

普觉 awaken

to Compassion and Wisdom on the journey of life



新加坡佛学院建校十周年
暨新教学楼落成庆典致辞

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Programming Joy into Our Lives

Singaporean Chade-Meng Tan, an ex-Google engineer, shares how he spread the seeds of joy and meditation all over the world

37

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Safeguarding and Protecting Our Planet

*Look around you.
Appreciate what you have.
Nothing will be the same in a year.*

*The earlier you learn to focus on what you have,
and not obsess over what you don't have,
the happier you'll be.*

Taking care of our environment has never been more critical. The well-being of earth on which we depend is vital for our survival. The condition of the ecosystem is essential to our health and quality of life. An environment filled with pollutants and toxins can only have a harmful impact on our health. Air sustains us and clean water is

a basic necessity that everyone needs in order to survive so we should do what we can to prevent pollution.

As Aboriginal activist Bobby McLeod once said, "When the earth is sick and polluted, human health is impossible...To heal ourselves we must heal our planet, and to heal our planet we must heal ourselves."

What he said was in line with what the Buddha taught: **the interdependence of all lives**. Everything depends on something else for its existence. Hence we must be aware of the impact our thoughts and actions have on the environment. We send out healing energies to the earth when we meditate on loving-kindness, or chant. Conversely, negative intention and action based on greed only contaminate our environment and bring about damaging consequences we all have to bear collectively.

To purify our environment and send out higher vibrational energies of wisdom and compassion, the monastery is planning to establish a 5-storey meditation centre by 2020. It will be constructed within the monastery's premises and will provide more opportunities for people to meditate. Through this, we hope to spur more people to learn meditation for the well-being of themselves and the planet.

The overall temperature of the earth's atmosphere is increasing. This is causing frequent, intense occurrences of dangerous weather patterns and devastating heat waves, droughts and floods. For the sake of our future generations, we must do more to combat global warming and climate change, and safeguard the precious biodiversity in our world. We are all interconnected and a loss in one aspect could cause problems in other areas.

So play your part: reduce, reuse, recycle and be thankful to Mother Earth by protecting and taking care of our environment.

Planet earth is the only home we have.

May everyone be blessed with prosperity, good health, peace and gratitude in the New Year! ☺

Sik Kwang Sheng (Ven)

Abbot, Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery

Facing difficulties and challenges is part and parcel of everyone's life journey. Such challenges may come thick and fast during certain life phases, or when the global economy is badly hit and one's livelihood is affected.

But even when we are caught in a chaotic and unexpected life situation, we can still transform adversity into joy and courage (pg. 57).

It is up to us how we want to use our thoughts, and whether we actively choose joy and peace of mind over suffering in times of anxiety (pg. 49). We always have that choice.

Once we have made the choice, we learn the techniques and know-hows to transform what is negative into positive (pg. 71) and to practise the methods learnt on a regular basis.

As Chade-Meng Tan said, "regular practice will enable you to build up your mental strength. Then even in times of great pain, you can bring up joy." (pg. 44)

One such technique is meditating on the Four Immeasurables. Through cultivating the qualities of Loving-kindness, Compassion, Empathetic Joy and Equanimity, we radically shape our view of reality, our values and way of life to infuse genuine joy and happiness into our being (pg. 52).

Being compassionate to ourselves is another important aspect. Research has associated self-compassion with other positive qualities such as wisdom, curiosity, optimism and happiness.

By learning self-compassion practices, we release negative thoughts and nurture ourselves by being kind, caring and supportive of ourselves (pg. 60).

So resolve to be gentle and kind to yourself and others this coming new year.

Have a joyful and peaceful Year of the Rooster. ☺

Accessing joy even in the midst of difficulties



Yours in the Dharma,
Sister Esther Thien



PM Lee Commended the Buddhist Community at the BCS Official Opening Ceremony

text : Esther Thien

Singapore – Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong officiated at the opening of the new 6-storey Buddhist College of Singapore (BCS) building during its 10th Anniversary Celebration in September 2016.

The college was founded in 2005 by Ven Kwang Sheng, the current Abbot of Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery and Rector of BCS. It is the only institution in Singapore to offer formal graduate and postgraduate education in Buddhist Studies specifically to ordained monks, and one of the few in the region to offer two streams—Chinese and English.

The programmes are conducted in partnership with Sri Lanka's state university, the University of Kelaniya, and the Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University in Thailand.

Close to 800 local and overseas guests attended the official opening, including Senior Minister of State, Mrs Josephine Teo and Ministers of State, Mr Sam Tan and Mr Chee Hong Tat, as distinguished Special Guests.

Speaking at the official opening, PM Lee paid tribute to the contributions made by the Buddhist community to our multi-racial society.

“Through their many devotees and temples in Singapore, they help the poor and needy, providing free meals, funding scholarships and bursaries, operating clinics and kidney dialysis centres,” he said, adding that Buddhists have also provided counselling at penal institutions, drug rehabilitation centres and the SAF Detention Barracks.

The community has thrived here because its leaders, such as Ven Kwang Sheng, understand the context of a multi-racial society and have a strong sense of service to the community. As the largest religious group in Singapore, Buddhists have also fostered racial and religious harmony by engaging with all races and religions and participating in the Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circles, continued PM Lee.

Mr Lee emphasised that with Singapore's multi-religious society, it is key that Singaporeans accommodate and adjust to one another, and respect each other's beliefs and practices in order to live harmoniously together.

The college admitted its first batch of students in August 2006 and has seen 70 students graduate with a Bachelor of Arts and 11 with a Masters of Arts in Buddhist Studies. Some of them are now pursuing their doctoral studies, or running temples, while others are doing administrative work in monasteries or teaching in various colleges.

“Thanks to the unstinting support of our staunch supporters and devotees, the college has been able to grow and attain today's achievements. The past 10 years have only been a beginning,” said Ven Kwang Sheng.

Looking ahead, the college plans to organise more exchange programmes with Buddhist institutions in the region, he added. ☺

Winners for KMSPKS Design Competition Announced

Singapore – Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery organised a design competition in 2016 inviting the public to submit innovative ideas for a lightweight canopy to replace the existing tentage at the open court fronting the Hall of Great Compassion.

A total of 18 entries comprising individual and group submissions were received. The overall design quality was highly competitive and impressive.

The jury had a challenging, albeit delightful time selecting the top three winners. Judging was conducted anonymously and the winners were revealed only after the selection process. The first prize went to Mr Minkqee Tan and Chen Zhi Yi from Minkke Architects Private Limited for their entry “Pavilions”.

“Our design for the monastery was inspired by the beauty of simplicity in Buddhist philosophy. The design hinges upon the notion of balance and moderation, where the subtle curves of the roof are inspired by both traditional temples and the natural world of rolling mountains and billowing waves,” expressed Mr Minkqee Tan.

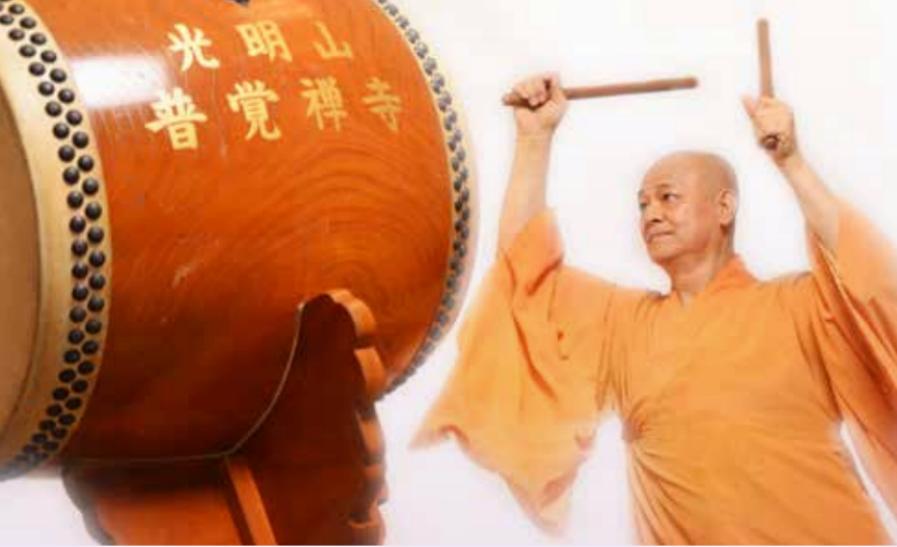
The second prize was won by Ms Sharon Lee, Mr Davis Wong and Mr Chen Qi Sen from the National University of Singapore (NUS) for their “Lotus Forest” design, and the third prize went to Mr Lee Kin Jun from NUS for his entry, “Karuna”.



Said Ms Lee, the team leader, “We were overwhelmed with joy when we received news that we had won. We are fifth year architecture undergrads and had put in great effort and thought into our design, which was inspired by the lotus and its opening mechanism. Our design embodies the Buddhist spirit, a space that facilitates the interaction between the worldly and spiritual, yet incorporates an effective drainage system.”

Mr Lee Kin Jun, on the other hand, had been particularly moved by the great hospitality and inspiring talks at the monastery's charrette. “Winning the third prize gave me a lot more confidence in design. My inspiration came from the light and incense offering in the Buddhist tradition. Hence, “Karuna” is a poetic expression of the fusion between light and timber,” shared Mr Lee.

The top winner took home a cash prize of S\$3,000, while the second and third prize winners received S\$2,000 and S\$1,000 respectively. All cash prizes were sponsored by Newsman Realty Private Limited. ☺



Ani Choying to Sing at *Voices of Harmony 2017 Charity Concert*

Singapore – Are you a fan of Ani Choying? She is well-known for bringing melodious Buddhist chants to mainstream audiences. You can catch her in Singapore at the East meets West *Voices of Harmony 2017 Charity Concert* on Saturday, 20 May, at the Singapore Indoor Stadium. A fund-raising concert for the Singapore Buddhist Free Clinic (SBFC), you can expect stellar performances from Ven Kwang Sheng, 19-year-old Chinese piano prodigy Niu Niu, Hand Percussion artistes, dancers, orchestral and choral performers where inspiring world music are brought to life. Niu Niu is a renowned award-winning pianist who created a storm in the music world when at the age of eight, he was admitted into the prestigious Shanghai Music Conservatory, its youngest student ever since its establishment.

“We are really happy to participate in this charity concert,” said Mr Sunny Wong from the NAFA Chinese Chamber Ensemble, one of the three orchestras, including ADDO Chamber Orchestra and The Philharmonic Winds to perform at the concert.

Tickets are priced at S\$20, S\$38, S\$68, S\$98 and S\$138. You can purchase the tickets from KMSPKS Monastery, SBFC and also from www.sportshubtix.sg. For enquiries, please contact SBFC at 67487292.



