

How to have a Happier Family Life through the Dharma

略说持戒

生命中无法承受的重

礼敬凡僧

厨房里的修行

Read How Mindfulness
Can Reap Much Benefits
For You And Your Family

41

5-8月 | may - aug
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Gifting Medical Care to All Who Needs It

Offering medical care and medicine to the needy has always been a part of Buddhist practice and service to our community.

The Singapore Buddhist Free Clinic (SBFC) embodies this selfless and generous spirit, and for nearly half a century has been rendering medical care to all patients who came to its seven clinics, regardless of their race or background. This is based on the principle that life is precious and all beings are equal, and hence should be shown “infinite compassion without discrimination”.

Recently, I found out that the three most pressing issues of interest to many people are “high blood pressure, high blood sugar, high cholesterol”, also known as the “Three High’s”.

They are indeed prevalent in our population, especially high blood sugar (diabetes). However, I believe that Traditional Chinese Medicine with its long history has effective remedies in the prevention and treatment of such diseases. Prevention is better than cure and it is the best option.

Most of these diseases have long latency periods and often, creep up silently to afflict the body when people do not pay attention to their dietary habits and health, or lack exercise. People are caught unaware at the initial stages, because these diseases may not show noticeable symptoms.

Hence, it is important that all of us be mindful of the need to take charge of our own health, eat more vegetables and fruits, inculcate healthy habits, exercise regularly, get enough sleep, and maintain emotional balance, in order to ward off the “Three High’s”.

Our next goal is to set up a clinic in the eastern part of Singapore. It is our wish that residents in the north, south, east, west and central parts of Singapore can have access to medical care offered by the SBFC Team at a clinic not far from where they live.

Charity is a journey without an end, but we do not fear that the road is long because there are numerous Buddhists and well-wishers in society, who actively participate in our charitable activities with one heart and mind, inspiring and spurring us on. Were it not for their generous donations, the SBFC would have had great difficulty providing its free public service.

Let me express my utmost gratitude to all of you. My wishes to all: may you be well physically, happy psychologically and blessed always! 🙏

Sik Kwang Sheng (Ven)

Abbot,
Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery
Chairman,
The Singapore Buddhist Free Clinic

Editor: This message is an excerpt of the welcome address given by Ven Kwang Sheng on the 48th anniversary of the Singapore Buddhist Free Clinic.

Uniting families in mindfulness, love and harmony

Families are the basic units and building blocks of any society. A family that practises love and mindfulness makes for a happy and harmonious family (pages 51 & 53).

A happy and harmonious family that stays together united in love, in which family members have the insight and self-awareness to understand their own behavioural patterns (pages 44 & 49) and are able to transform their own suffering (page 46) would be able to help others transform their pain, and in turn help others touch their happiness.

In this way, the society becomes much healthier and happier. Practising the Dharma can help a family to achieve this, nurturing wise, joyful people who can do good and alleviate suffering (pages 42 & 60).

Ven Thubten Chodron explains how we can guide and bring up our children well using the Buddha's teaching on page 60.

For more resources to establish daily mindful practices in your family life, flip to pages 65, 69 and 70.

Happy reading, and may all things be auspicious and joyful for every family.

Esther Thien

Yours in the Dharma,
Sister Esther Thien

HOME
SWEET
HOME



Singapore — The Buddhist College of Singapore (BCS) and The Studies in Inter-Religious Relations in Plural Societies (SRP) programme, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), and Nanyang Technological University (NTU), co-hosted an inaugural seminar at the BCS on 11 November 2017.

About 60 guests from various Buddhist organisations in Singapore and members of the public attended the seminar.

Titled “Buddhism and Religion in Society: Conflict and Peace”, the seminar aimed to address issues related to religion, conflict, and peace so as to provide a better understanding of issues affecting Singapore today.

Venerable Dr Chuan Sheng, Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs (BCS), delivered the opening remarks at the event.

Head of SRP Programme, Ambassador Mohammad Alami Musa, in his introduction on SRP and the aims of the talk, cited a study done



in the United States that found Singapore is the most religiously diverse country in the world.

Even though Singapore is a secular state, he added, there are many religions within the country, and religiosity has increased.

He said while social hostility due to religion has increased in other countries, Singapore is lucky to have enjoyed religious peace in the last 50 years.

However, he warned that the landscape would become increasingly challenging with the politicisation of religion. It is, therefore, important to gain awareness of religion-based conflict to prevent it, he said.

As the seminar moved to the topic of Buddhism and religion in society, keynote speaker Professor Emeritus Julius Lipner, Professor of Hinduism and the Comparative Study of Religion at the University of Cambridge, underlined the importance of engaging in dialogue amid different interpretations.

Citing the Four Noble Truths, Professor Emeritus Lipner said the doctrine has been subjected to many different interpretations in the history of Buddhism.



He said all religion traditions are constructs because they are based on interpretation. If there are different interpretations, he advised listening to the other party to see if one can complement or learn from the other.

He continued, saying these traditions, including Buddhism, usually involve two major dimensions. The first is the more active dimension, revolving around ordinary persons, who keep the society going by marrying, producing offspring and working. The other is more contemplative, meditative and disengaged from the world, and this is usually the role of monks or religious teachers.

Now, the time has come to dissolve any sharp distinctions between the active and passive dimension of engagement with the world, he said. This applies to all religions, and both groups must engage with the world and other faiths through dialogue.

He cited Lord Buddha as the epitome of engagement with the world when he rejected temptation from Mara and his beautiful daughters to forsake the world upon achieving enlightenment. Instead, the Enlightened One contributed his



experience and enlightenment and spread the Dharma.

Next, Dr Paul Hedges, Associate Professor of Inter-Religious Studies at the SRP Programme, expounded on fundamentalism and violence vis-a-vis peace and dialogue, referencing several scholars and historical literature.

Among his salient points was drawing a distinction between fundamentalism and its relationship to religion and violence. According to Dr Hedges, they are often linked even though they are distinct domains. This is because when we think of religion and violence, we often think of fundamentalist forms of religion.

He also pointed out that rarely is there pure religious violence. Rather, the violence can generally be traced back to contributing factors such as politics, nationalism, ethnicity or economics.

His point was later corroborated by another speaker, Dr Lee Foong Ming, who teaches history and philosophy of Indian Buddhism at the BCS.

Citing the Madhupindika Sutta and the concept of dependent origination in her discourse, she noted that the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar and the strife that has erupted between Rohingya Muslims and the country's Buddhists is not just about religion.

Ethnicity and community issues, including resources, are also involved. Closer to home, Ambassador Mohammad Musa reminded the audience that religious peace in Singapore does not happen by chance.

In fact, he said that inter-religious issues abound in Singapore. But they are mitigated by abundant sharing and exchange among leaders of the different religions, and the resulting familiarity amongst the groups has enabled them to resolve the issues among themselves. This is unlike other countries where the matter is escalated to the court for adjudication.

Having said that, Ambassador Mohammad Musa added that the question now is how we can level up the extent and intensity of inter-religious dialogue in Singapore, making it deeper and broader, and involving religious leaders as well as ordinary people across religious lines.

The full-day seminar concluded with a panel discussion about the different ways of resolving conflicts in the various religions. Tokens of appreciation were presented to all the speakers. ☺

Text: Janice Goh



Fostering better understanding with the Buddhism and Religion in Society: Conflict and Peace Seminar

A Happier Family Life through the Dharma

Dr Ang Beng Choo offers some guidance on how one can practise the Dharma with family members and cultivate a happy and harmonious family life.

Difference between home and house

A park warden was going to close the gate of a park. He saw an old man sitting on a bench in the park. He came over and gently asked him, "Please go home. I am closing the gate now."

"I have no home," the old man replied.

The warden recognised the old man as one of the richest men in the town and owned a big house opposite the park. He was rather surprised and asked, "Sir, your home is over there. Why do you say you had no home?" The old man answered sadly, "That is my house, not my home. I am alone and do not have a family there."

A home is a place where the family is.

What is a family?

What is a family? The word "family", can be an acronym for "Father and Mother, I Love You."

The Buddha said, "This is an impermanent world." Everyone faces adversities sometimes. With love, care, support and help among family members, one can overcome these difficulties much easier than alone.

However, as with any groups, there will be differences of opinion among family members and occasionally conflicts may arise. A family is like the body of a bird with several heads. If the heads cannot get along and start harming each other, the body, together with the heads will suffer.

How can we maintain a harmonious and happy family?

Relationship is a two-way traffic. Maintaining good relationships among family members is a concerted effort among all concerned. It requires mutual understanding, concern and love, and unfaltering commitment.

The Buddha said, "This is an imperfect world."

Even though nobody is perfect, everyone needs encouragement and affirmation. However, one usually sees his or her own virtues and others' faults. When there is a problem, one often believes that the fault lies in others. This is the source of conflicts, disputes and problems for family relationships.

The Buddha also said, "Thoughts are forerunners of speech and action."

Positive thoughts of gratitude

Positive thoughts will produce positive speech and action. How can we make our thoughts positive? I believe that the key to this is to always have a heart filled with gratitude.

