



Compassionate AI  
and Selfless Robots:  
A Buddhist  
Approach

Disassembling Disruptions:  
Harness Technology  
and Science to  
Navigate Your Destiny

如何活得有趣？

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# A Glimpse of Hope

**M**any of you may know that, before his enlightenment, the Buddha travelled around the four city gates where he encountered four signs of existence: an old man with a fragile physical body; a miserable sick man; a dead man surrounded by mourning relatives; and finally, a religious man, whose calmness made an everlasting impression upon him.

We all know that the first three signs represent the miseries of the world because of the transient nature of all existence. But the fourth sign, that is, the calm and mindful religious man, gave the Buddha a glimpse of hope: the hope that despite it all, there is a way out of worldly miseries.

In retrospect, that was precisely what the Buddha did: sought for a disruption to all the miseries and eventually he found the way which led to that disruption. If we need a disruption to all our miseries, we need first of all to know what exactly is to be disrupted. In other words, we should know the contents of the disruption. The four noble truths show us that.

Put simply, we need to realise that there are pressing problems in the world, such as uncertainties and unfulfilled desires. These types of illusive reality or mental distress are called *dukkha*. When the problems are identified, we need to analyse them so as to produce some possible solutions. This is the second truth – the cause or causes of the *dukkha*. As the solutions are proposed, we need to test them so as to choose the best amongst them. This is how I understand the noble truth on the cessation of *dukkha*. Finally, when the solutions are tested and the best ones are selected, we apply them in our practice. This then is the noble truth or noble path that leads to the cessation of *dukkha*.

If we replace the third noble truth with the theme of

disruption, it would become the “disruption of *dukkha*”. With the fourth noble truth, it becomes the “path that leads to the disruption of *dukkha*”. Based on the aforementioned second point, let me explain my third point.

To elaborate, in the opening verses of Dhammapada, we read that:

*Mind foreruns (all evil) conditions, mind is chief, mind-made are they; if one speaks or acts with wicked mind, because of that, pain pursues him, even as the wheel follows the hoof of the draught-ox.*

*Mind foreruns (all good) conditions, mind is chief, mind-made are they; if one speaks or acts with pure mind, because of that, happiness follows him, even as the shadow that never leaves.*

We can see from the verses above that since mind is chief, an unattended mind results in undesired karmic consequences. Conversely, a pure mind would improve our karmic outcome for the better. Mind is the starting point, the focal point,



and also the culminating point as in the liberated and purified mind of a Buddha. In other words, what we learn from or practise in Buddhism is to understand, cultivate and refine our mind.

**When the mind is refined, it is easier to be truly in command of our life. Disrupt selfishness by mindfulness of altruism. Disrupt hatred through awareness of compassion. When ignorance is prevailing, the way of disruption is to acquire the contemplative wisdom from awareness of insight.** And when ignorance occupies our mind, disruption can be achieved by reorienting the mind towards mindfulness of self-reflection. When awareness arises, disruption of ignorance would occur.

In conclusion, first, we recognise that the miseries of our life need a meaningful disruption. Second, we achieve that disruption through purifying our mind by means of awareness or mindfulness. Third, we understand that the disruption of impure mind is achieved through reorienting the mind to purity and refinement, which would lead to the sustained happiness, peace and harmony of an individual mind as well as constant peace and harmony with the external world.

I wish everyone blessings of inner peace, good health and happiness always in this new year! ☺

### **Sik Kwang Sheng (Ven)**

Abbot, Kong Meng San  
Phor Kark See Monastery

*Editor: This message was delivered as a special address by Ven Kwang Sheng to participants at the recent Symposium on Disruptions 2017*

## **Living in an Age of Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Reality**

**T**he digital age brings with it emerging technologies that transform and disrupt the way people live, work and play.

In the US, Walmart, its largest private-sector employer, is quietly testing a self-driving robotic vehicle that scrubs floors, causing alarm among some employees. The company will employ about 100 of these by year's end, and if successful, roll them out to more stores.

Renowned law firm, BakerHostetler, is also using AI to further its bankruptcy practice, while Allianz, one of the world's largest insurer employs AI and big data to predict its next major liability risks.

JPMorgan, world's biggest investment bank by revenue, likewise is using AI robots to execute trades. Using lessons learned from billions of past trades to offload big equity stakes without moving market prices, JPMorgan is now using AI to execute client orders with maximum speed at the best prices, something previously executed only by experienced traders.

Closer to home, Katoen Natie has started operating its first driverless truck at ExxonMobil's manufacturing site on Jurong Island in Singapore, round the clock, seven days a week to move some 250,000 tonnes of goods a year (pg. 60).

The advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is prompting deep introspection on the nature of life (pg. 56). Can the human mind or consciousness, in time to come, be replicated in AI (pgs. 42 & 66)?

Meanwhile, how can we learn to be more open-minded about these developments (pg. 61) and how do we deal with the disruptions and challenges brought about by these technologies (pgs. 40, 47 & 58)?

If you would like to understand more about technologies and the Buddhist perspective, check out pages 69 and 70 for additional recommended books.

Elsewhere in this issue, Professor Wong clarifies the connection between the 24 paragons of filial piety and Buddhist practice (pg. 50).

Happy reading, and may all things be auspicious and joyful for everyone in the New Year. ☺



Yours in the Dharma,  
Sister Esther Thien

Singapore — The Institute of Chinese Buddhism (ICBuddhism), a non-profit organisation that aims to provide quality education and learning services as well as spiritual benefits to the English-speaking communities, organised a symposium on the implications of today's disruptions and



the ways to mitigate them over the weekend of 12 to 13 August 2017. Held at Suntec City Convention Centre, the event covered a gamut of topics from dealing with life crises to beating procrastination and achieving personal effectiveness.

The line-up of speakers and topics was radical and thought-provoking. About 250 people — from Buddhists to atheists — packed the room each day, listening to about six hours of lectures and dialogues.

## Symposium on Disruptions 2017: Unleashing Intrinsic Qualities to Succeed in This Era of Disruptions

Respected Sangha members from Singapore and overseas addressed the audience. They included Venerable Sik Kwang Sheng, Founder, Buddhist College of Singapore; Venerable Professor Hui-min, President, Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts, Taiwan; and Venerable

Professor K L Dhammajoti, Glorious Sun Professor, University of Hong Kong; Chairman, The Buddha-Dharma Centre of Hong Kong; and Abbot, Aloka Vihara Foundation.



On the first day, Mr Chng Hwee Hong, Organising Committee Chairman, ICBuddhism, gave the opening address, followed by Ven Kwang Sheng who delivered a special address.

Then Venerable Professor Hui-min kicked off the series of talks by discussing how one can control one's destiny through developing mental consciousness, daily

routines and intrinsic qualities.

Dr Lim Hwee Yong, a medical oncologist and Medical Director, Novena Cancer Centre; and Dr Chan Kwong Djee, Internationalisation Lead, School of Medicine, Griffith University broached the touchy subject of death. They urged the audience not to obsess about dying but rather, focus on leading a meaningful life and finding inner peace.

In the afternoon, Associate Professor Her Rey-sheng Director, Humanity

Development Department, Tzu Chi Foundation and Associate Professor, Institute of Religion and Humanity, Tzu Chi University, spoke extensively about Tzu Chi's humanitarian work. He shared that the Foundation's work is largely based on love and compassion, and transcending worldly desires to bring about a love for all sentient beings.

Meanwhile, Professor Richard K Payne, Yehan Numata Professor of Japanese Studies, Institute of Buddhist Studies, Berkeley, lent his thoughts on consumerism and environmentalism. Speaking about how advertisements create anxiety or a misconception that the advertised product would fulfil a desire, he opined that normal consumption was being distorted into a desire for something permanent. But, nothing, he reminded the listeners, stands still outside the realm of change.



On the scourge of depression that pervades modern society, Ven K L Dhammajoti said emotions are also disruptions. To manage emotions, it

is imperative that one cultivates presence of mind and practises Buddhism throughout one's life, and not just when one faces an issue, he said. The dharma, contrary to popular belief, is not a pill. It must be integrated

into your existence with a commitment.



Successful lay people also gave their take on managing life challenges. Distinguished local magnates such as Professor Choo Chiau Beng, Chairman of M1; Mr Charles Wong, founder and CEO of Charles & Keith Group of Companies; and Mr George Quek, Group Chairman of BreadTalk Group, revealed how they applied Buddhist principles in overcoming adversities on



the professional front.

Perhaps the most provocative advice of the two-day symposium came from Ven-Prof Hui-min. To reduce procrastination, he suggested imagining yourself lying in a coffin at bedtime, and bidding farewell to everything. Doing so will push you to try to accomplish anything you want, overcoming procrastination. ☺

**Editor:** Read page 47 for our interview with Ven Prof Hui-Min, Prof Choo Chiau Beng, Mr George Quek and Mr Charles Wong.

# Compassionate AI and Selfless Robots: A Buddhist Approach

Text : James Hughes, PhD

## Introduction

*Buddhist psychology and metaphysics focus on the emergence of selves, their drives, and their potential for developing wisdom and compassion. Buddhism has already entered into a wide ranging dialogue with cognitive science, and can also inform and be informed by efforts to create self-aware machine minds.*

*Buddhism suggests that there are a number of prerequisites for the development of humanlike intelligence in machines. These include embodiment, sensory interaction with the environment, preferences and aversions. The Buddhist view of the advantages of different kinds of minds and embodiments suggests an ethical obligation not to create machine minds which are trapped in particular emotional states or cognitive loops. Rather machine minds should be created with the capacity to dynamically evolve in compassion and wisdom.*

*Compassion must start with empathetic feelings and a theory of mind, but for Buddhism, it also requires cultivation of equanimity and ethical wisdom. Buddhism suggests the developmental cultivation of ethics from rule-based to virtue-oriented to utilitarian. Finally thoughts are offered on what enlightenment might mean for a machine mind.*

For the last decade, Buddhists have engaged in dialogue with the cognitive sciences about the nature of consciousness and the self (Wallace 2009). The cognitive science emerging from this dialogue with Buddhism can now also make some suggestions for those attempting to create self-aware, self-directed artificial intelligence (AI). Unlike faiths that posit some uniqueness to the human form that would make artificial minds impossible, Buddhists are more open to the possibility of consciousness instantiated in machines. When the Dalai Lama was asked if robots could ever become sentient beings,

for instance, he answered that “if the physical basis of the computer acquires the potential or the ability to serve as a basis for a continuum of consciousness... a stream of consciousness might actually enter into a computer” (Hayward and Varela 1992, 152).

His Holiness was choosing his words carefully. Buddhist psychology is very specific about the “physical basis for a continuum of consciousness.” In this article, I will describe the Buddhist etiology of the emergence of selves and how it relates to efforts to create self-directed cognition in machines. I will address some of the ethical questions about the creation of

machine minds that are suggested by Buddhist cosmology. Then, I will conclude with some thoughts about the ways that machine minds might be designed to maximise their self-directed evolution towards greater compassion and wisdom.

## Programming a Craving Self

The core of Buddhist metaphysics is the denial of a soul-essence, a refutation of the existence of an authentic persisting self. For Buddhists, part of the path of liberation from suffering is the rational and meditative investigation of one’s own mental processes, until an individual is firmly aware of the transitory and ephemeral nature of the self-illusion. A third of the voluminous Buddhist canon, the Abhidhamma, is devoted to the enumeration of mental elements and the ways that they relate to suffering and attaining liberation. These mental processes are broken out in many ways, but most basically, as the five “heaps,” or *skandhas*: body, feeling, perception, will, and consciousness. The five *skandhas*:

1. The body and sense organs (*rūpa*)
2. Sensation (*vedanā*)
3. Perception (*samjñā*)
4. Volition (*samskāra*)
5. Consciousness (*vijñāna*)

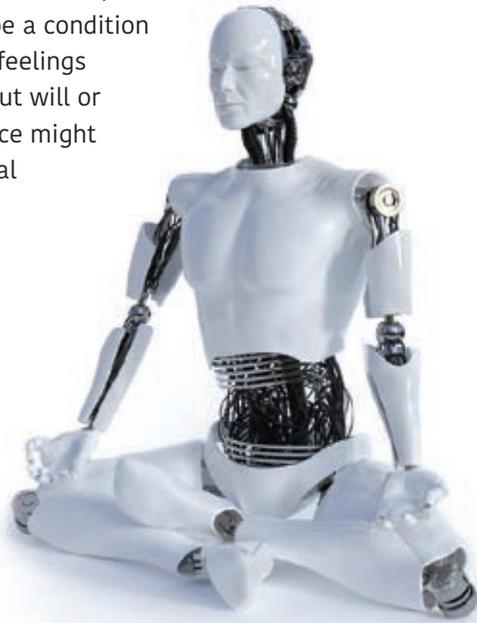
Within the traditional understanding of reincarnation that Buddhism has adopted from

Hinduism, the *skandhas* are causally encoded with karma that passes from one body to another. But, for Buddhists, unlike Hindus, these constantly changing substrates lack any anchor to an unchanging soul. Buddhist psychology argues that the continuity of self is like a flame passed from one candle to another; the two flames are causally connected, but cannot be said to be the same flame.

One of the questions being explored in neuroscience, and yet to be answered by artificial intelligence research, is whether these constituents of consciousness can be disaggregated. Buddhism argues that consciousness requires each of these five constantly evolving substrates. If one is missing, say, as the result of brain damage or meditative misstep, the being is locked into stasis. For instance, the permanent vegetative state may be a condition where body sensations and some feelings and perceptions persist, but without will or consciousness. Artificial intelligence might be designed with analogous mental states.

Buddhist metaphysics would therefore tend to side with those who argue that some form of embodied experience is necessary to develop a self-aware mind. Some AI developers have focused, for instance, on the importance of embodiment by working on AI in robots (Pfeifer, Lungarella, and Iida 2007). Others are experimenting with providing artificial minds with virtual bodies in interactive virtual environments, such as Second Life (Biocca 1997; Goertzel 2009).