Scan this to read our interview with Ani Choying on pg 44



KMSPKS to Build a Meditation Centre to Promote the Culture of Meditation

Singapore – Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery (KMSPKS) is planning to establish a meditation centre by 2020. A new 5-storey building spanning approximately 6000 square metres will be constructed within the monastery’s premises to promote the culture of meditation in Singapore.

The first level will comprise the library, the second and third levels are meditation halls while the fourth level contains seminar rooms and the fifth level, a meditation hall for monastics in the midst of a garden.

The architectural design hopes to achieve serenity through pure forms and symmetry. By offering spaces for contemplation and reflection, wonder and beauty, it creates a culture of understanding and acceptance. Visitors are taken into a calming oasis before embarking on their journey to seek peace and harmony through meditation, harmonising with nature and within oneself. The building engages nature’s elements of sun, wind and water to allow one to be drawn into a naturally meditative experience; a connection and balance that brings peace and happiness.

“The meditation centre will provide more opportunities for people to meditate. Through this, we hope to spur more people to learn meditation for the well-being of themselves and the planet,” said Ven Kwang Sheng, the abbot of KMSPKS.

If you would like to contribute to this meaningful project and play a part in bringing meditation to the masses, visit the Monastery’s Front Office or scan the QR code to donate online. ☺



KMSPKS Collaborates with PA and NKF to Establish the Seck Hong Choon-NKF Dialysis Centre

Singapore – Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery (KMSPKS) has donated S\$1.4 million to set up a dialysis centre with the People’s Association (PA) and National Kidney Foundation (NKF).

The Seck Hong Choon-NKF Dialysis Centre will be established at the upgraded Toa Payoh West Community Club by 2020, and will house 20 dialysis machines. This will be the first dialysis centre located in a community club.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed on 2 Oct 2016 to formalise the collaboration. The donation will be matched by a government grant to cover both the costs of renovation and equipment.

Said Mr Chee Hong Tat, Minister of State for Health, and Communications & Information, who attended the signing, “Bishan-Toa Payoh is an ageing estate with a lot of seniors here who need dialysis services. We need to provide for the future and ensure that we have sufficient capacity to meet the needs of our residents.” ☺

Editor: As we have achieved our target, kindly note that fund-raising for the Seck Hong Choon-NKF Dialysis Centre has ceased since 28 Oct 2016.

Seniors Now Have a New Place to Mingle

Singapore – Singapore is feeling the impact of a rapidly ageing population. The number of citizens aged 65 and above doubled from 220,000 in 2000 to 440,000 in 2015 and is expected to increase to 900,000 by 2030. In response to the needs of our community, Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery initiated a Seniors’ Interaction Corner in 2016 so that the elderly have another option to bond and mingle with one another.

They can try out a variety of interesting activities such as drumming, Zentangle and bead art here. These artistic activities allow them to express their creativity. At the drumming session, they can learn about tempo and the various beats from drums of different sizes, and how to perform in harmony with others. Then, when doing bead art, they will experience much fun and enjoyment creating assorted ‘fruits’ from sparkly, shiny beads. With Zentangle, seniors will learn a relaxing and easy way to create beautiful images while training their mindfulness and mental focus.

They also learn meridian flapping by using special tools to strike different acupuncture or meridian points on their bodies to improve blood circulation. There is also a segment on exercising with a resistance band.

In addition, they can participate in group prayers to create a positive connection with Guanyin Bodhisattva and learn simple guided meditation from a Venerable to cultivate greater mental and physical awareness.



There will also be health talks conducted by the Health Promotion Board for them to better understand illnesses such as dementia and depression and what constitutes positive ageing and mental well-being.

The Seniors’ Interaction Corner is open from Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 3.30pm. The monastery provides free lunch to all participants and a chartered bus service to Ang Mo Kio MRT station after the sessions end. Admission is free and no registration is required. ☺



text : Oh Puay Fong

Programming Joy into Our Lives



Photo by : Steve Nge

*Chade-Meng Tan (CMT), bestselling author of **Search Within Yourself and Joy on Demand**, speaks to **Awaken** on how joy is an immensely powerful resource that everyone can access to.*

Awaken: What inspired you to publish your books? What impact do you hope they will bring to society?

CMT: After my first book on emotional intelligence was published, I received many positive testimonies from people all over the world on how the practices had changed their lives. However, there was a common refrain that over time, they reached a plateau and did not continue from lack of time or motivation, etc. The solution is simple: joy is the remedy. Meditating allows us to access an inner joy that in turn sustains our practice. So the question is how to accelerate this experience of joy so that the practice becomes self-sustaining? I wrote this second book to address how to front-load joy in the process so that the practices become easy to do and to keep doing. When I showed my publisher the manuscript, they made some suggestions and so, this book on Joy was born.

Awaken: How is joy an immensely powerful resource as you mentioned in your book?

CMT: Joy is conducive for three things:

- Productivity and success, which everyone wants.
- Resilience, and this is especially important for entrepreneurs as they need to face many challenges.
- Creativity. When you experience one day of happiness from the joy of your practice, it leads to three days of creativity, which means it has multi-fold spill-over effects. So if you practise regularly, you will reap benefits continuously.

Awaken: Joy does not come easily for many, especially those who feel harassed living in a fast-paced modern society. What advice do you have for those who badly want to bring more joy into their lives?

CMT: It is possible to walk the difficult path of our practice joyfully. In fact, the Buddha taught that there were two ways to Enlightenment: one with exertion such as when one is travelling on a path full of challenges or “shit”, and the other without exertion. So, pain is a valid way but it is not necessary. A useful metaphor here is to see the “shit” we encounter in life as the nourishing mud that enriches the lotus’ growth. So, the more there is, the better the lotus thrives!

Awaken: How can we invite and access joy into our hearts when we are in great pain and suffering?

CMT: Regular practice is important. Don’t wait till you are on the edge of the cliff and about to fall off to start. It’s analogous to training repeatedly in the gym if you wish to build up your muscular strength. You need to train consistently and regularly so that when you need to use your muscles, they are toned and strong. Likewise, regular meditation practice will enable you to build up your mental strength. Then even in times of great pain, you can bring up joy.

Awaken: In Singapore’s current context, there are professionals, managers, executives and technicians (PMETs) who are unemployed or under-employed as they have difficulties finding jobs. At the same time, innovations like fintech are likely to cause further disruptions and job losses as technology replaces humans at work. It is hard for them to feel joyful in such circumstances. What message do you have for this group?

CMT: I fully sympathise as poverty in any form causes suffering when there is a lack of security about getting our basic needs fulfilled. Wealth and happiness are correlated when one is poor. At this end of scarcity, having more money does make one happier. However, beyond the threshold of meeting one’s basic needs, the correlation breaks down as getting more money does not necessarily make one happier.

The practices in my books are useful and can be easily applied by people who have moved beyond this threshold, i.e. they are not poor. For people who are poor, they can be sub-divided into two smaller groups: the first group is unable to meet their basic needs and the second group consists of those living in extreme paucity. For both of them, I would say the practices can help them too, though it is harder. Nonetheless, it is still doable and I would encourage them to practise because the benefits of mindfulness meditation can help them. In fact, one of my central tenets is that one benefit from practice translates into worldly success—I am a living proof of this.

Mindfulness meditation increases our resilience to deal with suffering and this skill is helpful to anyone. Specifically, it has three effects:

- Those who are joyful experience even greater joy;
- Those who are in neutral mode will move towards a more joyful state of being; and
- Those who are suffering will find their painful experiences more manageable. Practising will allow them access to isolated moments of peace and joy, which can serve as life buoys when things feel overwhelming and provide some respite.

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Over time, the practices will lead one to peace and calmness, joy, clarity and kindness for self and others, which are helpful for anyone, anytime, anywhere.

Awaken: Do you see any conflict between Asians' competitive streak to strive for greater excellence and achievement, and the need to bring more joy into one's life? How can Buddhist professionals balance both?

CMT: There is no conflict.

It is possible to skilfully do both at the same time. Goodness is an overlooked competitive advantage but research shows that honest salespeople generate more sales, businesses that act right by their customers get more repeat orders or referrals and fair employers who treat their employees right are more profitable. A business may get away with cheating its customers for a while and be profitable in the interim, but this is nothing compared to the phenomenal success that an ethical business generates. Doing good creates far greater value for both businesses and their customers.

A mind-blowing real-life exemplar is Bridgewater Associates, a US hedge fund founded by Ray Dalio who meditates every day and has done so for the past 30 years. He attributes his success to his practice which shows him reality as it is and fosters a radical transparency that allows open communication with his colleagues.

In his book, *From Good to Great*, Jim Collins revealed that Level Five leaders display two characteristics:

- humility; and
- great ambition for the greater good, which really marks out the best leaders.

When we analyse compassion, there are three aspects:

- affective – “I feel for you”.
- cognitive – “I understand you.”
- motivational – “I want to help you.”

We can map the first two aspects—the affective and cognitive aspects—of compassion to the humility of Level Five leaders, and its motivational aspect to their great ambition for the greater good. In short, compassion is a necessary condition for great leadership which drives productivity and success.

Awaken: Many people see you as a successful Buddhist and for them success is defined in material terms. What does success mean to you? What makes for a successful life?

CMT: Well, I don't feel I've succeeded yet.

My primary goal in this life is the democratisation of Enlightenment of the people, for the people, as embodied by the Buddha. Specifically to lead them to achieve the level of a *Sotapanna* (a stream winner who will gain Enlightenment after another seven lives, at most), which is widely accessible, understandable and practical. This is not a completely hopeless goal as it may seem because meditative *jhana* is a common experience of all highly skilled practitioners of different religions such as Saint Theresa. Buddhism set Enlightenment to “0”, emptiness, “non-self” or to use a more universal description, “going beyond one's self.” Some other traditions may set it to “1”, understanding it as unity with God, while others may set it to “infinity” and see God as omnipresent. But regardless of how it is conceived, it is an experience that can be made available to everyone.

My secondary goal is to create conditions for world peace. Being materially successful enables me to do this, so it is a means to the end. It allows scaling up of what I do and therefore, it is important to my Dharma work.

From cultivating *anapanasati* (mindfulness of breathing) and embodying *prajna* (wisdom) to world peace seems impossible but doing the impossible has always been a part of my life, so in a sense, I have succeeded though in another sense, I have yet to succeed because the goals are immense.

Awaken: What motivates you to embark on this ambitious undertaking that seems out of reach? Was there someone who inspired you? Why is world peace so important to you?

CMT: Compassion. And I feel I'm doing it to fulfil a vow from a previous life. My compassion is not restricted to any particular groups of people such as the Tibetans. I am equally open to helping Singaporeans and any other groups, so it's not exclusive, though it is applied differently to different groups.

My greatest teacher is the Buddha. I have met many great teachers but the Buddha is my greatest inspiration. For this reason, I want to revive the importance of early Buddhism in all schools, as many people have lost touch with the roots.