After the Buddha attained enlightenment, he stood in front of the Bodhi tree gazing at it for seven days in meditation to show his gratitude to the tree for having sheltered him during his struggle for

enlightenment. The Mangala Sutta enumerates gratitude as one of the highest blessings. It is not just the greatest virtue, but the mother of all virtues. To me, gratitude is the first lesson the Buddha taught through his own action.

The Buddha also taught us to be grateful to the four groups of people: parents, teachers, nation and all sentient beings. All have contributed to our well-being. If we practise gratitude, our conceit, greed, hatred, jealousy, and distrust will reduce gradually. We will then be able to maintain good relationships and rectify bad ones with our family members.

The importance of gentle speech

However just having grateful thoughts are not enough. We should manifest it in our speech and action.

Speech is an effective tool for communication and can make or break a relationship. Therefore, Right Speech is an important Buddhist teaching. It is addressed both in the Five Precepts and the Noble Eightfold Path. In the ten roots of skilful actions, four deal with speech.

In the Dhammapada, the Buddha advised his disciples, "only speak when you need to discuss meaningful things that will benefit your own practice and others. If not, please maintain noble silence." In other sutras, the Buddha also advised us to "respect the content of each sentence said", "control our tongue well to avoid condemning others and creating bad karma" and "use gentle words instead of harsh words". Let us practise the Buddha's teachings by using right speech and gentle words to avoid arguments, quarrels and fights among family members.

If there is a conflict between us and our family members, we should always try to reflect on ourselves to make sure that the problems do not lie with us.

There were two dogs walking into a room at separate times. A happy dog came out wagging its tail. An angry dog left the room growling. Out of curiosity, a person entered the room to find out what could possibly make one dog so happy and the other so grouchy. He discovered that it was just

an empty room filled with mirrors. When the happy dog entered, it saw a thousand happy dogs wagging tails at it, making it even happier. On the contrary, the grouchy dog saw a thousand dogs growling at it, infuriating it further. Remember that our family members may be the mirrors reflecting us.

We have two ears and one mouth. We should use our ears more to listen to our family members' difficulties. When a comment or suggestion is needed, be positive and gentle so as not to worsen the situation. If we are not sure of what to say, maintain noble silence. Furthermore, use these three magical words: "sorry", "please" and "thank you" generously.

Conclusion

A friend blamed himself for not taking care of his organs after being diagnosed with lung cancer. Our organs have been working hard for us and contributing a lot to our well-being since birth. However, we may have taken them for granted and never appreciated or cared for them until they malfunction. **Our family members are like our organs.**

Do we also take them for granted until they are sick? Let us have a caring and happy family while everyone is still healthy.

If we always have positive thoughts, show our appreciation, as well as extend a helping hand to our family members when required, we will be able to maintain harmonious relationships under one roof.

Once a strong and harmonious family is developed through our daily practice of the Dharma, others will naturally be convinced of the worthiness of practising the Dharma. This will eventually strengthen the faith of the family in the Triple Gem. ☺

Dr Ang Beng Choo was a prominent educator with the Ministry of Education for 33 years. She was also awarded the International Outstanding Buddhist Woman Award in Education and Culture in 1998. After her retirement, she is still serving the community, giving talks on personal development, human relationships, family life, children's education and senior citizens.



Understanding the Patterns of Behaviour in Our Lives

Mike Hou gives a brief overview and insight into the behavioural patterns we develop in our lives.

Introduction

There is an adage in Zen Buddhism that states “the way a man does one thing is the way he does everything”. **What this implies is that there is a certain degree of consistency, or pattern, in how we conduct the various activities in our lives.** If this resonates with you, you are not alone.

How patterns emerge

Through life, we develop various patterns of behaviour—for instance, how we respond to stressful situations (e.g. preparing for an exam, a competition, or a presentation); how we manage interpersonal conflict (e.g. arguing with a spouse or disagreeing with colleagues); and how we communicate with the people around us (e.g. deliberating on the image we wish to portray externally, through the words that we say and body language that we adopt).

Much of these patterns of behaviour have been acquired based on our life experiences from infancy to adulthood as means to cope with the various stressors and triggers that we face, and also in response to the patterns that others around us exhibit.

There are patterns that are more destructive—for example, we may find ourselves always “falling in love” with the same “type” of person (e.g. always liking someone who tends to be a taker, instead of a giver), culminating in a dissatisfying, frustrating and inequitable relationship; we may also often unconsciously sabotage our own success (e.g. by deliberately tiring ourselves out before a competition, or by developing excuses to rationalise why we aren’t cut out for a job that we desire).

There are also patterns that are more productive—there may be times when we resort to sublimation of our frustrations (e.g. anger, disappointment) through creativity (e.g. painting) and catharsis (e.g. sports).

The effects of patterns

Patterns are like habits. Sometimes we may be consciously aware of them, sometimes we may not. In most cases, negative or destructive patterns tend to be unconscious. Psychologically speaking, these patterns could be the result of certain defence mechanisms that we have embraced, in order to deal with psychologically challenging issues that we may yet have the capacity to overcome.

Some defence mechanisms include:

1. Projection — when we attribute our own undesirable qualities onto others instead, so that we do not have to face our own weaknesses, and
2. Displacement — when we fulfil an impulse (e.g. aggression) with a substitute (e.g. channelling the anger towards our boss at work to our spouse at home).

Suffice to say, these defence mechanisms are generally negative, because they promote and perpetuate illusions while discouraging us from facing our challenges squarely. They are a form of mental gymnastics that we perform unknowingly, to avoid facing our issues with awareness.

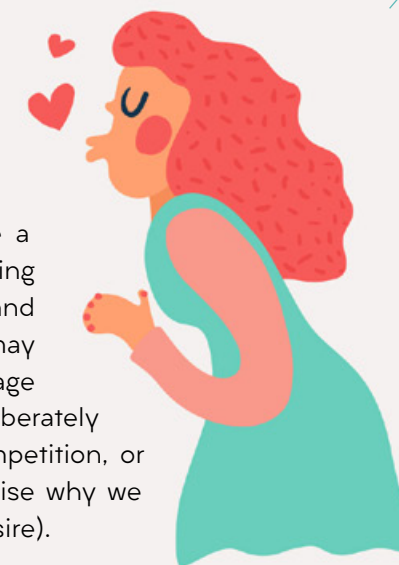
The benefits of mindfulness

If we examine our life experiences closely with mindfulness, we will realise that there are indeed recurring themes, or episodes, that somehow repeat themselves in various forms.

As with most change, knowing is the first step. Through efforts such as meditation, or introspection (e.g. reflecting about a particular stressful episode such as an argument with a loved one), we will be able to gain insight into the patterns of behaviour that we tend to resort to in our lives.

We can then make a conscious decision whether or not to continue to live with these patterns, or change for the better. ☺

Editor’s Note: The Monastery is conducting a Mindfulness Meditation Course in June. Please turn to page 72 or visit www.kmspks.org for more information.



Ms Nguyen Thi Gia Hoang has reaped slow but steady benefits personally and spiritually ever since she started her mindfulness journey in the Plum Village (PV) tradition earnestly at age 19.

Today, she and her husband, both in their early 30s, and their 2-year-old daughter, attend regular mindfulness practice sessions with Joyful Garden Sangha, a lay community in Singapore that follows Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh and the Plum Village tradition. Ms Hoang is pursuing a master's degree in counselling and her husband is an engineer.

Ms Hoang tells AWAKEN how practising mindfulness has shaped her marital life, parenting style and interactions with her family.

Awaken: When did you first encounter the PV practices of love and mindfulness?

Ms Hoang: I cannot recall the age when I had my first encounter with the PV practices. But I do remember listening to a Dharma talk about lighting up the light of mindfulness by Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh (Thay) with my father. The title of the talk stuck with me.

When I was 19, I read up more about Plum Village, Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh and the art of mindful living. It resonated so much with me as a young person that I was determined to save up money to attend my first two retreats with Thay in Hanoi in 2008. The retreats left a great impact on my life and I have been with the practices ever since.

Awaken: What have you learnt from PV?

Ms Hoang: I learn to slow down and appreciate the miracles of life that are available wherever I am: my breath, my steps, the presence of a loved one, the blue sky, the white clouds, the bright moon, or a cup of coffee.

I have also become more aware of and am more in touch with my own pain and suffering, and that of my loved ones. There is a great tendency to run away from pain and suffering, but Thay taught us that if we know how to suffer, we suffer less. It's called the Art of Suffering. Sounds strange, doesn't it?

Over the years, I have been able to accept and be with my suffering more. By doing so, I am getting closer to an understanding of suffering and that's where healing begins. I feel humbled by my own habitual energy of non-stop thinking, worry, jealousy, etc.

Breathe to be in touch with yourself

Janice Goh from Awaken speaks to Ms Nguyen Thi Gia Hoang to understand how her mindfulness journey in the Plum Village has reaped much benefits for her and her family.

I recently had a realisation about unconditional love: that we all, no matter what we do or have done, deserve to be well, happy and safe. In other words, the Metta Sutta rings true to me:

May I be happy, well, safe and free from afflictions.

