that follows the foot of the ox.*

*If with a pure mind a person speaks or acts,
happiness follows him like his never-departing shadow. ☺*

Sik Kwang Sheng (Ven)

Abbot, Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery





The Age of Mindful Revolution

Since the time of the scientific revolution till today, many people have considered science to be synonymous with knowledge. Typically, what is a gain to science is a loss to religion. Yet, the reverse is true for Buddhism.

Over the past century, mounting scientific evidence has demonstrated the effectiveness of Buddhist meditation for everyone, regardless of race and religion, particularly mindfulness meditation in fostering peace of mind and happiness; and validated the compatibility between Buddhism and science (pg 38, 42 and 63). This prompted *Time* magazine to feature “The Mindful Revolution” as its cover story.

To understand the practice of mindfulness, arm yourself with more resources by downloading apps or reading books on mindfulness meditation (pg 65 & 71).

On page 48, Dr B Alan Wallace highlights the known parallels of the twin poles of the reality spectrum—the outer vacuum of physical science and the inner vacuum of contemplative science.

Then on page 47, read how the scientific spirit of enquiry has influenced Chee Kok Tong’s learning and understanding of the Dharma.

While the insights of science can help us to improve our world, it is only spiritual values and concern that can show us the path we should walk in life.

The Dharma is an invaluable system that can inspire everyone to actualise a wholesome and meaningful life. “Everything is borne from our mind, so we are directly responsible for our lives; it is entirely our own choice whether we want to live a purposeful, fulfilling and happy life or otherwise,” said Dato’ Dr GK Ananda Kumaraseri (pg 44).

Elsewhere in this issue, Ajahn Sumedho spoke on the significance of *patipatta* (pg 55), while Ven Thubten Chodron and Russell Kolts clarify the importance of making time for practice each day (pg 40). Read also about the profundity of the mind on page 64.

Happy reading. ☺



Yours in the Dharma,
Sister Esther Thien



Why is it important to make time each day for practice?

Q: Why is it important to make time each day for practice? – Y.Y.

A: Making time each day for practice is important, as it is time to reconnect with your true values and to build a sense of meaning in your life. It's important to shift out of the hustle and bustle mode of 'getting things done' and create space in our lives to connect with our own experience and priorities. Even if we welcome our work, family and leisure activities and find them rewarding, it can be easy to drift away from our core values and again begin to move through life like we're checking items off our list. This can create stress, exhaustion and a gradual erosion of our sense of purpose and compassion – over time, we can find ourselves grumbling, and feeling resentful of all we have to do.

When this happens, our experience is telling us that it's time to slow down, create some space to relax and connect with our better qualities, and to re-engage with the things that give our lives a sense of purpose and meaning. We don't have to wait until we're feeling burned out, though. Establishing practice as a regular habit can help us avoid getting overwhelmed in the first place.

Whether you think of these practices as spiritual mind training or simply as taking your brain to the gym, the key is to slow down and create space in your daily life to reconnect with yourself, your values and what you ultimately want your life to be about.

It can be tempting to put off such practice because so many things seem to be demanding our attention. But if we don't make working with our minds a priority, it's unlikely we'll create lasting change. The easiest way to establish a consistent practice routine is to allocate time to do it every day, and to make that a part of our routine. This may be a challenge to start with but it will become easier as your routine becomes established.

In doing this, it's important to consider the obstacles that might get in the way. Ask yourself, "What could get in the way of me doing my regular practice?" For example, my routine requires that I get to bed at a reasonable hour. If I stay up too late, I'll be exhausted when my alarm clock goes off, and I'll be tempted to set it ahead thirty minutes and use my meditation time to get a little extra sleep. Going to bed on time sounds easy, but it requires a lot of discipline.

Another potential obstacle to practice is time. Sometimes we may think there's just not enough time to practise. One way to tell if this is true is to get a daily planner that breaks the days into hourly units, and spend a week recording what you do each hour. When we actually record our activities in this way, we often find lots of time spent surfing the internet, watching television or texting. In this case, we can reallocate some of that time to create 20-30 minutes for practice.

Sometimes, it is true that we don't have any free time – we're just racing from one activity to the next from the moment we get up until we collapse into our beds. If this is indeed the case, we need to address it. We won't be able to sustain this pace over time and also be at our best. If we want to develop qualities like compassion, we have to make it a priority. This may mean making tough choices about what we have to eliminate to make space for our practice. That said, we suspect you've made plenty of tough choices in your life already in order to pursue things that were important to you.

In comparison to the rest of our hectic lives, our relatively quiet practice may feel 'unproductive', as if nothing is getting done. This is a mistaken perception, a product of an overly busy mind – we've trained our minds to believe that being productive means being busy, but they are not the same thing. This busy-ness can keep us stressed out and block our compassion. Mind-training practices involve slowing down, and doing things such as focusing attention on our breath, creating compassionate imagery in our minds or reading materials that inspire us and deepen our understanding. This slowing down is not laziness; it is a basic building block of compassion and sanity. Becoming friends with ourselves, cultivating compassion and generating wisdom take time and dedication. Establishing a regular practice routine is the surest way to do that. ☺



– Ven Thubten Chodron & Russell Kolts

Extracted from *Living with an Open Heart: How to Cultivate Compassion in Everyday Life* (Available at Awareness Place stores)

Mindfulness-based therapy reduces veterans' PTSD symptoms

USA – A study suggests that some veterans may experience fewer symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) with mindfulness-based stress reduction therapy compared to another form of group treatment.

In this randomised research of 116 participants, one group of veterans with PTSD received eight weekly 2.5 hour-long group sessions focusing on mindfulness meditation and a day-long retreat. The second group, on the other hand, received nine weekly group sessions designed to address specific problems stemming from PTSD in daily life.

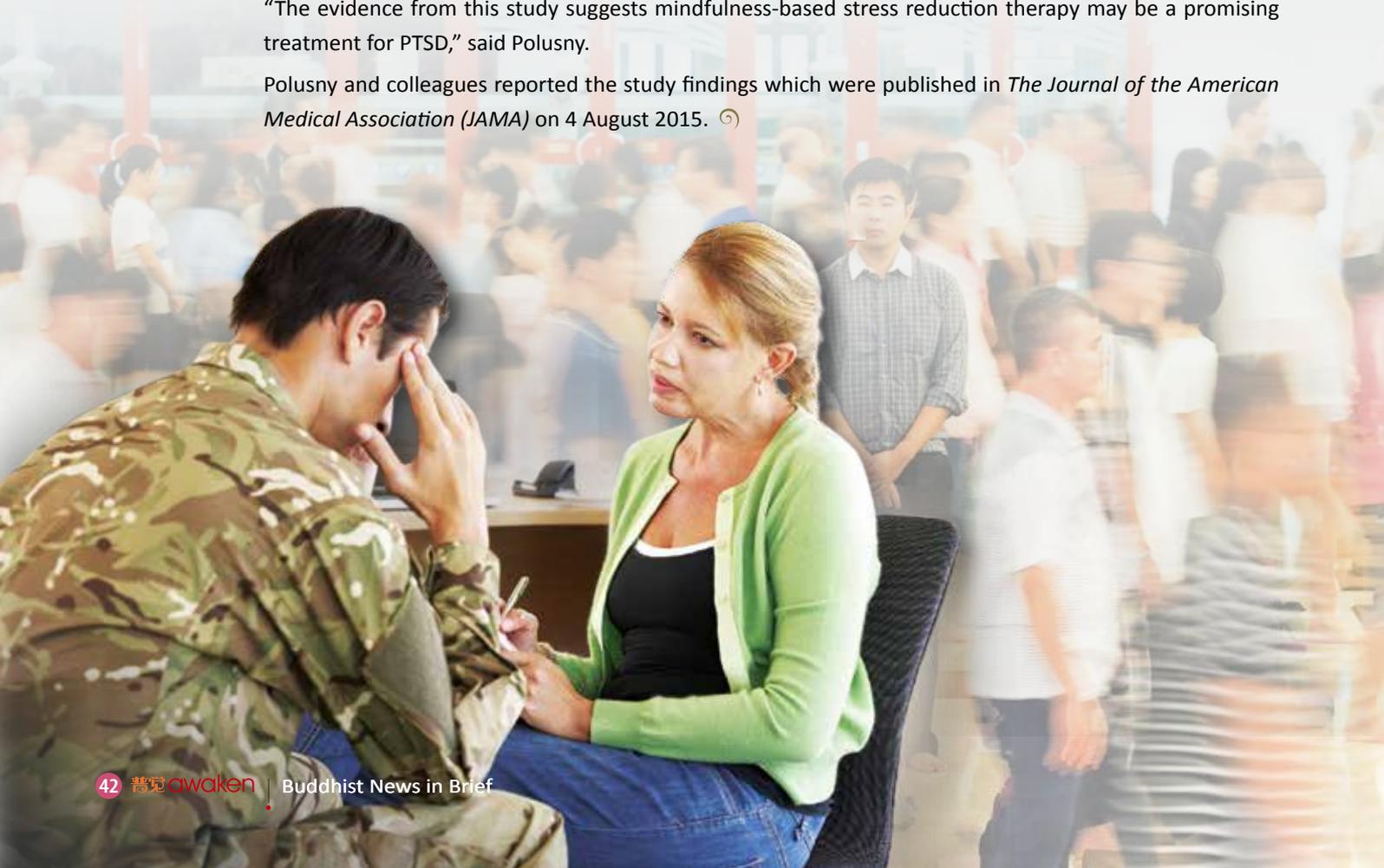
49 percent of veterans reported a noticeable reduction in PTSD symptoms and greater improvement in quality of life after two months with the mindfulness-based therapy as opposed to just 28 percent in the second group.

Veterans in the mindfulness-based group learned meditation techniques they can apply at home to develop awareness of the present moment during mundane daily activities such as eating or driving, said lead researcher, Melissa Polusny of the Minneapolis Veterans Affairs Health Care System. Breathing exercises and yoga were also taught to encourage body awareness and focus on the present.

The second group used the present-centred group therapy which fosters concentration on the impact of trauma and PTSD symptoms on daily life and emphasises problem-solving and coping mechanisms, she continued.

“The evidence from this study suggests mindfulness-based stress reduction therapy may be a promising treatment for PTSD,” said Polusny.

Polusny and colleagues reported the study findings which were published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* on 4 August 2015. ☺



Mindfulness-based programmes well-received at the Monastery

Singapore – In light of the success of mindfulness-based interventions in the scientific world, Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery has offered a few rounds of Mindfulness-based programmes.

Dr Jack Kornfield and Dr Trudy Goodman flew in from the US to conduct a 1-day retreat on the power of mindfulness and compassion in the modern world. The programme attracted hundreds of participants.

A Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction Programme was also organised for the dedicated volunteers of the monastery.

Taught by Ven Renxu on 27 and 28 June from 8.30 am to 5.00 pm, the participants learned techniques such as mindful eating, body scans, mindful breathing, mindful sitting and walking, and mindful yoga etc.

In another five-session programme for the public, Ven Chuan Guan taught mindfulness breathing meditation every Wednesday night to participants. The last session was conducted in August.

Practising mindfulness in daily life allows one to live more fully in the present moment. This in turn helps to enhance one's quality of life, improve interpersonal relationships, reduce stress and negative emotions, and boost one's quality of sleep.

The next mindfulness-based programme will be held at the monastery every Tuesday, 7.30 pm to 9.00 pm from 1 September to 6 October 2015. Please call 6849 5300 to register if you are interested. ☺

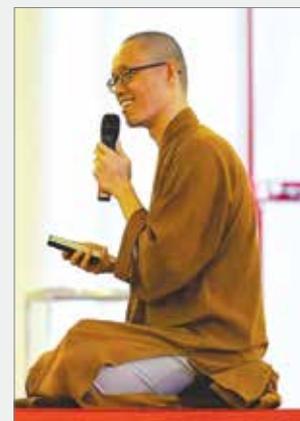




Photo: inwardpathpublisher.blogspot.sg

Buddhist Education Starts at Home

Dato' Dr GK Ananda Kumaraseri has been a career ambassador for more than 30 years. He retired from the Malaysian Foreign Service in 1995 as Director General of ASEAN. A prolific author of Buddhist pedagogy, he espouses the concept of "Living by Buddhism" by emphasising the practice and practical application of the Buddha's Teachings in daily life. In an email interview, he speaks to Esther Thien about his passion in Dharma education.

Awaken: How did you encounter Buddhism?