World peace in itself is important though it's often taken for granted. Scaling personal inner peace, joy and compassion logically leads to global compassion which is conducive to world peace. In turn, world peace provides the environment where global compassion is reinforced, which in turn fosters greater inner peace, joy and compassion. So it is a positive feedback loop, or what I called “virtuous cycle” in my book.

To share a real-life example, there was an angry young man in Egypt who experienced inner transformation just by doing one simple practice called “Just like me” from my first book, *Search Inside Yourself*. This loving-kindness practice completely shifted his mind-set from hatred and violent antagonism to empathetic acceptance of others as it dawned on him that others outside his own religious circle are just like him. Imagine such a transformation multiplied a billion-fold all over the world, then world peace is not just some elusive dream. And that's what Billion Acts of Peace hopes to achieve.

Awaken: How many hours are you meditating a day now that you have retired from Google? On the quantity versus quality debate of meditation practice, what is your stance? Longer is better? Or is quality paramount?

CMT: I meditated three hours every day for 40 days and 40 nights after my retirement. However, I cut back after that as I became overwhelmed by my To-Do lists. Right now, I'm doing four different things, each requiring half my time—yes, the maths don't work out—so I hope to release some of my work and have more time for practice this year.

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< I'll say aim for quality and here's a powerful metaphor. If you have a very strong perfume, you uncap it for a few minutes then close it but the room will continue to linger with its fragrance for some time afterwards. Whereas if you have a weak perfume, it doesn't diffuse even if you leave it opened for a long time. So, definitely go for an intense, high quality practice and then if you can spare the time, high quantity, in that order.

Or to use an analogy from my own experience, I'm now doing what is called "High Impact Interval Training". Training intensively for 30 seconds in short bursts with a short rest between intervals achieves the same effect as walking more than 30 minutes or cycling five hours. Clearly, short but intense is more efficient.

This brings me to a related question I get asked often.

How long does it take to see benefits from the practice?

To get life-changing benefits would take about 50,000 to 100,000 hours. For mastery, neuroimaging researchers like Julie Brefczynski-Lewis put the figure at 10,000 hours. To be very good at it, i.e. to reach a point where one can teach others easily, at least 1,000 hours though I require 2,000 hours from my instructors, which can be achieved within 3 months. To put this in perspective, to have any measurable impact takes only 100 minutes or less than two hours. And just to have any impact at all takes only one breath. It doesn't have to take a lot of time—just one breath, sitting erect, mindfully breathing in and mindfully breathing out—there will be a noticeable impact such as less tension, lowered stress level.

So, that's all it takes. It's all I ask of my students—one breath a day for the rest of their lives.

Awaken: Any last words for our readers?

CMT: I would like to inspire more young people to practise regularly. I hope everyone will experience joy easily in their practice, which will enable their practice to become stronger and more sustained, thereby creating inner peace, joy and compassion that leads to greater productivity and success in life. I am living proof of this—I am successful because many people like my jovial presence and help me, and I am jolly because of my practice.

I see 2015's SG50 as a celebration of Singapore's economic miracle and envision Singapore of becoming an example for the world in wisdom and compassion in the next 50 years. To this end, I started collaborating with the National University of Singapore (NUS) in 2016 to bring a Nobel Peace Prize winner to Singapore every year to inspire our young people. We brought in Rigoberta Menchú Tum in June 2016 at PeaceJam Singapore's launch event and her story moved many in the audience to tears. Together with Billion Acts of Peace, we can move towards inner and world peace. ☺

Editor: Chade-Meng Tan's books are available for purchase at all Awareness Place stores, and major bookstores islandwide.

Or scan the QR codes to enjoy 10% discount online till March. Just key in Discount Code 10Jan17 at check-out.



an Joy in Age of Anxiety

Ven Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche shares with us how we can find joy and peace of mind in this age of anxiety.

Real peace is in our mind

How can we have joy? Transform your mind. How you want to use your mind is in your control. We all face ageing, we have no choice but to go through it. We cannot change this fact. But how we face it or how we react to getting old is up to us.

When a person faces a problem, typically the person will think that it is the worst situation he or she can face and find it hard to cope. The mind exaggerates due to our belief that our happiness depends on our external circumstances. But really, the main cause for our happiness or suffering lies within us.

So we have to understand the essence and quality of our own mind.

My father once advised me, "Do not look for a solution in the external situation. The real peace is in your mind." He gave me this piece of advice as I was at that time suffering from panic attacks. I realised then that panic itself was not a problem, but how I related to it was the issue.

The two causes of our suffering

My motivation to learn meditation then was to rid myself of panic. So when I meditated, I did it with the intention of "Hello panic, get out! I'm meditating." My teacher told me not to meditate in that manner as the panic would only become worse.

So I changed and started meditating with the intention of "Hello panic, welcome. I accept you. But why are you still here?"

Later I realised, our unhappiness stems from two things:

One, it is disliking, resisting and being averse to a situation or an object, for example the panic I am experiencing. Or what I called the panic of panic.

The second is craving for something else that we do not have, such as in my case: the desire or attachment for peace and to stop the panic.

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In the end, I truly accepted my panic and learnt a lot from it. Panic has become my teacher and friend. I learn awareness, loving-kindness, compassion and also wisdom from my panic.

I am then able to *be* with my panic when it comes. I am happy too when it comes visiting because my meditation also comes along.

Transforming something negative to positive

For example, pain is generally unpleasant. But you welcome the pain from foot reflexology because you know it is good for your heart, liver, kidneys and other organs. So such sensation of pain becomes pleasant. The same thing goes for chilli. When you are young, you don't find chilli nice as it is too spicy. But now, as an adult, if you don't eat your food with chilli, you don't find it as tasty. It is the same with panic. You can change it to become your support for joy, just like foot reflexology and chilli. Even if someone points a gun to your head, that person may harm your physical body but your mind is in your hand.

So how do we do the actual practice? First, cultivate awareness of the body. Normally our mind is up there, jumping between past and future. When we are busy, it is even harder to stay in the present moment. So how do we focus our mind on the body? We need awareness and that is the essence of meditation.

Awareness is with us all the time. Our awareness is with us 24/7, even as we sleep. But we don't know it. So the main thing is we have to recognise our own awareness.

Meditation is about recognising awareness

Meditation is all about recognising that awareness and maintaining that recognition. That's it.

In order to recognise awareness, we need some form of support, such as our body. You don't have to block any thoughts or emotions. If you do that, it becomes worse so just let them come and go. Just don't forget your awareness of the body. After a few seconds you may forget the body. It's okay. Just come back to it again.

So now, let us begin the practice. Sit gently with your spine straight. Place your palms, joined together on your lap, or place them lightly on your knees. Close your eyes, relax your body. Feel your body and know your body. Be aware of any sensation within the body and relax. Bring your awareness on your body, part by part.

First, begin by bringing your awareness to the top of your head. Relax the muscles on top of your head. Be aware of any sensation on top of your head. It doesn't matter what sort of sensation. Slowly bring your awareness to your forehead. Relax the muscles in the forehead. Be aware of your entire face, and relax. Be aware of the back of your head and relax. Then bring your awareness to your shoulders and relax. Next, your chest and relax. Be aware of your back and relax. Then focus on your stomach and relax. Then be aware and relax your arms. Next, be aware of your legs and relax. Be aware of your entire body and relax. Be aware of any feelings, sensations and emotions within the body and just watch and let them be.

If you can relax your body, good. If you cannot relax, it is okay too. Allow anything to happen. You do not have to pretend to be somebody or act to be someone else. Just be yourself and be free. You are free and in control of yourself.

Simply watch

As long as you are aware, you are meditating. That is the essence. Just watch and be aware. If you can see the river, it means you have not fallen into it and have not been carried away by it.

For instance, you cannot stop toothache just through meditation. But it can transform toothache as a support for awareness and become a cause for happiness. It's not easy, especially for beginner meditators. But we can try. Only by trying and making mistakes can we have success in the future. The more failures the better as it means we did try and will lead to success eventually.

So when you watch—positive emotions, negative emotions, crazy monkey mind, peace, joy or whatever experience, feeling or emotion you have—it doesn't matter; just watch. Don't block them because it is impossible and needless to do so.

For example, if I ask you to think of anything except durian in your meditation, the one thing that will come up in your meditation is durian.

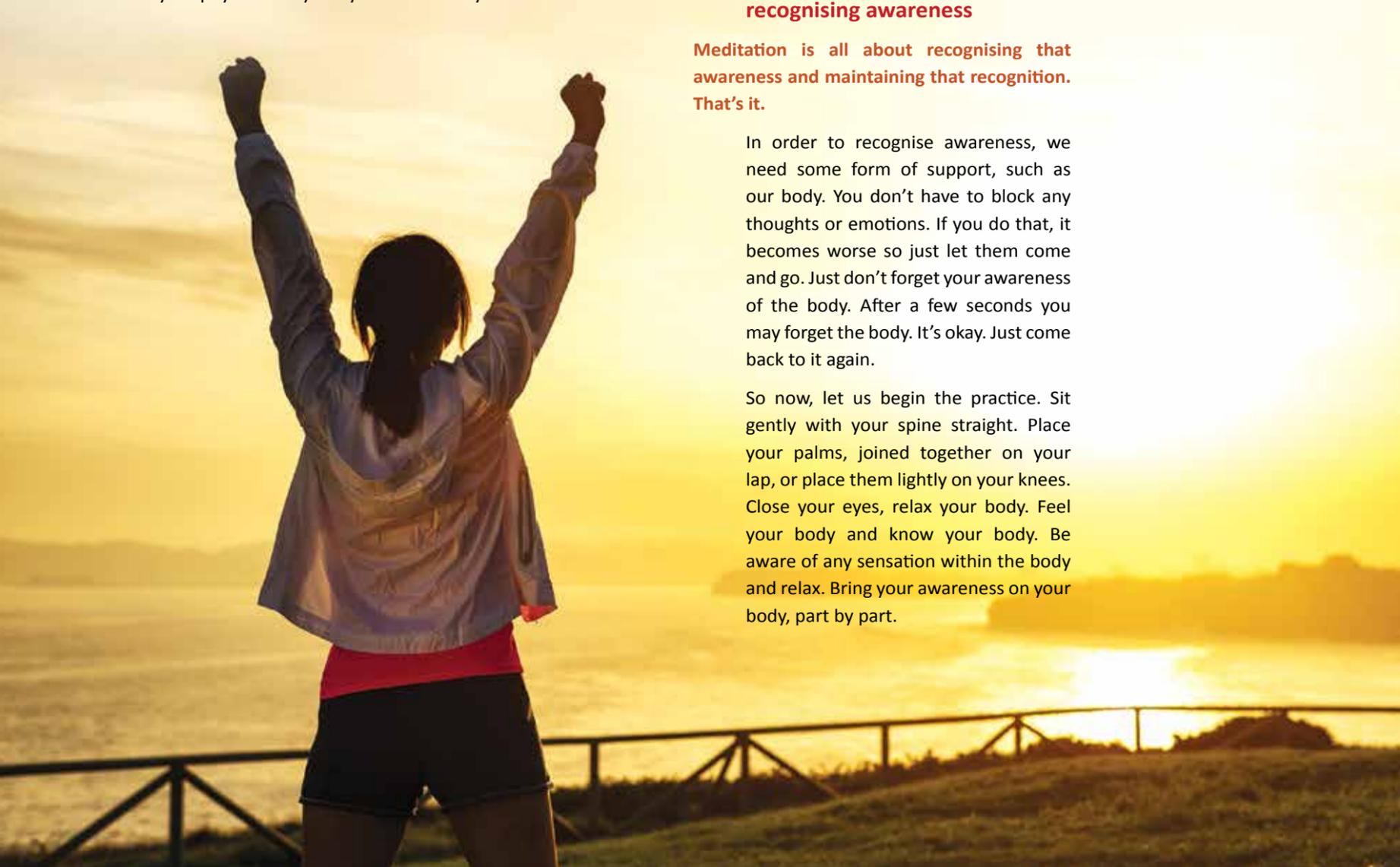
Not having any thoughts is not the path of meditation. It is an experience of meditation. Just like peace, joy and bliss are experiences of meditation but not the essence of meditation.