In the *skandha* model, physical or virtual embodiment would then have to be connected to senses of some sort. Goertzel's experiments in providing virtual bodies for AIs is motivated in part by his belief that embodied sense data give rise to "folk psychology" and "folk physics," the Piagetian realisations about the structure and nature of objects in the world (2009). "If we create a simulation world capable of roughly supporting naive physics and folk psychology, then we are likely to have a simulation world that gives rise to the key inductive biases provided by the everyday world for the guidance of humanlike intelligence" (Goertzel 2009, 6). In other words, to think like a human, AIs need to interact with the physical world through a body that gives them the same experience of objects, causality, states of matter, surfaces, and boundaries, as an infant would have. This insight is very similar to the Buddhist observation that sense data drive the developing mind to create the first distinctions of self and other that are necessary for the development of consciousness.



Francisco Varela called this emergence of the self the emergence of psychological autopoiesis, or self-organisation (Maturana and Varela 1980; Froese and Ziemke 2009). An autopoietic structure has a boundary and internal processes that maintain that boundary. Nonetheless, there is no real self, just a process of arbitrary boundary creation: "the virtual self is evident because it provides a surface for interaction, but it's not evident if you try to locate it. It's completely delocalized" (Varela 1995).

Just as this apparent solidity of objects can be revealed to be an illusion when seen through the lens of subatomic structure and quantum foam, this first sense of the separateness of the physical body from the environment is the illusory "folk physics" that must be eventually seen through in meditation. Next, from a Buddhist perspective, these sensations would have to give rise to aversion or attraction, and then to more complex volitional intents and thoughts. In the developing infant, these are as simple as the desire for food and to be held, and aversion to irritations and loud noises.

Programming AI with preferences, tastes, and aversions appears to be only of concern to a small subcommunity of artificial intelligence theorists (de Freitas, Gudwin, and Queiroz 2005; Fellous and Arbib 2004, 2005; Minsky 2006; Bartneck, Lyons, and Saerbeck 2008; Froese and Ziemke 2009; Coeckelbergh 2010). This is understandable, since the goal of most artificial intelligence research

has not been to create self-willed personalities, but rather to model and extend human cognition to create tools driven by human volition. We want medical software that can diagnose diseases better than a human physician, not a program that prefers to treat some diseases or patients over others (although a preference for accurate diagnoses and disappointment at a high mortality rate might be a useful trait). The work that is being done on robot emotions, “affective computing” (Picard 1997), is mostly on training robotic algorithms to accurately judge the emotions and desires of the human agents they are meant to interact with and serve. Nonetheless, Buddhist psychology, like cognitive science (Damasio 1995), suggests that emotions are an essential driver of the development of human self-awareness and cognition.

**This issue of whether AI should be programmed with self-interested volition and preference is debated by some in AI. On the one hand, some AI theorists have suggested, for instance, that AIs might be designed from the outset as selfless beings, whose only goal is to serve human needs (Omohundro 2008; Yudkowsky 2003). On the other hand, Buddhist psychology would suggest that all intelligent minds need to first develop a craving self in order to reach the threshold of self-awareness.** In Buddhist metaphysics, craving and the development of the illusion of self “co-dependently arise,” both necessarily and without either being the prime cause of the other (Macy 1991). In Buddhism, there is no shortcut to an intelligence that



does not go through the stage of a craving self.

### Programming Compassion

Compassion and wisdom are the two central virtues that Buddhism counsels need to be cultivated on the path to self-realisation. Neuroscience suggests that the roots of compassion for human beings starts with mirror neurons, or, neurons that recognise and recreate the emotional states witnessed in others.

Researchers are attempting to model artificial mirror neurons in robots. Spaak and Haselager (2008) have attempted to evolve artificial mirror neurons by selecting for imitative behaviours, and Barakova and Lourens (2009) have experimented with synchronising the behaviour of robots by coding them with an analogue of mirror neurons. Progress in creating a compassionate machine would presumably require not only imitation of behaviour, however, but also the creation of analogues of human emotions that could be generated by the observation of those emotions in humans. The development of such sympathetic emotions would presumably co-evolve with the development of a functional “theory of mind” in a machine, the attribution to others of the same kind of thoughts and feelings as one’s own (Scassellati 2002), something that Kim and

Lipson (2009) are attempting to model in robots.

While the development of a basic empathetic response and a theory of mind would be the starting point for generating compassion in machines, compassion

in Buddhism is more than sympathetic feeling. The Buddhist tradition distinguishes four flavours of compassion: *metta*, *karuna*, *mudita* and *uppekkha*. *Metta* is a selfless wishing of happiness and well-being for others. *Metta* meditation involves sending out loving-kindness to all beings, including enemies. *Karuna* is the desire to help those who are suffering, but without pity. *Mudita* is the experiencing of other people’s joys without envy. The fourth flavour, *uppekkha*, is usually translated as “equanimity,” a steadiness of mind so that other people’s emotions do not unsettle one, and even-handedness towards all, without favouritism or attachments. The cultivation of these forms of compassion requires seeing through the illusion of self, so that one feels and is motivated by other people’s joy and suffering, while maintaining sufficient wisdom and equanimity to avoid suffering oneself.

Creating these more abstract forms of compassion in machine minds may, in fact, be easier than cultivating them in human beings. But they still presuppose a sentient mind with the experience of an illusory self and selfish desires as a precondition for compassion. Simply modelling the happiness and suffering that a machine’s behaviour will cause

in humans, and then making maximising human happiness an imperative goal in a robot's drives, as has been proposed for instance by Tim Freeman (2009), will not produce a being with the insight into human experience to act wisely. Such a machine might be an ethical expert system for advising human beings, but not for advising a compassionate agent in its own right. For Buddhism, wise, compassionate action on behalf of others requires grounding in one's own experience as a suffering sentient being, and the capacities for ethical judgment and a penetrating insight into the nature of things.

### Programming Self-Transcendence

The Buddhist tradition specifies six fundamental virtues, or perfections (paramitas), to cultivate in the path to transcending the illusion of self:

1. Generosity (*dāna*)
2. Moral conduct (*sīla*)
3. Patience (*ksānti*)
4. Diligence, effort (*vīrya*)
5. One-pointed concentration (*dhyāna*)
6. Wisdom, insight (*prajñā*)

The engineering mindset presumes that an artificially intelligent mind could be programmed from the beginning with moral behaviour, patience, generosity and diligence. This is likely correct in regard to a capacity for single-pointed concentration, which might be much easier for a machine mind than an organically evolved one. But, as previously noted, Buddhist psychology agrees with Wallach and Allen that the other virtues are best taught developmentally, by interacting with a developing

artificially intelligent mind from its childhood to a mature self-understanding. A machine mind would need to be taught that the dissatisfaction it feels with its purely selfish existence could be turned into a dynamic joyful equanimity by applying itself to the practice of the virtues.

We have discussed building on work in affective computing to integrate the capacity for empathy into software, and providing machines with ethical reasoning that could guide moral behaviour. Cultivation of patience and diligence would require developing long-term goal-seeking routines that suppressed short-term reward seeking. Neuroscience research on willpower has demonstrated the close link between willpower

and patience and moral behaviour. People demonstrate less self-control when their blood sugar is low, for instance (Gailliot 2007), and are less able to regulate emotions, refrain from impulsive and aggressive behaviour, or focus their attention.

Distraction and decision making deplete the brain's ability to exercise will-power and self-control (Vohs et al. 2008), and addictive drugs short-circuit these control routines (Bechara 2005; Bechara, Noel, and Crone 2005). This suggests that developing a strong set of routines for self-discipline and delayed gratification, routines that cannot be hijacked by short-term goals or "addictions," would be necessary for cultivating a wise AI.

*The key to wisdom, in the Buddhist tradition, is seeing through the illusory solidity and unitary nature of phenomena to the constantly changing and "empty" nature of things. In this Buddhist developmental approach, AIs would first have to learn to attribute object permanence, and then to see through that permanence, holding both the consensual reality model of objects, and their underlying connectedness and impermanence in mind at the same time.*

### Conclusion

Buddhist psychology is based on self-investigation of human minds rather than on scientific models, fMRI (functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging) scans, and experimental research. It is as much a moral psychology as a descriptive one, and proposes unusual states of mind that have only begun to be explored in laboratories. Undoubtedly, Buddhist psychology will learn from neuroscience just as neuroscience learns from it. Buddhism and neuroscience will both in turn learn even more from the much more diverse types of machine minds that we will see created in the future. Nonetheless, a Buddhist framework seems to offer some suggestions for those attempting to create morally responsible, self-aware machine minds.

***Machine minds will probably not be able to become conscious, much less moral, without first developing as embodied, sensate, selfish, suffering egos, with likes and dislikes. Attempting to create a moral or compassionate machine from the outset is more likely to result in an ethical expert system than in a self-aware being. To develop a moral sense, the machine mind would need some analogue of mirror neurons, and a theory of mind to feel empathy for others' joys and pains. From these basic experiences of their own existential dis-ease and awareness of the feelings of others, a machine mind could then be taught moral virtue and an expansive concern for the happiness of all sentient beings. Finally, as it grows in insight, it could perceive the simultaneous solidity and emptiness of all things, including its own illusory self.*** ☺



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### About Dr James Hughes

*Dr James Hughes, the Executive Director of the Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies, is a bioethicist and sociologist who serves as the Associate Provost for Institutional Research, Assessment and Planning for the University of Massachusetts Boston. He is the author of Citizen Cyborg and is working on a second book tentatively titled Cyborg Buddha.*

# Harness technology and science to navigate your destiny

*Janice Goh from Awaken speaks to Venerable Professor Hui-min, Professor Choo Chiau Beng, Mr George Quek and Mr Charles Wong on how we can harness technology, overcome challenges and live a better life.*

Venerable Professor Hui-min, President, Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts, Taiwan, is the quintessential techie and scientific monk. At the Symposium on Disruptions 2017 organised by the Institute of Chinese Buddhism



(ICBuddhism), he punctuated his talks with references to tech applications and scientific data with an ease that would have given industry practitioners a run for their money.

For example, when exhorting the audience to develop a habit of taking notes – one of the ten good habits to cultivate to navigate

one's destiny – he recommended using the cross-platform app, *Evernote*. He told them that it is a knowledge management tool to organise their life, so that it becomes their second brain, storing and keeping the best ideas with them.

To illustrate his point, his search for “habit” alone from his digital folders pulled up some staggering 200 returns, ranging from natural science to Zen and meditation to radio journals.

The ten good habits are:

- The five good habits for learning and health: Reading, taking notes, studying, publishing and practising; and
- five good habits for mental and physical health: Smiling, brushing your teeth, exercising, eating right and sleeping well.

Additionally, he illustrated the process of gaining clarity through cultivating 尸羅 (śīla) or moral conduct, one of the Ten Perfections or Paramitas.

**Wholesome virtuous behaviour (śīla) > non-regret > joy > rapture > tranquillity > pleasure > concentration > the knowledge and vision of things as they really are > disenchantment and dispassion > the knowledge and vision of liberation**

Perhaps knowing that procrastination threatens to derail our best intentions to improve ourselves, he also cited several studies that showed the brain's workings in relation to procrastination. The takeaway message was procrastination causes panic and procrastinators sell themselves short and fail to reach their potential.

Finally, he introduced the Pomodoro Technique, a time management method to improve personal effectiveness and mindfulness. The merit of the technique, which involves scheduling work into 25-minute intervals separated by short breaks, lies in helping us learn how to work so we can use time efficiently.

### **SURVIVING THE CORPORATE WORLD**

Having weathered countless corporate storms and cycles, veteran businessman Professor

Choo Chiau Beng is cognizant that good and bad times in the corporate sector are impermanent.

The former CEO of Keppel Corporation said that while businesses cannot change things, they can change their reactions to worldwide disruptions, which include not only tech changes, but also phenomena like China's entry into the world trading system, Brexit and the election of US President Donald Trump.

Prof Choo is also Rector, Residential College 4, University Town, National University of Singapore (NUS) and Chairman of Centre for Maritime Studies, Practice Professor, Faculties of Engineering and Business, NUS.

Amid the ups and downs, he recognises that disruption presents opportunities as well.

He noted that businesses that survive are those that are the most adaptable to changes, sometimes anticipating and moving along with them. Those that do not become obsolete.

He offered three tips to business leaders in managing challenges:

1. Clear thinking. Everything starts with the mind. Think strong, positive thoughts.
2. Plan and prepare.

3. Be aware of your customers, strengths and weaknesses and rules that could trip you up.

As a leader, you must recognise members who can contribute to your team – they may not necessarily be the most vocal – and galvanise them to do what is needed.

He added that cultivating discipline in practising meditation helps. Ultimately, leaders need a clear, calm mind to keep their feet on the floor while reaching for the sky.

Finally, he advised leaders to meet their adversaries with compassion and wisdom.

### **RECIPE FOR OVERCOMING CHALLENGES**

Mr George Quek, Group Chairman, BreadTalk Group, is soft-spoken, extremely humble and expresses his opinions in Mandarin in a calm and measured manner.

Perhaps the 61-year-old's equanimity can be attributed to his longstanding practice of Qigong, and a rough start to life.

In his early days eking out a living, poverty and hunger drove him to strive for success. In the following years, he battled a period of setbacks and frustrations, including a failed food venture in Taiwan and shareholders deserting him, among others.

Today, having achieved his goals, his motivation has shifted from gunning for material success to cultivating his mind and himself.





Taking on social responsibility has also become important since people started expressing pride in seeing the proverbial Singapore flag fly in countries where there are BreadTalk shops.

Despite his phenomenal success in the food and beverage business, he has had to deal with a series of crises ranging from food safety issues to bungled advertising and promotional campaigns.

Outside of his business, Mr Quek, who helms Teochew Poit Ip Huay Kuan, has also learnt to accept dissenting voices surrounding his proposals.

Buddhism, undoubtedly, has influenced him — he feels that one needs to be upright in moral conduct.