Dato: I was very fortunate. My parents were very devout Buddhists. As a result, I had the good fortune of having a sound upbringing in the practice of the Dharma since childhood. My father's commitment to practise and spread the Dharma throughout his adulthood also left an indelible imprint in my thinking and attitude to life in general; and on my role and responsibility as a lay Buddhist to propagate the Dharma specifically. I am greatly indebted to my wonderful parents for guiding me according to the Dharma and for being excellent role models as lay Buddhists.

Awaken: How has learning and practising the Dharma influenced your life?

Dato: To a very large extent, the Sublime Teachings of the Buddha have held me in good stead throughout my childhood, adolescence, youth and adult life. **The rational and scientific Teachings of the Buddha that are highly compatible with modern life continue to guide my thinking and attitude. More importantly, the Exalted One inspires me to aspire towards actualising a wholesome and meaningful life.** The very life of the Buddha before He attained Enlightenment as Bodhisattva Siddhartha has been most realistic and inspiring for me. I aspire to succeed in my endeavours of living a healthy and purposeful life, to be happy and at peace with myself and the world around me, including Mother Nature; as the World Renowned One had highlighted - all sentient beings are deeply intertwined with one another to form inextricable and integral bonds.

Awaken: What is most fulfilling to you in life?

Dato: Having been given the right guidance to succeed in life through the Buddha's teachings, it is extremely fulfilling for me to pass on the light by contributing positively to communities through the active engagement of Dharma-related activities. It is immensely satisfying to be able to share the practice and practical application of Buddhism in books I have authored and published, and in public talks in Malaysia and abroad. I hope my efforts by way of teaching and guiding will help to establish many more active lay Buddhists to practise and spread the Dharma.

Awaken: You are obviously very passionate about Dharma education. Why is it your calling in life?

Dato: The Buddha-Dharma is a complete teaching as well as an invaluable training programme for our success, well-being, happiness and peace. I have benefited so much by applying the Dharma. I say this based on my own personal experience. The Dharma has helped me to be more mindful of my thinking, attitudes, speech and actions. **Even from a young age, I have been conscious of the Buddha's fundamental teaching that the mind is the forerunner of all of our thoughts, speech and actions.** As everything is borne from our mind, we are directly responsible for our lives. That is to say, it is entirely our own choice whether we want to live a purposeful, fulfilling and happy life or otherwise. It is through understanding and practising the Dharma that I acquire freedom of thought, intellect, honesty and integrity. The infallible and universal Law of Karma explains clearly and rationally the meaning and reality of human life and Nature all around us. As we reap what we sow, it is critical to have the right understanding, to be pro-active and direct ourselves to be resolute in achieving set goals and aspirations, be self-reliant, putting in the effort to regulate and discipline ourselves in the development of wholesome qualities and virtues. I strongly believe herein lies the answer to the exacerbating social ills and crimes that plague contemporary societies all across the world.

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Awaken: Tell us more about your approach on education?

Dato: To me, the education systems around the world have failed. This clearly manifests in the ever-exacerbating social ills and crimes that we witness all over the world. The underlying goal of education, I feel, is to nurture qualities that would naturally lead to establishing more peaceful and harmonious societies. Although more children have access to education today, and schools and learning centres' facilities, infrastructure and locations are far superior to those of the last generation, societies are plagued by increasing social ills and crimes.

The current teaching methods and techniques generally used in schools and higher educational institutions are largely confined to cognitive learning. The higher domains of learning and training of affective and psychomotor skills as defined in Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning are virtually absent or only minimal.

Due to my parents' commitment to follow the Buddha's Teaching of *Pubba Archariya* (first teacher), they were my first and foremost teachers at home. It was also due to their commitment that I have been privileged to develop fortitude in life. In my recently published book titled *Mothercare and Parenting: Key to Social Structuring*, I emphasised the importance of home education. In this well-illustrated book of more than 500 pages, I endeavoured to highlight the instructions Lord Buddha gave on how to live a happy married life, on holistic motherhood and parenting, and on the joy of honouring and looking after one's parents in their living years.

The Buddha-Dharma serves as a lucid, essential and effective guide for all humankind to live meaningful and fulfilling lives, regardless of differences in social standing, race or gender. Yet, it is somewhat of a paradox that we do not use the Buddha's pedagogy of teaching when we regularly honour and worship Him as a Peerless and Unparalleled Teacher.

Well over 2500 years ago, the Buddha pinpointed three domains of learning and training as *Pariyathi*, *Patipatta* and *Pativeda*. That is, the theoretical or factual base; the experiential domain realised through practice; and the internalisation of the learning – the apex which is insight wisdom. So one should not only know the Buddha-Dharma, but also *be* the Noble Dharma or *live* the Dharma in everyday life. Knowledge per se according to Buddhist Pedagogy constitutes the lowest level of learning. For, *knowing* and *being* what one knows are poles apart.

It is highly regrettable that when teaching the Dharma, scant or no attention is given to these areas of life that are connected directly to one's personal self-development, well-being, happiness and inner peace by most Buddhist communities. Due to this serious shortcoming, I was motivated to set up the Personal Development and Peace Foundation (PDP Foundation). It is my fervent hope that the PDP Foundation will be able to create greater understanding and appreciation of these aspects. It is both imperative and urgent for leaders at all levels in communities to ensure that a holistic approach to education is embraced in the interest of our young and future generations to come. ☺

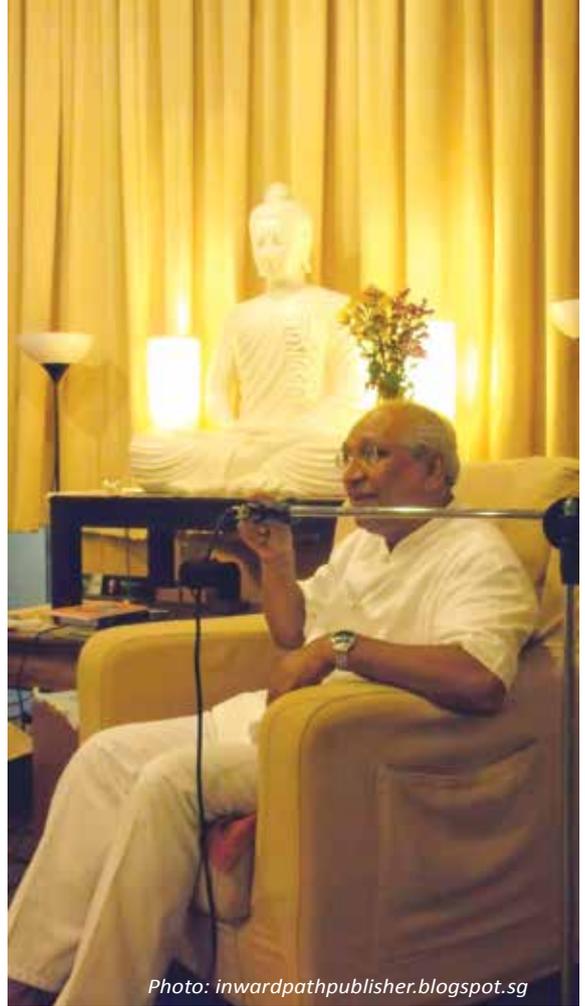


Photo: inwardpathpublisher.blogspot.sg

Editor: Visit www.livingbybuddhism.com to view the free resources provided by Dato' Dr GK Ananda Kumaraseri

text : Janice Goh

How has the scientific spirit of enquiry influenced your learning and understanding of the Dharma?

This is a tough question. To answer this question we have to come to a common understanding of the key words: scientific spirit of enquiry and Dharma.

Scientific spirit of enquiry, to me, means to ask questions and seek answers using the scientific manner, that is, the answers must be observable and measurable. For example, with the help of science, we now understand how rain and lightning come about, and that they occur not through the acts of some gods or spirits.

Dharma means different things to different people. To me, it means the timeless truth of phenomena. Before Prince Siddhartha became a Buddha, he sought answers to three pressing questions. Why do we suffer? What is the cause of suffering? How to end suffering?

Lord Buddha taught the Three Marks of Existence. He also taught Dependent Origination, the Noble Eightfold Path and how to establish mindfulness so that we can observe and see through all phenomena. No one taught him that. He obtained the answers himself and taught us what he discovered and observed. The manner that he went through was scientific in nature. He observed all phenomena without an ego (the observer) and hence he was able to observe them as they were, not as he thought or wanted them to be.

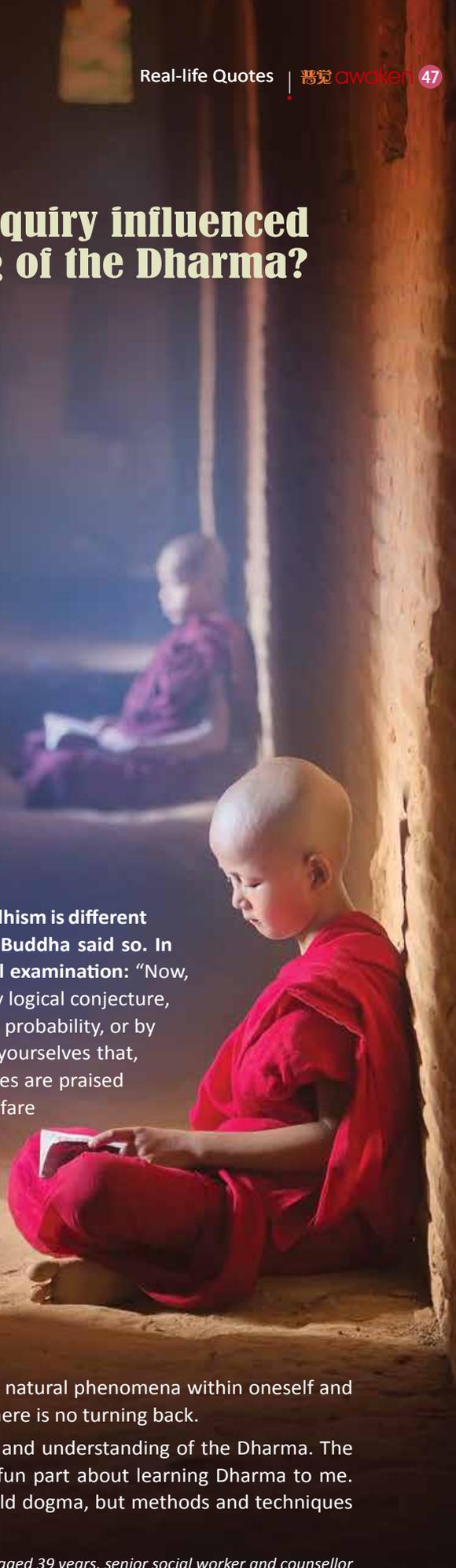
The first step of all religions is faith, including Buddhism. **However, Buddhism is different as it does not require blind faith in the teachings just because the Buddha said so. In the Kalama Sutta, the Buddha emphasised the importance of careful examination:** “Now, Kalamas, don’t go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical conjecture, by inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, ‘This contemplative is our teacher.’ When you know for yourselves that, ‘These qualities are skilful; these qualities are blameless; these qualities are praised by the wise; these qualities, when adopted and carried out, lead to welfare and to happiness’ — then you should enter and remain in them.”

What the Buddha taught is systematic, concise and logical. If one does not want to suffer, then logically one has to find out why one is suffering and from there how to end it by practising what the Buddha taught. The sutras have instructions on how to establish mindfulness. Once one abides by the Five Precepts and is able to establish mindfulness, slowly and gradually one would come to see and realise for oneself the truth behind the Three Marks of Existence. From there, one would be able to realise the truth behind

Dependent Origination. One becomes akin to a scientist, observing all natural phenomena within oneself and outside of oneself as they really are. When one has seen such truth, there is no turning back.

This is how the scientific spirit of enquiry has influenced my learning and understanding of the Dharma. The learning is never ending, as phenomena are ever changing. It is the fun part about learning Dharma to me. What are being taught in the sutras aren’t some few-thousand-year-old dogma, but methods and techniques to train us to see things as they really are.

- by **Chee Kok Tong**, aged 39 years, senior social worker and counsellor





The Potential of Emptiness:
Vacuum
States of Space
and Consciousness

Read this article by Dr B. Alan Wallace where he highlights the known parallels of the twin poles of the reality spectrum—the outer vacuum of physical science and the inner vacuum of contemplative science.

edited by: Lynn Quirolo

Science does some of its best work in a vacuum. Radio, television, computers, and many other life-changing and philosophy-boggling advances are the results of work with the vacuum. As it turns out, Nature may abhor a vacuum, but technology loves it. Like Western physical science, Buddhist contemplative science also makes discoveries using vacuum states. Since the concept of emptiness is integral to Buddhist philosophic, religious, and cultural traditions, discovering wisdom in emptiness requires no paradigm shift. As technology loves a vacuum, so does insight.