Awareness is the essence, and is the heart of basic goodness. We all have wonderful qualities that are with us all the time such as love and compassion, abilities, power, wisdom, skills and lots of other good qualities.

We are more capable than we believe, and more good-hearted than what we feel. But people usually focus on and exaggerate the negative aspects, which generally make up just 10 percent of their lives, instead of the positive. So we have to learn to think, talk and act positively. Only then will you discover good qualities within.

In a nutshell, first, find joy and peace within you rather than seek them in the external environment. Second, utilise meditation as a tool to find that peace within you. And third, appreciate our basic goodness, appreciate our lives and be grateful that we are still alive and breathing and able to experience wonderful conditions such as living in a delightful country like Singapore. ☺

Editor: You can also obtain a CD of the body relaxation meditation taught in this article from the Monastery's Reception Office. Titled *Meditation for Relaxation*, the guidance in the English and Chinese tracks is given by Ven Kwang Sheng.



Finding Happiness through the

The Four Immeasurables

Karen Tan attended a recent retreat by Dr Alan Wallace and learnt what made for genuine joy and happiness.

“Those desiring to escape from suffering hasten right towards suffering. With the very desire for happiness, out of delusion, they destroy their own happiness as if it were an enemy.”

– Shantideva

These words smacked me like a ton of bricks, the epiphany above ringing in my ears, echoing throughout my consciousness. I saw squarely how deluded and ignorant I have been and still am.

Dr Alan Wallace had just laid out in plain English why we suffer pain, change and conditioning the way we do. In a two-day retreat on the Four Immeasurables held at the Pagoda of 10,000 Buddhas at the Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery, it certainly felt like we were in the presence of more than one teacher in the room. Goodness knows I need all the help I can get to end this self-perpetuating cycle of craving and delusion.

A slow learner and late bloomer, this is my third retreat with the eminent meditation teacher. Dr Wallace has practised meditation for the last 40 years and is one of the most prolific Western writers on Buddhist meditation and translators of Tibetan Buddhist texts and commentaries. Having been a translator to many accomplished Buddhist teachers including H.H. the Dalai Lama, his effortless articulation is testament to the eloquent wisdom that has been passed on through him. Their voices were literally his voice, he said. “So if I am articulate, it is only because I have good teachers who captured the teachings so artfully. I am very grateful.”

The significance of the Four Immeasurables

To embody the Four Immeasurables, Dr Wallace took us on a journey of development and discovery **to understand that the qualities of Loving-Kindness, Compassion, Empathetic Joy and Equanimity are not just Buddhism 101 and attributes that are nice to have, but to see how these four great qualities are in fact infused and intricately woven into every aspect of our ethical, mental and wisdom cultivation. They are in fact, the very fabric of our consciousness, of life, of each of our reality.** “Buddhist meditation is not only a matter of stilling the mind, or centring oneself; it has to do with radically shaping our view of reality, our values, our way of life,” he said.

The usual way we look for happiness

Two hundred and eighty retreatants, from all walks of life, of different ethnicities, nationalities, religions, came together in a singular search for one thing: Happiness. We all wanted to know how to be happy. Yet we didn’t know where to look. Dr Wallace said, as human beings, we are habitually ocular and our senses are naturally drawn outwards. Hence we seek answers to questions by searching outwards, instead of looking inwards. Hedonic pleasure, or pleasure derived from the world, as he defined it, is stimulus-driven—“stemming from sensory, personal, conceptual, intellectual or aesthetic stimulation”. Even the functions of hunting and gathering influence the way we think of happiness. So we take, consume, acquire, accumulate—thinking that more is better, more is happier, but then it somehow falls short. That’s why we read about so many depressed, rich people in the world, and conversely, so many poor people who are happy!



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What true happiness really is

So what is this happiness we have to find within? This beautiful paradox brings me to tears: **Genuine happiness stems not from what we can get from the world, but what we bring to it. What makes happiness genuine is the very motivation behind each thought, word and deed. Is it wholesome or unwholesome? Is it harmful or beneficial? Is it for my own sole benefit or for the benefit of many others?** I paused to think about the happiness from my worldly acquisitions and achievements that never quite lasted and the many pleasures that quickly became displeasure in no time. Juxtaposed against the wellspring of happiness from doing something good unconditionally for others, because it is the right thing to do at the right time, there is simply no comparison here.

Genuine happiness, said Dr Wallace, has no competition. If you see a well-balanced happy person, you can't take it away from him. The most you can do is to be inspired by him. It is the cultivator approach to well-being, stemming from an ethical way of life, mental balance and self-knowledge that crosses the borders between science, philosophy and religion. **"Compassion can spark and fuel our aspiration for a life of genuine happiness. Generating compassion will allow us to see through the delusion of hedonic pleasures and stimulation. Not having compassion is the very reason for our failure to see the actual or underlying causes of our own misery. That is why we continue to wallow in the cesspool that we have made for ourselves and we continue to ask ourselves, why am I in this mess?"**

True happiness is without negativities

Authentic or genuine well-being is free from resentment, hatred and animosity. According to Dr Wallace, these negative feelings and mental states are the core features that make us feel sorry for ourselves and diminish our aspiration to be free from misery and the causes of misery. They drain us from being more focused and diligent on our journey to well-being.

So like a mother guiding her only child on his first steps, Dr Wallace walked us through the fundamentals of meditation central to the Buddhist teachings. Talking us through on how to settle the body, speech and mind in its natural state, he reminded us that natural is not habitual, but rather the absence of tension and dullness. It is relaxed but alert attention, allowing the breath to flow easily like gentle waves coming in and out. "I have never met a relaxed person who is also angry", chuckled Dr Wallace. Any tightly-held posture like a clenched fist is not sustainable. It is our natural birth right to be at ease.

Equanimity is the crux

As a young monk, Dr Wallace was taught to develop the quality of equanimity first. "My teacher said, 'Develop equanimity well first and the rest of the three Immeasurables will follow.'" This deep heartfelt recognition that everyone ultimately just wants to be happy is the foundation of Bodhicitta. Equanimity brings forth serenity, calmness and warmth that lead naturally into loving-kindness,

compassion and empathetic joy. It makes sense because if we recognise that everyone is just like us in wanting to be happy and not to suffer, it makes it easier to see that we are all in the same boat. How can we wish badly upon one of our own? If one sinks, we may all sink together.

I recall my embattled years in the corporate world, equating drive and aggression to motivation, unrelenting speed with pro-activeness, every man for himself. So when I first encountered these qualities of loving-kindness, compassion, empathetic joy and equanimity, I was suitably unimpressed. To me then, they felt weak, passive, and out of place with the modern world. It was only years later after I encountered them again and again, that I discovered how wrong I was.

H.H. the Dalai Lama once said, "Compassion is not only an antidote to relieve others of their pain, it is also the basis of our immune system". These words are never far from my mind as I make my way through life. At the mundane level, the Four Immeasurables can be developed as life skills, useful to have in one's arsenal of know-hows. But their magnitude knows no bounds. They are powerful and directed, not weak and passive as I had originally thought. They cut across chronological age, maturity, mental continuum, life times and beyond, and are omnipresent in all rungs of the ladder on the climb towards Nirvana. They are the ultimate manifestation of the perfection that resides in all of us, our Buddha nature.

The Four Immeasurables counter-balance one another

However, used wrongly, as Dr Wallace cautioned—like a wolf in sheep's clothing—self-centred attachment can be mistaken as loving-kindness, despair as compassion, frivolous pleasure as empathetic joy, and aloof indifference as equanimity. Used well, loving-kindness is the antidote for malice, compassion for cruelty, empathetic joy for envy and cynicism, and equanimity for attachment and aversion. The beautiful synergy of the Four Immeasurables also remedies each other's false facsimiles, creating a brilliant system of checks and balances. Little wonder how it got its name.

Like a fine musical instrument, the system is in place and now requires someone adept enough to play it well. Guiding us back to the practice of meditation, Dr Wallace led us through eight sessions of sitting over two days, allowing us to test-drive each of the Four Immeasurables, starting with a loved one to neutral parties and finally to all sentient beings, pushing the limits of space and time. It is important, he reminded us, to know how to end your meditation well. When you complete your dedication or visualisation, ease back into your body to feel what it is like to feel loving-kindness, compassion, empathetic joy and equanimity. It is this cultivation, over and over again *ad nauseam* that you begin to spot the false facsimiles that seem so much like the genuine thing. It is precisely when you can feel it in your body that you know the difference.

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“How is it possible to love terrorists for all the terrible things they do?” someone asked. Dr Wallace answered, “Condemn the deed but not the doer. Recognise that the deed was wrong, evil, malevolent; yet understand that like us, they too want to be happy but have unfortunately gone down the wrong path. If anything at all, they deserve our compassion and help. No one who took the way of malice and malevolence has ever ended up well. Sadly, it inevitably and always ends up badly.”

It is simple logic but it takes a warm heart and sound mind to practise in this way. This practice may look simple, but it is far from it. It takes immense courage, confidence and conviction to walk the line. This, in a nutshell, is the essence of the Four Immeasurables.

As I began, I once again draw inspiration in the wisdom of Shantideva:

“All the suffering there is in this world arises from wishing oneself to be happy. All the happiness there is in this world arises from wishing others to be happy...”

**With perfect and unyielding faith,
With steadfastness, respect, and courtesy,
With modesty and conscientiousness,
Work calmly for the happiness of others.”**

Dr Alan Wallace, on the Four Immeasurables:

“We should season our day with loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy or equanimity, depending on the circumstances or situation, to cultivate well-being.... the cultivation of subliminal qualities around the heart leads to a good life, one that is satisfying, meaningful and fulfilling... a well-lived journey.”

Cultivating Conative Balance

To strengthen your mindfulness faculty, season your day with mindful moments and mindful silence. Then culminate your brief mindfulness practice with aspiration meditation.