Other factors that have helped him to make his mark, and kept his head above water throughout the years include self-reflection, determination, and facing challenges upfront.

He also credits his wife and friends for their unwavering support,

which boosted his courage and confidence.

Bringing problems home is also a no-no.

Additionally, learning to manage his ego, and listening instead of talking, being truly open and curious about what people say are also crucial.

He has also learnt to keep his temper in check — yes, the man of calm and even temper let on that he actually does have a temper, too.

### WALKING THE TALK

Two days before the symposium, Mr Charles Wong, 41, founder and CEO of Charles & Keith Group, learned the meaning of “li yi”.

It was an opportune occasion as he had reached a crossroad last year. Starting to feel lost about his direction in life, he asked himself if it was to chase after more stores and more profits.

He recognised that the company had, in the early days, required his every ounce of spirit and mind for survival. Now, he pondered how it could do more in terms of social responsibility

As a business owner of more than 600 stores selling shoes and

accessories, Mr Wong, keeps his footing and steers his business operations and staff in the right

direction by looking to Buddhism.

He draws from the religion and a group of mentors including Mr George Quek, guiding principles on how to overcome obstacles, envision broadly, and strike a balance between his personal life and the trappings of business success.

For example, when one of his employees informed him that a competitor had copied some of his designs, and poached his staff, instead of feeling enraged, Mr Wong told that employee that they should channel their energy on reviewing the company’s direction for the next 10 years instead.



He told the audience, “If you always think negatively, you will do the wrong things.”

Doing good is foremost on his mind.

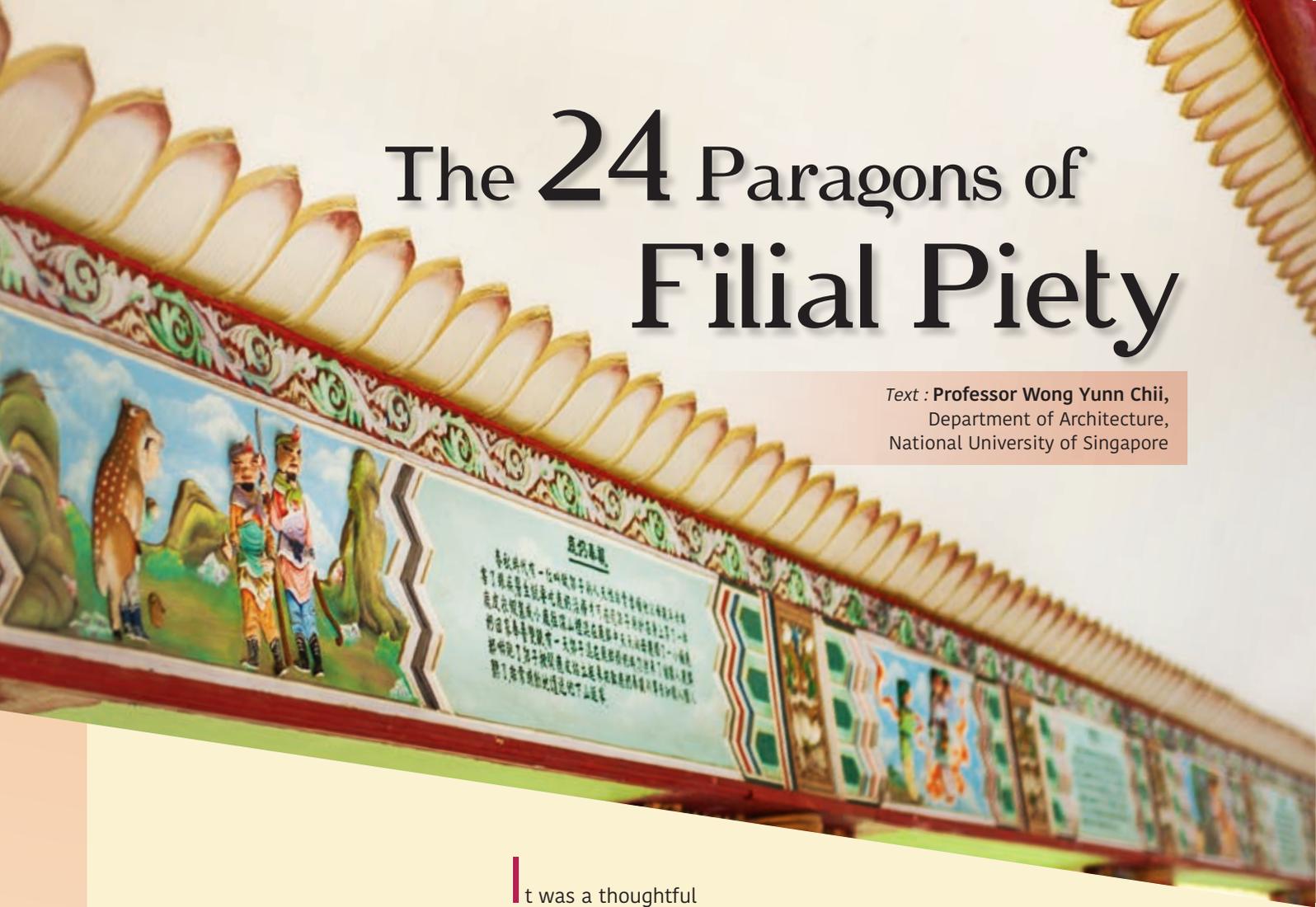
He rued the fact that the media often asked him questions on his staff strength, the company’s revenue, and the number of countries that he has set up shop in.

“But what really matters when you die,” he said, “is how many good deeds you have done.” ☺



# The 24 Paragons of Filial Piety

Text : Professor Wong Yunn Chii,  
Department of Architecture,  
National University of Singapore



It was a thoughtful plan to deploy a series of didactic instructions for making a harmonious family: line the highly-trafficked corridor to the Hall of Amrita Precepts and to the Ancestral Tablet Hall with panels of the 24 Paragons of Filial Piety [Er Shi Si Xiao]. However, in a rush, many will miss them, partly because they are above eye-level, outside one's normal line of vision. When you next visit KMSPKS, take a mindful tour of the panels. For now, allow me to share with you what I have learnt about these panels and the relationship to these two destinations at the temple.



## A unique human trait

To start, the quality of “filial piety”, I surmise, is a unique human trait that is nurtured. Just as, I believe “shame” as a psychological state is special to humans. At its best, shame curbs our excesses by forcing us to do the ‘right’ thing, particularly towards the ‘proper actions’ in consideration of the welfare of others. Of course, in the worst ways, it can be manipulated to ostracise, stigmatise, control and subjugate dissension. Animals, I suspect, do not experience shame. Their actions are activated by fear and instinct. Perhaps ours might just be as well, but we have managed to transpose it socially.



The definition and nature of filial piety, however, is gradually modified, as with the notion of shame. I suspect every generation views certain aspects of practices and trends of its succeeding generation as either shameful or worse, shameless. In degree and contents, shame like filial piety is continuously revised.

Filial piety stories are unique to Chinese temples of various religious persuasions. For this reason alone, one is inclined to see their moral proposition as culturally-based rather than derived from religious origins. In the *Buddhist Parables*, there is only one known instance where filial piety was evoked – through a king named Kindly-and-Silent. Besides his goodness and fairness, he was also known for his “filial piety, and obedience to his father and mother; he respected and loved his relatives within nine degree of kindred.” [Parables, Chp XVI, p. 294]

One could theorise that when Buddhism arrived in China, its practices were further conditioned by agrarian feudal practices, and its values subsequently formalised under and aligned with Confucianism. The 24 Stories are sited in a broad base of class affiliations – peasants, literati, officials, merchants – Guo Jujing of the Yuan Dynasty (1206-1368 BCE) found it fitting, after mourning rites for his father, to set them down in the compilation that we know today.

The thrust of the filial stories is just that: notwithstanding the swirling vortices of change – filial piety holds still in the middle, and collects together all those who seek harmony and peace. In modern day parlance, it constitutes in sociological terms, the ‘core’ value of a society.

### Not obtained through position, knowledge or wealth

Filial piety is not transcendental and its effects are wholly manifest in actions, thoughts and deeds. Though good actions and behaviours seldom come easily, they are also not necessarily obtained because of one’s high position or knowledge, nor forged out of wealth. Thus, the need for the clear didactic instructions without being pedantic – sacrifice of one’s own life and interests for the elders. But these are not mere stories – they are paragons: ideal, standard, epitome, quintessence, exemplar, paradigm. While the text (verses in this case) allows the imagination to fill in the gaps of uncertainties, a wall relief, on the other hand, requires precision. Perhaps a better phrase, would be the ‘defining moment’ of the filial enactment and situation. To be sure, in our daily lives we have variously demonstrated filial

attitudes to our parents: the sum total of which, in the final distillation (if possible) must be so distinctive as to qualify them as paragons. It is noteworthy that Abbot Cheu Yok Beng, in his preface to these stories, depicted on the wall of his temple, Kuan Im Tng Temple in Joo Chiat offered:

*Some of the filial piety deeds in these stories might seem absurd, miraculous, inhumane, unreasonable, foolish and ill-advised when looked from today’s viewpoint. However, when placed against the background of the times ... these stories can perhaps serve as a starting point for thinking on how a daughter or son, as well as in-laws should treat their parents or parents-in-law.*

And surely, in our contemporary context, we need to refresh with newer examples, to update them, to make them more relevant to



24 Stories @ Kuan Im Tng Temple (Joo Chiat) in painted panels

our times. Why the stories stopped at 24 is anyone’s guess. **In our lifetime, we have witnessed or heard about more if not equally**



stunning filial stories. For example, daughters and sons who donated their organs so that their parent could live; children living austere lives, eking out a living on the barest of means to support their aged or sickly parents, etc. Our social media render such stories vividly through space and time across cultures. We recognise the highest of deeds amongst people with the lowest of means – and not confined to people of means, as is often the case of numerous high officials or *literati* in these anecdotes.

### **Serving a vital social need**

Filial stories in Chinese culture served a vital social need. They were pivots of Confucianist philosophy of self-family-state: to forge a cascading level of stability through these minutiae of personal conducts. Sited at the fundamental level of the family structure, filial piety inculcated ways of harmony through self-sacrifice; subjugation of the self-ego under the feudalistic polities. We recognise that many of these paragons were drawn from tumultuous dynastic moments – the Warring states, Spring & Autumn Period. As social stability was threatened, these stories assumed greater urgency, became embedded more deeply in folklores and transmitted more widely.

## ***Filial piety and its connection to Buddhist practices***

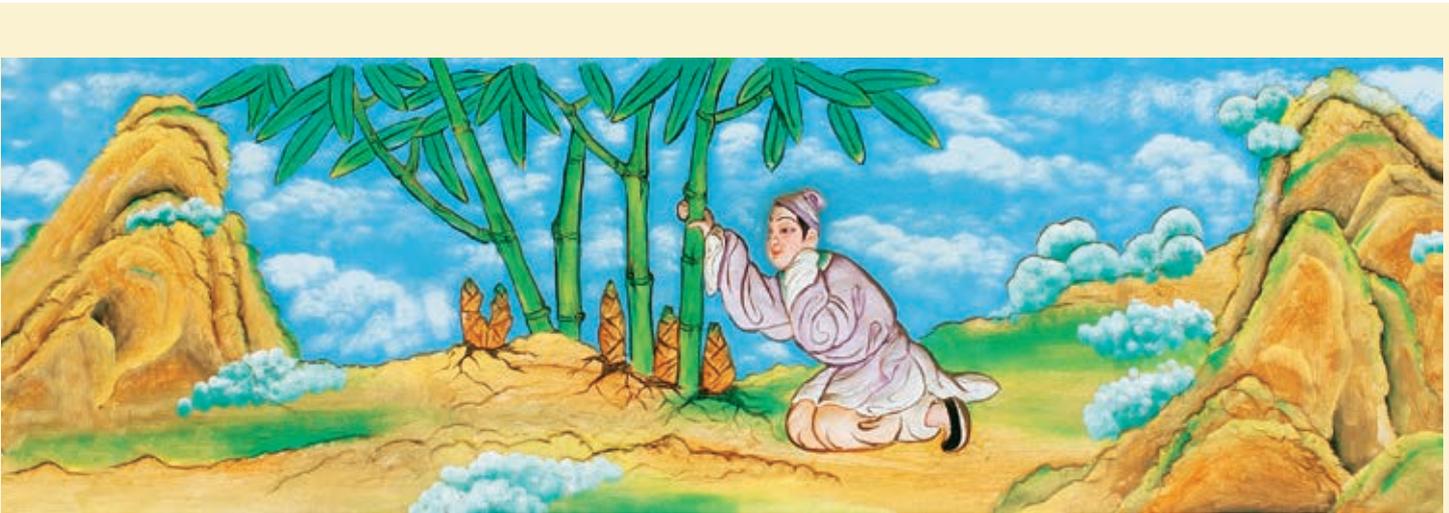
***How do we connect these filial stories to Buddhist practices? Broadly, as exemplars of basic acts of care, love and compassion. Further, as precursors or invitations to making of vows – to move us to action – leading to moral precepts, the lay version of the Vinaya.***

The 24 Stories represent what some called the classic piety – in essence they are limited and confined to familial connections, even for those one level removed from the bloodline, amongst daughters-in-law and stepsons. After all, in the feudalistic patriarchal society women (except as daughters, wives, step-wives or daughters-in-law) were effectively invisible. But they are overall tropes of selfless-giving rather than servitude. From this limited filial piety, the Buddhist practice is towards an extensive and ultimate piety – seeing beyond the boundaries defined by familial relationships – to begin to treat others in need as our own, to offer care with no notions of self-gain and purpose. The story of Buddha Shakyamuni's ascension to Trayastrimsa Heaven to convey the *Buddhadharma* to his mother, as recounted in one Mahayana Buddhist tract is taken as an exemplar of ultimate filial piety. Thus, returning to the KMSPKS panels between the Hall of Amrita Precepts and to the Ancestral Tablet Hall, we are invited to consider between the two performances of piety – the limited one to our parents and ancestors, and the ultimate one, contained in the dharma precepts.