Science, both physical and contemplative, uses analogy and metaphor to extend understanding and predictive ability. Analogy and metaphor are particularly important in descriptions of realms outside the reach of the five senses. I will be drawing parallels between two manifestations of the vacuum—that of the outer world, the physical vacuum studied by physicists, and that of the inner world, the mental vacuum studied by Buddhist contemplatives—for the purpose of extending metaphor and thereby extending understanding.



Generally speaking, Western science investigates physical phenomena and Buddhist science investigates consciousness. Since Western science has as yet no method of identifying or measuring consciousness, its study as a natural phenomenon has been marginalised in modern Western science. The reverse is true in Buddhist cultures. Not known for technological innovations, in Buddhist cultures the study of consciousness is an expertise. Some rapprochement is in order, some sharing of skills and knowledge, and to facilitate this process, I will highlight the known parallels of the twin poles of the reality spectrum—the outer vacuum of physical science and the inner vacuum of contemplative science.

Preoccupied with the stunning discoveries of early science, only in the closing decades of the last century did Western scientists begin to grapple with the nature of consciousness. At this time, the West remains without an objective definition and without an objective means for detecting the presence or absence of consciousness. We have sciences of quarks, the Big Bang, galactic clusters 12 billion light years away, but we don't have a science of what makes it all possible, consciousness. Within Western science, consciousness is an anomaly.

There are some striking analogies between Western science, which studies primarily the physical world, and Buddhist contemplative science, which studies consciousness. First, a historical perspective of Western science. In the seventeenth century, Galileo (1564-1642) refined the telescope and rigorously examined celestial phenomena. His discoveries provided compelling evidence in support of the heliocentric cosmology of Copernicus. As a naturalist, Galileo placed his attention outwards. As a devout Catholic, Galileo's goal was to understand the mind of the Creator by understanding His creation. Historically, Galileo shares credit for starting what was later called the Scientific Revolution and his student, Evangelista Torricelli (1608-1647), Italian mathematician and physicist, started a revolution within that revolution. Torricelli was first to remove everything material from a container within the limits of the technology of his time. Torricelli defied Nature and started the revolution of the vacuum.

In the seventeenth century, the onset of the Vacuum Revolution was not newsworthy. You can get a little bit of empty space, so what? Much better to make something. In the last three centuries, however, the vacuum has been used in hundreds of technological applications: thermometers, thermoses, radios, refrigerators, electron microscopes, x-ray tubes, particle accelerators, and, very significantly, instruments for extending our senses to more closely investigate the nature of reality. In fact, modern life as we know it depends on the vacuum.

Now step outside of Western civilisation, to sixth century B.C.E India where Siddhartha Gautama was receiving contemplative training. I will call Gautama a naturalist because, like the founders of the Scientific Revolution, he was intent on exploring the world experientially and rationally, as free from subjective bias as possible. It's unlikely that Gautama thought of himself as a founder of a new religion, for at that time in India there was no term or concept for "religion" as we conceive of it in the modern West.

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Gautama, aged 29, trained in a contemplative practice to create a vacuum state within his own mental space, a vacuum state of consciousness. Gautama's first teacher, Ālāra Kālāma, taught him techniques to enter a state described as "nothingness" in which the mind is voided and disengaged from the physical senses. This is a state of concentration of luminous awareness of nothing, a state more subtle than meditative stabilisation, which is also described in the early literature. Gautama accomplished the state of "nothingness" very rapidly, apparently a prodigy. He wanted to go further and trained with another contemplative, Uddaka Rāmaputta, who brought him to a state even more subtle than nothingness, a state disengaged from the phenomenal and sensual world, drawn into a space purely of the mind, and then disengaging even from mind.

This is subtle. When even this was accomplished, Siddhartha Gautama was not satisfied; he wanted to go further.

What Gautama did next was revolutionary. Having refined the mind, having developed extraordinary states of attentional stability and vividness, Gautama used his mind as an instrument to actively explore the nature of reality. Gautama began to explore consciousness itself and started what we can call, from a historic vantage point, a Noetic Revolution. By using states of meditative concentration to rigorously examine mental and physical phenomena, Gautama began a contemplative science parallel to the physical science of the West. The techniques are similar, the tools are very different.

The parallels between the inner science of Gautama and the outer science of Galileo lead to extremely useful metaphors. Just as Galileo did not invent the telescope but refined it as a tool for observation of the planets, Gautama did not invent meditative concentration (samadhi) but was first to use extremely refined, focused, magnified awareness as a tool for investigating the nature of consciousness. As the West has developed different tools for the investigation of the outer world, Gautama devised different types of mental vacuums to explore and develop consciousness. Gautama's methods, for example, extended mental perception, explored consciousness and related phenomena, and cultivated wholesome mental traits. **Gautama was not interested in knowledge for knowledge sake, but believed that investigating reality should be beneficially transformative. Benefit has remained a central priority in Buddhist practice ever since.**

As people of the seventeenth century did not foresee much use for the physical vacuum, contemporary Westerners may wonder what use there could be for the mental vacuum. Like the physical vacuum, the mental vacuum presents a surprising set of qualities and potentials. What is left when the turbulence — memories, thoughts, desires, emotions, mental images — has been released, is not a state of empty-headedness. Instead, the mental vacuum is a state that is luminous and vivid with an extraordinary power for concentration.

Gautama, as a naturalist, turned away from the dogma of the dominant religion of his time and studied the world rationally and empirically. Gautama's working hypothesis was that physical and mental events take place due to causes and conditions within the natural world.

This is the same hypothesis held by the founders of Western science and was as innovative in sixth century India, when phenomena — hailstorms, earthquakes — were attributed to supernatural agencies, as it was seventeenth century Europe. Naturalism, just like being of benefit, became central to the theory and practice of Buddhism.

Now let's examine the physical vacuum. What is it? In the words of James Clerk Maxwell, "The vacuum is that which is left in a vessel after we have removed everything which we can remove from it." The vacuum is defined as the lowest possible energy state of a volume of space. What can be removed depends, of course, on technology. The vacuum itself is shapeless but it may assume specific forms as it takes on the configurations of mass-energy resulting in what is conventionally called the "real world." The phrase "configurations of mass-energy" refers to everything that is around us. "Excitations of the vacuum" are commonly



described as being like the surface waves on a pond. Why is an oscillation of an abstract field quantity in space not an actual oscillation of space itself? The field we are concerned with is not a substance. It is an abstract quantity, a very useful abstract quantity, but still considered by physics as an abstract quantity. Therefore, configurations of mass-energy are oscillations of an abstract quantity in empty space and no objectively real substance actually oscillates. Mass itself is sometimes referred to metaphorically as frozen energy. Additionally, general relativity theory tells us that fluctuating masses of the vacuum, despite their abstract nature, cause curvatures of space.

The physical vacuum is very weird. As described, an oscillation of an abstraction is substantial enough to curve space. But space is not so substantial either. We hear from quantum mechanics that within space, virtual particles and antiparticles spontaneously emerge from a vacuum and become “real” little particles only if you add x energy. When energy is added to virtual particles, the resulting longevity entitles them to be called “real.” If no energy is added, virtual particles dissolve right back into the vacuum. It is like instant soup without the soup, but instead of adding water, add energy.

The physical vacuum has two divisions, both having a parallel in contemplative descriptions of vacuum states of consciousness. The two divisions of the physical vacuum are (1) the false vacuum and (2) the true vacuum.

A false vacuum is the lowest possible energy state under the circumstances, but it is not completely devoid of energy. The false vacuum has energy and structure and is not perfectly symmetrical. Physicists work with false vacuums on a day-to-day basis. A false vacuum is like water that falls to a lower state, cooling and freezing as it releases energy. The false vacuum is often referred to as “frozen.”

The true vacuum is called “melted.” Scientists are not sure what remains once everything that nature allows us to take from a well-defined space has been removed. Again, the false vacuum is determined by the limitations of technology. But the true vacuum depends on all the laws of nature, whether they have been discovered yet or not. The true vacuum would be perfectly symmetrical. Unlike the false or frozen vacuum, in the true or melted vacuum, particles, fields, and electricity are undifferentiated. In the false or frozen vacuum, these entities are distinct from each other. To understand the true vacuum, it is necessary to thoroughly understand the false vacuum.

Scientists speculate that quantum mechanical fluctuations within a vacuum initiated not only the stuff of our world but also space-time itself. Perhaps the absolute nothingness discussed in philosophy and religion should be considered as a state wholly innocent of laws, space, and time—a state in which nothing exists but possibilities.

Now consider consciousness, inner space, the space in which dreams, mental images, thoughts, emotions, desires, hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, all arise. The fundamental discovery of Buddhist contemplatives is that the nature of consciousness is empty and luminous. Buddhist terminology is very precise in describing the characteristics of consciousness. Consciousness is empty for it is, like space, intangible and unsubstantial. Consciousness is luminous in being clear cognizance, or knowing. Additionally, consciousness can manifest in all kinds of forms. As we have just heard from physics, space also manifests, also takes on form. The difference between space and consciousness is that consciousness not only takes on form but also has a quality of being aware which, as far as we know, space does not have.

If you could observe bare consciousness, without mental states, it would appear empty and luminous. What obscure the luminosity of consciousness are thoughts, mental constructs, dullness, excitation, and an endless array of mental contents. In many aspects of science, special conditions are necessary to investigate natural phenomenon. In contemplative science, the mandatory prerequisite for the investigation of consciousness is getting to its ground state, a vacuum.

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Entering the ground state of consciousness can be done. We have already drawn a parallel between physical vacuums and vacuum states of consciousness. Now we take the analogy deeper. As physicists distinguish between false and true vacuums in the physical world, contemplatives distinguish false and true vacuum states of consciousness. The false vacuum state of consciousness is known in Buddhist literature as the *bhavaṅga*, from Pali and Sanskrit, which is a kind of substrate consciousness. The *bhavaṅga* is a relative ground state of consciousness, more vacuum than deep sleep and free of mental dullness, in which all mental activation is dormant. The *bhavaṅga* is an empty, luminous state of awareness and, like its analog, the false vacuum of physics, it is a potentially creative state.

Contemplatives follow a variety of procedures to create a mental vacuum. One common strategy is to powerfully contract consciousness by focusing on a small mental image, the smaller the object on which consciousness is focused, the more potent the consciousness becomes. When the mind is so concentrated that all physical senses have gone dormant and awareness is luminous and pure, the image is released. What is left? An absence, a vacuum state of consciousness characterised by bliss and luminosity, without thoughts, mental constructs, or images. In this state, bliss, luminosity, and non-conceptuality are experienced distinctly, just as the various attributes of the false vacuum of physics — particles, fields, and so forth — are distinct from one another.

Since differentiating, accessing, and utilising different states of consciousness is somewhat unfamiliar terrain in the West, I'll go into a bit of detail here explaining the *bhavaṅga*, or false vacuum state of consciousness. The *bhavaṅga* is the individual ground of becoming from which all mental activities arise, both positive and negative. Positive states include generosity, friendliness, and compassion. Negative states include malice, cruelty, and spite. Negative activations of the mind warp the mind, destroying its equilibrium. Positive activations restore the mind to a state of relative balance. However, distortions of the space of consciousness occur only when energy is invested into mental activities, positive or negative. Investing energy in mental events is called grasping or identification. When we give energy to an idea, thought, or emotion that emerges spontaneously from the *bhavaṅga*, it changes status from virtual to "real," analogous to the potentials of the false physical vacuum. With the energy of identification, the now "real" mental event starts influencing other mental activities as well as physical behaviour. The *bhavaṅga* spontaneously, effortlessly, and often unpredictably gives rise to a wide range of mental activations. If one does not grasp onto them or identify with them, they tend to persist for relatively brief periods and do not perturb the equilibrium of the mind.

Grasping onto and identifying with the natural phenomena of the *bhavaṅga*, the false vacuum of the mind, infuses them with energy. In a mixed terminology of Buddhism and physics, you could say that mental activations arise virtually from the ground state and then, if no energy is infused into them, disappear back into the ground.

When a mental activation is infused with energy through grasping or identification, the activation changes status from virtual to "real." Having an investment of energy, the mental event obscures the substrate consciousness by interacting with other mental, verbal, and physical activity, and leaves its imprints upon the substrate consciousness. These activities and their residue in the substrate are called karma and karmic imprints, respectively, and can accrue indefinitely with positive and negative imprints cancelling each other out. This is the contemplative understanding of the nature of consciousness that is the foundation of the Buddhist concept of karma.