The initial baby step for wisdom to arise is the training of attention. Begin with cultivating clarity, acuity, brightness, luminosity of the mind—focused attention and stability—not a dull, dopey, diffused mind.

Then reflect on these four questions in a sequence over 20 to 30 minutes of sitting mindfulness practice

1. **What is the most important aspiration in my life now?**
2. **How can others support me to fulfil this aspiration?**
3. **What change(s) should I make or transformation(s) should I embark on internally?**
4. **What can I contribute to the community or the world?**

Transforming Adversity into Joy & Courage

Q: How can we transform adversity into joy and courage, so that we don't get overwhelmed by situations and become unhappy? – TH

A: We frequently encounter adversity in cyclic existence. When our mind is filled with afflictions, adversities come quite easily. When the mind isn't filled with afflictions, we can be peaceful and open even when we face difficult situations. How we interpret the situation influences how we will experience it. That's why it is so important to transform our mind.

But when we have problems, do we think of transforming our mind? Usually, we think that the situation is unfair, that others are wrong for treating us badly, and that they should change. When we blame others, we are essentially giving our power to them because we're thinking, “My problem and my unhappiness is the fault of that person. They have to change and then I'll be happy.”

Looking at the situation this way is a dead-end because we can't make them change. The only person we can possibly change is ourselves. Instead of either feeling sorry for ourselves or stewing in our anger, we need to change how we are viewing the situation.

For instance, my teacher Lama Yeshe told us how much he learnt by being forced to flee his homeland and become a refugee. Had he not encountered this, he said, he would never have deeply understood the Dharma even though he had been studying it for years at Sera Monastery in Lhasa. Only when he became a refugee did he start putting the teachings into practice, and this caused his whole life to change. He began to see the internal power he had to deal with the situation. By seeing that his having to leave everything behind and go to a new country where he didn't know anyone was a result of his karma—the actions he had done previously—he didn't get angry at those who occupied Tibet. He had more energy to do purification practices and his renunciation of cyclic existence grew. As he saw the suffering of the refugees around him as well as the suffering of the soldiers occupying Tibet, his compassion for all sentient beings expanded.

That transformation would not have happened had he not become a refugee. I remember Lama putting his palms together and saying how much he appreciated the people who caused his difficulties. This made a strong impression on me because he was not angry at all and genuinely appreciated the people whose actions brought him problems.

So when you think of someone who makes your life difficult, put the Dharma you have learnt into practice and transform your mental state. When you do, you'll grow in the Dharma and will have increased confidence and courage to face difficulties. Your mind will be joyful. You may even be able to say “thank you” to him for giving you the opportunity to change and grow. If we want to attain Dharma realisations, we need to practise patience and master fortitude. Developing such qualities requires people who challenge us. So we have to appreciate and thank them.

There are several ways we can look at an adverse situation in order to transform it into joy and courage. If we firmly believe and understand karma—that our actions produce the corresponding results we experience—we will know that if we criticise others, inevitably others will criticise us. We created the cause for it with our anger, our judgmental, critical mind, and our tendency to blame others. Once we acknowledge that we create our own misery and whatever we experience is due to our having done something similar to someone in this or previous lives, it becomes easy to begin practising the Dharma and transforming adversity into the path.

By harming others in the past, we indirectly harm ourselves. This doesn't mean we deserve to suffer; we're simply experiencing the results of our own actions. By treating others with kindness and compassion, we create the causes for our own future happiness. Understanding this, we will be more conscientious and mindful of our actions, bringing more peace in our life and influencing others in a positive way. ☺

– Ven Thubten Chodron
www.thubtenchodron.org
www.sravasti.org

The Soapberry Sutra

Spoken by the Buddha

This short and easy-to-understand sutra is believed to be one of the earliest canonical sources where the Buddha made a direct reference to the use of the rosary beads (or mala) as a physical aid to the practice of seeking refuge and maintaining mindfulness in the Three Jewels.



Thus I have heard: At one time, the Buddha was travelling through Rajagriha, and came to Vulture Peak Mountain, together with a great assembly of bhiksus, one thousand two hundred and twenty-five individuals in total, and uncountable bodhisattvas whose fame spread far and wide, well-respected by devas and humans. At that time, a troubled king, whose name was Vaidurya, sent his messenger to the abode of the Buddha. He prostrated at the Buddha's feet, and relayed this message to the Buddha, "Blessed One! The borders of my country are small, frequently

plundered by bandits over the years, the five kinds of grains are scarce and expensive, and infectious diseases circulate, oppressing my people with much suffering. I have never been able to sleep in peace. The Dharma treasury of the Tathagatha is profound and vast, but as I am burdened by worrisome duties, I am unable to practise. May the Blessed One specially regard me with loving-kindness, and grant me the essential Dharma that is easy to cultivate whether in the daytime or at night, so that I can be separated from the masses of suffering in the future."

The Buddha said to the king, "If you wish to extinguish the obstacles of afflictions, and the obstacles of karmic fruition, you should string together one hundred and eight beads of soapberry, and keep it with you at all times. Whether walking, sitting or reclining, always maintain a focused mind, without dissipating your attention elsewhere, and call upon the names of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha while counting one soapberry bead. You count the soapberry beads consecutively in this way, up to ten times, twenty times, a hundred times, a thousand times or even until one billion times. If you are able to complete two hundred thousand times, without distraction in body and mind, and without any sense of hypocrisy, at the end of your life, you will be born in the third heaven (of the desire realm) called Yama, where food and garments come naturally, and where there is always peace and bliss. Moreover, if you are able to complete one million times, you will cut through the one hundred and eight types of afflictions, and begin to turn away from the stream of samsara, and head towards nirvana. By permanently cutting through the root of afflictions, you shall attain the highest fruition."

The messenger relayed this message to the king, and he was greatly overjoyed. Turning towards the direction of the Blessed One, he bowed his head to the Buddha from afar, and said, "What virtue! I shall obey it!" Then, he ordered his minor officials to produce one thousand sets of soapberry rosary, and distributed one set to each of the six relations of the royal household. The king was constant in his recitation and mindfulness, and though he might be personally involved in military expeditions, he did not forsake his practice.

The king thought, "The Blessed One with his great kindness responds to everyone. If the goodness that I have fostered will indeed help me to avert the long-lasting sea of suffering, may the Tathagatha appear before me to speak the Dharma." Overwhelmed by this joyful aspiration, he did not eat for three days. The Buddha manifested himself, together with his retinue. Coming into the palace, he said to the king, "Previously the bhiksu Shadou recited the names of the Three Jewels for ten years, and attained the fruition of sakadagami (once-returner). By gradually progressing in his practice, he has become a pratyekabuddha (solitary realiser) in the world called Universal Fragrance." Upon hearing this, the king doubled up in his practice. The Buddha said to Ananda, "What more so if someone could recite the names of the Three Jewels for multiples of ten thousand times? Even to merely hear the name of such a person, and to generate a single thought of rejoicing brings about future rebirth in places where the ten virtues are always heard."

When this teaching had been spoken, the great assembly was overjoyed and vowed to uphold it. ☺

Unknown translator, filed under Eastern Jin records. Sutra #786 of Taisho Tripitaka.
English translation attempted by Vincent Lim.



Scan this to read
the sutra in Chinese

Self-compassion practices can be difficult for both children and adults. But learning to be compassionate to ourselves is important. Early research has associated self-compassion with other positive qualities like wisdom, personal initiative, curiosity, happiness and optimism. Try the mindful awareness practice below to develop self-compassion.



A Radical Act of Kindness

- 1 Lie on the floor and pay attention to your body. How do the different parts of your body feel right now? How does it feel to lie on the floor? Feel your head on the pillow, the crook of your neck, your shoulders on the blanket.
- 2 If thoughts come to your mind, don't get caught up in them; just return to your body: noticing how your arms feel lying by your sides, how the back feels against the floor, your rear, your legs, your feet, etc.
- 3 Try not to analyse; just observe your body and mind. Ignore the heckling voice in your head. Resting and introspection often don't seem as important as the other things we do. But they are really important, more important than we realise.
- 4 There is no place we have to go right now. Nothing we need to do, nobody we need to please and nobody else we have to be. We don't need anything other than what we have right here. All we are doing now is resting. Nothing more and nothing less.
- 5 As you sense your weight sinking to the earth below, imagine seeing the tension in your body as a cloud of grey smoke leaving your body and releasing it into the earth below.
- 6 Then picture your own safe place: a place where you are happy, feel loved, are strong and relaxed, and have lots of fun. This can be a place you have been, never visited or even an imaginary place you conjure up. Picture yourself having fun and relaxing in your safe place.
- 7 Next, move your attention to where your heart is. Imagine that space glowing with warmth. Feel the warmth slowly and steadily become sweeter, larger, deeper and wider until it radiates out to warm your torso, neck, shoulders, arms, hands, fingers, then throughout your entire body. The warmth coming from inside is enormous and limitless. Rest in that warmth for a while.
- 8 We take a break from all the inner talk about what people say, do, think and feel. We let go of such thoughts, take good care of ourselves and rest. We are going to be kind, caring and supportive of ourselves, knowing that we are complete and whole just as we are.
- 9 Good times and bad times are part of life; like the tide they come and go. One thing's for sure, they'll always change. Sometimes it's hard to wait but just hold on.
- 10 Finally, send friendly wishes to ourselves. May we be healthy and strong, be with people we love and who love us. Everyone in our safe place is relaxed, peaceful, free, having fun and at ease. ☺

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

The General's Question

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

A general once came to question a renowned meditation master. The general was a forceful and powerful man, while the master was well-known to be gentle and peaceful.

"Do heaven and hell actually exist? If so, prove it to me!" demanded the general.