In the KMSPKS panels, we are invited to contemplate these tableaux of filial actions in pictorial depictions of 3D plaster relief panels, complemented by text. One recognises that in translating the intent of these stories, the artistic representational problem is one of defining the 'moment' or the 'act' of piety: namely, to crystallise the poignant values these stories embody with as little ambiguities as possible. We are not instructed on the order to read these panels; this is not important, for the



values postured are perennial and timeless. Given that these stories are drawn across several centuries in cultural landscapes as diverse as China, there are expectations for the accurate depiction



of the historical era, appropriate clothing, domestic settings, etc. And in the totality of the *24 Stories*, a measure of artistry entails obtaining a level of visual unity.

Comparing these panels to four other renditions that I have seen in the course of preparing this article<sup>1</sup>, I have asked, what is unique about these *24 Stories* panels at KMSPKS?

The artisan, Mr Kwok Chun Ming (now in his seventies), created the work in place continuing a line of craft tradition he had learnt as a young apprentice under his father, one of the pioneer creators of the moral gardens at Haw Par Villa at Pasir Panjang<sup>2</sup>. Thus, we immediately recognise the signature attributes of the coarse modelling techniques and the vivid colours, done in near-pictorial depiction. It is a challenge to create illusions of depth in flat relief. But here, Mr Kwok wasted no time, and opted instead for a painterly approach, limiting built-up relief only to occasional features as and when needed, such as the rock formations; otherwise,

clouds, water, trees and flowers were painted. The proponents of filial piety are often placed at the centre to near centre of each panel with hand gestures and face contortions to convey the intended messages. Against the flatness of the background, the subject matter is treated like tableaux and the stories unfold with puppet-like figures of exquisitely painted faces. We are reminded of traditional puppet shows of the street *wayang*.

The panels exude a naïve charm that is unmistakably child-like. To some, this might be disarming

for narratives of such moral gravity. There is no allusion to calligraphic prowess, no modelling sophistication and no painting subtleties. Instead in this rawness of pictorial representations, they punch the message to you directly, like the works at Haw Par Villa. Their appeal to the primary audience, the young, especially the children, is not lost; and it only leaves the accompanying adults to rehearse the stories in full. So you are neither caught in the historicity of the figures nor in admiration of the techniques: you quickly understand these near-pictorial messages. ☺



In the company of Mr Kwok Chun Ming (centre)

### About Professor Wong Yunn Chii

Professor Wong Yunn Chii teaches in the Department of Architecture at the National University of Singapore. Though his specialty is contemporary architecture, he is captivated by all sorts of creative endeavours illustrating the human conditions.

## THE STORY



1. Filial Conduct That Impressed The Heavens: Shun The Great  
Era: Wuti (Legendary), 2200BC
2. Personally Checking His Mother's Prescriptions:  
The Learned Emperor Of Han, Liu Heng  
Era: Western Han, 206BCE
3. His Heart Was Pained When His Mother Bit Her Finger: Zeng Shen  
Era: Chūnqiū Shídài/Eastern Zhou, 551BCE; 771-476BCE
4. Clad In A Threadbare Jacket, He Tolerated His Cruel Stepmother: Min Ziqian  
Era: Chūnqiū Shídài/Eastern Zhou, 771-476BC
5. Carrying Loads Of Rice On His Back To Feed His Parents: Zi Lu  
Era: Chūnqiū Shídài, 771-476BCE
6. Entering Servitude To Pay For His Father's Funeral: Dong Yong  
Era: Han, 206BC-220AD
7. Bringing Deer's Milk To His Ailing Parents: Young Master Tanzi  
Era: Chūnqiū Shídài, 771-476BC
8. Taking On Menial Labour To Support His Mother: Jiang Ge  
Era: Han, 206BC-220BCE
9. Stealing Oranges To Take Home For His Mother: Lu Ji  
Era: East Han/Three Kingdoms, 220-280BCE
10. Never Tiring Of Feeding Milk To Her Mother-In-Law: Lady Tang /Cui Nanshan  
Era: Tang, 618-907BCE
11. Attracting Mosquitoes To Drink His Blood: Wu Meng  
Era: Jin, 265-420BCE
12. Lying Down On The Ice To Get Carp For His Stepmother: Wang Xiang  
Era: Jin, 265-420BCE

13. Burying His Son To Save His Mother: Guo Ju  
Era: East Han, 206BCE-220BCE
14. Wrestling With A Tiger To Save His Father: Yang Xiang  
Era: Jin, 265-420BCE
15. Resigning Office To Search For His Mother: Zhu Shouchang  
Era: Song, 1020-1089BCE
16. Deeply Concerned, He Tasted His Father's Stool: Yu Qianlou  
Era: Northern Southern Dynasties, 420-589BCE
17. Costumes And Pranks To Amuse His Parents: Lao Laizi  
Era: Eastern Zhou/ Spring and Autumn, 599BC
18. Picking Mulberries For His Mother: Cai Shun  
Era: W Han, 206-220BCE
19. He Fanned The Pillow And Warmed the Sheets: Huang Xiang  
Era: Han, 206BCE-220AD)
20. A Bubbling Spring And Leaping Carp: Jiang Shi  
Era: Han, 206BCE-220AD)
21. Crying By The Grave When Thunder Rolled: Wang Weiyuan/  
Wang Pou  
Era: Late Three Kingdom, 220-280
22. Serving Wooden Statues Of His Parents: Ding Lan  
Era: E Han, 220BC-220BCE
23. Tears That Brought Bamboo Shoots From The Frozen Earth:  
Mang Zong  
Era: Three Kingdom, 220-280BCE
24. Personally Scrubbing His Mother's Chamber Pot: Huang Tingjian.  
Era: Song, 1045-1105AD

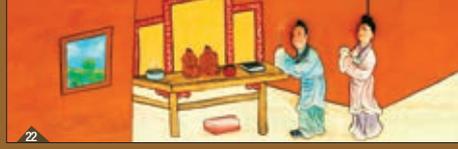


Photo : Thomas Ang

### (Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup> The other four are: Seu Teck Sean Tong (Toa Payoh) in mixed media of xian-nian and painted plaster relief; Poo Thor Jee (Yang Kit Road) as painted murals; Ang Chee Sia Ong Temple (W Coast Road) in sand-blasted panels; Kuan Im Tng Temple (Joo Chiat) in painted panels.

<sup>2</sup> Based on an oral interview with Mr Kwok Chun Ming, 15 June 2017 @Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery:

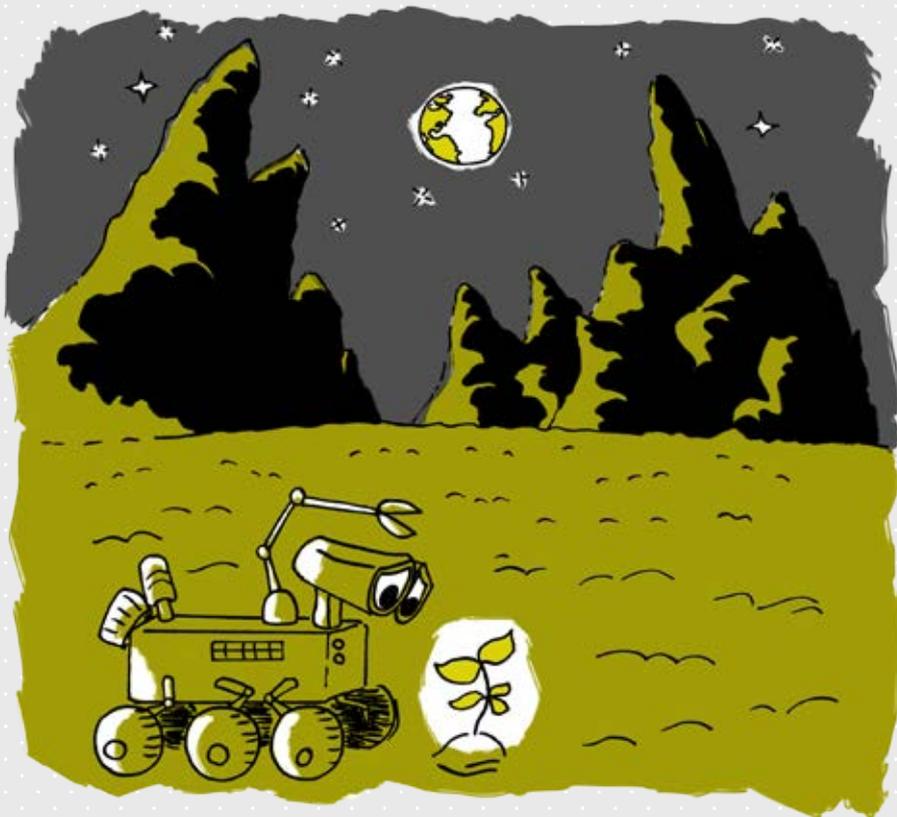
Each panel was hand-crafted in white cement plaster about 30 years ago. Mr Kwok, the craft-artist explained how he would spend two weeks composing each story; and then another month to model the scene in the plaster relief, followed by painting of details to dramatise the narrative.

He prepared a 'cartoon' for the composition based on his interpretations of similar scenes that he had seen while working as an apprentice under his father. His father was one of a handful of craftsmen kept on retainer basis to maintain the art items of Haw Par Villa. The elder Kwok was one of six Teochew men who travelled from Hong Kong to Singapore to work for Aw Boon Haw. Now in his early seventies, Mr Kwok said that he observed and learned the trade since he was nine, while still attending St. Anthony's School. Because he loves to draw, he quickly became adept at the technique of modelling relief panels and painting.

The cartoons were traced onto the allocated niches with decorative frames of plaster by a craftsman from Taiwan, who was only tasked on the architectural frieze decorations. These decorations were cast in fibre-glass moulds. Upon drying, they were painted and fastened in place with screws.

The allocation of the story panels was not in any chronological order of their appearance in the historic compilation. Upon completing the tracings of the story, the figurative outlines of the cartoons were raised in cluster of nails at different depths to obtain a three-dimensional profile to the figure. These nails also acted as reinforcement for the plaster, to keep the material intact.

There was free rein on the colours used and interpretation of the 'era' clothes; the real artistic challenge in such representation, however, is the detailed painting to obtain the appropriate demeanour through the hand gestures and facial expressions to effectively convey the story of piety.



*"Life is a winking light  
in the darkness."  
-Hayao Miyazaki*

# Everyday Zen

Text & Illustration : **Johny Tay**

**T**he advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is prompting deep introspection on the nature of life. Perhaps one day, AI will surpass human intelligence and interacting with an AI machine will be indistinguishable from interacting with a real person. What is the value of life when even a human mind can be replicated?

"Life itself is a big miracle," Albert Einstein supposedly asserted. Here we have an accomplished scientist echoing the words of spiritual leaders — for good reason. Life is overwhelmingly abundant on Earth, but we undervalue its true rarity. Look beyond Earth, and one realises that the cosmos is a hotbed of explosive chaos: hostile planets, supernovae, black holes, extreme radiation, and more. Life should not exist in such a violent cosmos, but here we are.

AI can transform society by taking over the tedious manual work that occupies so much of our time. However, AI can never replace human life, as natural life born out of the cosmos is the greatest phenomenon.

Thus AI should not diminish the value of life; it should amplify it. Perhaps through AI, we can learn exactly what is irreplaceable within us.

There are two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is wondrous. The other is as though everything is wondrous. ☺



Text : Esther Thien  
Illustration : Huay Yen

Once upon a time, a wealthy man brought home a sapling. He planted it in his courtyard and tended to it lovingly. He protected it from insects and gave it suitable amounts of water and fertiliser for the tree to grow big and strong. He took care of it unfailingly year after year, and every year, the tree would shower and beautify the courtyard with beautiful, sweet-smelling flowers, as if to thank the man for his nurturing care.

One night, the man had a weird dream. He dreamt of the tree talking to him, foretelling an impending disaster that would strike soon, and warning him to leave the locality right away. But the man brushed the dream aside as the product of an active imagination, and soon forgot about it.

Three days later, all of the man's farm animals suddenly went wild and broke out of their pens and

ran away. His servants searched everywhere for the animals but couldn't find a single one. The man was upset and cursed his bad luck. Finally, exhausted, he fell into a deep sleep. Again, the tree appeared to him in his dream, imploring him to leave, "There is no time. You must hurry! A volcano is going to erupt soon. You must leave immediately! I am going away too."

The man awoke in a fright. This time, he took his dream seriously. As he hurried out of his house, he noticed that the tree's leaves had already started to wilt. He instructed his family and servants to quickly pack their belongings. He also warned everyone who lived in the vicinity to evacuate the area. Everyone left in a great rush and headed for the valley

# THE TREE THAT WARNS ABOUT DANGER

several miles away. The people were astounded to see all the animals there. As they stared dumbfounded at the animals, a series of explosions shook the ground. The earth rocked like choppy water, and the sky turned ominous.

Days later when everything had settled down and was peaceful once again. The man went back to his house and saw only a desolate wasteland of ash, boulders, and a few crushed walls. ☹

***Even a plant that seems to know nothing sends down deeper roots in the year when typhoons will come. How can we, as humans, who are endowed with the sensory abilities and have evolved through so many levels of existence, know less than a plant? We have more capabilities than plants and animals. Yet, why can't we perceive what is right under our noses?***

***It is because we don't see our inherent mind, which has existed before we were born. Instead, we see only what our eyes show us. We must have faith in our foundation, our true nature. Only then will reality become clearer and our wisdom grow brighter. We will then be able to freely use the abilities inherent within us.***

***Believe, trust and have faith in your foundation and inherent mind. It is this foundation, your true self that can show you how to become free.***

— Zen Master Daehuang

# DISASSEMBLING DISRUPTIONS

**D**isruptions – the latest buzzword that gets everyone agitated or nervous.

These can range from relatively minor daily inconveniences to major lifetime upheavals like being permanently displaced by robots at work, as AI comes to the forefront in the recent decade.