*May you be happy,
well, safe and free from afflictions.*

*May he/ she be happy,
well, safe and free from afflictions.*

*May they be happy,
well, safe and free from afflictions.*

*May we be happy,
well, safe and free from afflictions.*

Awaken: How do you integrate the practices into everyday life?

Ms Hoang: We can integrate them in our marital relationship and parenting.

• Marital relationship

I'm so fortunate that my husband is also a fellow practitioner in this tradition. Thanks to that, we have many common grounds and common practices to take care of ourselves and our relationship.

My husband and I learn to be attentive to each other and notice changes in the other's mood and check in with each other if we feel something is not right. We often have small catch-up or "kopi" sessions where we share our insights, happiness, learning, joys and difficulties. We gain better understanding of ourselves and of each other. We have become better friends and partners in our marriage.

There is a mantra that Thay taught, "I am partially right." I think it helps my husband and me a lot. I have learnt that allowing the other person to speak without interruption is so important. It allows the other party to freely express his perception, and when he feels heard, it is easier for us to share our perspectives. Having both parties acknowledge that both are partially right allows us to acknowledge our incomplete understanding.

• Parenting

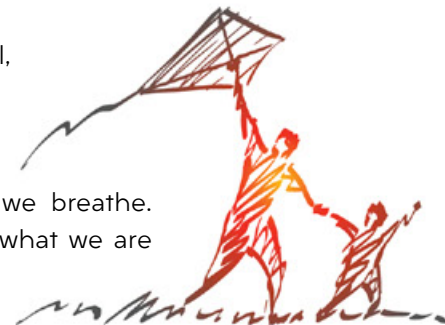
I am not a perfect parent. However, I have tried in some ways to apply my practice to parenting. I learn to pause before reacting to a situation. I also learn to create boundaries and be firm with my child (and that's against my tendency to be sweet, gentle and pleasant).



Thay often reminded us that understanding is the basis of love. Sometimes, as parents, we may be too quick to apply our perception to our children and misjudge them. I try to be curious about my child and learn to think from her perspective. It is amazing to try to understand the story that a toddler, with her limited language, tries to tell you, and see her expressions. Such experiences nourish me a lot as a parent.

My husband and I bring our child to the mindfulness practice sessions and allow her to stick around when she can. Sometimes she can stay calm and quiet when others meditate. She also learns some PV songs and likes to sing, "In, out, deep, slow, calm, ease, smile, release." We ask her to invite the bell, as practised in the PV tradition, and practise mindful breathing at times.

When we invite the bell, we are invited to breathe mindfully and pay attention to the sounds of the bell as we breathe. We are asked to pause what we are doing and return to the breath.



Awaken: What changes have you seen?

Ms Hoang: There are some changes that you can feel immediately. For example, if you can successfully return to your in-breath and out-breath, even if it's just for a short while, there can be a sense of calmness and clarity. Sometimes when we are in a very difficult position, the breaths offer a space from which to respond to the situation, rather than getting caught up in our thoughts, feelings or automatic responses.



As a young adult who had a need to find meaning and purpose in life, I found a strong connection to Thay's books. I realise that the purpose of my life is to transform my suffering and help others transform theirs, to nourish my happiness and to help others touch their happiness. Plum Village practices offer me concrete ways to realise that life purpose: by touching the present moment, we are in touch with ourselves, our suffering and our joy. We also find the connection to other people and with nature.

One of the long-term benefits is that I am able to better tolerate emotional pain and discomfort. In the past, I often ran away from negative feelings. When I see my loved ones in pain, sometimes I try to cheer them up to mitigate the sadness. I realise that strategy does not always work. I had to learn to stay with the sadness, which can be very uncomfortable. By learning to embrace the painful emotions, I become a little more patient with myself and my loved ones. There are times when I still run away or push the feelings aside, but I'm learning to acknowledge them as a friend that comes to visit, "Hello sadness, I know you are there."

Another long-term benefit is experiencing the beauty of a truly practising community. As we practise together, we learn about one another's strengths and weaknesses. Amid conflict that arises among practitioners, the beauty of this practice is the community's commitment to transform our suffering and reconcile our differences.

Awaken: How do your family members feel?

Ms Hoang: I think our parents feel loved and respected. They can see the efforts that my husband and I put in to take care of our child and provide for her. They can also see how we refrain from saying or doing things that may hurt others, and try to build harmony in the family.

Awaken: How have they changed?

Ms Hoang: My in-laws are more receptive to what I share and become curious about how to transform difficult relationships and live a richer life.

My parents often ask me about my practice, my sangha and my teacher. My father practises chanting and meditation regularly, which is an inspiration for my own practice. My mother enjoys listening to Dharma talks on YouTube.

Awaken: Any advice for busy working professionals who are not familiar with the PV tradition?

Ms Hoang: Practise the practice. Take care of yourself. Get in touch with your own suffering and transform it. Grow your happiness. To me, happiness is not about feeling good all the time. It also involves connecting to others and getting out of our comfort zone to do what is important.

Listen and respect one another. Learn to accept differences. Communicate with one another.

Editor: The Monastery will be conducting a "Breathe, You are Alive" retreat in June with the Sangha from Plum Village. Please turn to page 72 or visit www.kmspks.org for more information.



As a workshop facilitator of Dr Stephen R Covey's "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" programme, I am often asked by my participants about the purpose of life as I lead them to discover their personal mission.

Repeatedly, I used the metaphor of a match stick to illustrate my answer.



Life is like a match stick. Its life begins when we ignite it. The flame symbolises our life. It depends on what we want to use it for. We can either use the flame to bring light and warmth into darkness, brighten up our life and those of others or use it to burn down forests and houses and bring harm to others. The purpose of life, therefore, depends on what we want to do with our precious human life.

Life is not just about how successful and rich you are. To me, the word "LIFE" stands for "Living It Fully and Eternally for the common good". It is a journey that continues even after death as the legacy that we leave behind may impact the current generation and live through many subsequent generations. We can find meaning in life, if we want and choose to.

The mental map or the paradigm that we hold influences our thinking and affects the path that we take to find meaning in life. I believe that life can be meaningful and complete if we are willing to change our paradigm and see things from other people's paradigm.

Dr Covey defines paradigm as a perception, assumption, theory, frame of mind or lens through which we view the world. He believes that if we want to make minor, incremental changes and improvements in our life, simply work on modifying our practices, behaviour or attitude. But if we want to make significant, quantum improvements in our life, we need to work on our paradigm.

We do not live all by ourselves. We live in an interdependent world. Our actions and decisions affect others. We should always take action and make decision based on a complete paradigm of the situation. There is no absolute right or wrong. In every right, there are some wrongs and in every wrong, there are some rights. It all boils down to the paradigm we hold.

One day whilst travelling on an MRT train, I overheard a young wife questioning her husband over a trivial issue. The young wife said to her husband, "Last week, when we visited your mum, she told me that she was around our vicinity shopping for some household items. Why didn't she come and visit us since she was near our house?" The husband replied, "May be she didn't know that we were at home." The wife was not happy with the response and refuted, "She can always call us, right! I think your mum doesn't like me!" That response put her husband into a defensive position and a tiff soon followed.

I believe the couple did not have a good sleep that night. That would probably be because the young wife was living in her own paradigm and perception about her mother-in-law.

Perhaps the real reason could be that the mother-in-law did not want to intrude into their privacy and wanted to give them some quality time together. If the wife views the situation from a positive paradigm and is willing to embrace it, I believe

she would be a much happier person.

This incident teaches us not to act based on our own paradigm. Instead, seek to embrace the complete paradigm of the situation and base our action on it.

In one of the workshops that I attended, I was told this story about a preacher who was very disappointed when he saw a man sleeping through his sermon. He told himself that he would reprimand the man after the service for showing disrespect to him and the audience.

At the end of the sermon, he stood up and walked towards the man. Before he could reach the man, the man's wife came forward to him and apologised on behalf of her husband. She said, "Sir, my husband has contracted cancer and he is in a terminal stage. The doctor has given him a month to live. He doesn't want to waste his last days resting at home. He insisted on coming here to listen to your sermon. Unfortunately, he was too sick to concentrate on your teaching and I am sorry for that."

The preacher was stumped and felt ashamed of himself. He realised how shallow and petty he was.

We tend to see the world as we project it rather than for what it is. We are more likely to make a better decision and take better action if we seek to embrace the complete paradigm of the situation.

The mind is the creator and destroyer of our purpose of life. If we think good, good will come to us and if we think bad, bad will come to us. It is all in our mind. Buddha once said, "All things are preceded by the mind, led by the mind, created by the mind." ☺

Text: **Johnson Ong Chee Bin**

Whose perception is correct?

A reckless driver in a car
With mother, niece and sister-in-law
Steps on the oil pedal as he wishes
Zooming and braking as he likes

Mother sits in grace and calm
Ever tolerant of her son's driving style
Niece is thrilled with cheers and joy
Enjoying the ride as if she's on a roller coaster
Sister-in-law is evidently annoyed
Engaged in her angry thoughts

One same act and three different perceptions
Why on earth are there such responses?
The answer lies in dependent origination
The universal law as revealed by Lord Buddha

Having the 'correct' perception is not the key
Having the wisdom realising emptiness is supreme
With this wisdom beamed on all life situations
May one gain enlightenment this lifetime. ☺

By **Yeshe Osel**



Retold by **Esther Thien**
Illustration: **Goh Shang Hao**

The Good-for-Nothing Son

Long ago, there lived an old man with his only son. Instead of being a source of comfort, this son gave him only heartache and frustration.