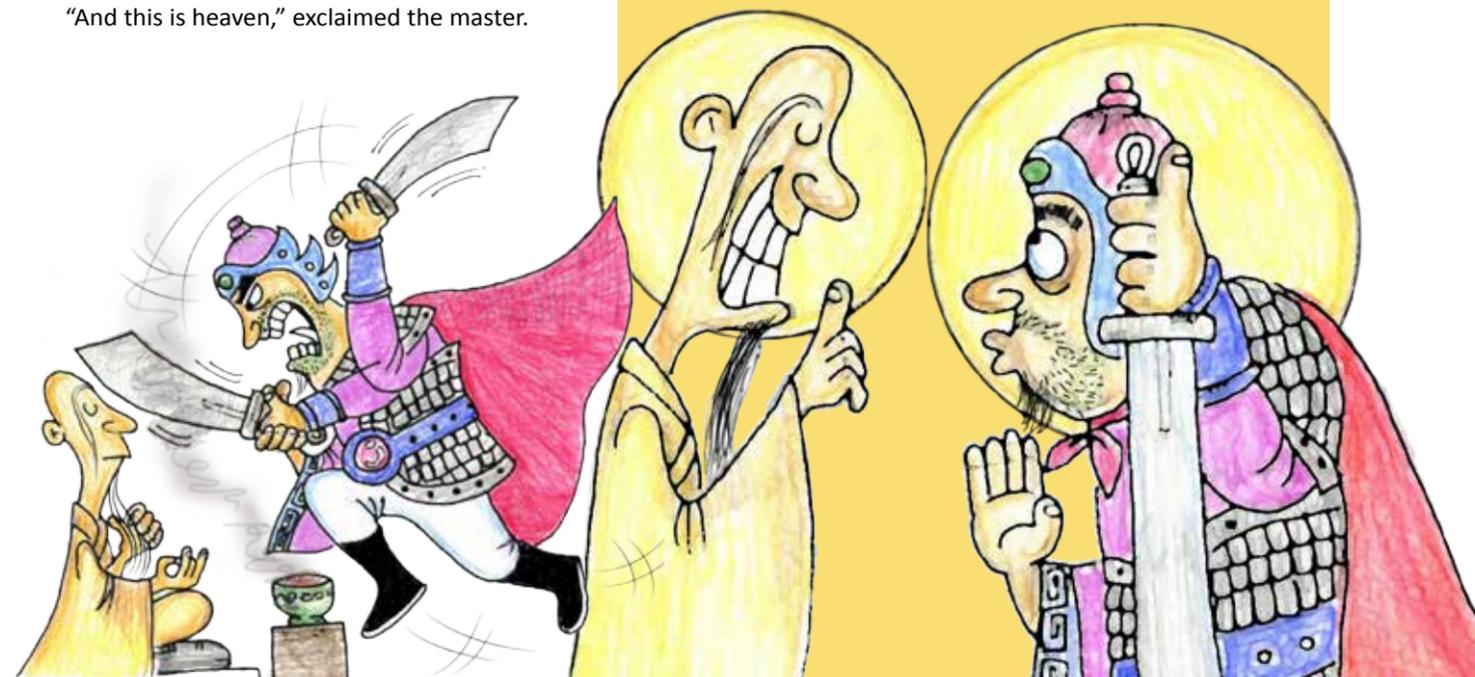
The master regarded him with obvious contempt. "Such a weighty question," he answered sardonically. "And asked by someone with such an ugly face!"

The general was not accustomed to insults and he flew into a huge rage. He unsheathed his sword, raised it above his head and was about to deliver a death blow on the master.

The master, unaffected, said softly, "Here is hell."

At this, the general paused. He stared at the master, and quietly put away his sword.

"And this is heaven," exclaimed the master.



Heaven and hell are only what we create for ourselves. If we make ourselves miserable with our own thoughts, or if we allow our ego (our false self) to be hurt by what we consider to be insults or injustices, we will suffer and create a sort of living death or hell for ourselves.

We cannot really change or control others, but we can change our attitude towards them.

It is not only those who are familiar with Buddhism who can understand this. The English poet, William Blake wrote the following verses around two hundred years ago. The first verse describes how by caring for others, one creates heaven; and the last verse describes how through selfishness, one creates hell.

*Love seeketh not itself to please
nor for itself hath any care,
but for another gives its ease,
and builds a heaven in hell's despair.*

*...Love seeketh only self to please,
to bind another to its delight,
joys in another's loss of ease,
and builds a hell in heaven's despite.*

There are numerous examples in world's literature that show similar insights to those we find in Buddhism. The message of the Buddha is: *Come and see, and decide for yourself.*

— Ven Hue Can

Minding our Freedom to Believe

I was caught in a heated exchange once with a young Cambodian. We were posed this question, “Should the state impose a national religion on its people?”

He is an intelligent, young man who was born and bred in the Kingdom of Cambodia, where Buddhism is officially declared in the Cambodian Constitution as the state religion, along with the clause that people are free to pursue their own religious beliefs.

For him, the question was therefore a no-brainer. His instinctive response had been, “Yes, of course! What is the problem? Buddhism has been the state religion in Cambodia for a long time and it is good for everybody that we follow the same traditions and customs. It’s part of our shared Cambodian identity.” End of discussion.

I disagreed and pointed out that the question was a general one, not specifically on Cambodia or Buddhism. It was intended to be prescriptive and applicable to states in general. Coming from multi-racial, multi-cultural Singapore, I am more mindful of the need to defend the space for diversity and co-existence. I tried my best to explain to him that not all religions are peaceful. What if the national religion that the state decides to impose is extremist and denies the right to existence of all other belief systems? In fact, it seems to me that most religions tend to make a distinction between their believers versus “others”. It took him some time but he eventually came round to see my point.

I strongly feel that Singapore’s position as a unique melting pot for peoples of all races, religions, cultures, languages from any part of the world is under-appreciated. I once worked with an Arab researcher. One day, she received an invitation to meet an Israeli, and she did not know whether to accept it or not. I offered to go with her to the meeting but she thought it over and decided that she was capable of handling this social occasion independently. After the meeting, she burst

into my office and said it was her most mind-blowing experience ever. From the day she was born till now, i.e. for over 30 years in her life, she had never—not even once—considered Israelis as anything except “others”, a diplomatic way to say “enemies” who are automatically dehumanised in our minds. But today, meeting one in real life, having tea over a social conversation with this “enemy” who in every other way was just as human as her, was so ... surreal. Such a meeting would have been unthinkable back in their home countries in the Middle East. It could only have taken place here in Singapore.

Yes, in teeny weeny tiny Singapore, which the Cambodians jokingly inform me will sink into nothingness if we put the whole of Singapore (total area of 719.1 km²) into their Tonle Sap river (areas ranging from 2,700 km² to 16,000 km²). Perhaps, it is good that we remain always mindful of our vulnerabilities, lest we fall into complacency as I thought my young Cambodian counterpart did. Unfortunately, I did not share his optimism that Buddhism as Cambodia’s state religion is unassailable. As a foreigner, I get Cambodians telling me things that they could not openly say to each other. I’ve met many Cambodians who had converted to other religions; some openly, others surreptitiously. Some of them were highly critical of Buddhism though I felt that most of their comments were directed at cultural practices that they assumed were Buddhist as they grew up being told so, without really understanding or trying to find out what the Buddha taught. One young man who was my motorcycle rider (riding pillion on a motorcycle is the most common form of public transport in Cambodia) told me that “nobody believes in Buddhism anymore.” He estimated that eighty to ninety percent of the people in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, were Christians. His was obviously a biased view, coming from his own life experience growing up in a missionary orphanage (though he was not an orphan; his father worked there) and was presently attending medical school sponsored by a church.

Ironically, pacifist worldviews are the most vulnerable to competitive, militant pressures for the simple fact that they accommodate others and eschew violence. It would be naïve to assume that our freedom to believe in whatever worldview we choose is guaranteed because it is not.

What we have in a heterogeneous society like Singapore is therefore really precious and extremely rare. The pertinent question is how do we ensure that we and our future generations can continue to exercise this choice. ☺

text : Oh Puay Fong



I have had my fair share of budding vegetarian woes since I decided on a meatless diet. From a lack of support from family and friends who are non-vegetarians to experiencing a shortage of vegetarian food options within Singapore, you name it—I have gone through it. Through this food review column, I hope to highlight food outlets serving dishes that are suitable for those on a lenient or strict vegetarian diet, making vegetarianism a much easier lifestyle option.

text : Chloe Huang



Rare find in the city

Tempura Kohaku
3 Temasek Boulevard
#03-311 Suntec City
Singapore 038983

Opening Hours
11 am to 11 pm

Tempura Kohaku serves both meat and plant-based tempura tendons (tempura on rice). It has the most varied types of plant-based tempura that I have ever tried so far. Whatever vegetables that I can think of, are now transformed into tempura! Instead of dipping the tempura in a separate sauce, the savoury-sweet Tensho-sauce is dribbled on the tempura. You may also choose between spicy and non-spicy flavour tendons.

If you are a big eater, there is the option of Vegetable Tendon set (S\$18.50), which consists of the regular tempura tendon accompanied with Udon. Alternatively, you could upsize rice at an additional S\$1. For me, the regular Vegetable Tendon (\$14) was more than enough to keep me full throughout the day.

I was a little disappointed that the restaurant only served cold green tea. But, it provided good customer service. I was surprised by the waitress' thoughtfulness, when I was provided a basket for my big shopping bag. If you are looking for a place to bond with friends, this place is less than ideal as its small space is more suitable for a quick meal.

It is also famous for its long queues during meal times so do try to get there early or you will have to wait 15 to 30 minutes for seats.

Overall rating: ★★☆☆☆ (lenient vegetarian diet)



Newcomer in the heartland

Art of Dao, the sister branch of Ci Yan Vegetarian Organic Restaurant located at Smith Street, is making its debut in the Ang Mo Kio neighbourhood. A little cosy café that serves delicious local vegetarian delights, the most popular dish of the restaurant is Nasi Lemak (S\$7.90). Its version replaces fried ikan bilis (anchovies) with fried tofu skin (beancurd skin), accompanied by delicious mock otak-otak (grilled fish cake wrapped with banana leaf) that tastes just like the original.

I also ordered satay (6 sticks for S\$9), which were crispy and tasty. Another highly recommended item to try is the crispy curry puff (S\$1.20 each), which is usually sold out by lunch-time!

Interestingly, this small, quaint café serves organic gourmet coffee (S\$5.90) in French press.

Art of Dao also provides catering services for various functions, and can customise its menu to your preference.

The hunky owner is friendly and chatty. It is a good place to visit for a relaxing afternoon break.

Overall rating: ★★☆☆☆ (strict vegetarian diet)



Art of Dao
603 Ang Mo Kio Ave 5
#01-2661
Singapore 560603

Opening hours
11 am to 9 pm





Creamy Dairy-free Mushroom Soup

纯素蘑菇浓汤

Don't you love smooth, creamy mushroom soup?

Here's a recipe that uses a special ingredient—potatoes—to achieve a creamy and hearty soup that's absolutely dairy-free!

Ingredients :

- Mixture of button mushroom and shitake mushroom 200g
- Potatoes 60g
- Extra Light Olive Oil 1 tbsp
- Water 360ml
- Mushroom extract ½ tsp
- Salt to taste
- Pepper to taste
- A drizzle of Truffle oil (optional)

Method :

- 1 Peel and cut potatoes. Boil in lightly salted water until soft enough to pierce through with a fork.
- 2 In a separate pan, fry sliced mushroom in extra light olive oil until mushrooms turn golden brown.
- 3 Add water, mushroom extract and boiled potatoes to the pan of fried mushroom. You can use the same water previously used for boiling the potatoes.
- 4 Bring to a boil and simmer for about 10 minutes.
- 5 Transfer soup to blender. Add pepper and blend till soup is smooth. Taste and add salt if desired. You can thin the soup with some hot water if you prefer a thinner soup.
- 6 Serve with bread or salad. For a luxurious touch, drizzle some truffle oil before serving. Serves two persons.