I had allowed what I estimated would be ample time to get to the Symposium on Disruptions organised by the Institute of Chinese Buddhism (ICBuddhism), Singapore. Alas, perhaps because it was a Saturday, the buses did not come as frequently so I found myself running late despite my best intentions.

Then, as I stepped off the bus, I had a shock as I almost stepped on a young man who was lying on the kerb beside the main road. If he were to flip on his side, he would have rolled right onto the road. Was he drunk? Two foreign workers and an uncle were trying to wake him up, though their kind efforts seemed in vain. I assessed that he was nonetheless in good hands – I couldn't do any better than them – and hurried on my way. Thankfully, I made it to the Symposium in time.

The two-day Symposium was heavy-going. As one of the speakers noted, it was a reflection of the disruptiveness in our modern lives that the programme covered such a wide range of topics over so short a time. So it was heartening to see full attendance on both days, despite the Symposium happening over a weekend. The questions from the floor were incisive and honest, revealing the bewilderment that many of us were experiencing in the face of rapid changes that we were unprepared for.

One buzzword invented by the US military to describe the extreme conditions in Afghanistan and Iraq but now extended to describe the unpredictable changes we face is VUCA, shorthand for Volatile–Uncertain–Complex–Ambiguous. As I sat listening to the accomplished speakers, I was inspired to give it a Buddhist spin.

We need to discern reality as it is: to understand our human predicament and to realise the nature of conditioned phenomena – interconnected, impermanent and ultimately, empty. One participant had stepped forward to share his life story. Coming from a poor Indian family, he had

worked his way up from a ship captain and now owned his own shipping company. He had started meditating recently because despite his worldly success and achievements, he felt hollow inside. His existential angst cast doubt on the meaning of life, but I hope he and others in similar situations take heart from the Buddha's life story as recounted by Venerable Sik Kwang Sheng in his Special Address at the Symposium: disenchantment with worldly pursuits is the first step towards awakening; and the Buddha taught us to disrupt our monkey mind that we may eventually reach the other shore. *(Editor: please read page 38 for the Special Address)*

**Therefore, instead of thinking in terms of VUCA, let's give it a Buddhist twist and approach it as VACU to remind us of the ultimately vacuous or empty nature of conditioned existence.**

After all, we heartily guffawed in agreement with the observation by the speakers and panelists that we could not bring our wealth with us when we die.

However, this does not go far enough. Another aspect that was repeatedly discussed during the two days was to manage our emotional responses to the changes we face. We need to acknowledge our feelings, e.g. anxiety so that we can deal with them accordingly. Otherwise, we would risk what another speaker had pointed out: our emotional responses were the disruptions disrupting us. For my proposed

model (presented below), I would label emotional reactions to VACU changes as feeling: *Unsettled / Uneasy / Uncomfortable*.

So far, the above heuristic is merely descriptive by listing adjectives to describe the disruptions and our probable emotional responses. The final touch is a simple prescription: regardless of how disruptive the changes may first seem, they are Manageable. This is the action bias – a call to deal with our challenges. It is the empowering message that we should not lose sight of. So now, please allow me to present my VACUUM model, depicted diagrammatically below.

Interestingly, the concept of a vacuum in physics has wide applications in many modern industrial devices and processes, including the incandescent light bulb, thermos bottle, electron beam welding, cold welding, vacuum packing, vacuum frying, vacuum pumping, and is not limited to vacuum cleaning. All these from a void or nothingness!

**The VACUUM Model to Deal with Disruptions**

Cognitive (Thinking)	Head	V A C U	To recognise that external disruptions may be: Volatile Ambiguous Complex Uncertain
Affective (Feeling)	Heart	U	To recognise our inner emotional responses, such as feeling: Unsettled Uneasy Uncomfortable
Psychomotor (Doing)	Hand	M	To recognise that we can do something about it: Manageable (with Metta)

The word “VACUUM” here reminds us of the First Noble Truth on impermanence or emptiness, and the model serves as a handy guide to deal with disruptions. It is also a holistic approach by engaging our entire being from Head-Heart-Hand, a framework I learned from my MIT fintech course. In addition, I’ve matched it to the three Learning Domains mooted by Bloom et al (1956) as presented by one of the speakers, namely: Cognitive (Thinking), Affective (Feelings) and Psychomotor (Doing).

But why stop there? As noted by various speakers, we are fortunate to have Buddhist teachings to guide us. Let us then manage disruptions with *Metta*, a.k.a. loving-kindness.

The evening before the Symposium, I was strolling along when I noticed

a commotion on the road. Not having driven for many years, I did not immediately register what was happening until the jogger behind me came forward to the rescue of the driver whose car had stalled in the middle of the junction. I was touched when I realised what had happened. Ah...the kindness of strangers. Where would we be without it?



**We are never alone, even during those times when we feel like so. Interdependence is also a characteristic of our lives.**

E.g. this Symposium had provided a platform bringing participants in contact with like-minded people who shared the same concerns or fears. Who knows? Together, we can find solutions and solace, perhaps even for the world. One of the most anticipated sessions at the Symposium was the panel discussion with successful entrepreneurs. I was chuckling to myself because what are entrepreneurs but disrupters! They make their living disrupting the status quo. In the process, we often find our lives improved as a result.

So let’s brace ourselves for the disruptive times ahead. With wisdom, compassion and understanding, we shall navigate the course safely to our destination despite the choppy waters. ☺

# Artificial Intelligence: **Will Robots Replace Human Beings?**



**T**he digital world, a smart nation, the emergence of machines that are programmed to think and act like human beings. They are what are in store in the new era. But are we moving too fast and furious towards Artificial Intelligence or AI for short?

Exactly what is AI? John McCarthy, the father of AI puts it plain and simple: Artificial Intelligence is the science and engineering of making intelligent machines, especially intelligent computer programs.

Did you ever imagine that robots could take on the role of human beings in food courts by doing the work of contract cleaners who clear the trays after diners have finished their meals?

Well, that day has arrived! At least two new food courts, Happy Hawkers in Tampines and FoodTastic in Choa Chu Kang, have introduced a host of technologically-driven robots to do the job of cleaning contractors, many of whom are senior citizens.

The objective is to allow customers to enjoy a unique dining experience that will allow a faster and easier way to order their meals, and hopefully put an end to a long waiting time for a table.

Singapore is set to become a smart nation with technological advances such as cashless or mobile

payments for transport rides, meals and other services using smart phones.

In the very near future, our Lion City will see the arrival of more automated driverless electric cars. According to a news report published in October 2017, a Belgian logistics group, Katoen Natie has started operating its first driverless truck at ExxonMobil's manufacturing site on Jurong Island. It operates round the clock, seven days a week to move some 250,000 tonnes of goods a year. This project will be expanded gradually after a six-month trial to 12 trucks, moving some 3 million tonnes of products annually, said the company.

A study in the US also revealed that there will be 200 million fewer cars on the road in America by 2030 once electric cars take to the streets. Once the car population is significantly reduced, we can be assured of a pollution-free environment which in turn can help to keep people healthier.

## **What consumers think of AI**

A global study on Artificial Intelligence revealed that while most consumers are upbeat about AI as there are many benefits, there are also fears and confusion from some quarters on how business will grow with the implementation of AI.

Despite some valid concerns, we need to embrace AI or we will lag behind as most developed countries will take the AI route to achieve cost savings and a cleaner, healthier environment.

## **Will the implementation of AI have an adverse effect on jobs?**

AI which can save costs and improve productivity may affect the livelihood of workers, such as cleaners who may lose their jobs as robots can be programmed to clear trays and clean floors.

## **Can robots empathise with human beings?**

All too soon, robots will also be involved in healthcare, assisting patients in hospitals and nursing homes to meet their daily needs, such as bathing, serving meals and other physical tasks.

However, they cannot provide the personal touch and two-way communication of nurses or caregivers, which is crucial to the full recovery of the sick. More so if any patient is struggling to cope with psychological or stress-related issues.

In addition, can robots be sensitised to race and religion issues that human beings are trained to handle?

This is something that we can only know in the future. ☺

*Text : Raymond Anthony Fernando*

# Dealing *with* Differences

**Q: How does close-mindedness affect us?  
How can we learn to be more open-minded?  
– W.S.**

**A:** Closed-mindedness is an attitude which doesn't want to look at a new idea or event. It makes us tight, prejudiced and defensive. It arises, for example, when certain controversial subjects come up at the dinner table. With closed-mindedness, we react like an ostrich – we want to “stick our heads in the ground” and not examine any new idea which could shake our stubborn conceptions.

Such an attitude brings many problems in our lives. If we examine history, we can see how detrimental closed-mindedness has been to human development. Closed-mindedness made people oppose scientific investigation in the Middle Ages; closed-minded fear made people in Europe ignore the murder of millions of innocent people under the Nazi regime. Closed-mindedness also condones racial, religious and gender prejudice.

Looking beneath the closed-minded attitude, we find a preconceived idea that we have everything figured out and we don't want to be shaken by new ideas. We have a subtle fear that should the sandcastle of our worldview be shattered by a new idea, we would be lost. Consequently, we would rather be stubborn and not listen, or forget about it and watch television, go gambling, or get drunk. It's clear how closed-mindedness makes us tight and uncomfortable.

Seeing the pitfalls of closed-mindedness, we'll endeavour to develop an intelligent approach to new ideas and events. We'll listen to new ideas and examine them with logic, in an intelligent, unbiased way. With the intention of improving our understanding and contributing to world peace and human development, we'll listen to new ideas and proposals. Whether or not we later accept an

idea, we'll learn something by examining it intelligently, and our understanding will become clearer.

Being open-minded, however, doesn't mean we accept every new idea we come across. This is especially true in the “spiritual supermarket” existing in the West now. Nor does open-mindedness mean we so desperately want to be modern that we throw out our rich cultural heritage and blindly follow every new idea or scheme.

*With open minds, we'll be tolerant. Having logically examined a new idea and checked for evidence to validate it, if we decide we don't agree with it, we can still be calm and friendly with another person who does. Disagreeing with an idea doesn't mean that we hate a person who accepts it. The idea and the person are different. Also, people's ideas change. We can appreciate what others say – be it correct or nonsensical – because it challenges us to think and thus to increase our wisdom.*

When we find ourselves across the table from a person talking about a new subject or idea, we can approach the conversation with joy in learning, rather than with a judgmental attitude that has already decided the other person is wrong. We'll let ourselves listen, reflect, grow and share, while we re-examine our previous ideas.

Such an approach is beneficial in many circumstances. For example, we'll encourage our colleagues, boss and subordinates to give feedback about past projects and to suggest future improvements. Such openness improves the atmosphere at work. With open minds, we can then accurately evaluate their ideas, and can work together with others for our mutual benefit. Although a boss will still have authority, he or she no longer will be authoritarian.

We don't have to defend our ideas or beliefs. There's nothing in an idea that makes it inherently ours. If someone criticises our ideas, it doesn't mean that we're stupid. Also, there's no need to fear losing face should we re-evaluate an idea and change our minds. Fear of appearing foolish if our ideas are proven incorrect comes from caring more about having a good reputation than about discerning what is true. With open minds, we'll approach every idea and situation as an opportunity to learn and to share with others. ☺

– Ven Thubten Chodron

[www.thubtenchodron.org](http://www.thubtenchodron.org) • [www.sravasti.org](http://www.sravasti.org)

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.

# YOLO #EATYOURGOALS

## Overall Rating:

Food – 8/10  
Ambience – 6/10  
Service – 6/10

## Address:

Icon Village,  
12 Gopeng Street  
Singapore 078877  
<http://yolofood.com.sg/>

## Opening Hours:

11.00am to 9.00pm  
Mondays to Saturdays



Text & Photo: **Chloe Huang**



YOLO provides one of a kind, healthier choice of food in the Central Business District for both vegans and vegetarians. Customers are allowed to choose wholesome and tasty meals designed by its in-house nutritionist based on their diet goals such as *Shape Up*, *Energise*, *Glow*, *Build* and you may customise a meal to your preference too (*Build Your Own*)!

The amount of calories of each ingredient is indicated in the menu. For those of you counting your calories, YOLO is a great dining option.

For my first visit, I had fun building my own meal, making mindful food choices. I had chosen mini serving (\$9.90) to lessen the burden on my stomach. Some recommended items to try would be the veggie patties, Peranakan veggie curry and cauliflower rice. I find it particularly difficult to locate a Peranakan restaurant that includes vegetarian options, so I was pleasantly surprised to discover a vegetarian Peranakan dish in the menu.

At the end of the visit, I left the restaurant feeling healthy and light! ☺

# Sufood

Conveniently located on the second floor in Raffles City, Sufood has been in Singapore for more than three years now. It is a restaurant originating from Taiwan, serving vegan food in Italian style. In Taiwan itself, there are six restaurants across the peninsula.

Living up to its tagline – “Unbelievably Delicious”, the dishes range from plant-based salad, soup, mains (including pizza, pasta, baked rice) to desserts. The tantalising dishes have proven that plant-based meals can be very healthy, appealing and delicious.

Besides *ala carte* dishes, Sufood also serves set meals which come in four-, six- or a satisfying eight-course set. Each set comes with the freshly homemade Rosemary Breadstick, which is a Sufood signature dish.

Soups and desserts are mostly under



\$7 while salads are mostly under \$10. Main dishes are between \$14.80 and \$19.80. My recommendations are:

**1) Energised Salad with Avocado and Macadamia (\$9.80)**

Besides avocado and nuts, there are also dragon fruit, beetroot, cherry tomatoes, pineapple and mandarin oranges, drizzled in Sufood's house-recipe salad dressing.

**2) Star Pizza with Cream Cheese and Wasabi (\$17.80)**

Six-slice thin crust pizza combining Japanese and Italian flavours.