The son was a drunkard and a gambler. Due to his unwholesome habits, he often stole from others, and was constantly involved in street brawls and fights. Sometimes, he would rant and scream in the streets. On other days he would black out in a stranger's yard.

The son's behaviour was so noxious that the old man did not dare to show his face in town. Not only did the son not take care of his elderly father, he even stole the title deed to their house, sold it, and spent all the money in a single night on women and drinks.

Finally, the old man exploded, "Get out! Crawl off and die! Never come back! May the typhus get you for all I care!"

Before long, his son did indeed catch typhus, and died soon after. The old man had spoken carelessly, out of deep frustration, but he hadn't really wanted

his son to die of the disease; it felt as if all the sadness, regret and guilt would rip his heart asunder.

One day, a monastic walked past and saw the old man sitting in front of his little hut, so forlorn that no tears were left. Seeing the old man in such great agony, the monastic looked deep inside the man, and eventually said,

"The principles that guide this world function very precisely. They function without even the tiniest error, and nothing takes place outside of them. We receive the things exactly as we have done and sent out."

"In your past life you wasted all of your family's wealth on gambling and womanising. You even sold your own wife. You brought heartache and every kind of pain to your parents. Eventually, your father's anger killed him."

"It was this karmic connection that caused him to be reborn as your son in this life. So, who can you blame for what has happened? Your karma from that life was just about to be exhausted, and your



son would have straightened out and turned over a new leaf. Unfortunately, you couldn't endure this long enough."

"Losing yourself in grief won't help you or your son. If you truly love him and want to heal from this suffering, you have to let go and return all your regrets, anger and grief to your foundation. Persevere and continue to do this. It's not easy but eventually they will quiet down. This is the only way forward and the only way to help your son."

"We all share the same foundation, Buddha-nature, our true essence which is inherently pure and can transmute all negative karma and suffering. Through this foundation, we are connected to every animate and inanimate life and object throughout the universe."

"Therefore if you work on returning everything to your foundation, you can also help to lift the darkness that is covering your son's mind. Don't be too sad, and don't hate yourself. Let go of all the negative karma between the two of you, and let go of all the terrible and harmful things done previously."

"When you can let go of those to your foundation, they will dissolve and disappear, allowing your son to be reborn in a good place."

Then, the monastic said a prayer for the old man's son, and left. ☺

Not a single thing in this world remains the same. Everything is ceaselessly flowing and changing.

Even though you or the ones you love suffer from the karma you have created through your words or actions, that suffering can change in an instant, depending upon how well you are able to return thoughts to your foundation, and depending upon the thoughts you give rise to right now.

Suppose someone in your family did something really rotten and dreadful. Even in such a situation, you should unconditionally entrust everything to your foundation. Through it, the minds of parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters are all connected as one. So entrust everything to your foundation, knowing that your inherent mind, your true nature can take care of everything.

For instance, if your child runs away and later returns home, don't start yelling at him or her. Instead, embrace the child with a warm and gentle heart. Ask if he or she is hungry, if he or she were safe when away from home.

Initially, your child may respond in a cold or distant manner, but gradually, he or she will begin to feel the warmth and love of family and home, and will stop wandering the streets.

As you entrust all your love and concern to your foundation, through their foundation, your child will sense them. Eventually, your family will come to share love and happiness together.

Such harmony is the source of all good fortune, grace and virtue.

— Zen Master Daehuang



The Hornless Bull

There was once a young clumsy bull which was very unique.

While his peers were wrestling and jostling, he stumbled to join in.

Round and tubby, he could not balance well. So tumble he did, again and again.

He was always surrounded with roars of laughter, "Look at that clumsy little bull! What kind of bull is he? Ha! Ha! Ha!"

Hot tears flowed as his heart raged with shame and anger. "Why am I so clumsy? How dare they say this about me?"

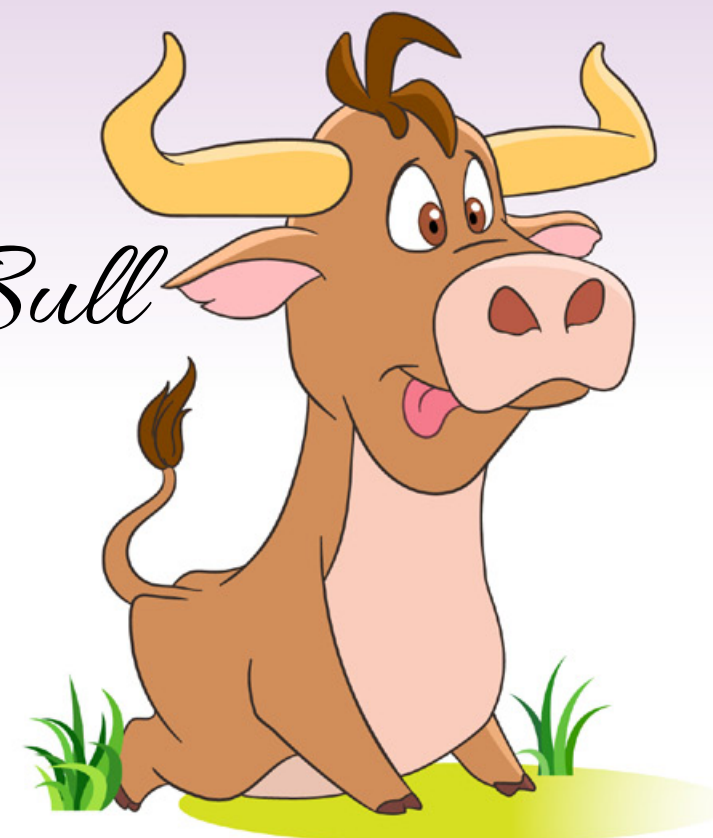
He walked alone to the deep, quiet forest and as he calmed down, he decided, "I'm going to show them what a bull I can become indeed!" By the day, he hid in the bushes, watching the strong bulls train and wrestle. By night, he wandered into the forests, picking sturdy old trees as targets to practise his charging and train up his might.

Through this training, he shed layers of fat and became tough, rugged and strong. His horns grew sharp and sturdy and his confidence grew. He now could roam calmly amongst his own, earning cheers instead of jeers now.

He felt truly triumphant. "This is the day! Now they know my worth!"

He became a leader, roaming the fields with at least a dozen in tow.

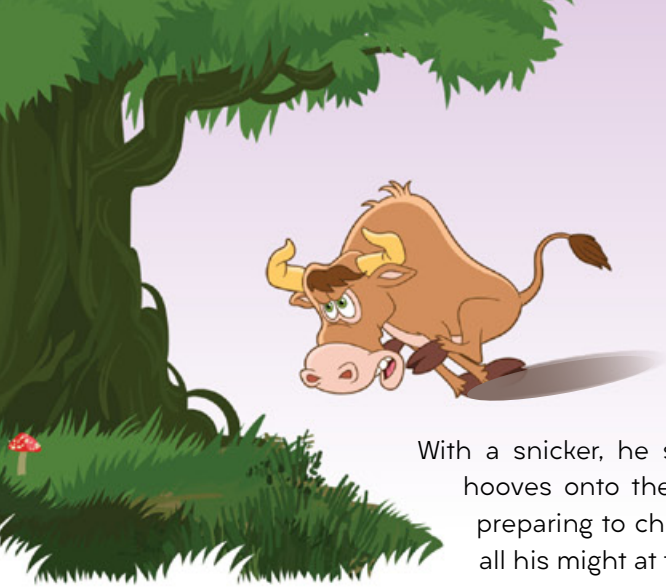
One day, there was a fight. This fight was for only the strong and bullish, and indeed, no bull short



of these criteria could survive it. The formerly clumsy bull threw his hooves in and called out for competitors.

And the fight began. Day and night, the crowds jostled with excitement to watch. The defeated bulls were thrown carelessly into the crowd while those still strong and powerful continued their tussles. After three long days and nights, only the previously clumsy bull and two others were left. In hours, the third was eliminated and only the bull and another remained. This was the moment for the ultimate victor!

With all his bullish strength, he charged at the other. And wham! The other bull flew through the air and landed with a thud far off. "Hurrah! The winner has emerged!" Our bull felt his heart rush with excitement, "This was it! This was it!" Looking at his fallen competitor on the ground, a sudden cruel wave swarmed his mind, "That's it. I will be the strongest around. Off to his old home he goes!"



With a snicker, he stuck his hooves onto the ground, preparing to charge with all his might at the fallen one. "May he be gone forever!" And he pushed off with such might that the dust and sand whirled around and the tiny flies scuttled off in a flurry. Crack! Our bull was stunned by a strong blow to his head, "What happened?" He could not move, his horns were lodged onto something and he felt dizzy. The more he pulled, the more stuck his horns became. "What? What happened? What the h..." As the dust slowly fell away from his vision, he found himself staring at the foot of a tree and the crowd roared with laughter, "Look at him! Look at him! What a sight! A bull stuck in the tree! Ha! Ha! Ha!" For a while, he was disoriented. Then from the corner of his eye, he glanced back and saw that the fallen one was fallen no more. It had jumped out of the way nimbly before our bull struck and was now standing triumphantly, smirking with its front hooves raised in victory.