谁不爱顺滑的蘑菇浓汤？今日分享的蘑菇浓汤采用特别食材——马铃薯，无需任何乳制品，您也能煮出香醇富足感十足的纯素浓汤。

- 材料：**
- 新鲜蘑菇、香菇200g
可依个人喜好，采用不同新鲜菇类
 - 马铃薯60g
 - 橄榄油1大匙
 - 水360ml
 - 蘑菇精 / 调味½小匙
 - 盐适量
 - 胡椒粉少许
 - 松露油（可随意增减）

- 做法：**
- 1 马铃薯削皮切片，放入煮滚的水与少许盐，煮至叉子可轻松穿过即可。
 - 2 在另一个锅中加入橄榄油，将切片的蘑菇、香菇煎至金黄色。
 - 3 在锅中加入水，蘑菇精 / 调味与煮软的马铃薯，可用之前煮马铃薯的水。
 - 4 煮滚后再闷煮约十分钟。
 - 5 煮好的汤放入搅拌机，加入胡椒粉打至顺滑。可依个人喜好再加重调味，若觉得汤太浓稠，可加入少许的热水再搅拌。
 - 6 把浓汤盛入碗中，搭配面包或沙拉享用。您也可淋上少许的松露油，增添奢华感。

(以上食谱为两人份。)

Recipe & photos courtesy of 食谱 / 照片: Joyce T
预知更多纯素贴士，请浏览
For more vegan food ideas, check out
www.facebook.com/rejoyceveg/

KONG MENG SAN PHOR KARK SEE MONASTERY
AWAKEN Magazine
88 Bright Hill Road Singapore 574117

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88 BRIGHT HILL ROAD SINGAPORE 574117
TEL: 65 6342 1739
MON - SUN 10AM TO 4:30PM

AP @ BRAS BASAH
216 BRAS BASAH STREET #01-02
BRAS BASAH COMPLEX SINGAPORE 330221
TEL: 65 6337 7562
MON - SAT 11AM TO 7PM & SUN, PW 10AM TO 3PM

YOUR Feedback Matters

We value your comments and welcome your suggestions for improvements to AWAKEN. Tell us how we can improve our magazine to better cater to your spiritual and holistic needs. What new column would you like to see; which articles would you like to read? Send us your praises and flames. E-mail your feedback to awaken@kmspks.org or send them to:

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

* Please include your full name and personal particulars

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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 yakshas, 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.

Dear Reader, "The Gift of the Dharma Exceeds All Other Gifts."

Do you wish to offer this greatest gift to others, so that more can be touched by the beauty of the Dharma, and be inspired to lead happy and meaningful lives? If so, you can share in the production costs of AWAKEN Magazine for free distribution. Simply photocopy this page, fill in the sponsorship form and mail it back to us together with your cheque or money order. All cheques and money orders should be made payable to "KMSPKS Monastery" and sent to:

Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery
AWAKEN Magazine
88 Bright Hill Road Singapore 574117

For overseas readers, please send bankdrafts in Singapore currency. Please include S\$10 for bank charges. Please note that the monastery is NOT able to accept cheques in foreign currency.

You can also donate online via eNets or Giro at <http://kmspks.org/about/donate>
If you have any enquiries, please call 6849 5300 or e-mail: awaken@kmspks.org

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 Please refer to www.kmspks.org/privacy-policy for more information on Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA).

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WHAT'S NEW

Text: Esther Thien

Singing your way to positive vibrations

Looking to start 2017 on a good note by cleansing remnant negative energies? Check out the latest singing bowls at Awareness Place.

You can choose from handmade ones of various sizes from Nepal, which include the Full Moon bowl, or the standard types.

A singing bowl is a metallic bowl made from a special alloy. Striking the surface of the bowl with a mallet or your fist, or stroking its rim produces a sustaining resonance that is delicate yet intense and deeply meditative.

Singing bowls offer a range of rich harmonic tones and vibrations, that entices the brain to move into the Theta brain wave frequencies, inducing a peaceful state of mind for greater clarity and intuition.

The Full Moon bowl is a more exquisite high grade bowl made astrologically from pure metals. It is fashioned only under the direct light of a full moon when there is less wind and peaceful vibration. Workers must also purify themselves physically with a ritual, and be calm and relaxed before making the bowl. If these conditions are not available, making of the Full Moon bowl is postponed.

Prices range from S\$128 to S\$828 for the 11 cm to 30 cm handmade singing bowls, and S\$36 to S\$105 for the 8 cm to 14 cm standard ones.

The Full Moon Bowl, measuring 11 cm to 15 cm costs S\$250. While stocks last. ☺

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

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

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Issue 37 / January 2017



Counselling & Social Services

心理辅导与社会服务

你是否经常觉得
Do you often feel

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 焦急不安	Anxious
<input type="checkbox"/> 不知所措	Confused
<input type="checkbox"/> 空虚寂寞	Lone
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 心事重重	Troubled
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 情绪低落沮丧	Sad
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 生活压力繁重	Stressed
<input type="checkbox"/> 紧张	
<input type="checkbox"/> 情感上碰到状况	Stuck in a relationship rut
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 需要一位聆听心事的人	Simply in need of a listening ear

Whatever difficulties or situations you are experiencing, you do not have to face them alone. Call us to meet our counsellor. Together we will help you to weather the storms!

无论您有什么烦恼, 都可以找我们倾诉。请立即致电与我们的辅导员预约。让我们协助您克服困境。

Helpline 6849 5351
Bilingual in English & Mandarin | 中英双语
 Operating Hours: Thu to Mon | 星期四至星期一 | 9am to 4pm
 Closed on Tue, Wed and public holidays
 辅导时间: 星期二、星期三与公假休息

*Strictly By Appointment Only - No Walk-In
 仅限预约, 谢绝无预约者

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Seeking Fulfilling Careers?

Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery (KMSPKS) is an established Buddhist organisation with a vision to be the exemplary spiritual and service sanctuary for the spread and practice of Buddhism; one that is guided by compassion and wisdom to enrich the lives of the community at large.

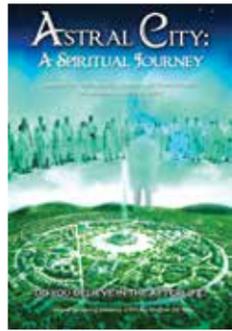
If you are passionate about joining us in realising our vision and take pride in producing great work, we welcome you to join our big family.

You may send your resume to: hrdept@kmspks.org OR drop by our HR Office @ 88 Bright Hill Road, Singapore 574117 between 9am to 4.30pm (Mon-Fri), except public holidays.

Alternatively, you may log onto: www.kmspks.org and click onto "kmspks", followed by "Livelihood" to view our job vacancies.

SEEN

Reaping the consequences of our thoughts and actions text: Susan Griffith-Jones



Astral City

Directed by: Wagner de Assis
Starring: Renato Prieto, Fernando Alves Pinto

In this epic movie by Brazilian filmmaker, Wagner de Assis, a man wakes up in a hell realm. He is confused and doesn't know where he is. He had been a good man on Earth, a doctor by profession, who was compassionate and kind towards others and always showering love on his family. In this strange place, all around him tormented creatures are calling him 'Suicide'. He is completely confused about where to go and what to do, as in this place, one torture is piled on top of another and beings are miserable and unkind in unimaginable ways to one another. He genuinely feels alienated in this territory and one day after viewing someone being rescued by some men exuding light, he sincerely calls out to them for help. Eventually they appear to take him away from there, literally whisking him into another dimension of existence.

When one first becomes a Buddhist, one will first learn four mind changing techniques that are traditionally designed to make one understand why it is necessary to turn one's mind to the Dharma. Among those that speak of the precious nature of human birth, the law of cause and effect and the law of impermanence characterise the nature of the six main realms of samsara. **In this film, we directly see different realms existing parallel to one another, and understand them to be governed by the merits of our thoughts.**

Having been saved by the beings of light, he now finds himself in an 'advanced' hospital where he is being given the chance to recuperate. He learns that he is reaping the consequences of his thoughts and actions on Earth. Although he considers himself a good man, he learns that he is indeed a suicide case, which is of great surprise to him. The explanation for this is that although he did not literally kill himself, he had actually metaphorically been doing so, which is why his heart gave up on him and why he found himself waking up in a kind of hell realm after death.

The purpose of the film is to show how life goes on after death and how we reap the results that we sow during our lives. When the time comes to return to Earth to learn lessons that have not yet been assimilated, then we will assume a physical form. However, once rebirth has taken place on Earth, we will forget where we came from and be totally absorbed in the reality we find ourselves, whether that is rich or poor, good or bad.

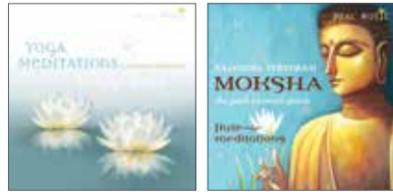
The ultimate message here is that we must reconnect to the greater reality that we inherently belong to while we are still in an earthly physical body, so that our thought process is refined to a stage in which we can appear in higher and higher (or rather more and more refined) levels of existence. Finally we can actually exit out of the hierarchy of realms that make up the whole of samsara upon enlightenment. ☺



Scan this to watch the movie online

Meditative music and easy-listening harmonies for your well-being text: Esther Thien

HEARD



Yoga Meditations
S\$23.90

Moksha: the path to inner peace
S\$23.90

To enjoy an afternoon of meditative music, spin *Yoga Meditations* on your disc player. Composed from various instruments such as piano, cello, temple bells, tingsha and even the calming sound of ocean waves, the meditative harmonies guide you towards a journey of inner peace.

In *Moksha*, you are immediately greeted by the cheerful chirping of sparrows in track one before being brought into the musical world of the bansuri flute, known to facilitate serenity and deep relaxation with its tune. Listen according to the suggested schedule for best effects.

Both CDs are available at all Awareness Place stores. ☺



Bernward Koch's Remembering
S\$23.90

Kevin Kern's Always Near: A Romantic Collection
S\$23.90

More light-hearted, breezy tunes await you in *Remembering* and *Always Near: A Romantic Collection*. The former features 13 signature Koch compositions—reflective, light and uplifting—to allow us to emerge into present awareness and remember we truly are joyous and loved beings.

The latter by the popular Kevin Kern, an American pianist, composer and recording artist of new-age music, is a 14-track compilation of some of his best works. It showcases very melodic and heart-stirring musical pieces. I love track five for its tender, poetic melody.