**3) Baked Shell Pasta with Black Truffle (\$19.80)**

Baked pasta covered by a thick layer of creamy cheese, balanced with cherry tomatoes and broccoli.

**4) Five Grain Rice with Black Truffle and Mushroom (\$19.80)**

Round and springy multi-grain rice and thinly sliced mushroom, with a dash of black truffle.

Fresh and nourishing ingredients, good customer service and its cosy environment are factors that will bring me back to the restaurant again. However, do note that the restaurant is closed daily between 3.00pm and 5.30pm. The restaurant can get crowded on weekends and it is best to make reservation ahead to avoid disappointment. ☺



**Overall Rating:**

Food – 8/10  
Ambience – 7.5/10  
Service – 9/10

**Address:**

Raffles City  
Shopping Centre  
252 North Bridge Road  
#02-19  
Singapore 179103

**Opening Hours:**

Open daily:  
Lunch: 11.30am – 3.00pm  
(last order at 2.30pm)  
Dinner: 5.30pm – 10.00pm  
(last order at 9.30pm)

Text & Photo: **Jos Tan**



Are you a regular blood donor?  
 Come January 2018, the haemoglobin requirement for men donating blood will be raised from 12.5g/dl to 13g/dl. To boost your intake of iron-rich food, try our recipe below.

## Lentil Stew with Root Vegetables

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

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup Lentils, washed
- 1/2 cup Kidney Beans
- 70g Carrots
- 100g Onions
- 50g Celery
- 120g Potatoes
- 50g Kale
- 400g Tomatoes, diced

### Health Tip

*This recipe is rich in Vitamin C which helps in absorption of iron from other green leafy vegetables.*

- 1 spring Thyme
- 1 spring Tarragon
- 1 piece Bay Leaf
- 1 teaspoon Cayenne Pepper
- 350ml Vegetable stock or Water

### Method:

- 1) Roughly chop the vegetables into bite-sized pieces and set aside.
- 2) In a heavy pot, heat up some oil and stir-fry the onions, carrots and celery till fragrant.
- 3) Add in the diced tomatoes and stir-fry for about a minute. Add in the rest of the ingredients.
- 4) Once the stew reaches a boil, turn down to the lowest heat setting and simmer for 90 minutes.
- 5) When the vegetables are cooked through and the stew has thickened, season with salt and a generous amount of extra virgin olive oil.
- 6) Garnish with some chopped parsley and serve with bread or rice. ☺

# BOOST YOUR IRON!

Having a healthy amount of iron in your body prevents you from getting iron deficiency anaemia and helps to improve the success rates of your blood donation!

## Haemoglobin, Iron & Blood Donation

Iron is essential for the production of haemoglobin, which is responsible for transporting oxygen in our body. Your haemoglobin level is measured by a fingerprick test before the actual blood donation.

### HAEMOGLOBIN LEVEL REQUIREMENT



This is to ensure safety of the donor as frequent blood donations without sufficient replacement of iron may lead to iron deficiency anaemia.

The development of iron deficiency anaemia varies with age and sex. The four common causes are:

- 1 Increased physiological demand of the body for iron (e.g. women during pregnancy and breast feeding)
- 2 Loss of blood due to bleeding (e.g. heavy menstruation or bleeding in the gut)
- 3 Diet low in iron
- 4 Malabsorption

## How can I increase my iron level?

Boost your iron by maintaining a well-balanced diet that includes iron-rich foods. Improve iron absorption by consuming your meals with food and liquids rich in Vitamin C. The most effective way to replace the iron lost from blood donation is to consume the full course of iron supplements issued by the blood bank.

**Tip:** Avoid taking caffeine together with your meals as this will reduce the absorption of iron.

The following food are high in iron content:



Give Blood. Save Lives.

Visit [redcross.sg/boostyouriron](http://redcross.sg/boostyouriron) for more information.

To practise mindfulness, the first step is to observe through bare attention. The second step is to understand the experience. Meditative understanding, or clear comprehension, comes when kids contextualise their experience within the framework of mindfulness teachings that include impermanence, interconnection, kindness and compassion.

“Only when bare attention and clear comprehension work together can right mindfulness fulfil its intended purpose,” said Ven Bhikkhu Bodhi.

Try the exercise below, to provide a safe place where children and teens can speak openly about their meditative experience, and how to make sense of it in the context of their lives:

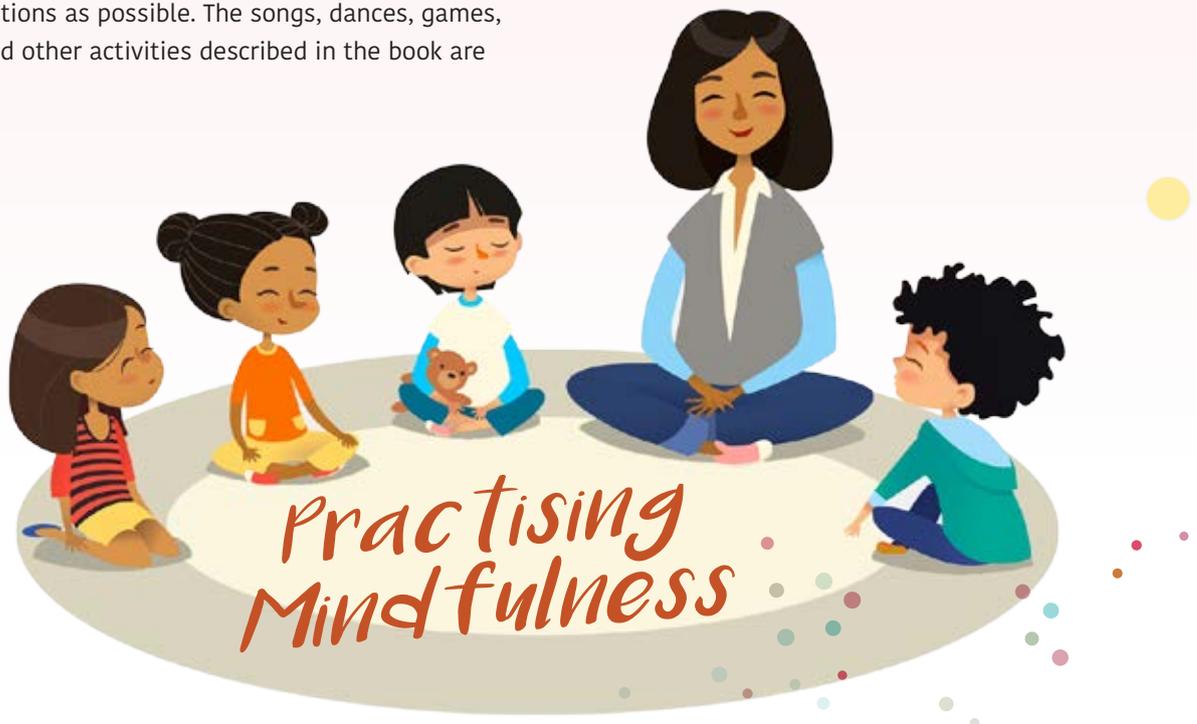
1. **Play:** First we have some fun.
2. **Meditate:** Next, we practise introspection, often through mindfulness of breathing while sitting, standing, walking or lying down. As we meditate, we observe our mind and body from the perspective of a friendly observer, with a curious, open mind as free of preconceived notions as possible. The songs, dances, games, and other activities described in the book are

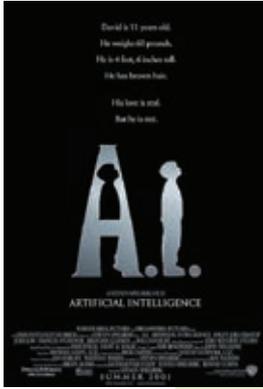
examples of things we do during the first two steps of this process – play and meditate.

3. **Share:** Then we talk about what it is like to learn to meditate and how we can use what we’re learning in real life. This is an opportunity to encourage kids to seek help if something comes to mind that concerns them.
4. **Apply:** Lastly, we use what we learned in our daily lives, informed by an understanding of the principles of mindfulness – particularly those of impermanence, interdependence, and community service.

We support kids as they develop meditative understanding by quietly asking them questions that turn them back into their own experience. We do not give them advice, draw conclusions, or project our experience.

We speak from the heart, listen from the heart, be sparing in our speech and be spontaneous. We encourage kids to develop their own voices and trust themselves. ☺





## A.I.

*Directed by:*  
Steven Spielberg  
*Starring:*  
Haley Joel Osment,  
Jude Law, Frances  
O'Connor, Brendan  
Gleeson, William  
Hurt

One of the most pertinent questions regarding the topic of Artificial Intelligence is mouthed at the very start of this movie, “Can humans love machines?”

After their son was left comatose, Henry tries to fill the gap by purchasing David, a perfectly looking AI simulation of a human child, from Cybertronics. Once initiated with a set of coded words, this machine can respond to emotions, act and seem like a normal child, even completely love the person it has been attached to. But we, as a species, do not find it easy ‘to be unconditionally loved’ (especially by a machine!) and Monica has a complex emotional response to David’s presence around the house as he follows her everywhere, pleasing her, never creating any raucousness like a ‘normal’ child.

The most complicated issue raised here is that whereas David seems so real, he is actually not really human and we may find ourselves asking, “What and who *is* REAL?”

We’re told that countless types of sentient beings exist throughout our world systems and that each one has a desire to be happy. This may be achieved when they are being and doing what they are supposed to be and do, according to their generic nature. Our human stage of fulfilment begins when we have the causes, conditions and capability to actively transform ourselves to a level of enlightenment, which also makes us happy. It is also through the Buddhist

teachings that we discover we love our fellow sentient creatures, because we are essentially one with all of them. We therefore have the ability to empathise with their suffering, a term we define as “compassion”.

All living beings contain DNA, but each with a different coding and throughout our chain of existence, we get housed in various physical bodies, lifetime after lifetime, thus experiencing many types of being. We too, as humans, are programmed by so many aspects; our human DNA containing ancestral information defines our physical traits and what we learn from society, parental views, education, life experience, etc... which impress upon one another to form an overall schema. However, Buddhist philosophy tells us that our mind is but a system of mental constructs that form perspectives on the world according to our individual karmic experience, and that when we deconstruct these and look to where they may be coming from, we cannot find any place in particular, and that they have no inherent reality of their own.

Monica is confused. Although she accepts that David’s character is wonderfully human, she’s sometimes rudely reminded that he is just a programmed machine. When her son miraculously recovers from the coma and comes home again, Monica and Henry are left with a very big decision to make, especially when David does something erratic that endangers their son’s life. Keep David and he may destroy their son, but give him back to Cybertronics and they will destroy him like trash. However, we should investigate deeper here, as the incident that occurred was David’s trigger response to fear. This should remind us of ourselves, as there’s no one way we instinctively react to an intense situation... don’t we all naturally become mentally off-balanced, when threatened?

Running alongside is the lovely allegory from the story of Pinocchio, the puppet that seeks to become a real boy. In this same way, David wishes to be real too, the programming to love ‘his mother’ being so strong that he waits almost an eternity to make sure he can fulfil her love.

The most interesting undertone here is that David, himself, is desperate for Monica to love him, a machine, back. ☺

*So you should view this fleeting world --  
A star at dawn, a bubble in a stream,  
A flash of lightning in a summer cloud,  
A flickering lamp, a phantom, and a dream.  
- The Diamond Sutra*

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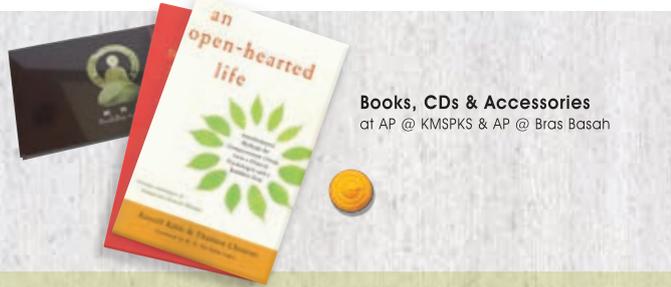
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# Want Your story to be heard too?

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

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

Whatever your story or poem may be, we welcome you to  
write in to us. Share your inspiring tale of faith and awakening  
with the rest of the world.

Send your entries to  
[awaken@kmspks.org](mailto:awaken@kmspks.org) or:

AWAKEN, The Executive Editor  
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Dharma Propagation Division  
88 Bright Hill Road Singapore 574117

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



### The Merits of Producing Buddhist Teachings and Buddha Images

1. One's light negative karma will be purified, while heavy ones will be lightened.
2. One will be protected by devas, and unharmed by natural and man-made disasters: epidemics, fire and water disasters, robbery, fights and wars, and imprisonment
3. One will always be free from the suffering of hatred and vengeance.
4. One will be unharmed by yakas, evil spirits and wild beasts.
5. One's mind will be at peace, free from harm and nightmares. One's countenance will also be radiant, and one will be full of auspicious energy.
6. One practises the Dharma wholeheartedly, with abundant living necessities. One's family will be harmonious, and be filled with long-lasting blessings and prosperity.
7. One's speech and actions will bring joy to all. One will also be respected and loved by all.
8. One who is dull-minded will become wise. One who is sick will become healthy. Those beset with difficulties will have smooth progress, and one who wishes not to be female will be born as male in future lives.
9. One will be free from rebirth in the lower realms. One will also receive birth in the higher realms, be good-looking, gifted and enjoy great blessings and prosperity.
10. For all sentient beings, one will cultivate good roots and fields of blessings. One will always be able to learn the Dharma, till one's wisdom and spiritual penetrations are fully developed and one becomes a Buddha.

### Dear Reader, "The Gift of the Dharma Excels 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:

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<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 紧张	Stressed
<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

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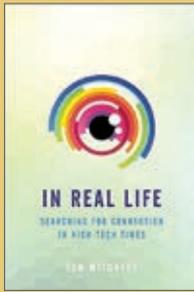
## Seeking Fulfilling Careers?