The formerly clumsy bull felt the familiar hotness come back to his heart, the same queasiness and shame that he had felt long ago. He wanted to disappear straight away into the deep forest that had always given him solace, but struggle as he did, he could not dislodge himself from the tree. No bull came to help that day. All his friends had gone with the celebrating crowd, throwing praises and salutations upon the triumphant bull.

He was left all alone, in the dust, in the dusk, hot tears streaming, back and hooves tired from struggling to get free.

The night passed quickly. When day broke, the bull was confused from fatigue, anger and depression and his life flashed by him as he waited. He did not know what he was waiting for. He no longer felt he knew his life and future.

Suddenly—

"Pa! Pa! Look! Look!" He jumped a little at the voice, the voice of a little one of the human race and tried to twist his head quickly to see where it came from. His vision was restricted by the tight grip on his horns but he saw two pairs of feet, one pair bigger than the other. Then he felt a touch.

He jumped and protested by kicking his hind legs furiously.

"Careful! Come here, he's angry and he might kick you." The older one shouted. "But he's in pain, Pa, can we help him? His horns are stuck in the tree!"

The older human came cautiously round the bull, keeping out of reach from the furiously kicking hooves. He stood just behind the tree trunk and looked at the bull, tired, afraid and in pain from its pathetic situation. He did not know what to do. He feared for his son and himself if he should free this bull. Would it kill them in fright?

The bull looked into the man's eyes and felt something different. There was a certain gentleness and calm in this man that made the bull feel as if it could almost trust him. The bull relaxed a little and maintained the eye contact.

Then a little hand came and courageously caressed the bull. The bull twitched a little but the touch felt good. His tears fell again at this expression of concern.

The little boy was worried now. "Pa, it is in pain. It's crying! Please help him, Pa! Please help him! It must be so painful!"

His father was confused. His elders always warned him to keep away from the wild bulls in the forest. In their village, at least one member of each family had had some kind of encounter with the ferocious wild bulls, some losing their lives, others left crippled or maimed. Should he do it?

A little wet hand grabbed at his wrists. "Pa! Pa..." He looked at his little boy, whose eyes were red and teary, looking up sadly into his eyes.

Something tugged at his heartstrings and he made the decision.

"Ok, brother bull, we are here to help you. Please relax and calm down. Please promise not to harm my little boy and me. Don't worry. We mean no harm. Please don't worry..." he repeated these words over and over again, looking straight into the eyes of our now defeated and shamed bull. Then he reached out his hands to caress the face of the crying bull, soothing it like he had comforted his little boy when the little one had awakened in fear from his nightmares.

The bull showed its consent by trying to sit down close to the tree, waiting quietly.

The horns were too deeply rooted in the trunk. They looked impossible to yank out forcefully. It might be a dangerous operation, injuring the bull and causing excessive bleeding. Then the older human had an idea. He had a saw with him! The sharp saw that he used to fell old, thick trees with. Maybe he could saw the horns of this bull to save its life.

When the bull saw the man reaching for the saw, he winced. "Not my horns! My bull horns! No bull would be afraid of me anymore! Please no! Not my horns!" His tears came again and he stood up nervously, trying to back away slowly, only to end up moving his hooves around the same spot on the ground. He started to perspire and his feet shivered in fear.

"Pa! Pa!" The observant little boy sitting atop the tree in front cried out in worry.

His father assured the little boy with a nod, and then approached the bull slowly and gently. He spoke to the bull like an old friend, "My friend brother bull, there is no other way except this. Though your horns will never grow again, you still have your life and strength. You can still live out your lifespan and bring much benefit. You will soon starve here if we don't do this. Please, we are trying to help you. We are your friends." The man spoke sincerely and slowly from the bottom of his heart. He hoped that

his intention could be felt by this bull, even if it did not understand human speech.

The bull continued to struggle for a while, then slowly it calmed down and sat down again close to the tree, closing its eyes, with tears streaming down the sides of its face.

"It's all right, my friend. Please relax, I will try to saw through your horns now. Please do not harm me, I am trying to help you."

At the risk of being too close to the bull, the older human walked over slowly, putting one hand reassuringly on the bull, then he put both hands on his familiar tool. Slowly, the teeth of the saw cut into the pearly white horns of the bull. He sawed slowly and steadily, taking pains not to injure the bull.

Finally, it was done. With a thump, the tired bull fell against the foot of the tree.

"Hurray! Thank you, Pa! Thank you, Pa! He's released now. He's released now. Yeah!"

The little boy jumped down the tree and came quickly to the exhausted bull, sitting next to its huge and strong body, reaching out his little arms in embrace.

His father's heart jumped and he quickly reached forward to pull his only son back. "Be careful, my boy! He is still a wild bull!" The boy struggled in protest in his father's arms but the father would not let go.

"Come now, my boy, it's almost dark. We should go home now."

As the exhausted and hornless bull laid in the dirt at the base of the tree, he heard the cries of the little boy becoming more and more distant, until all he could hear were the sounds of birds returning to their homes, crickets singing and other forest animals chatting.

Now the reality of being hornless sank in.

Our bull sank hopelessly into depression. No more a perfect bull, shamefully defeated, no more

admirers, no more future, no more ‘me’. What have I become?

The whole night these thoughts, memories of his past horned life came flashing back. For a while he thought he was back in the limelight, showing off his strength by throwing fallen trees farther than any into the woods. Sometimes, he became the young tubby and clumsy little bull again, shy and afraid, ashamed at his own un-bullishness. He spent the night in such delirium or rather, delusions of who he was and who he thought he might become.

Another night passed. And another...

On the third morning as he lay slumped against the tree in the same position, not having the mental strength and courage to move anywhere, he heard that same familiar young voice again. This time, it came very near to him. But he did not even flinch even a little; he was now a depressed hornless bull. He no longer cared if some hunter came and stuck a knife deep into his hides. He thought he no longer had any future. What use was his life now?

A little human hand caressed his head, and then he felt the cool, refreshing feeling of water trickling down his head. Water! He opened his mouth for the water to flow in and he realised how thirsty he was! He opened his eyes and saw the little boy squatting next to him with a bowl of water. “Drink, drink! You must be thirsty now. Why are you still here? Why are you not going home?”

As the hornless bull lapped up the water, he let the word “home” repeat again and again in his mind. Where was home? Do I have a home? They only loved me because of my beauty and strength. Now that I have been publicly disgraced and now de-horned, what would they think of me?

He ignored that little boy who was caringly bringing him more water as he listlessly lapped up bowl after bowl.

Then he fell into thinking again, reminiscing, thinking and realising now that nobody had ever loved him. Was he even worth anybody’s love? At

times, he glanced up at his sawed-off horns stuck in the trunk and his tears fell again. In this way, his emotions went up and down but still, he did not make any effort to move from that very spot.

Each day while he remained at that spot, the little boy came in the mornings with water and food. His little human nurse was gentle and patient. But the bull-headed patient was too self-engrossed with sorrow and shame to notice. He just continued lying there in the dirt.

One night in the quiet and cool of the forest, the hornless bull lay there awake, thinking as usual. Then he saw a little light coming closer into the forest, flickering and moving. He stiffened. What or who was it? As it came closer, he recognised the sound of the little boy’s footsteps. What was he doing here in the middle of the night?

When the little boy came close and saw the bull looking at him, he was overjoyed and came running, falling beside the bull, moving up close. Looking into the eyes of the little boy, the bull realised he had been crying. This little boy must have been afraid to walk in the dark forest, but why had he come?

The stubborn hornless bull now paid attention to this little human crouched close to its hide. “Brother bull, I had a dream tonight. I dreamed that a group of hunters came and carried you away to the market. You were crying and angry but you could not fight back because you had no horn. I was so worried. I wanted to come and see if you are safe. I am so happy you are still here!” Then the little human wrapped his arms around the bull in joy.

As the bull laid there wrapped in the little boy’s embrace, his heart softened and his tears fell. This time, they were tears of gratitude. Why, he had come all this way to see if I am safe! He was deeply touched under his stubborn hide.

As the happy little boy continued to keep his arms around his friend, the bull woke up.

He finally woke up from his self-centred depression and saw that this little boy with the lamp who had come in the frightening dark was his FRIEND — someone who loved him and cared for him despite his current pathetic situation.

He curled his great body a little so that the boy could fit comfortably in the centre, to be kept warm from the night’s cold. His hide was thick, but the boy had only a shirt and jacket on him. He now felt responsible for taking care of this boy, his nurse, his benefactor and his friend.

The night passed peacefully, and it was also peaceful within the mind of our friend, the hornless bull. Gone were the waves of thoughts that had tortured him for days. Now what remained was a happy and peaceful calm.

When day broke, the forest was suddenly filled with the sound of people moving around quickly and of voices calling out. Who was it now? The boy woke up and he jumped up in joy, “Here! Here! I am here! I found him! I found him! He is all right, Pa! He didn’t get caught!”