According to Buddhism, the *bhavaṅga* is not a true or absolute vacuum because precognitive conceptual structuring of awareness still persists. Even though concepts such as subject and object are not manifest, awareness is still structured by conceptual and biological influences. Like its analogue in physics, the false vacuum of consciousness, the *bhavaṅga* appears to be empty but has structure and energy.

Vacuum states of consciousness, whose potentials go largely unrecognised in the West, may be responsible for as yet unexplained phenomena, such as the so-called placebo effect and other mental effects on the body that originate from a source deeper than conscious volition. Buddhist contemplatives view the substrate consciousness as the source of creativity, genius, and other potentials that can be accessed when it is drawn into consciousness. However, to tap the potentials of the substrate consciousness, it is necessary to create a mental vacuum. Studies have shown that all geniuses have something in common — exceptional degrees of sustained voluntary attention, the same ability cultivated by yogis as a spring board to developing vacuum states and exploring consciousness.



Like the false vacuum states, the true vacuum states of physics and consciousness have similarities. In Buddhist literature, the true vacuum is called primordial awareness and, like the false vacuum state, it can be realised experientially. Most Western cognitive scientists believe that the mind cannot be emptied of content; conceptual constructs and impulses are built-in, so the mind always has content. In the West, there is a good deal of cultural anxiety concerning emptiness. “I think, therefore I am,” is Descartes’ famous line. But Descartes also worried what happened when he was not thinking ... and then quickly moved on.

Buddhist contemplatives state that an absolute vacuum of consciousness exists and can be ascertained by direct experience. How? In a way that is unlike any other form of knowledge. The absolute vacuum of consciousness is knowing in a way that is non-conceptual, by means of identity, without any sense of subject/object duality, and simultaneously not-knowing in all the ordinary ways. The realisation of the true vacuum of consciousness is by way of achieving the false vacuum of consciousness.

With finely honed awareness, a mind stable, vivid, and highly focused, one can experientially probe all mental phenomena. The primary tool for this investigation is the false vacuum of consciousness, a state that is a clean lab without noise or pollution, in which mental events arise. Within these conditions, instead of settling for bliss, one can probe deeper into the nature of mental activity. From where do mental events arise and into what do they dissolve? What is the nature of the mind that can be probed and identified in this way? This is an ontological probe into the space of the mind itself.

Buddhists contemplatives have used vacuum states to investigate the nature of the mind for 2500 years. The collective result is the discovery that there is no thing that is the mind. In the state of not finding, awareness comes to rest in a state of luminous, empty, non-duality, without any sense of subject or object. This is the absolute vacuum of consciousness and is utterly free of all conceptual constructs, including space and time, mind and matter, even notions of existence and nonexistence. In this state, bliss, luminosity, and non-conceptuality are undifferentiated. Like the true vacuum of external space, the true vacuum of consciousness is one of perfect symmetry, for it is non-local, timeless, homogenous, and devoid of internal differentiation. This absolute ground of consciousness is called the Great Perfection.

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The Buddhist contemplative science, in parallel to Western physical science, describes two types of vacuums: (1) The false vacuum, or bhavaṅga, the relative ground of becoming, out of which each individual mind-stream emanates; and (2) the true vacuum, or Primordial Awareness, the absolute state of phenomena out of which space and time, mind and matter, everything in the universe, emerge.

Now to wrap this up a bit. Western cognitive scientists generally regard dreaming, imagination, and waking experience as basically the same phenomenon except that waking experience is constrained by sensory stimuli from the external world. **Dreaming, imagination, and waking perception are all considered to be creations of the mind.** Physicists describe the physical world as configurations of mass-energy consisting of oscillations of abstract quantities in empty space that may or may not exist independent of a system of measurement. When cognitive science is combined with physics the result is something like: Everyday waking experience is an illusion constrained by the oscillations of abstract quantities in empty space—a statement that raises questions about the nature of reality and our relationship to it. If we also consider that sensory experience of space and all concepts of space and time occur in the space of consciousness, the questions deepen.

Like physicists, Buddhists have investigated the nature of physical phenomena. Using contemplative techniques, Buddhists have found physical phenomena to lack any inherently objective nature independent of the conceptual framework within which they are identified. Contemplatives use the same techniques to investigate the nature of mental phenomena. What they discover is that consciousness itself lacks inherent identity independent of the conceptual framework in which it is identified. Contemplatives have discovered that the mind is just as empty of inherent existence as the external physical world.

Finally, contemplatives have taken the investigation of phenomena a step further and report that the division between external physical phenomena and internal mental phenomena is empty of inherent existence. The distinction between external and internal is an illusion; internal and external space are ultimately non-dual. This is the absolute space of phenomena. In Buddhist literature, this is the Great Perfection out of which the entire universe originates.

The Buddha summed up his investigations of reality with this statement: “All phenomena are preceded by the mind. When the mind is comprehended, all phenomena are comprehended.” By “mind,” the Buddha was referring to the deepest state of consciousness, primordial awareness, true vacuum.

In the West, many physicists believe the evolution of the universe began with a perfectly symmetrical vacuum that cooled into the current frozen vacuum state, which is what they study. The cooling of the original true vacuum is believed to have liberated enormous amounts of energy that gave rise to quarks, electrons, and eventually all of life.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama recently described the Great Perfection:

Any given state of consciousness is permeated by the clear light of primordial awareness. However solid ice may be, it never loses its true nature, which is water. In the same way, even very obvious concepts are such that their ‘place’, as it were, their final resting place, does not fall outside the expanse of primordial awareness. They arise within the expanse of primordial awareness and that is where they dissolve.

The Dalai Lama is saying that the absolute ground state awareness is primordial awareness, the fundamental ground from which everything, space-time, mass energy, mind-matter, all arise and into which they eventually dissolve.

Over the past four centuries, Western science has made enormous progress in understanding the nature of external physical phenomena and the space in which, and from which, they arise. But scientific progress into the nature of the mind and consciousness has been far more limited. Buddhist contemplative science, on the other hand, has made innumerable discoveries concerning the origins, nature, and potentials of consciousness, but it lacks the physics, chemistry, and biology that have been developed in the West. When these two great traditions of experiential and rational inquiry are integrated, we will see a Noetic Revolution that will be of enormous benefit for humanity. ☺

Editor : Extracted from *Exploring Buddhism and Science* published by the monastery.
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Visit the Reception office from October onwards for a complimentary copy of the book. While stocks last.

The Significance of Patipatta

In a public talk at Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery, Ajahn Sumedho spoke on the significance of the first discourse given by Lord Buddha.

I encountered Ajahn Chah in 1967. He was living in a remote part of Thailand and I happened to meet him. He was always emphasising *Patipatta* or “putting into practice the words of the Buddha”. He couldn’t speak English and I couldn’t speak Thai. There was a language problem but from the several monks who interpreted, I heard this word a lot.

Ajahn Chah was very clear about practice, he didn’t seem to have any doubts on this. He was a very clear and happy kind of person, even though life in those days - in 1960s northeast Thailand - was still very backward. Roads were not developed; most of the villages had no electricity and were rice-farming communities.

The first discourse

Patipatta is in the teaching when the Buddha gave his first discourse of the Four Noble Truths. After His Enlightenment, the Buddha had thought, “What I have learnt is not dependent on words, I can’t really teach it as it is not a metaphysical idea or philosophy.” Nonetheless, according to the Pali tradition, the lords of the lower heavens requested the Buddha to go forth and teach for the welfare of those with little dust in their eyes. That was the catalyst that set forth Lord Buddha to go out and give His first discourse.

That first discourse is interesting because the Buddha delivered the Four Noble Truths to his first Five Disciples, who were friends and ascetics whom he had practised with for many years but still had not awakened to reality or Dharma. The Buddha realised that to be liberated from all delusions is awakening to reality.

Mindfulness is the ability to open to the present moment. *Sati* means to remember this moment, to be fully awake here and now while *sampajañña* means to receive all that exists in the present moment without choosing or focusing on any particular object but cultivate a broad spectrum of awareness that is receptive. The foundation for these is based on *paramita* or virtue and good intention, and meritorious actions such as *dana* (which means generosity – helping others and sharing what we have with others, not being selfish and stingy) and *sila* (being responsible for how we live in society, to refrain from intentionally doing or saying things which cause unnecessary harm, deceit or suffering to others and ourselves).





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The basic structure for practice in Buddhism is *dana, sila, bhavana* (meditation).

Meditation is divided into two kinds. The first is concentration or *shamatha* practice, where you concentrate on something such as inhaling and exhaling of the breath, a candle flame or some other object that you devote your attention to the exclusion of everything else. In short, it is limiting your awareness to the object you are concentrating on. Doing so develops levels of concentration which bring peace, joy and a sense of well-being. The other is *vipassana* practice, where you look into or investigate the nature of things for insight; in other words, it is *patipatta* practice. This structure runs through the Four Noble Truths and everything that the Buddha told his disciples when he first taught them in Sarnath 2557 years ago.

The Buddha didn't teach by talking about himself, his Enlightenment or what he had seen. When you read the Four Noble Truths, they have the structure: "*There is...*". There is suffering or *dukkha*. This is an interesting way to teach the Five Disciples who had developed high levels of concentration and had experienced bliss, happiness, universal love and other blessed states that came from concentration.

Patipatta

So why did the Buddha use the term, "Noble Truth of Suffering"? What is so noble about suffering? Nobody wants suffering. Everyone wants happiness, love, fulfilment and all kinds of good things. I do not know anyone who really wants to suffer, and yet the Buddha in his first discourse gave this teaching and emphasised that it should be understood. **This is the patipatta or the practice to understand, to know, to fully recognise suffering; and not just to react to it, by running away from it or blaming it on somebody else like we tend to do.** "*I suffer because of my wife or husband or children; I suffer because of the political system etc.*" We blame everyone else for our unhappiness. We say, "*if the government was perfect..., if the healthcare system was perfect..., if my wife or husband was perfect...if my parents had never abused me in any way, then I would not have any suffering.*" But even if all that came true, you would still have suffered. Because if there is no understanding, no cultivation of wisdom, no examination into the nature of things, even under the best, most auspicious and pleasant conditions that we can expect as a human beings, there would still be *dukkha* or suffering.

This can sound pessimistic to many people. But it is not. It is about changing our direction, from running around trying to find happiness or running away from suffering, to looking at and recognising that there is suffering.

You recognise the mental states and look at suffering not as though it is out there, for example blaming the weather or someone else, but to look at your consciousness in the present moment and realise the doubts, fears, resentment from the past, the anxiety about the future, worry, dread, disappointment, despair, grief and loss. All these are part of the human experience. Likewise, everyone has to deal with old age, sickness and death. We all have to cope with the loss of loved ones, seeing our parents grow old, feeble and die. This too is part of the human experience. Yet we suffer from this because we do not want our parents to get old, sick and die, or we don't want that to happen to ourselves.

It is the foolishness of the present age to run after eternal youth through plastic surgery, laser treatment, vitamins etc and hope that you can extend your lifetime for a longer period and still look fairly attractive. **The reality is that all human beings have to cope with the inexorable condition of change: what is born, grows up, ages and dies. It is just the nature of things. It is a natural phenomenon. There is nothing wrong, good or bad. All conditions and phenomena are impermanent.** Investigate with your direct experience: try sustaining your attention on your sense of sight, smell, hearing, taste, touch, or your thought process or feeling. You can't sustain any of them for very long and keep it the way you want it to be because it keeps changing. It is impermanent.

The belief that I'm this body

The big obstruction that we face is the belief that "I am this body". We all are brought up to believe that this body is me, mine, what I am. We conceive ourselves as this physical form that is male, female, Asian or European etc. We identify with and form strong attachment to our physical forms. We become the body itself, and we become limited by that delusion that "I am this human form, this human body". The sense of the ego develops, because as we grow up, we identify with our physical appearances. We remember things that happened. Animals, unlike humans, do not have retentive memories. We can remember things, especially the unhappy ones, from the time when we were children, teenagers, or in our married life etc until we die at a hundred years old. So many people suffer from the resentment that they were not treated fairly when they were children, and carried that into middle age, even old age and die with that perception. This is the problem about identity with the body. We use language to reinforce retentive memory, "I am this body, this is my body" is a memory we reiterate until we awaken to the Dharma, and question the reality of the body as being really 'me' or 'mine'. This human body is like any other form in nature. It is an impermanent condition. The body is born, grows up and dies just like any other conditions, external or internal. For example, from the act of seeing (sight) to what you see (objects) to the eye (organ) itself. The eye is a condition, depending on other conditions for its successful functioning.