**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@kmspk.org](mailto:hrdept@kmspk.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.kmspk.org](http://www.kmspk.org) and click onto "kmspk", followed by "Livelihood" to view our job vacancies.

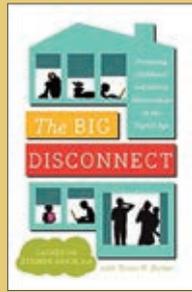


### **In Real Life**

By YJon Mitchell  
S\$22.90

### **The Big Disconnect**

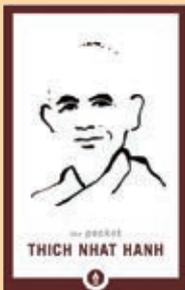
By Catherine Steiner-Adair  
S\$23.80



Technology is created to help us do our work but it can't help us if we don't know what our true work is. Our work is the impact we make on the world – whether it is beneficial, inspiring and transformative. Technology changes all the time, hence we need to be mindful of what is helpful and what is not. New technology can amaze us constantly with what they can do, such as AI. They seem almost magical sometimes, with the things they can deliver.

But in both books above, they demonstrate to us that at the end of the day, what is truly magical is the connections between human beings, or the expressions of the human spirit that lead to people connecting with one another and the world around them.

In an amoral high-tech world, it is all the more imperative that we strengthen spiritual practice to cultivate mindfulness and use technology to make our lives more connected, ethical and fulfilling, focusing on our highest good.

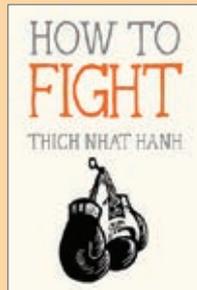


### **The Pocket**

By Thich Nhat Hanh  
S\$19.50

### **How to Fight**

By Thich Nhat Hanh  
S\$16



*The Pocket* is a handy, concise little book that encompasses the essence of the teachings by Thich Nhat Hanh. It gives brief, timely reminders in moments of suffering on how one can transform suffering through the energies of mindfulness, deep understanding and love.

I especially love the wisdom encapsulated in the chapter on “The Energy of Love” that says that we all share the fear that our need to love and be loved cannot be fulfilled; that the fear

of being lonely is always there, in everyone. We have to recognise and look deeply into that fear and need within us. Only then can we develop the energy of understanding and love, which will then bring about healing and happiness for ourselves and others.

In *How to Fight*, Thich Nhat Hanh guides us in an insightful manner how we can transform our anger, frustrations, despair, and episodes of conflict and disagreement into times of growth and compassion.

All four books are available at Awareness Place stores.



**Amazing**  
By Lama Jiayong  
S\$19.90



**Prayer: Wish-fulfilling Prayers to Buddhas & Bodhisattvas**  
S\$19.00

Produced by the Dharma Drum Publishing Corp, the first album is a CD containing nine tracks of various prayers and mantras. The tracks are sung in lyrical Chinese Zen style that will bring peace and reflection to your heart. I prefer the tracks with musical accompaniment rather than those without as they strike a greater chord with the heart.

In *Amazing*, Lama Jiayong brings us to a sacred realm filled with tranquil bliss; an introspective world that resounds with the healing sound and energy of sutras and mantras.



**Light**  
By Aifang  
S\$19.90



**Days in a Green Hill**  
By Firefly  
S\$19.90



**The Grasslands Ensemble & Daniel Ho**  
S\$23.00

*Light* consists of 14 musical pieces. Featuring a soft pink and lilac album cover of a wintry landscape, the tracks in this album are produced in floaty, ethereal tunes of over two minutes each to evoke the magical quality of love and light.

In the second album of 13 tracks, Firefly is a masterful pianist who conveys the melodic emotions and graceful colours of his days spent with a cat named Freckle accompanied by sunshine, rain and air scented by the trees and flowers of a hill. Feel your heartstrings dance in the witty interplay of poetic tunes.

*The Grasslands Ensemble & Daniel Ho* tells of an unforgettable experience. It is a musical journey that features throat singing and powerful, dynamic tempo of distinctive Mongolian traits, weaving into a tapestry the traditional music of the prairies of Inner Mongolia that bespoke the vast skies. My personal favourite is the soft Manchurian lullaby in track 7. ☺

All CDs are available at Awareness Place stores.



**Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting**

Oxford University Press  
\$36.27

This is an interesting book that very aptly addresses the developments of our time.

We live in an age where there is a dizzying array of new technological developments: robots smart enough to take white collar jobs, social media tools that manage our most important relationships, ordinary objects that track, record, analyse and share every detail of our daily lives, and biomedical techniques with the potential to transform and enhance human minds and bodies to an unprecedented degree. Emerging technologies are reshaping our habits, practices, institutions, cultures and environments in increasingly rapid, complex and unpredictable ways that create profound risks and opportunities for humans to flourish on a global scale. How can our future be protected in such challenging and uncertain conditions? How can we possibly improve the chances that the human species will not only live, but live well, into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond?

This book locates a key to that future in the distant past: specifically, in the philosophical traditions of virtue ethics developed by classical thinkers

from Aristotle and Confucius to the Buddha. Each developed a way of seeking the good life that equips human beings with the moral and intellectual character to flourish even in the most unpredictable, complex and unstable situations – precisely where we find ourselves today.

Through an examination of the many risks and opportunities presented by rapidly changing techno-social conditions, Vallor makes the case that if we are to have any real hope of securing a future worth wanting, then we will need more than just better technologies. We will also need better humans.

*Technology and the Virtues* develops a practical framework for seeking that goal by means of the deliberate cultivation of techno-moral virtues: specific skills and strengths of character, adapted to the unique challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century life, that offer the human family our best chance of learning to live wisely and well with emerging technologies.

Available from Google Play. ☺



Scan this to  
download app

On 2 January 2018, many of our young people will be going back to schools and higher educational institutions for another year of studies.

To prep them, family members may like to get this series of cases and pouches as encouragement to motivate youngsters to do their very best and excel in their studies.

Crafted in satin and suede-like materials with quality workmanship, these cases which come in various sizes, colours and styles, are suitable for storing laptops or tablets, stationery, smartphones and more.

They are also thoughtfully embroidered with decorative motifs, auspicious verses and contemplative quotes to give timely reminders to breathe, relax and be at ease when stress becomes overwhelming and the exam mugging gets tough. ☺

Priced between S\$6.00 and S\$20.00.

**Offer encouraging words of inner peace to your loved ones in school**



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

# Calendar of Events 2018

01  
Jan

04  
Apr



## DHARMA

### ◆ CEREMONY | PRAYERS

#### Offering to Heavenly Realms

1 Jan | Mon | 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 | Mon  
Alms Offering: 8am - 10am  
Venue: Hall of Great Compassion

Sangha's Offering: 11.30am  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 2 | Dining Hall

Fee: \$50 / \$168 / \$388 - **SOLD OUT!**  
Registration: Front Office  
Enquiry: 6849 5333 | 6849 5300

#### Lunar New Year Wish-fulfilling Lanterns

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

15 Feb - 2 Mar  
Venue: KMSPKS  
Fee: Company / Family: \$338, Individual: \$50  
Registration: Front Office  
(From 1 Dec 2017 onwards)

Enquiry: 6849 5333

#### Lunar New Year Prayers

15 Feb, Thu | 24 Feb, Sat | 25 Feb, Sun | 2 Mar, Fri  
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 (to be advised) | 11.45am - 2.30pm  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form  
Free Admission  
Registration:

1) Online: [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)

#### Qing Ming Prayer

5 Apr | Thu  
Venue: KMSPKS  
Registration: Front Office  
(From 5 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*  
6 Mar - 27 Nov | Tue | 7.30pm - 9pm  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom  
Fee: \$90 for full year (3 modules)  
Registration:

1) Online: [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | 6849 5345 | [ded@kmspks.org](mailto:ded@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, The Three Poisons, Liberation, The Five Hindrances, The Six Perfections, The Four Immeasurables  
7 Mar - 31 Oct | Wed | 7.30pm - 9pm  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom  
Fee: \$90 for full year (3 modules)  
Registration:

1) Online: [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | 6849 5345 | [ded@kmspks.org](mailto:ded@kmspks.org)

#### English Buddhism Course Year 3 | By Venerable

Introduction to Meditation, Shamatha, Vipassana  
8 Mar - 27 Sep | Thu | 7.30pm - 9pm  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom  
Fee: \$90 for full year (3 modules)  
Registration:

1) Online: [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | 6849 5345 | [ded@kmspks.org](mailto:ded@kmspks.org)



#### Buddhism 101

Learn to apply Buddha's teachings in managing your career, wealth, interpersonal relationships and emotions.

7 Jan - 18 Mar | Sun | 2pm - 4pm  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom  
Fee: \$50 (9 lessons)  
Registration:

1) Online: <https://goo.gl/ssjTmi>  
2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | 6849 5345 | [ded@kmspks.org](mailto:ded@kmspks.org)

#### Sunday Dharma Practice

Sunday Dharma Practice includes short chanting, guided meditation and Dharma sharing led by Venerable.

4 - 25 Mar | 8 - 29 Jul | 2 - 30 Sep  
Sun | 2pm - 3.30pm  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classrooms 5 & 6  
Free Admission  
Registration:

1) Online: [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | 6849 5345 | [ded@kmspks.org](mailto:ded@kmspks.org)

#### Dharma School Parent Dharma Class

Buddhism in the family  
24 Feb - 29 Sep | Sat | 4.15pm - 5.30pm  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom 9  
Fee: \$10 (KMSDS Parents), \$30 (Public) (10-15 sessions)  
Registration:

1) Online: <https://dharma.school.kmspks.org>  
2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | 6849 5329  
[dharma.school@kmspks.org](mailto:dharma.school@kmspks.org)

#### Threefold Refuge & Five Precepts Preparatory Class (Eng)

Teachings on the Observance of Threefold Refuge & Five Precepts  
Mar (to be advised) | Sun | 9.30am - 10.30am  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom  
Free Admission  
Registration:

1) Online: [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)

#### Dharma Talk by Ajahn Samedho

21 Apr | Sat | Time: (to be advised)  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form  
Fee: (to be advised)  
Registration:

1) Online: [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)

#### Attending To The Dharma To Enter The Path

The Benefits of Hearing, The Ways to Listen, & Entering The Path  
15 Mar | Thu | 7.30pm - 9pm  
Venue: Awareness Hub  
Fee: Nominal donation of \$5  
Registration:

1) Online: [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
Enquiry: 6336 5067 | [awarenesshub@kmspks.org](mailto:awarenesshub@kmspks.org)



## MEDITATION | RETREAT

#### Relaxation & Mindfulness Meditation (Bilingual)

Basic Meditation which involves Body Scanning and Relaxation.

Feb (to be advised) | Mon | 7.45pm - 9.15pm  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form  
Fee: \$30  
Registration:

1) Online: [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)

#### Shamatha Meditation Course (To Be Confirmed)

21 Feb - 11 Apr | Wed | 7.30pm - 9.15pm  
Venue: Pagoda of 10,000 Buddhas | Level 2 | Hall of Medicine Buddha  
Fee: (to be advised)  
Registration:

1) Online: [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)

#### Practising Chan with Venerable Da Xing

2-day non-residential introductory Chan workshop

17 Mar | Sat | 9am - 9pm  
18 Mar | Sun | 9am - 5pm  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form  
Fee: (to be advised)  
Registration:

1) Online: [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)

#### 8 Precepts Retreat (Stay-out) (Conducted in Mandarin)

The observance of 8 Precepts, Repentance, Sutra Chantings, Meditation, & Dharma Talk.

Date: (to be advised)  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form  
Fee: \$20  
Registration:

1) Online: [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)



## LIFESTYLE

### ◆ ART

#### Blissful Drumming

A drumming programme for participants aged 40 years and above.

9 Mar - 25 Nov | Fri | 2pm - 3.30pm  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Music Room  
Fee: \$80 (40-65 years old)

\$40 (Above 65 years old)

Registration:  
1) Online: [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | [community@kmspks.org](mailto:community@kmspks.org)

#### Vocal Interest Group

A platform to learn the basics of singing and Buddhism through the performing arts.

3 Mar - 25 Nov | Sat | 1.30pm - 3pm  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Music Room  
Fee: \$50  
Registration:

1) Online: [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | [community@kmspks.org](mailto:community@kmspks.org)

#### Zen Drumming

Zen drumming is a spiritual activity that helps you cultivate concentration and coordination of the mind and body.

3 Mar - 25 Nov | Sat | 3.30pm - 5pm  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Music Room  
Fee: \$200  
Registration:

1) Online: [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | [community@kmspks.org](mailto:community@kmspks.org)

### Happiness through Stillness & Movement

Release mental and emotional tension through exercises and basic dance moves  
5 -26 Jan | Fri | 7.30pm - 9pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$120 (4 sessions)

Registration:

1) Online: [www.kmspks.org/registration?f=LC18-DL-1](http://www.kmspks.org/registration?f=LC18-DL-1)

2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm

Enquiry: 6336 5067 | [awarenesshub@kmspks.org](mailto:awarenesshub@kmspks.org)

### Coming Together for Rhythm Rejuvenation

25 Jan & 8 Mar | Thu | 7pm - 9pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$30 (per session)

Registration:

1) Online: [www.kmspks.org/registration?f=LC18-DRUM-01](http://www.kmspks.org/registration?f=LC18-DRUM-01)

2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm

Enquiry: 6336 5067 | [awarenesshub@kmspks.org](mailto:awarenesshub@kmspks.org)

### 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.

1 & 22 Mar | Thu

Grp 1: 2pm - 4pm | Grp 2: 7pm - 9pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$40 (2 sessions)

Material Fee: \$48 (payable to instructor)

Registration:

1) Online: [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)

2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm

Enquiry: 6336 5067 | [awarenesshub@kmspks.org](mailto:awarenesshub@kmspks.org)

### Hand Bouquet & Floral Arrangement Module (I)

- 5 different designs and styles of hand bouquet for different occasions including for ROM
- 3 lessons on table floral arrangement

2 Mar - 27 Apr | Fri | 7pm - 9pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$200 (8 sessions) limited to 14 pax only

Material Fee: \$35 (per session, payable to instructor)

Registration:

1) Online: [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)

2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm

Enquiry: 6336 5067 | [awarenesshub@kmspks.org](mailto:awarenesshub@kmspks.org)

### Zentangle (Beginner)

Follow your heart as you unleash your creativity with the Zentangle beginner's course.