The human voices quickly came towards them and the bull saw four or five men with sticks and knives rushing over. He stood up behind the little boy, preparing to protect his friend with his life.

“Oh, you are finally moving!” The boy hugged him again in joy.

At the sight of the mighty hornless bull and the tiny little boy in an awkward embrace, the men lowered their weapons and smiled, “Why, we thought he was bragging and telling a childish made-up story. There really IS a hornless bull here.”

“Can we bring him home, Pa?” The familiar older man came forward and embraced his son in relief. “If he wants to, my boy.”

The boy met the bull’s eyes and he knew the answer was yes.

So the group walked back to the village and as they approached, the villagers came out to greet them and they saw the hornless bull walking slowly behind them, quietly and calmly. Some children screamed and women protested to their men. “Get that bull away! It will harm our children!”

This time the boy’s father stepped out. He seemed to be a leader of the group. He spoke some words and the crowd calmed down. One by one, they entered their homes and emerged with gifts of food, drinks and water for the bull. The boy’s father, the village leader had told them, “This bull is a hero. It protected my son in the forest the whole night.”

The wild bull was not used to staying close to humans, but it learned to be patient and gentle. The village children became his best friends, and as it was showered with love and care, it began to think that it was time to be useful to these humans. The hornless bull saw the men slogging in the fields, pulling heavy logs to level the grounds. So it walked in and pushed the logs with the men. When it saw women and children wading across the little river that linked the next village with this one, it went into the water and lowered itself for them to sit on it. And he would bring them safely across to the other side.

Soon word spread and people from the other villages came to see for themselves. They had all heard about the gentle, hornless wild bull that had come and stay with this village, helping them in their farming and playing with their children.

The bull spent many years there and he was a great help to the villagers. He felt truly happy now. He had never felt such peace in his whole life. He was even better off without his horns! People were not afraid of him because he did not have horns to attack. People felt safe because he would walk gently and slowly amongst them, not harming a single one. For the rest of his life, he stayed amongst the people and away from his own savage, wild ones.

When the time came to leave this life, he lay down beside the familiar old tree and stared at the two holes where his old horns used to be lodged in. It had by now been pried out and sold by some

enterprising villagers. But it no longer mattered. He had long learned that he had no use at all for those horns or any kind of weapon to attack anyone with. He had learned that he was best off when he gave the gift of safety to others.

He gazed at the clear blue sky, and these phrases came to him:

*“Once I wandered amongst the strong and beautiful,
Yearning much to be like them and better than them.
I struck fear in the weaker ones, and felt triumphant at that thought.
I thought I had proven myself and those who came were true admirers.*

But alas, when disaster struck, how many remained by me?

*Those two sharp horns I used to prize,
Were gone with a few saws of the sharp metal piece —
My pride, my security, my prized possession...
left me that very day.*

*But I gained a true friend, a friend from the human kind,
Who gave me love, food and shelter,
and best of all, the courage to live on again.*

*Now I come again to this wretched spot, but now
It is wretched no more.*

*This is the place of victory. The place which marks
The day that I found true happiness.*

*Today I know it's time; my bull life is complete.
What more do I need to fight for, knowing that
My life has been complete and peaceful...*

*Wandering gentle, hornless and harmless on the streets of people,
Doing great works of benefit in gratitude to them.
There is much more joy in serving others,
Than to fight selfishly for that pride and thorny honour —
Which is fleeting, short-lived and valueless, so to speak?*

*With my last breath, I sing in honour of my friends,
My benefactors:*

*“Thank you. Thank you for loving me unconditionally,
For showing me there's more to life than just ‘me’.”*

And the old hornless bull went to sleep peacefully, unmoving in the still forest night. ☺

Text: **Ng Pei Fuen**

That best portion
of a good man's life,

His little nameless,
unremembered acts of
kindness and of love.

— **Wordsworth**

Life is mostly froth
and bubble,

Two things stand like stone,

Kindness in another's trouble,

Courage in your own.

—**Adam Gordon**

I had encountered Thay's writings while exploring philosophy and spirituality as part of my growth as a psychotherapist. One of the books that inspired me to learn more about mindfulness is “Living Buddha, Living Christ”, which brought me into contact with Joyful Garden Sangha, the lay community that practises in the tradition of Plum Village (PV).

After attending Days of Mindfulness (single-day retreats) with them, I ventured into my first mindfulness retreat in Malaysia, held in a cool hill resort on Genting Highlands in 2012. I was diving into the deep end, not only was this my first retreat but also my first experience of a Buddhist tradition. I was curious to see what Thay had written about, such as how the monastics should “close doors mindfully”.

“I have arrived, I am home” : Reflections on Plum Village Mindfulness Retreats

It was a gentle start to the retreat, which I later learned from other PV retreat experiences that this is how the practice can be so joyful and light — there is no hurry, no where to go, nothing to achieve at the retreat. Throughout the retreat, I had time to interact with my new “family”, which is what we call our dharma discussion group. The retreat not only brought freshness but also deep bonding with my dharma family. We could share deeply our hurts, regrets, and worries while everyone practised mindful listening. Coming alone, I found myself wondering at the miracle of children as a couple in our group brought their playful toddler along. The presence of children and teens at retreats changed my perception that retreats were dull and sombre. Mindful singing was another surprise, using simple songs and catchy tunes to remind ourselves to cultivate mindfulness and joy. The generous smiles and carefreeness of the monastics were infectious and soon we learned from them the essential skills of being mindful at everyday mundane things — how to generate the energy of mindfulness while

sitting, walking, eating, resting, playing, singing, and even while talking. And if that was not enough, we had posters in the toilets reminding us that mindfulness can be practised while bathing, brushing teeth, and even toileting.

For me, the most transformative and poignant part of these retreats was when the monastics facilitated a Beginning Anew session. This is when two persons, whether they are friends, loved ones, or family, come together in the presence of the fourfold sangha to mend any hurts they have caused each other and to make changes going forward. The steps are simple and yet achieve a profound change of the heart, which is often difficult between

family members. Everyone is there to support them by being fully present, breathing in and out mindfully — the family is lovingly embraced by a larger family, the Sangha. Tears are often shed by many witnessing the healing that takes place.

Each retreat brings its own challenges so it's not a bed of roses — that's how life is. Sometimes certain people, events, or even the food can trigger us to act out or feel negative. And yet, I always look back at each retreat knowing that I've done my best just being me. Perhaps this is what Thay says about learning the art of suffering so we can suffer less. One key challenge I hear often is people “fizzle” out soon after “recharging” at retreats, i.e. they lose the freshness and also the diligence to practise. Thankfully, I have a spiritual family to return to in Joyful Garden Sangha, so regardless of whether I am in a tranquil retreat or back to the hectic pace of urban life, I can continue to feel “I have arrived, I am home”. ☺

Text: **Lawrence Goh**



Illustration & text: Johnny Tay

Buddhists are often portrayed in works of fiction in a mistaken manner, for the sake of dramatisation. One such misleading portrayal is that a Dharma seeker must disown his or her family, so as to join a monastic order or become a hermit.

In reality, Dharma seekers are also made up of lay householders. Cutting ties from family brings grief and suffering to loved ones. It runs counter to what the Dharma is supposed to accomplish — nurturing wise, joyful people who can do good and alleviate suffering. True Dharma is not designed to break up families; it is designed to unite families and people.

Being a compassionate, upright person who does not shirk from family responsibilities follows the Dharma. Treasuring loved ones and inspiring them by good example to Awakening follows the Dharma. Teaching the nature of life and proper perspectives on life follows the Dharma. ☺

Guiding our children using what the Buddha taught

Q: *How can we guide and bring up our children well using the Buddha's teachings? – C.P.*

A: The relationship between parents and child is a unique and precious one, for it's due to the kindness of our parents that we're alive today. This is one of the most changeable of our relationships because it lasts over a long period of time, during which both parents and child as individuals go through many stages in life. Thus, both have to be sensitive to the changes occurring in the other, and to allow and support them.

The Buddha told Sigalo:

Householder, in these five ways the parents discharge their responsibilities towards their children:

1. *They restrain them from negative actions,*
2. *They establish them in virtuous actions,*
3. *They educate them in the arts and sciences,*
4. *They provide them with suitable wives and husbands,*
5. *They give them their inheritance at the proper time.*

Parents should restrain their children from actions that harm either themselves or others. They should encourage their children to share what they have with others and to have a kind attitude towards others. If children are brought up to value ethics and kindness, they'll become happy adults who will get along well with others. If children aren't taught how to be kind and happy people, then even if they have many academic achievements, their lives will be filled with difficulties.

Parents need to be good examples to their children. The old slogan of "do what I say, not what I do," is a limp excuse for parents who do what they advise their children not to. Children copy their parents'



actions, and by acting hypocritically, parents are telling their children that hypocrisy and lying are all right. Thus, parents who want to help their children will live ethically and will be kind towards others.

Also, to help their children develop good character, parents must spend time with them. Although both parents may work to support the home, they should avoid becoming workaholics. Working overtime to earn more money may seem appealing, but if that extra money has to be used to pay for the children to get counselling because they feel unloved, what use is it? Similarly, if parents overwork and are very stressed, the money is used to buy tranquilisers, pay for medical bills due to ulcers and heart attacks, or for vacations without the kids so they can relax. Overwork is self-defeating for the parents.