Developing wisdom

With modern education, we grasp at knowledge - knowledge that is learnt or acquired from outside sources such as books, teachers, traditions etc - but with *sati-sampajañña*, there is wisdom developing. We develop wisdom in the sense of truly knowing the way things are, understanding that all conditions are impermanent including our body and its senses like sight, smell, hearing, taste, touch, thinking process and memory. These are changing conditions, but what is constant throughout relentless change is consciousness. Consciousness doesn't have a self in it. It's not personal. It's not 'me', or 'mine', 'yours' or 'theirs'. It is 'here' and 'now'. It is natural and we are all experiencing consciousness. We can't actually find it, hold it out and say, "this is it" or put it under a microscope. But you know, for everyone experiences it, that your thoughts, opinions, memories and views arise and cease in consciousness. So what *sati-sampajañña* does is it allows us to change from being the personality constantly filled with anxiety and fear due to our identification with a delicate and vulnerable physical body to having the awareness and mindfulness to see and investigate our habitual and blind attachment to identity - physically, mentally and emotionally - and understanding that ignorance is the cause of suffering.



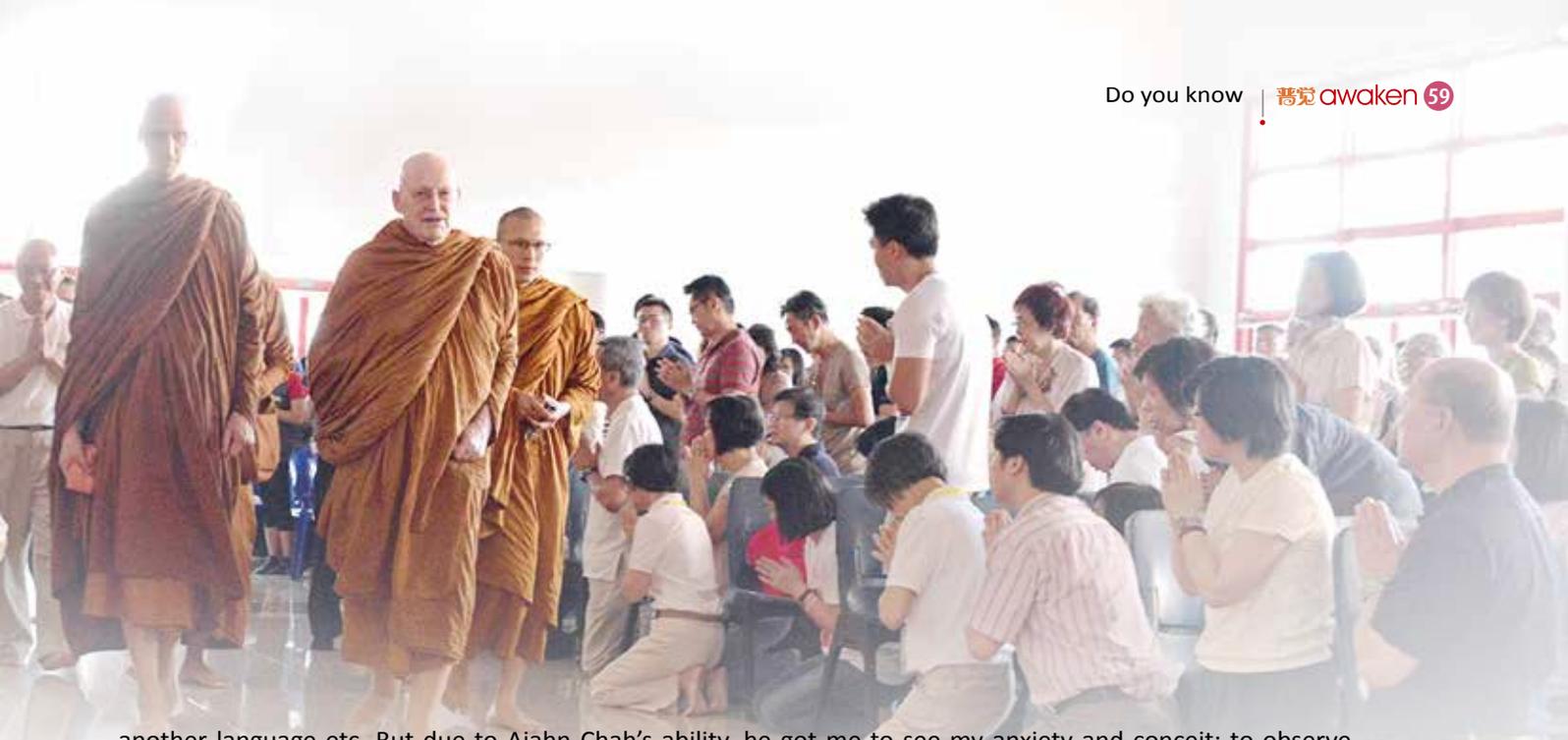
In the Buddhist teaching it is ignorance, and not the conditions themselves (the conditions are the way they are; they change and are unsatisfactory), which leads to more desires and fear that bring about suffering. Suffering ceases only when we awaken to Dharma. This is clearly pointed out in the first discourse, and is complete in itself. This is a brilliant discourse that still applies to all of us in the present age.

In my 49 years as a *bhikkhu*, I have met many fine teachers like Luang Por Chah who have shown that the Buddhist teaching is practical and still applicable. The Western world which was previously not interested in the Buddhist teaching is now keen on vipassana and mindfulness practices etc. Why is this so? It is because the Four Noble Truths are not about the Indian culture, Asian society, anthropology, archaeology or the ancient time. **What the Buddha taught is still accurate. There is suffering. That has not changed. The suffering of the present time is not that much different from the suffering of the age that the Buddha actually lived.** He gave practical advice. Suffering should be understood. To understand something you have to accept it. If you are always hating someone or something and running away from it, you will never understand it. **To understand suffering, you have to look at it, admit it, notice it and investigate it. Observe that suffering is impermanent and that it is not the ultimate reality. It arises and ceases; has a beginning, has a cause and a cessation and there is a way and path that we can cultivate in our life as human beings in which we don't create suffering. And that is *bhavana vipassana* (insight meditation).**

Everything I have said in this talk is not to be believed blindly. It is offered as a reflection. The Buddha is not telling you what to do or condemning you as a good or bad person. He gave His teaching as an invitation, a compassionate offering to humanity to reflect on the Noble Truth of Suffering and its causes – ignorance and blind habitual attachment to various desires and habits we have; operating from prejudices, positions, attitudes, opinions, fears, anger, resentment, jealousy and all other human emotions. The Buddha is not saying that we shouldn't feel them, or shouldn't hate or be angry, jealous or afraid. He pointed out all these human primal emotions, fear and desire, in order for us to understand them, and to realise that these are conditions arising and

ceasing. With this realisation, they change from being 'my problems' to being what they actually are in the present. They are *saṅkhāras* (conditioned phenomena, volitional formations). They are not personal anymore. For example, seeing fear for what it is. When you are mindful, you actually allow fear, understand and see it. You are not indulging in it or trying to get rid of it. By allowing it to be what it is, it naturally ceases because fear is a *saṅkhāra*. **As you become more confident in your practice, you can prove this to yourself that even what is most frightening and loathsome to you - some obsessive worry or anxiety, self-hatred or self-criticism etc - it is just *saṅkhāras*.** You see it with wisdom, understanding emotions to be *saṅkhāras* instead of interpreting them as 'what I should or should not feel' or 'my problems'. Your relationship to *saṅkhāras* is to note their presence and absence. That is what we called *sati-sampajañña* or mindfulness. All this is verifiable.

I had the opportunity to practise it myself and found out it works. Now in my old age, I feel immensely grateful to the Buddha for the Four Noble Truths teaching he gave at Sarnath. It is a real blessing in my life as I apply it to everything that happens to me, such as when I was staying with Luang Por Chah in northeast Thailand, the frustrations and confusion as a foreigner in Thailand where nobody spoke English and I had to learn



another language etc. But due to Ajahn Chah's ability, he got me to see my anxiety and conceit; to observe my consciousness at what was happening, to receive it, not judge or identify with it but to see and learn from it, and to realise that if we cling onto emotions like fear, resentment and conceit, we create endless suffering for ourselves. You can live in a Buddhist monastery and suffer enormously. This is because you have ideas and expectations of what should or shouldn't be the way; also the conceit, opinions and views that come up. Ajahn Chah got me to understand them for what they are, as conditions arising and ceasing.

With mindfulness, we are also aware of *sila*, the willingness to commit ourselves to refrain from actions and speech that will cause unhappiness, disillusionment, deceit etc So it is a maturing process from generosity to taking on responsibility.

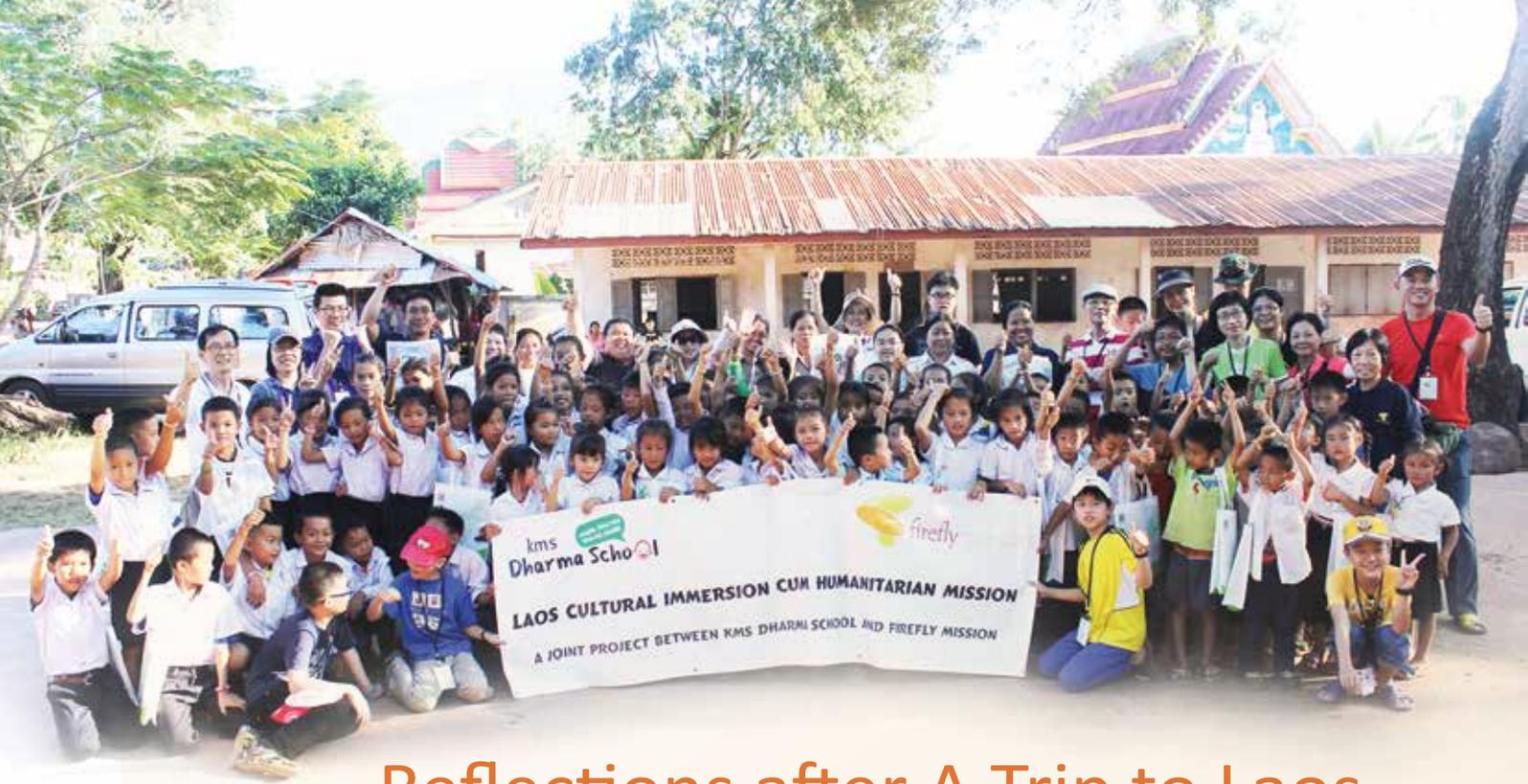
An example is the vendetta problems in Europe, where people try to get even or take revenge against a family, group or relative who had injured them in the past. This is being taken for granted as normal human reaction but such course of actions doesn't lead to self-respect, peace or happiness. Instead, it breeds more resentment, anger, fear and anxiety. When we take responsibility for our actions and speech, it doesn't mean we are not going to have negative feelings but we cultivate the awareness that the feelings we have of anger or hatred in the present is a changing



condition; it is an awareness of change, not judging or criticising the condition, but recognising it. Recognising the fact that all conditions are impermanent gives us a way to get beyond guilt, fear, self-aversion and self-disparagement through understanding what such negativity actually is in a very direct and honest way.