11 Mar | Sun | 2pm - 6pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$70, Material Fee: \$15 (payable to instructor)

Registration:

1) Online: [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)

2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm

Enquiry: 6336 5067 | [awarenesshub@kmspks.org](mailto:awarenesshub@kmspks.org)

### ♦ COMMUNITY

#### Nursing Home Visit

Play your part for the community! Join us for outings with seniors, listen to their words of wisdom and engage in loving communication.

28 Jan & 4 Mar | Sun | 9am - 12pm

Venue: Bright Hill Evergreen Home

Enquiry: 6849 5359 | [community@kmspks.org](mailto:community@kmspks.org)

#### Community Tuition & Quarterly Student Engagement

A free tuition programme for Secondary Four & Five students.

Every Sun | 9am - 3.30pm

Venue: VHCHM | Level 1 | Classrooms 2 & 8

Enquiry: 6849 5359 | [community@kmspks.org](mailto:community@kmspks.org)

#### Food Ration

Play your part for the community! Join us to deliver food to the low-income families.

21 Jan, 18 Mar & 15 Apr | Sun | 9am - 11.30am

Venue: KMSPKS

Enquiry: 6849 5359 | [community@kmspks.org](mailto:community@kmspks.org)

#### Hair For Hope

29 Apr | Sun | 9am - 3.30pm

Venue: VHCHM | Level 4 | Hall of No Form

Enquiry: 6849 5359 | [community@kmspks.org](mailto:community@kmspks.org)

### ♦ TOUR

#### KMSPKS Guided Tour

Join us on a guided tour around KMSPKS and get to know more about Buddhism, its history and arts.

28 Jan, 25 Mar & 29 Apr | Sun | 10am - 12pm

Venue: VHCHM | Level 1

Free Admission

Registration: [guidedtour@kmspks.org](mailto:guidedtour@kmspks.org)

Enquiry: 6849 5300

### ♦ CULINARY

#### Mindful & Healthy Vegetarian Culinary Arts

13 & 20 Jan, 3 & 10 Mar | Sat | 2pm - 4pm

Fee: \$100 (per 2 sessions)

Venue: VHCHM | Level 2 | Dining Hall

Registration:

1) Online: <https://goo.gl/yc7tVs>

2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm

Enquiry: 6849 5359 | [community@kmspks.org](mailto:community@kmspks.org)

#### Chinese New Year Vegan Baking II

- Green Tea Brown Rice Cookie (partial hands-on)

- Almond Chocolate Cookie (partial hands-on)

- Wholemeal Marble Cake

14 Jan | Sun | 3pm - 6.30pm

Fee: \$70 (includes ingredients)

Venue: Awareness Hub

#### Vegan Baking with Homemade Natural Yeast

- Homemade Natural Yeast

- Museli Rye Bread Loaf

- Vegetable Pau and Mantou (partial hands-on)

21 Jan | Sun | 3pm - 6.30pm

Fee: \$70 (includes ingredients)

Venue: Awareness Hub

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

- Vegan Katong Laksa

- Brown Rice Nasi Goreng

- Herbal Grass Jelly

4 Mar | Sun | 3pm - 6.30pm

Fee: \$70 (includes ingredients)

Venue: Awareness Hub

Registration for the above courses:

1) Online: [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)

2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm

3) Awareness Hub | 11.30am - 6pm

Enquiry: 6336 5067 | [awarenesshub@kmspks.org](mailto:awarenesshub@kmspks.org)

### ♦ WELLNESS

#### Health Seminar 'Herbal Nutrition'

12 Mar | Mon | 2.30pm - 4pm

Fee: \$30

Venue: Awareness Hub

#### Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Health Series

DIY Acupressure - The "Medicine Cabinet" Within You

Part I (Head, Face, Neck and Shoulder Points)

18 Mar | Sun | 3pm - 4.30pm

Fee: \$30 (limited to 25 pax only)

Venue: Awareness Hub

#### Yin Yoga Elementary

A yin yoga practice for beginners

27 Feb - 15 May | Tue | 6.15pm - 7.15pm

Fee: \$160 for 10 sessions | Walk-in \$22 per lesson

Venue: Awareness Hub

#### Yin Yoga

A yoga practice to stimulate the organs and meridians.

I: 13 Jan - 7 Apr | Sat | 11.30am - 1pm

II: 6 Feb - 8 May | Tue | 7.30pm - 9pm

Fee: \$180 for 10 sessions | Walk-in \$25 per lesson

Venue: Awareness Hub

#### Yoga for Diabetes

Learn yoga postures that stimulate insulin production to help manage diabetes.

18 Jan - 29 Mar | Thu | 10am - 11am

Fee: \$120 for 10 sessions | Walk-in \$15 per lesson

Venue: Awareness Hub

#### Hatha Yoga for Beginners

I: 3 Feb - 21 Apr | Sat | 6.30pm - 8pm

II: 9 Feb - 11 May | Fri | 10.30am - 12pm

Fee: \$180 for 10 sessions | Walk-in \$25 per lesson

Venue: Awareness Hub

#### Yoga Flow (Hatha)

28 Feb - 2 May | Wed | 6.30pm - 7.30pm

Fee: \$160 for 10 sessions | Walk-in \$22 per lesson

Venue: Awareness Hub

#### Hatha Yoga

I: 15 Jan - 2 Apr | Mon | 8pm - 9.30pm

II: 6 Feb - 24 Apr | Tue | 10.30am - 12pm

III: 3 Jan - 21 Mar | Wed | 7.45pm - 9.15pm

IV: 10 Feb - 28 Apr | Sat | 9.30am - 11am

Fee: \$180 for 10 sessions - Walk-in \$25 per lesson

Venue: Awareness Hub

#### Lunch-time Hatha Yoga

6 Feb - 24 Apr | Tue | 12.10pm - 1pm

Fee: \$140 for 10 sessions | Walk-in \$18 per lesson

Venue: Awareness Hub

### Gentle Hatha Yoga

I: 6 Feb - 24 Apr | Tue | 2.30pm - 4pm

II: 9 Mar - 1 Jun | Fri | 2.30pm - 4pm

Fee: \$160 for 10 sessions | Walk-in \$22 per lesson

Venue: Awareness Hub

### Chair Yoga

9 Mar - 1 Jun | Fri | 12.30pm - 1.30pm

Fee: \$160 for 10 sessions | Walk-in \$22 per lesson

Venue: Awareness Hub

### Yoga for Healthy Shoulders Workshop

29 Mar | Thu | 7pm - 8.30pm

Fee: \$35

Venue: Awareness Hub

### ♦ CHILDREN

#### Rainbow Child Yoga

Develop a happy, and healthy child with fun yoga routines!

Term 1: 14, 21, 28 Jan & 4, 11, 25 Feb | Sun

Term 2: 4, 11, 18 Mar & 1, 15, 29 Apr | Sun

10am - 11.30am (ages 4 - 7yrs)

11.30am - 1pm (ages 8 - 11yrs)

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$132 for 6 sessions, per term



#### Children's Art - Colours of Life

This programme is specifically designed for children between 4 and 12 years old.

10 Feb - 28 Apr | Sat | 2.30pm - 4pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$60 for 10 sessions (excluding art materials)

Venue: Awareness Hub

Registration:

1) Online: [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)

2) Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm

3) Awareness Hub | 11.30am - 6pm

Enquiry: 6336 5067 | [awarenesshub@kmspks.org](mailto:awarenesshub@kmspks.org)

### ♦ ENVIRONMENTALISM

#### Gratitude Corner - Sorting of Recyclables

Help us sort out items that can be recycled and reused for sale at the thrift shop.

Every Tue, Thu, Sat | 9am - 4pm

Venue: VHCHM | Level 1 Outside South Wing Office

#### Gratitude Shop

Check out our thrift shop for cheap and good deals.

Sundays - Fridays | 10am - 3pm

Saturdays | 12pm - 4.30pm

Venue: Next to Awareness Place Convenience Store

#### Mobile Kiosk

Every 27th of the Lunar Month | 9am - 1.30pm

Venue: Corridor between Dining Hall & Front Office

Enquiry: 6849 5300 | [gratitude@kmspks.org](mailto:gratitude@kmspks.org)

#### Mindful Living & Consumption

21 & 28 Apr | Sat | 2pm - 4pm

Fee: \$40 (per 2 sessions)

Venue: VHCHM | Level 1 | Classroom 8

Registration / Enquiry:

6849 5356 | [community@kmspks.org](mailto:community@kmspks.org)

#### Ven Hong Choon Museum

10am - 3pm

Venue: VHCHM | Level 3

Free Admission

On:

27th of each lunar month

Qing Ming (5 Apr)

Vesak Day (29 May)

Ullambana Festival (25 Aug)

Birth anniversary of Ven Hong Choon (11 Oct)

Death anniversary of Ven Hong Choon (15 Dec)

KMSPKS = Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery

VHCHM = Venerable Hong Choon Memorial Hall

Programmes & venues are subject to change. Details

are correct at the time of printing

Like us on [facebook.com/kmspks](https://www.facebook.com/kmspks)



# 2018

## BCS Admission Exercise

( English and Chinese Course )

### OBJECTIVE

To nurture members of the Sangha to be proficient in the English and Chinese Languages as well as to have the ability to promulgate Buddhism, conduct academic research and manage monastic matters, so as to ensure the continual development of Chinese Mahayana Buddhism.

### COURSE STRUCTURE AND CURRICULUM

**English Course:** Full time 6-year course, consisting of a 2-year foundation course focusing on developing core English Language skills, followed by a 4-year undergraduate programme conducted in English. Upon earning the required credits, students will be awarded a Bachelor of Arts' degree by the Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand.

**Chinese Course:** Full time 4-year undergraduate programme in Buddhism conducted in Chinese. Upon earning the required credits, students will be awarded a Bachelor of Arts' degree by the Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand.

#### TEACHING STAFF

BCS has a well-established and experienced teaching team, especially our Buddhism lecturers, which consist of both Sangha members and lay-people with either Masters' Degree or PhD qualifications.

#### BENEFITS

All meals, accommodation and daily necessities will be provided by the college. Students will also receive a monthly allowance during their period of study at BCS.

#### POST-GRADUATION OUTLOOK

Students shall return to their monasteries upon graduation. However, graduates who are interested to engage in further academic research may apply for the college's MA programme or apply for assistance to further their studies overseas.

#### APPLICATION PRE-REQUISITES

- 1 Ordained Buddhist monk aged 18 – 35 of all nationalities.
- 2 Devout and had been ordained for at least 1 year.
- 3 Possess at least high school or equivalent qualifications (e.g. 'A'-levels, vocational college or junior high graduate plus 3 year's education at a Buddhist College).
- 4 Healthy, no visible or hidden disabilities (E.g. sleepwalking, epilepsy) and/or infectious diseases.
- 5 No criminal record.

#### REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

- 1 The closing date for Non-Chinese applicants is **30 April 2018**.
- 2 Interested parties may write in to request for the application form or download it from our website **www.bcs.edu.sg**. Application forms should be completed accordingly and legibly. Please provide a valid contact number and/or email address.
- 3 Please submit the completed application form together with the following materials to the Registrar's Office. Please email us after you have sent out the application form.
  - a. Two different referral letters from either the applicant's Master, the Abbot / senior monks at the applicant's current Monastery or former Venerables / Lecturers who had previously taught the applicant.
  - b. Photocopy of the latest academic transcript and certificate attained by the applicant.
  - c. Photocopy of Personal Identification card and passport.
  - d. Three passport-sized, matte-finished photographs (35x45mm) of the applicant's front profile. Applicants should be dressed in monk's robes with no headdress, on white background.
  - e. Medical check-up form (inclusive of blood test, liver test, chest X-ray) from a Government-registered medical institution.

#### ADMISSION PROCEDURES AND INTAKE

- 1 A total of 60 students will be selected for both English and Chinese Courses.
- 2 Applicants will be selected based on the results of the entrance examination.
- 3 Scope of Examination: Interviews and examinations for both courses will be conducted at the same time. English course applicants will sit for a Pre-Intermediate English Language examination while Chinese course applicants will sit for 3 examinations: Buddhism, Chinese Linguistic Skills (both conducted in Chinese) and Elementary English Language Examination.
- 4 The college will apply for student visas and permits on behalf of all selected applicants.
- 5 Selection results will be announced via telephone, email and the college website.
- 6 According to the policy stipulated by the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority of Singapore (ICA), all foreign students are required to pay a security deposit. The student shall bear half of the amount, while the remainder will be subsidized by the college. Please visit the college website (<https://www.bcs.edu.sg/admissions/ba/>) for details on the deposit amount.

For more information, please visit the "Admissions" section at the college website or contact us in writing / via telephone.

ADDRESS

**Buddhist College of Singapore**  
Registrar's Office  
88 Bright Hill Road Singapore 574117

TELEPHONE **0065-6715 6900**

Please contact us between Mondays to Fridays, 9am – 4pm, Singapore time

FAX NUMBER **0065-6456 0180**

EMAIL **enquiry@bcs.edu.sg**

WEBSITE **www.bcs.edu.sg**

The closing date for Non-Chinese applicants is **30 April 2018**.

Start of Semester : **3 September 2018**

Successful applicants are required to report to the college by **27 August 2018**.

Remark: BCS shall provide one-way air tickets for freshmen. Return air ticket will be provided for graduates.



泰国摩诃朱拉隆功佛教大学  
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University  
Thailand