In addition, the children miss out on love and affection from their parents. Even if the parents pay for music and art lessons and sports activities for their children, if the children feel unloved, all these lessons won't enable them to grow up to be happy adults. Western societies are witnessing tremendous increases in crime, drugs, divorce and delinquent children. A lot of this is due to the breakdown of the family structure and the fact that parents don't spend enough quality time with their children. I hope modernising Asian societies will learn from the mistakes of the West and avoid them. Grasping for money, at the expense of family closeness, brings problems.

Parents should give their children the best education they can, and gear that education towards the child's disposition. If a child doesn't have musical ability, why torture him with forced music lessons? On the other hand, if a child has talent and interest in geology, the parents should encourage that. In our modern world children are pressured from a young age to learn a lot and to be the best. This creates many psychological problems, for children need time to just be children and to have fun. They need to be able to try new activities without being evaluated by tests and without their performance being compared to others. They need to be loved simply for who they are, without feeling they have to be the best.

Clearly, in our present society, parents don't arrange their child's marriage as in ancient India. Also, in those days, the family business—the inheritance—was passed on to the children when they were capable of running it, whereas today that isn't necessarily the case. However, I believe in today's society, the fifth advice could mean that parents provide for the material well-being of the child as best as they can.

Parents should care for the child's physical and material needs in a practical way. Obviously, they can't give more than their income allows. Giving children everything they want doesn't necessarily benefit them. Spoilt brats may be produced instead. When children have unfulfilled wishes, parents can help them by explaining that what they want is too expensive or isn't available. Help them understand that even if they had it, it wouldn't make them completely happy and that by making a fuss, they are making themselves unhappier. Explain to them the benefits of sharing possessions with others.

By helping their children deal with unfulfilled wishes, parents show them how to diminish their attachment, prevent them from taking things for granted, and help them to consider others' needs and wishes. Children often understand more than adults give them credit for. When something is explained calmly, logically and repeatedly,

in various circumstances that illustrate the point, children will understand.

Children develop their self-image depending upon what the adults around them say. If children are often told they're naughty or stupid, they'll develop that self-concept and then will become like that. Thus, it's important to praise children and acknowledge what they do.

When correcting children's mistakes, parents should help them understand why that action was harmful. Also, it's important that children learn that although they made a mistake, it doesn't mean that they're bad people. If children start thinking that they—not the action they did—are bad, then that negative self-image will mould who they become.

Sometimes, in order to convey an important point to a child, parents may have to speak forcefully, but their minds should be imbued with compassion, not anger. In that way, they let the child know a certain action is not to be repeated, but they aren't angry and don't reject the child because of the misdeed.

Being a parent means walking the fine line between the extremes of over-protecting the children, and neglecting them by not providing sufficient guidance. To counteract excess attachment and possessiveness, parents must remember that their children aren't their possession. Children are unique personalities, who must learn to

form their own opinions and make their own decisions. By being too attached to a child, parents create the circumstance for their own unhappiness, for it's impossible for the child always to be with them. When their children grow up, some parents have difficulty in allowing their children to become more independent, for it means that they can't control their children's actions as closely and must trust the children's ability to make good decisions.

Some parents constantly tell their children what to do and what not to do. There is no discussion involved, for the children are expected simply to do what they're told. There are some situations where this is appropriate—for example, when the child's well-being is endangered and he clearly lacks the ability to decide properly. However, constantly telling children what to do doesn't help them to develop good judgement. Nor does it allow for them to seek their parents' advice and discuss their problems with their parents. Children feel much closer to their parents if their parents listen and respond to them. When parents explain why a certain behaviour is harmful or beneficial, it helps children to make wise decisions later. In this way, children learn to think clearly and act beneficially. Having trained their children to do this, parents can then feel more comfortable trusting their children. This helps to avoid the power struggle that so often happens during the teenage years.

Parents can't make their child into what their image of a perfect child is. Each child has his or her own potential, which may or may not correspond with what the parents want him or her to be. Parents can't expect their child to live their own unfulfilled dreams. While guiding their child to choose careers, spouses and hobbies, parents must be mindful to have the child's interests, not their own, in mind. Wise parents accept their children as they are, while simultaneously guiding them to develop according to their capacities.

The other extreme is neglecting the child, which unfortunately happens too often in busy societies. Sometimes, in order to provide for the children's material well-being, the parents are too busy working to spend time with them or to give the love and guidance that they need. Parents need to allocate their time appropriately. It may be better to work less, but have a more united family.

Parenting is a challenge and can enrich one's Dharma practice. The teachings on impermanence are apparent as the children grow up. The disadvantages of anger and the importance of developing patience become clear when parents lose their temper in frustration at a child they want to help. An inkling of what it would be like to cherish all beings comes when parents think of loving everyone as much as their children. With mindfulness, parents and children can grow at the same time. ☺

— Ven Thubten Chodron

www.thubtenchodron.org • www.sravasti.org

Thunder Tea Rice

(Lei Cha @ Joo Chiat)

OVERALL RATING

Food: 9/10

Ambience: 7/10

Service: 5/10



The monsoon surges with thundery showers in January reminded me of a famous dish in the Hakka tradition, which is the well-known healthy heartland dish, Thunder Tea Rice, a.k.a. Lei Cha Fan (擂茶饭).

So, I went hunting down this famous dish, which created a huge buzz in Singapore many years back. There is a popular stall at Joo Chiat, whose only signature dish is Thunder Tea Rice. This iconic dish is sold at a reasonable price of only \$5.50 and you can choose to have it with white or brown rice. The marvellous part is there is a vegetarian option.

In the Hakka tradition, Thunder Tea Rice is usually eaten on the seventh day of the Lunar New Year. This nutritious dish contains ingredients such as diced tofu, green beans, groundnuts, pickled radish and cabbage, snow peas, long (French) beans, Kai Lan, Romaine, black-eyed peas. The tea is made from Thai basil, mint, and tea leaves. According to research, Thunder Tea Rice is effective in treating colds, flu, cough and joint pain. It also improves digestion, reduces bloated stomach and promotes weight loss. It is definitely a miracle dish for ladies! ☺



Address: 328 Joo Chiat Road, #01-04, Singapore 427585

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

Opening Hours: 10.00 am to 9.30 pm, Open daily

Text & Photo: Chloe Huang

Nature Café

OVERALL RATING

Food: 7.5/10

Ambience: 7/10

Service: 7.5/10



Nature Café is a vegetarian bistro which started business some 15 years ago and currently has four outlets across Singapore. It offers over 200 items on the menu, such as the following, just to name a few:

- Local favourites such as Chicken Rice, *rojak*, *wanton* noodles, *kway chap*;
- Local stir-fried dishes a.k.a. *tze-char*; and
- International cuisine such as Western burgers and steaks, Korean spicy noodles (*bibimmyeon*), Thai Green Curry, Japanese *Tonkatsu*.

You name it, they might just have it. In my opinion, the top three must-try dishes are:

1. Hong Kong Style *Char Siew* Chicken Rice
2. Japanese Style Chicken Steak Rice
3. Monkey Head Mushroom hotpot

Beverages extend beyond the regular *teh* (local milk tea) and *kopi* (local milk coffee) to a variety of gourmet tea and coffee (with simple *latte art*). For non-tea or coffee drinkers, there are other choices such as hot chocolate, hot vanilla or juices to choose from.



I find their pricing to be quite reasonable, considering the comfortable environment and helpful service. Prices start from \$5 while beverages cost \$3 and above. The place is conducive for individual diners,

small gatherings with family or friends, and even large groups. ☺

Address: Boon Lay (Trade Hub21) | Kallang (The Aperia Mall) | Bukit Merah | Suntec City
<http://www.naturecafe.com.sg>

Opening Hours: Open daily
10.00 am to 10.00 pm (last order at 9.15 pm)

Text & Photo: Jos Tan



Kick off the festivities of Mother's and Father's Days
on a healthy and auspicious note with our recipes below.

Longevity Porridge

Level: **Easy** | Cooking time: **80 minutes**

Formulated to support the harmonious interaction
among the five internal organs



Ingredients:

- 10g Mung Beans, pre-soaked for 8 hours
- 10g Lotus Seeds, pre-soaked for 8 hours
- 10g Barley, pre-soaked for 8 hours
- 10g White Yunnan Biandou, pre-soaked for 8 hours
- 6g Red Dates
- 2g Wolfberries
- 50g Huang Qi herb, pre-soaked for 20 minutes
- 3 bowls Filtered Water

Method:

- 1) Boil Huang Qi herb in 2 bowls of water for 15 minutes; collect the decoction.
- 2) Boil Huang Qi herb with another bowl of water for 15 minutes; collect the decoction and combine with the previous.
- 3) Add mung beans, lotus seeds, barley, biandou, red dates to the Huang Qi herbal decoction and bring to boil, then simmer for 40 minutes.
- 4) Add in wolfberries and boil for another 10 minutes. Serve warm. ☺

Chrysanthemum Fenugreek Tea

Level: **Easy** | Cooking time: **5 minutes**

A beverage that is good for the eyes,
kidneys and liver

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup Chrysanthemum
- 1/4 cup Fenugreek seeds
- 4 slices Chinese Liquorice
- 1 tsp Wolfberries

Method:

- 1) Mix all the ingredients and pour in hot water and wait for 5 minutes.
- 2) Serve warm. ☺



Recipes & photos provided courtesy of [The VegSchool.net](http://TheVegSchool.net)
Turn to page 72, or call Awareness Hub at 6336 5067
for more details on our vegetarian cooking classes

Breathing is the most natural thing in the world, the foundation of our lives. We do it without thinking about it, but we can use the technique of breathing to help children calm themselves when they feel overwhelmed. By tapping into the power of this simple act, we can better manage stress and live happier lives.