May you all be blessed. May this teaching inspire you to investigate this practice of *patipatta* in a more profound manner. ☺





Reflections after A Trip to Laos...

The day finally arrived for my family to join the KMS Dharma School-Firefly Mission trip to Vientiane, Laos. We boarded the plane at Changi Airport with great excitement and anticipation, taking with us many hopes and joys for the children in Laos.

Prior to this trip, we were advised to lower expectations of the living conditions in the villages where we would reside for four nights. However, no preparation was ever enough for a personal taste of a different kind of living conditions, especially for city dwellers like us. Living in a rural village with bare necessities was indeed a new experience for us, especially for the children.



As it turned out, the experience of not having hot shower, TV or Wi-Fi and sleeping on a thin mattress with mosquito net over our heads was not so bad after all. I guessed we all do sometimes take the convenience of living in Singapore for granted and it's about time we reflect on it and be grateful.

The mission of our trip was about respect, humility, compassion, gratitude and sincerity. It was especially touching for me to see so many sincere and selfless deeds being showered on the people in Laos. We raised funds to build fences, donated stationery and interacted with students from the schools. Looking at the contented, happy and innocent disposition of the students and teachers in Laos left a deep impression on me. On one of our many visits to a school in Laos, we saw how rundown the study environment was and really sympathised with the students. Seeing such a dilapidated condition, our group decided to raise funds to reconstruct the school and we were very grateful to the people of Laos for giving us the opportunity to practise humility and compassion.

I hope this trip provided a great learning education to our children - my two sons included - and set them on the right path to become caring and compassionate individuals. I have benefited greatly from this trip and I do hope more people will have the opportunity to join such a fruitful and fulfilling expedition in the future. Thank you KMS Dharma School, thank you Firefly Mission! ☺

text : Leslie Loh



Thoughts from 9-year-old Javier, Leslie Loh's son:

The day finally arrived! After a three-hour flight, we landed in Laos. My mother's first impression of the place was that it looked like Singapore in the 1960s or 70s. At the first village, we built walls for a school, donated stationery and planted a Moringa tree. At the second village, we made charcoal, harvested rice and performed for the villagers. On the last day, we prepared a big banquet dinner for 300 villagers. When I helped to serve food to the villagers, I could tell from their expression that they were very hungry yet happy and thankful. Vegetarian food had never tasted so good! It was such a wonderful night! The trip to Laos was an eye-opener. It taught me to be grateful for what I have and I felt so fortunate to be living in Singapore. I also learnt to never waste food. I hope I can go on another meaningful mission trip in the future! ☺



I am Bryan and I am in Primary 5 this year. I went for a humanitarian trip in Laos last November that was organised by KMS Dharma School and Firefly Mission. It was an experiential trip for me. This was my first overseas trip without my parents, so I felt it was a good time for me to be more responsible and learn how to take care of myself.

When I reached Laos, I had to pass my luggage to the local driver. He climbed all the way to the top of the van to place it there. It took about four hours for us to reach the hotel. While in the van I got to know my roommate Roy better.

The next day, we had breakfast before leaving for the village. The journey was harsh and it took us another four hours to reach our destination. When I came out of the van the first thing that caught my eyes were the chickens. It was the first time I saw wild chicken running around up close!

After breakfast on the third day, Teacher Hun Tong and I visited a temple before going to a school together with my group to help out. At the school compound, I had to make cement. It was tough. I had to carry a heavy shovel to mix cement powder with water to build a wall. I understand that in Singapore, construction workers don't make cement the way the Laotians do. In Singapore we use machines but in Laos they use their arms and muscles! I felt lucky as not many people had the chance to experience making cement.

The next day we travelled to another village. We snacked on ice cream, tea and pizza in the van. When we reached the second village, we interacted with the school children there. They enjoyed the performance that we had prepared for them. They even prepared a performance for us. Although it wasn't in English, I enjoyed it tremendously. After that, we distributed candies, books and recycled bags to the students. The children there were really active, I had a great time playing with them.

The next day, we used sticks to break charcoal and saw how charcoal was made from underground charcoal making stoves in a forest. The teachers used the charcoal to cook delicious, hearty Lao food and Singapore dishes for a dinner feast for the villagers. On the last night, we helped out by serving the villagers food that the teachers

had warmly prepared. After the dinner, the villagers set up camp fire and we enjoyed spending time with the villagers. Teacher Hun Tong and I stayed over in a hut for one night. In the hut at night, it was totally dark. I couldn't even see my hand. As we couldn't sleep, Teacher Hun Tong and I went outside for a walk. I really enjoyed Teacher Hun Tong's company and sharing. I have learned a lot from him. He treated me well, and he was a good teacher and mentor.

I enjoyed the trip as it taught me to be more responsible and how to appreciate the life that I already have because the villagers in Laos don't even have the chance to play iPad, iPhone or even just sleep on a comfortable bed. This trip made me more mature in the sense that I learnt how to respect people more and I also learnt generosity by giving and helping others. I strongly encourage everyone to go for such a humanitarian trip. ☺



text : Bryan Yam



< **M**y work does not require me to travel, hence going overseas had always been leisure trips for me. However, the Laos Humanitarian and Cultural Immersion trip, co-organised by KMS Dharma School and Firefly Mission (FFM) last November, changed this. It was a non-leisure trip as we all went with tasks in mind.

I registered my son, Jordan who is attending the KMS Dharma School, and myself for this trip, thinking that it would be a good learning opportunity for him to appreciate being a Singapore kid. I thought that Laos, being one of the poorest countries in the world, would give him a good exposure to a simpler lifestyle with fewer creature comforts. I had hoped that from there, he would learn to count his blessings in life. Never did I expect that we would gain so much more at the end of the trip.

Initially, he was resistant and argued that nobody would spend so much money to go to a poor country. However, after he participated in the pre-trip activities, especially the fund-raising flea market, he soon understood the objectives of the trip and became positive about it.

We would also like to thank the two organisers for their great planning and preparation, which they undertook many months before the trip to put everything in place.

For eight days seven nights, 48 of us bonded well in Laos. Everybody was so friendly and open towards one another that we could easily strike a conversation. I was joyful over the new friendships that we established through the process of carrying out our duties and during the sharing sessions.

I observed Jordan carrying out his tasks diligently at the various schools we visited, and knew that the experience he gained from this trip would leave an imprint on him which would constantly remind him about giving and gratitude.

We got a chance to immerse into the Lao culture through the village homestay. **During the homestay, I was reminded that happiness could come from the simplest things in life: a song, a plate of food, a dance or just a sincere eye contact.** When I looked into the eyes of the Laotian children, I saw that their happiness index was high even though their standard of living was low in these villages. Jordan surprised me by being able to adapt quickly to the village homestay, including spending a night in a village hut with a family of seven. He took cold showers and slept on the floor with an old mattress without a word of complaint.

I am grateful to KMS Dharma School and Firefly Mission for giving Jordan and me this opportunity to be part of the team. We got to see how individuals put the Dharma into action and were touched by their selflessness and generosity. It was a fruitful trip and definitely a good learning experience for us. ☺

text : Poa Li Li

Thirty years ago, Dr Jon Kabat-Zinn used the practice of mindfulness to develop a secular “mindfulness-based” stress-reduction programme for adults. Known as MBSR, Dr Kabat-Zinn taught adults to hold off, for just a short while, from reacting to or even analysing a stressful situation and rest in the experience of what is happening in order to see it clearly. It worked. This learned skill allowed those who practised mindfulness-based stress reduction to better control their own reactive emotions, and therefore respond, when they were ready, in a more thoughtful, calm, reasonable way.

The point of mindful awareness is to bring awareness to what happens in your mind and body (your thoughts, emotions and physical sensations etc) not to control your mind but to transform it. Thus, practising mindfulness with children gives them more tools to become reflective, caring adults.

These four insights provide a road map for teaching mindfulness to children:

The first insight – Life has its ups and downs

It is easy to underestimate just how stressful modern childhood can be. No matter how good a parent you are, your children will be confronted with problems that they cannot ignore.

The second insight – Delusion makes life harder than it needs to be

The key to managing stress and other difficult situations does not always lie in the situation itself but rather in how kids and their parents respond to it. It is a basic and profound truth that suffering can be caused by how we view a situation, and made worse by how we respond to it.

The third insight – Happiness is in reach

Even when we can't change a difficult situation, we can choose how to respond to it. We can choose to be happy in the midst of suffering. At times a shift in perspective is all it takes to alleviate suffering.

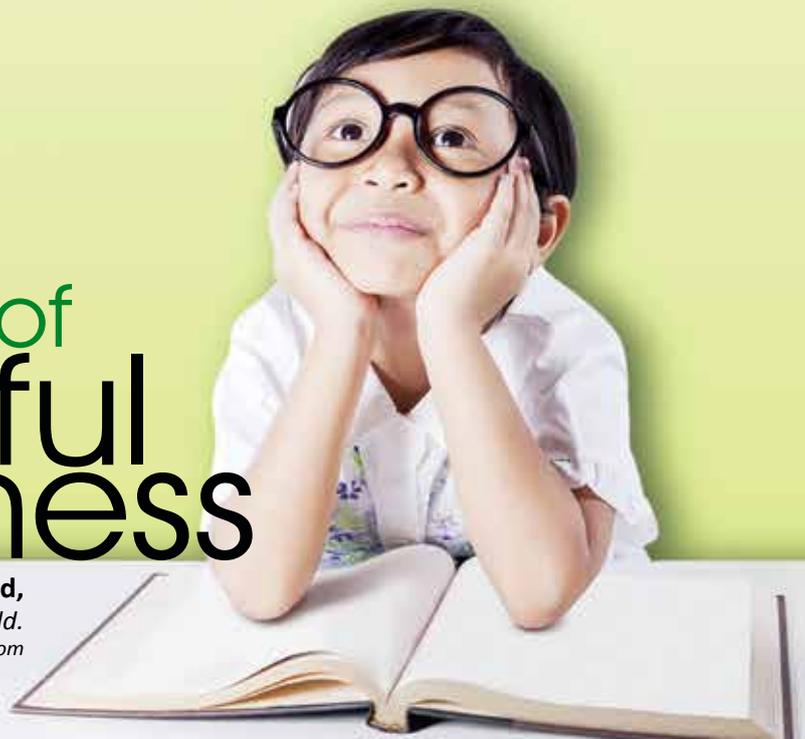
The fourth insight – The key to happiness

We often spend much of our time plotting to get what we want, avoid what we don't want and ignoring everything else. Desire, aversion and indifference are common, automatic reactions to life experience, but they may cause us trouble when we don't recognise them.

When having an emotional reaction, it's a good idea to pull our attention back so that we can give ourselves a little breathing room before we draw a definitive conclusion about what is or is not happening. With some perspective we can better see the big picture and respond in a way that is skilful, kind and compassionate. ☺

The Science of Mindful Awareness

by **Susan Kaiser Greenland**,
author of *The Mindful Child*.
www.susankaisergreenland.com



On a remote farm in the mountains lived an old man with his son, daughter-in-law and their five children. For many decades, the old man was diligent in his spiritual cultivation. He integrated everything that happened in life into his spiritual practice. So, although he was poor, he never felt a sense of poverty. His joyful laughter and wisdom brightened everyone around him. All in all, they were a happy family.

Sadly, one day his son passed away all of a sudden. Not long after, the old man sensed that he too did not have much time left. The old man's greatest concern was his daughter-in-law. He knew how hard it would be for her to work on the farm by herself while raising so many young kids.

After much meditation, he knew how he could help: he would be reborn as an ox in order to help his family.

Several months after his death, the family's old cow gave birth to a strong, bright-eyed calf. As the calf grew, it seemed to know what work needed to be done on the farm even before the widow. For instance, when it was time to plough the fields, the ox would stand next to the plough and moo loudly till the widow understood its cries.