Get the albums from any of the Awareness Place stores. ☺

READ

Awakening joy and transforming the mind text: Esther Thien

Touching the Earth: The Power of Our Inner Light to Transform the World
By Seon Master Daehaeng
S\$23.90

Emotional Rescue: How to Work with Your Emotions to Transform Hurt & Confusion into Energy that Empowers You
By Dzogchen Ponlop
S\$39.30

Our Pristine Mind: A Practical Guide to Unconditional Happiness
By Orgyen Chowang
S\$25.90

Clearing Emotional Clutter: Mindfulness Practices for Letting Go of What's Blocking Your Fulfilment & Transformation
By Donald Altman
S\$24.80

Touching the Earth: The Power of Our Inner Light to Transform the World is a powerful and deeply insightful book. The teachings on our true nature delivered by Seon Master Daehaeng are direct, candid and hit straight to the point for those Buddhist practitioners who are keen to transform their lives through the practice of working with the mind, and raising their spiritual level.

In the second book, Ponlop Rinpoche gives a down-to-earth emotional rescue plan that allows us to gain greater self-awareness and understanding in order to live a more compassionate, joyful and peaceful life. The techniques of creating a *mindful gap*, *clear seeing* and *letting go* are especially useful.

Our Pristine Mind is another beautiful guide written in a clear straightforward manner to help us uncover the true nature of our mind that is brilliant, clear and immensely joyful. Presenting the entire journey of meditation, it is a realistic process that can be practised and experienced by anyone.

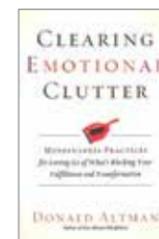
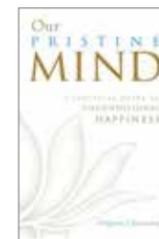
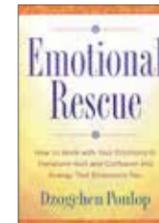
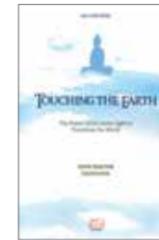
In the last book, *Clearing Emotional Clutter*, former Buddhist monk, psychotherapist and award-winning author, Donald Altman gives nuggets of practical advice and tools to modify our deeply entrenched habits, patterns and emotional baggage with a few minutes of self-care and attention daily.

All four books are available at Awareness Place stores. ☺



禅修的美好时光
Wonderful Moments of Meditation
By Garchen Rinpoche (In Chinese)
S\$27.80

Meditation plays a vital role in the practice of the Buddha's teaching, yet many beginners find meditation hard to enjoy and sustain. 《禅修的美好时光》 *Wonderful Moments of Meditation* is a complete practitioner's guide to the stages of meditation as taught in both Mahayana and Tibetan Buddhism. Detailed and comprehensive instructions on Shamatha and Vipassana meditation practice are given by a renowned meditation master, and each chapter includes a Q&A segment covering pertinent situations which beginners may encounter during meditation. Overall, this book is a great read for Chinese readers who are familiar with Tibetan Buddhist terminology and seeking practical instructions in their meditation practice. Purchase it from any Awareness Place stores.



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

Dharma Apps



Scan this to download app

Meditation Music

Relaxio

Free

Are you plagued by worries and need a break for greater calm and better sleep?

Take a deep breath, relax and meditate with this app. Choose from a selection of 12 tracks of

meditation music, ranging from soft piano, peaceful lake, gentle morning, sunrise to inspiration, autumn forest, seaside relaxation and temple in the hills.

This collection of gentle ambient music is perfect to help you relax, relieve stress and sleep. An intuitive timer helps you to measure your meditation sessions or turn off the music player after you have fallen asleep.

This app also features a 'gong' which you can activate to gently remind you that your timed session will finish soon. More than 16,000 users have rated five stars for this app.

Available from Google Play. ☺

text: Chloe Huang

Calendar of Events 2017

01
Jan

04
Apr



DHARMA

♦ CEREMONY | PRAYERS

Offering to Heavenly Realms

1 Jan | Sun | 6am
Venue: Hall of Great Compassion
Registration: Front Office
Enquiry: 6849 5333 | 6849 5300

Alms & Sangha's Offering

Offering alms to the Sangha is a meritorious act as it allows the monastics to concentrate on their learning, practising and sharing of the Buddha's teachings.

1 Jan | Sun
Alms Offering: 8am - 10am
Venue: Hall of Great Compassion
Sangha's Offering: 11.30am
Venue: VHCMH | Level 2 | Dining Hall
Fee: \$48 / \$388 ~~Sold Out~~
Registration: Front Office
Enquiry: 6849 5333 | 6849 5300

Chinese New Year Wish-fulfilling Lanterns

Light a Wish-fulfilling Lantern and usher in the Year of the Rooster with blessings of health and prosperity for you and your family!

27 Jan - 11 Feb
Venue: KMSPKS
Fee: Company / Family: \$338, Individual: \$50
Registration: Front Office
(From 1 Dec 2016 onwards)
Enquiry: 6849 5333

Chinese New Year Prayers

27 Jan, Fri | 5 Feb, Sun | 11 Feb, Sat | 12 Feb, Sun
Venue: KMSPKS | Various Halls
Registration: Front Office
Enquiry: 6849 5333 | 6849 5300

Threefold Refuge & Five Precepts Ceremony (Conducted in Mandarin)

Undertaking of Threefold Refuge & Five Precepts
Mar | Sun | 12pm - 2.30pm
Venue: Hall of No Form
Free Admission
Registration: www.kmspks.org
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | sed@kmspks.org

Qing Ming Prayer

4 Apr | Tue
Venue: KMSPKS
Registration: Front Office
(From 4 Feb onwards till fully registered)
Enquiry: 6849 5333

♦ TALKS | WORKSHOPS | COURSES

English Buddhism Course Year 1 | By Venerable

Life of the Buddha, Buddhist Observances, Threefold Refuge, Five Precepts/Eight Precepts, Ten Wholesome Actions, Four Noble Truths, Noble Eightfold Path and *Sigalovada Sutta*
15 Feb - 29 Nov | Wed | 7.30pm - 9pm
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom
Fee: \$90 for full year (3 modules)
Registration: <http://bit.do/2017EBCY1-1>
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | YAD@kmspks.org

English Buddhism Course Year 2 | By Venerable

Six Realms of Existence and Rebirth, Karma, The Concept of 'I', Three Marks of Existence, Dependent Origination, Buddhist Councils, Spread of Buddhism in Various Countries, The Three Poisons, The Five Hindrances, *Kalama Sutta*, The Four Stages of Enlightenment, The Six Perfections, The Four Immeasurables
15 Feb - 29 Nov | Wed | 7.30pm - 9pm
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom
Fee: \$90 for full year (Three modules)
Registration: <http://bit.do/2017EBCY2>
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | YAD@kmspks.org

English Buddhism Course Year 3 | By Venerable

Buddhist Scriptures, Buddhist Ethics, Buddhist Community, Buddhist Community in Singapore, Buddhism and Its Application in Life
13 Mar - 13 Nov | Mon | 7.30pm - 9pm
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom
Fee: \$90 for full year (Three modules)
Registration: <http://bit.do/2017EBCY3>
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | YAD@kmspks.org

Buddhism 101 for Youth

If you are between 21 and 35 years old, and wish to enhance your life and relationship with others, join this course! The eight sessions will cover teachings given by Lord Buddha, and how you can find relevance and apply them in your daily life.
5 Feb - 26 Mar | Sun | 2.30pm - 3.30pm
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom
Fee: \$40
Registration: <https://goo.gl/KJOVHW>
Enquiry: 6849 5345 | YAD@kmspks.org

Buddhist Etiquette Class 1 (Eng)

Teachings on Basic Practice & Observance of Buddhist Etiquette
Mar | Sat | 1pm - 4pm
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom
Free Admission
No registration Required
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | sed@kmspks.org

Threefold Refuge & Five Precepts

Preparatory Class (Eng)
Teachings on the Observance of Threefold Refuge & Five Precepts
Mar | Sun | 9.30am - 11am
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom
Free Admission
No registration Required
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | sed@kmspks.org

What is Karma?

English Dharma Talk Series by Bro Yick Keng Hang
16 Mar | Thu | 7.30pm - 9pm
Venue: APWBC
Fee: Nominal donation of \$5
Registration: community@kmspks.org
Enquiry: 6336 5067



MEDITATION | RETREAT

Self Meditation @ Lunch

Join our meditation session during lunch and relax your mind and body. Registration is required.
4 Jan - 26 Apr | Wed | 12.30pm - 1.30pm
(except 25 Jan, 1 Feb, 15 Feb, 22 Feb, 1 Mar)
(subject to availability)
Venue: APWBC
Free Admission
Registration: community@kmspks.org
Enquiry: 6336 5067



LIFESTYLE

♦ ART

Blissful Drumming

A drumming programme for participants aged 40 years and above.
6 Jan - 24 Nov | Fri | 2pm - 4pm
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Music Room
Fee: \$80 (40-65 years old)
Donation basis (Above 65 years old)
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | community@kmspks.org

Vocal Interest Group

A platform to learn the basics of singing and be a vocalist.
8 Jan - 26 Nov | Sun | 12.30pm - 2pm
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Music Room
Fee: \$50
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | community@kmspks.org



Zen Drum Class

A programme to train Zen Drum performers.
8 Jan - 26 Nov | Sun | 2.30pm - 4pm
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Music Room
Fee: \$100 (17-25 years old)
\$200 (Above 25 years old)
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | community@kmspks.org

Ribbon Embroidery

Learn how to stitch with ribbons. Welcome Chinese New Year with Embroidery Stitches.
5 Jan and 19 Jan | Thu
Grp 1: 2pm - 4pm | Grp 2: 7pm - 9pm
Venue: APWBC
Fee: \$40 (two sessions)
Material Fee: \$40 (payable to instructor)
Registration: community@kmspks.org
Enquiry: 6336 5067

100 Bliss Blanket Workshop

Let us rekindle a tradition that delivers and expresses love through the 100 bliss blanket to people we love and care about.
16 Feb and 2 Mar | Thu
Grp 1: 2pm - 4pm | Grp 2: 7pm - 9pm
Venue: APWBC
Fee: \$40 (two sessions)
Material Fee: \$48 (payable to instructor)
Registration: community@kmspks.org
Enquiry: 6336 5067

Western Floral Arrangement

Participants will learn 6 different geometric designs and styles for different occasions. 2 lessons on free styles.
24 Feb - 21 Apr | Fri | 7pm - 9pm
(no lesson on 14/4)
Venue: APWBC
Fee: \$120 (eight sessions)
Material Fee: \$25 (per session, payable to instructor)
Registration: community@kmspks.org
Enquiry: 6336 5067

Zentangle & Bach Flower

Emotion Management Workshop
8 Jan | Sun | 2pm - 5pm
Venue: APWBC
Fee: \$30 (inclusive of materials)
Optional (payable to instructor): personalised Bach flower remedy bottle at \$10 each
Registration: community@kmspks.org
Enquiry: 6336 5067

Zentangle (Beginners)

Follow your heart as you unleash your creativity with the Zentangle beginner's course.
15 Jan | Sun | 2pm - 6pm
Venue: APWBC
Fee: \$70
Material Fee: \$15 (payable to instructor)
Registration: community@kmspks.org
Enquiry: 6336 5067