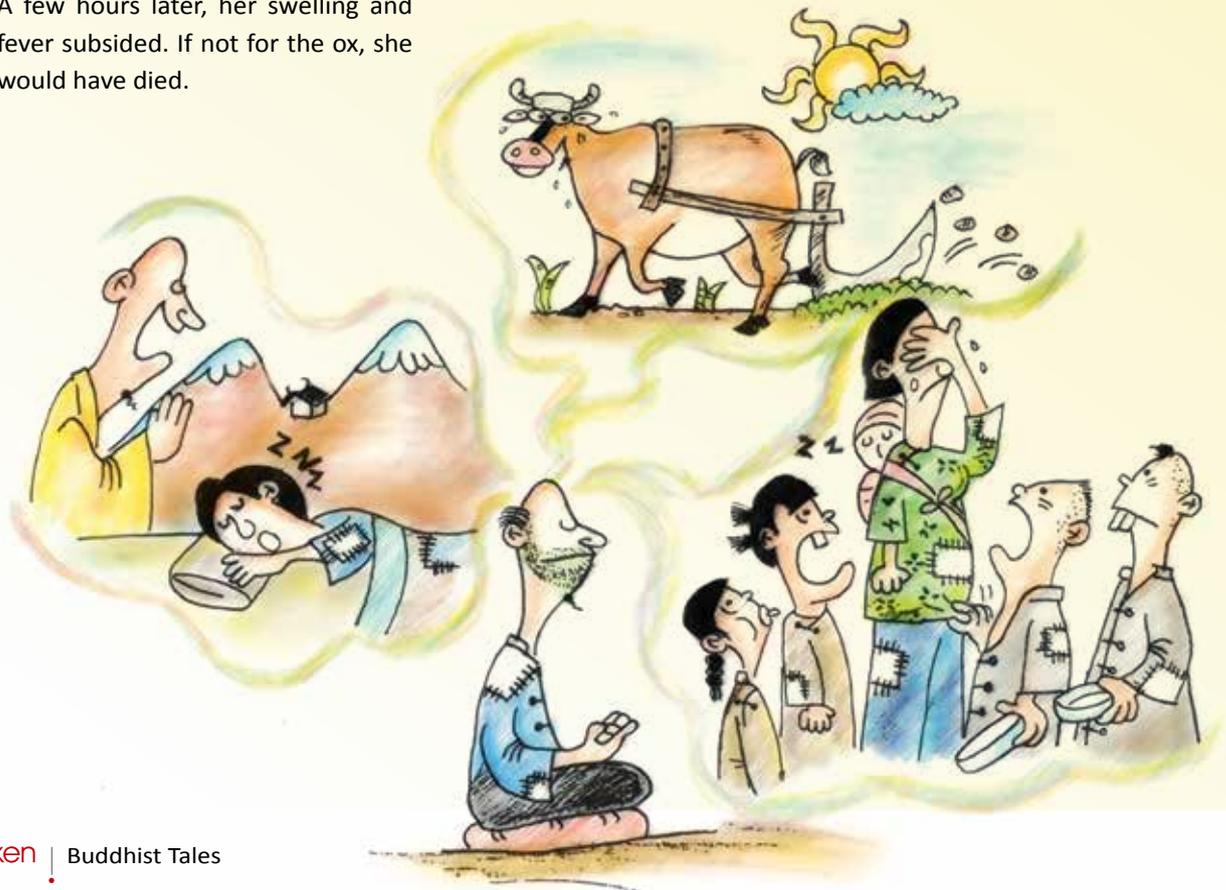
The ox helped the woman in many other ways too. Once, while working in the fields, she was bitten by a snake. Her ankle swelled up and became infected. Soon she could not walk and could only stay in bed, moaning from the pain.

Her children were too young to help her, but the ox walked up to the house and hit its tail on the porch. It continued until

the woman crawled out to see what was going on. The ox then nudged her up on its back and carried her to a spring far inside the mountains. The spring stunk of rotten eggs, but the ox gently set her down so that her feet were submerged in the water. A few hours later, her swelling and fever subsided. If not for the ox, she would have died.

The Man Who Became an OX

retold by: **Esther Thien**
illustration by: **Robert Yeo**



In this way, 20 years flew by. One by one, the children grew up and left home. Eventually, only the woman and the ox were left. One evening, she fell asleep and had the strangest dream. She dreamt of her father-in-law, whom she had not thought of in years, speaking to her:

“Daughter-in-law, I know how tough it would be for you to raise five kids and take care of the farm all by yourself. So to help you and ease your hardship, I was reborn as your ox. I’m leaving now but another facet of myself is living in a small temple on the other side of this mountain. If you would like to practise together, go to that temple.”

Startled, the woman awoke and immediately ran barefooted to the ox. Alas, it had died. She knelt there and cried, awed by the love of her father-in-law who was even willing to be reborn as an ox in order to help her.

When dawn broke, she set off for the temple that her father-in-law spoke about in the dream. After several days, she came to the temple and saw a young monastic who lived there alone. He was about 20 years old, and looked exactly like his father-in-law, right down to the mole on his face!

Her father-in-law had amazingly been reborn as both the ox and the young monastic! ☺

► *The ability and functioning of the mind is so profound that most people can't even imagine it. A single cup of water may not be able to do much but if you add that cup of water to the ocean, its combined strength becomes unimaginable. This is the strength of our fundamental Buddha-nature.*

But we are unable to recognise this when we spend each day lost in a thousand different kinds of dualistic thoughts. When we stop grasping at them and revert to our fundamental nature, the energy of our fundamental mind and the energy of everything we encounter will be able to function as one.

The energy of this combined functioning is beyond anything we can imagine. It overshadows even that of the oceans and skies, for it is the energy of every single thing in the universe, connected and working as one.

If you truly want to help someone, let go of all your dualistic thinking. Let go unconditionally of all your ideas about high and low, worthy and unworthy, human or animal.

When you keep entrusting everything to your fundamental essence, something deep within you will stir. This vast energy responds to whatever is needed and adapts by taking any form.

It is true compassion, and can take any shape – even that of an ox.

- Zen Master Daehaeng

Dharma Apps

One good thing about having a smartphone or tablet is that it can be used to connect you to the wisdom of the Dharma 24/7. Text: Esther Thien



Mindfulness Meditation

MULX Education
\$1.34

You have read about the benefits of mindfulness meditation affirmed by scientific findings, now try it out with this app. Delivered by a clinical psychologist with over 15 years of meditation experience, this app guides users to quickly develop a mindful state, to relax and focus attention on the present in an accepting and non-judgemental manner.

You can now meditate anytime anywhere by selecting one of the two tracks. Track one is about four minutes long and track two takes about nine minutes. There are tips to help you use this app optimally. Available on Google Play.



Buddhist Sutras

Jurassic Apps
Free

For those who are new to Buddhism and unsure about the importance of the Sutras, check out this app. It contains lectures on some of the most important Sutras in Buddhism. Read the Sutras or listen to the Audiobooks that clarify the meaning and importance of the Sutras. Available on Google Play.



Spinach Beancurd Roll with Goji Berry 菠菜豆皮枸杞卷

Ever wondered why spinach is the favourite food for Popeye? It is because spinach is a super food packed with tons of nutrients and yet is low in calories. According to medicalnewstoday.com, eating spinach is said to reduce the risks of cancer and of developing asthma, improve blood glucose control in diabetics, lower blood pressure, improve bone health and prevent constipation.

Try our recipe and incorporate more spinach into your diet today!



Ingredients:

- Spinach (about 300gm)
- Beancurd skin (10pcs)
- Goji berries (about 20 berries)
- Coriander or pasley leaves (optional; for decoration)

Seasonings:

- Salt, mushroom seasoning powder or pepper salt powder to taste
- A little flour (one small bowl; mixed with water into a batter to 'seal' rolls)

Method:

- 1 Blanch spinach. Drain off excess water and season with a little mushroom seasoning powder or salt.
- 2 Wash goji berries and soak them in hot water until bloated.
- 3 Spread out beancurd skin into long strips and sprinkle a little pepper salt powder. Fold spinach into pellet and place on beancurd skin. Then roll it up tightly and seal with a small amount of flour batter.
- 4 Place sealed rolls, facing downwards in a pan. Add a little oil into pan to fry rolls until crispy golden brown.
- 5 Cut rolls into two; decorate it with goji berries and serve.

材料:

- 菠菜一把 (约300克)
- 豆皮10个
- 枸杞子约20颗
- 香菜叶 (点缀用, 可不加)

调味料:

- 海盐、香菇粉及椒盐粉适量
- 面粉少许, 与水混合成面糊

做法:

- 1 烫熟的菠菜, 挤干水分后加点香菇粉及海盐调味。
- 2 枸杞子冲洗过, 泡在热开水中让它吸水涨大。
- 3 将豆皮摊开成长条状, 晒点椒盐粉, 拿些菠菜折成丸状放上, 紧紧捲起再用面糊封口。
- 4 豆皮捲封口处朝下, 放入平底锅用少许油煎到外皮香酥金黄。
- 5 将豆皮捲一切为二, 再把泡软的枸杞子放上点缀即可上盘。

食谱 / 照片: 谢家绫 提供 (台湾)

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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?

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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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The Merits of Producing Buddhist Teachings and Buddha Images

- 1 One's light karmic misgivings will dissolve, while heavy ones lighten.
- 2 One will be protected by devas, and be unharmed by natural and man-made disasters.
- 3 One will always be free from the suffering of hatred and vengeance.
- 4 One will be unharmed by yaksas, evil spirits and wild beasts.
- 5 One's mind will be at peace, free from harm and nightmares.
- 6 One's complexion will be radiant.
- 7 One will be full of auspicious energy.
- 8 One who practises the Dharma wholeheartedly will have adequate living necessities.
- 9 One's family will be harmonious and be blessed with fortune and wisdom.
- 10 One who practises what one preaches will be respected and loved by all.
- 11 One who is dull-minded will gain wisdom.
- 12 One who is ill will gain health.
- 13 One who is poor will gain wealth.
- 14 One will be free of being reborn in the negative realms.
- 15 One will be able to help others grow in wisdom and gain great merits in doing so.
- 16 One will always be able to learn the Dharma, till one's wisdom and spiritual penetrations are fully grown and one becomes a Buddha.

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Want to do your part for Planet Earth and be more eco-friendly? Say goodbye to disposable dining ware and get this set of good quality, portable tableware.

Entirely manufactured in Taiwan, the set comprises two bowls with lids, a pair of easy-to-carry screwed on metal chopsticks and casing, and a mug with an accompanying coaster in a drawstring bag.

The bowls are produced from polycarbonate. The mug is made of non-toxic, unbreakable PLA material, which is a biodegradable resin obtained from corn that can withstand high and low temperatures.

Clean, simple yet classy design, the set is as practical as it is aesthetically appealing. For instance, the beautiful coaster can double up as a nifty wrap to protect your hands when drinking hot beverages from the mug.

The mug is available in green, brown and light blue, whilst the carrier comes in grey, green and red.

Get the entire set at S\$25; or the bowls, chopsticks and bag at S\$22.

Separately, the mug and bag cost S\$10 each, while the reusable bowls and chopsticks are S\$20.



Corn Plastic to the Rescue



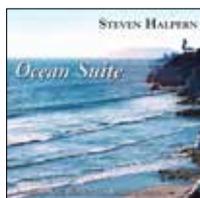
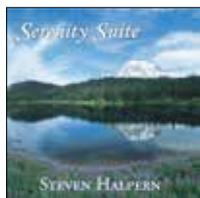
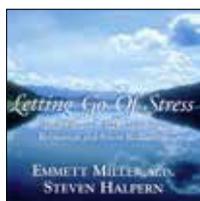
To find out more, please call Awareness Place stores at 6337 7582 or 6452 1732.

Letting Go of Stress Serenity Suite Ocean Suite

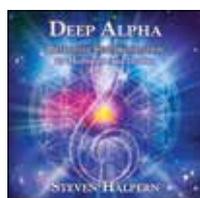
By Steven Halpern
\$28 each

Learn four easy yet effective techniques in *Letting Go of Stress* to release stress in your life and unlock your own healing ability. Track one relieves tension, track two uses deep relaxation, guided imagery, self-affirmation and deep breathing for autogenic stress relief. Track three and four further use image visualisation for mental quieting and emotional relaxation.

After you have relaxed your mind and body, continue forth the journey of serenity by listening to Halpern's *Serenity Suite* and *Ocean Suite*, a relaxing orchestration of melodious nature sounds – chirps of oriole, babbling brook, rippling lake, spring meadow and the ocean - amid 24 soothing musical compositions of piano, harp, flute, violin and the electric piano. Close your eyes, feel the day's tensions melt away and your spirit renewed! All CDs are available at Awareness Place stores. ☺

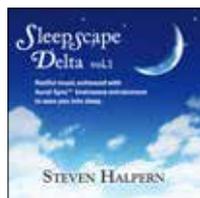


HEARD



Sleepscape Delta Deep Alpha

By Wind Records
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One common problem that most urbanites have is sleep deprivation. Over time, this can lead to irritability, fatigue, increased stress, a weakened immune system and impaired memory and cognitive ability.

For a good night's rest, try listening to *Sleepscape Delta*, an album of restful music enhanced with delta brainwave frequencies to induce you into the deepest, most restorative sleep.

For healing and peace, to quiet the mind and open the heart, tune in to *Deep Alpha*. The brainwave synchronisation music gently guides your brain into a deep alpha state of 8Hz and invites you to abide in a core state of serenity and bliss. ☺

Both CDs are available at all Awareness Place stores.

SEEN

Mind over matter text: Susan Griffith-Jones

Gattaca

Directed by: Andrew Niccol
Starring: Ethan Hawke, Uma Thurman, Jude Law

'At a time not too distant in the future' (the movie starts with this comment), the concept that 'a child conceived of love has a greater chance of happiness' has become obsolete. Nowadays, when you want to get pregnant, you go to your local geneticist, who will take and make from 'the best of you both' a human specimen as perfect as possible.

At birth, a blood sample is taken to assess your genetic trait, possible physical and mental diseases are analysed and if you have not been finely tuned, then you will be stamped and marked as an underdog of society for the rest of your life.



This is the newly discriminated underclass, not on societal or racial terms, but according to genetic profiles. Your resume lies in your cells, a job interview to the toughest institution on earth is a mere urine sample and an exceeded potential simply means it has not been accurately measured in the first place.

The story is of two brothers: Vincent, who is born from free love and Anton, by the hand of a geneticist. Naturally, Vincent is discriminated from the start as underprivileged and unlikely to succeed at anything, but he has a dream of going into space that no one and nothing can prevent him from achieving. His will to get there is so strong that it drives him to his destiny, no matter what society puts in his way.

The two brothers are prone to challenge each other at swimming. Anton had naturally always been the winner until one day, Vincent realises that he is not as weak as his brother; and his brother, not as strong. This gives Vincent the courage to achieve his goal.

The institute 'Gattaca', an anagram of the four letters of genetic bases - AGCT, ironically is the most prestigious institution of space exploration.

READ

End anxiety and depression by rewiring your brain for happiness text: Esther Thien

Vincent gets the best job he can at the place - that of a cleaner, which is the highest position he is likely to achieve there as an 'In-Valid' member of society. He comments, "I was never more certain how far I was from my goal when I was standing right beside it", because no matter how much he studied, and no matter the test score, he would still need the "correct" blood test result to go with it.

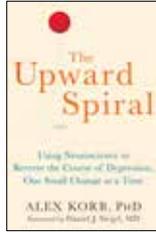
His cards turn when he meets an unscrupulous character, who enters him into the binding commitment of a new identity. Remarkably, he learns that 'one man's loss is another man's gain', but also comes to understand that being a member of the so-called 'elite' class is not easy as the drive for perfection can cause the greatest suffering.

This clandestine switching of profile, whereby his in-valid self takes on a superior makeover that renders it possible for him to exist in the 'valid' world, runs the risk of being uncovered when the mission director of Gattaca is murdered and everyone's identity comes under scrutiny.

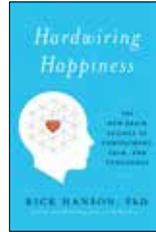
He doubts whether he can pull off his dream, but the determination to succeed comes from his persona of switched identity, who will not let him fail at any cost.

To further agonise the situation, he falls in love with his beautiful colleague, Irene, who has to eventually find out who he truly is and maintain her love for him even though he is not what he seems.

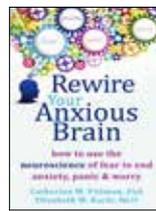
Brilliantly charged with emotion and intelligent construction, this cleverly made movie provokes us to see who we really are in our depth and not at the surface - in our mind and not as a physical entity. ☺



The Upward Spiral:
Using Neuroscience to Reverse the Course of Depression, One Small Change at a Time
By Alex Korb, PhD
\$23.90



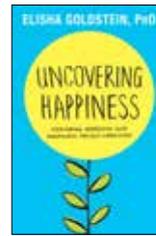
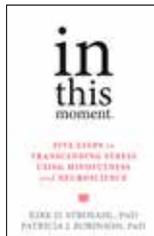
Uncovering Happiness:
Overcoming Depression with Mindfulness and Self-compassion
By Elisha Goldstein, PhD
\$32.30



Rewire your Anxious Brain:
How to Use the Neuroscience of Fear to End Anxiety, Panic & Worry
By Catherine M. Pittman, PhD
\$27.60

In This Moment:
Five Steps to Transcending Stress Using Mindfulness & Neuroscience
By Kirk D. Strosahl & Patricia J. Robinson, PhD
\$32.90

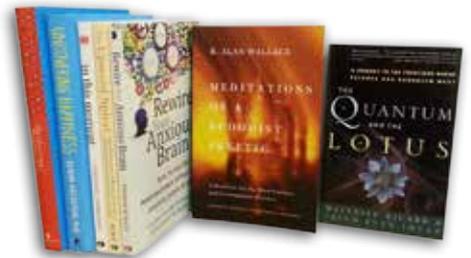
Hardwiring Happiness:
The New Brain Science of Contentment, Calm, and Confidence
By Rick Hanson, PhD
\$32.90



Are you often plagued by anxiety, worry or depression? Arm yourself with these enlightening self-help books to better understand how your brain causes these conditions, and how you can rewire your brain. By introducing small, positive, mindful changes

in your life, you can alter brain activity and chemistry for greater happiness, peace and well-being. You can train your brain to beat stress and find peace in this moment!

In the book *Hardwiring Happiness*, Dr Rick Hanson, an acclaimed neuropsychologist and internationally bestselling author, tells us just how important it is to grow inner strengths. Inner strengths are fundamental to a happy, productive and loving life. In a reader-friendly manner, he lays out four steps that use the hidden power of everyday experiences to build new neural structures that attract happiness, love, confidence and peace. Available at Awareness Place stores. ☺

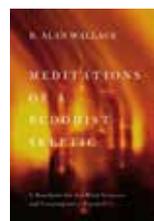
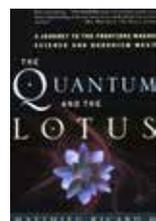


The Quantum and the Lotus
By Matthieu Ricard & Trinh Xuan Thuan
\$23.60

Meditations of a Buddhist Skeptic
By B. Alan Wallace
\$26.60

For intellectually stimulating and interesting reads, pick up *The Quantum and the Lotus* and *Meditations of a Buddhist Skeptic*. The former is a mind-expanding eye-opener which discusses the exciting parallels between cutting-edge thinking in physics and Buddhism. It introduces with great clarity the many ways in which science and Buddhism confirm and complement each other through the profound yet lively correspondences of the two authors.

In the latter book, Dr Alan Wallace reasserts the power of *shamatha and vipashyana* to clarify the mind's role in the natural world. He challenges the claim that consciousness is nothing more than a property of the brain and maintains that mental phenomena influence brain function and behaviour. This book is a stirring attack on the blind spots and hubris of the scientific establishment, combined with an appealing exposition of Buddhist wisdom as the antidote. Highly thought-provoking. Available at Awareness Place stores. ☺



2015

09
sep12
dec

Calendar of Events

DHARMA

CEREMONY | PRAYERS

Medicine Buddha Prayer

26 Oct – 31 Oct | Mon – Sat | 7.30pm

Venue : Pagoda of 10,000 Buddhas | Level 2
Medicine Buddha Hall

1 Nov | Sun | 10 am

Venue : Hall of Great Compassion

Registration : 6 names - \$100

of names 2 names - \$50

1 name any amount

Registration : From Aug till fully registered

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | 6849 5333

3 Refuges & 5 Precepts Ceremony

Through taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, one enters the Buddhist path, whilst undertaking the precepts (basic moral guidelines of moral conduct) helps one to develop mindfulness.

1 Nov | Sun | 12.30pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | 6849 5333



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 the path of Buddhahood.

14 – 20 Dec | Mon-Sun

Venue : KMSPKS

Registration : ♦ Inner Shrine

of names \$30,000 | \$20,000 | \$10,000
\$5,000 | \$3,000♦ Grand Shrine
\$2,000 | \$1,000♦ Shrine of Various Sutra
\$300 (5 - 6names)
\$200 (1 - 4 names)
\$20 (1 name)♦ Pureland Shrine
\$300 (5 - 6names)
\$200 (1 - 4 names)
\$20 (1 name)♦ Food Offering to Triple Gem
\$3,000 | \$2,000 | \$1,000 | \$500
| any amount

Registration : From 1 Sep till fully registered

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | 6849 5333



TALKS | WORKSHOPS | COURSES

English Buddhism Course Year 1 (Module 3)

| By Venerable

An introduction to Buddhism – understand the core principles in Buddhism, the Four Noble Truths & Noble Eightfold Path.

14 Sep – 2 Nov | Mon | 7.30pm – 9pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom

English Buddhism Course Year 2 (Module 3)

| By Venerable

Understand the Four Immeasurables, Three Poisons, Five Hindrances, Stages of Sainthood and the Bodhisattva Ideal including the Six Perfections.

10 Sep – 19 Nov | Thu | 7.30pm – 9pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom

English Buddhism Course Year 3 (Module 3)

| By Venerable

Learn about The Sutra on the Eight Awakenings of The Great Beings that consist of the Eight Truths that all Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and great beings are awakened to.

10 Sep – 26 Nov | Thu | 7.30pm-9pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspsk.org

English Dharma Talk - Arahantahood & Bodhisattvahood

| By Yick Keng Hang

17 Sep | Thu | 7.30pm – 9pm

Venue : APWBC | Free (Registration is required)

Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspsk.org

Buddhism & Science Symposium V - The Mind: The Window to Our Well-Being

A public forum initiated by the Buddhist community in Singapore to explore the relationship between Buddhism, Science and the contemporary society.

3 Oct | Sat | 8.30am – 12.30pm

Fee : \$20

Venue : VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspsk.org

English Dharma Talk - The Three Main Chinese Mahayana Teachings

| By Yick Keng Hang

17 Dec | Thu | 7.30pm – 9pm

Venue : APWBC | Free (Registration is required)

Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspsk.org

3 Refuges & 5 Precepts Preparatory Course

Understand the meaning behind taking refuge and precepts.

1 Nov | Sun | 9.30am – 11am

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspsk.org

MEDITATION / RETREAT

Self-Meditation @ Lunch

Rejuvenate your mind and body! Take a break during lunch to join our meditation practice. Registration is required.

2 Sep – 30 Dec | Wed | 12.30pm – 1.30pm

Venue : APWBC

Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspsk.org

The Way of Shamatha: Soothing the Body, Settling the Mind and Illuminating Awareness

A 7-day retreat to explore in theory and practise the three methods for developing meditative quiescence or shamatha.

26 Sep – 2 Oct | Sat – Fri | 9.30am – 5pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspsk.org

Monkhood Novitiate Programme @ Bodhgaya

Experience a simple monastic life together to cultivate compassion and wisdom for inner joy and peace.

4 Nov – 15 Nov | Wed – Sun

Venue : Bodhgaya

Fee : \$2,660 per person

Requirement : 16-65 years old, male only

Remark : Shortlisted participants are required to attend preparatory class

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspsk.org



8 Precepts @ Bodhgaya

A retreat where participants observe the eight precepts at Bodhgaya, the holy site where Buddha gained enlightenment.

6 Nov – 15 Nov | Fri – Sun

Venue : Bodhgaya

Fee : \$2,660 per person

Requirement : 16-65 years old, male & female

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspsk.org

YOUTH

DHARMA

Camp Awareness 2015

A 3-day, 2-night Buddhist camp for youth aged 15-20, it seeks to share the wisdom of the Buddha's teachings through interactive activities and sharing sessions.

4 – 6 Dec | Fri – Sun

Venue : KMSPKS

Fee : \$30 per person

(early bird registration till 13 Sep)

\$40 per person (registration after 13 Sep)

\$120 per group of 4 people

Sunday Group Cultivation (Open to all ages)

Join us every Sunday for a short chanting, short guided meditation & a not so short discussion led by Venerable Chuan Guan. No prior registration is required.

Every Sun | 2pm – 3:30pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom 5

Enquiry : 6849 5345 | youth@kmspsk.org



Lunch Gathering

Lunch gathering with Venerable Chuan Guan before Sunday Group Cultivation

First Sunday of every month | 12pm – 1pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom 5

Enquiry : 6849 5345 | youth@kmspsk.org

Life Liberation

A way to practise kindness and compassion towards animals by saving them from being killed for food.

Once every two months | Sun | 9.30am – 12.30pm

Venue : Changi Jetty

(Gathering point at VHCMH, KMSPKS)

Enquiry : 6849 5345 | youth@kmspsk.org