*The transformative
power of breathing*

Our children's breathing is the swinging door between their inner and outer worlds, and allow us to know how they are reacting to life experience. If you observe carefully, the speed, depth, pace and intensity of our children's breathing will convey how they feel and even signal possible health issues.

By slowing down to notice other people's breathing, we can gain insights into their worlds that we might otherwise miss. Besides their inner worlds, our children's breathing tells us about their outer world as well—their relationship with us, siblings, authority figures, peers and the social world in general.

If you are wondering how to get your child started, here's what I suggest to beginners:

- Concentrate on the feeling of your breath as it moves through your body.
- If your mind wanders, that's perfectly natural; just bring it back to the physical sensation of your inhalation, your exhalation and the pause between the two.
- Remember, don't think about your breathing or change it in any way, just feel your breath as it is now and rest. ☺

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



If I Stay

Directed by: **R. J. Cutler**

Starring: **Chloe Grace Moretz, Mireille Enos, Jamie Blackley, Joshua Leonard, Stacy Keach, Aisha Hinds**



Mia, the protagonist of the movie is a teenager in the final years of school. She lives in a perfect family environment with parents who treat her and her younger brother with the respect they deserve as fledgling human beings and give them the advice they need to learn to make decisions, as well as helping them out when they need an extra push. Financially, they are not rich, but comfortable and have a happy circle of close-knit friends and family who live nearby and with whom they spend a lot of time.

Mia has an extraordinary talent for playing the cello. This is ironic as she had been brought up in the environment of her father's rock band, but had turned to classical music the moment she'd heard the cello being played. Her parents supported her decision even though she was very young and had managed to scrape money together for her lessons from a student player. When they understood that not only was she committed but also extremely good, her father sold his drum kit in order to buy her an instrument and became a school teacher himself. Later in the movie we understand that he had actually sacrificed his own love of playing music for the sake of developing her talent.

In Mia's heart of hearts, she knows she's brilliant but still doubts her abilities. Nonetheless, the support and well wishes she receives from her family, including from her younger brother, gives her the space to become who she truly is. This highlights that children growing up in a compassionate and loving environment are also given the space to develop into who they can truly be; although they may still confront the confusions that everyone goes through when making decisions, they are not confined by parents forcing their own opinions upon them.

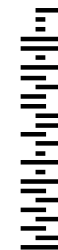
It's when she gets together with Adam, one of the school heart-throbs that she has to start facing the daunting task of making choices. Like her father, Adam plays in a rock band that's starting to be noticed and getting gigs all over, whereas she is going to apply to one of the best music schools in the country, far away from where they live. They are so in love but the question of distance and how they will see each other in the future starts tearing them apart.

The car accident comes out of the blue and Mia, fully conscious but already largely separated from her physical body lying in a coma in hospital, in a half state between life and death must make a decision whether to come back to the land of living, or not. Family members and nurses, who are sensitive to the fact that she may be able to hear them, give her space to make this decision. But having grown up in the family she has, has already taught her how to make such a decision. ☺



Scan this to watch it online :

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Want Your story to be heard too?

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

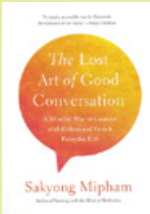
Perhaps you too have a story to tell, a story of how the Buddha and His Teachings so inspired you to walk the Buddhist path, or maybe a simple account of the little treasures and blessings in life? Or perhaps you are a budding poet who would like to share a prose and a verse or two about how the Dharma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

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

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



The Lost Art of Good Conversation: A Mindful Way to Connect with Others and Enrich Everyday Life
By Sakyong Mipham
S\$30.40

A reflective book, the first title explores how we can reconnect with the basic goodness in our lives, to foster the art of conversation, which in turn is an engagement of mindfulness of being present and true listening.

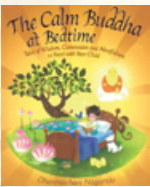
A good conversation increases our life-force energy and changes our lives by connecting us heart-to-heart with another person wherever we may be. Talking and listening

are essential components of a good, healthy relationship. By exchanging stories and making each other laugh, we are celebrating our special connection, and that connectivity is really the heart of all conversations and relationships.

In **Bear Awareness**, well-known monastic and meditation teacher Ajahn Brahm answers in a very reader-friendly and candid Q-and-A format queries that meditators have, including the scary and not-so-pleasant things that may surface while at the meditation cushion.

The third book, **Mindfulness On the Go** is a handy pocket book that showcases simple meditation practices that you can do anywhere, from eating, drinking to listening, waiting, touching, walking, smelling, feeling and having a conversation. Experience the many benefits of mindfulness which in turn help us cultivate gratitude and insight.

The fourth book by Japanese cleaning consultant Marie Kondo offers tips on how we can declutter, organise and simplify, elevating tidying to a whole new level. The KonMari method, with its revolutionary category-by-category system leads to lasting results.



The Calm Buddha at Bedtime: Tales of Wisdom, Compassion and Mindfulness to Read with Your Child
By Dharmachari Nagaraja
S\$27.95

If you have previously enjoyed reading the children's books published by Dharmachari Nagaraja, you will like this latest offering by the same author. This book is a helpful tool for parents who are new to the practice of mindfulness and contains simple meditative practices such as "Golden Light Mindful Breathing", "Cultivating Kind, Friendly Wishes" and "Visiting the Magical, Relaxing Garden" that you can pick up and guide your kids with. The stories in this book are also whimsical, easy-to-read and impart various morals to develop the qualities of wisdom, compassion and mindfulness in children.



Mind Your Manners! A Kid's Guide to Proper Etiquette
By Roz Fulcher
S\$8.00

The second book is a fuss-free kid's guide to good manners. Created in the form of a colouring book, this 46-page book gives various lessons to children about polite behaviours such as thanking each other, greeting adults, respecting the elderly and following the proper etiquette in many other day-to-day situations. ☺

All books are available at Awareness Place stores.

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Issue 41 / May 2018

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

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

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Counselling & Social Services 心理辅导与社会服务

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

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

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

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

Heard

Permeate your consciousness with bliss this Vesak
in the light and tranquil energies of Buddhist prayers, sutras and mantras
Text: Esther Thien



**Ksitigarbha
Bodhisattva
Purvapanidhana
Sutra**
S\$45.00



**In Metta:
A Collaboration of
Peace and Light**
By Imee Ooi
S\$15.00



JSJG
S\$15.00

Produced, composed and vocalised by Imee Ooi, the first album is a lyrical compendium in Mandarin of the well-known and popular Chinese Mahayana Sutra, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Purvapanidhana Sutra. Like the sutra, the album comprises three segments or collections and its contents are brought to life aurally in a poetic manner.

The next album, *In Metta*, a compilation of Imee Ooi's best-loved tracks, she continues to captivate us with her unique compositions and renditions of various prayers and mantras in her pure crystal clear vocals, transporting us to a sacred space filled with the healing energies of blissful peace.

The last CD of five tracks is enunciated by a group of eight male singers. The singing is suffused with a radiant, positive quality that speaks of indestructible strength, determination, courage and fearlessness. My personal favourites are tracks two and three. This album also contains a bonus track by Imee Ooi.

**All three CDs are available at
Awareness Place stores.** ☺

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

Dharma Apps

Here are some apps that act as resources for families to establish mindful practices in their everyday lives.

For the little ones:



**Breathe, Think,
Do with Sesame**
Sesame Street
Free

If your kids adore Sesame Street, teach them how to de-stress "Sesame Street" style with a blue monster on this app.

The app teaches children how to tackle everyday frustrations, such as dealing with separation anxiety, learning to share and take turns, and going to bed. Kids have to work through one of the five problems before unlocking the next.

The app shows the monster's problem through animation. Kids tap the monster's belly to help him breathe deeply and calm down. When the monster is serene, kids tap thought bubbles, which produce three possible strategies, and select one the monster will try. The technique of breathing, thinking, and doing is reinforced throughout. The parental section includes even more tips to help kids develop resilience by giving them tools to solve problems.

Suitable for kids aged 4 years and above. Available on Google Play and the Apple App Store.

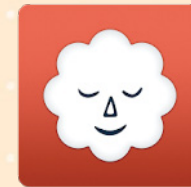


Headspace for kids
Headspace
Free

Kids get to explore five themes that will guide them to learn the fundamentals of mindfulness with simple and fun breathing exercises, visualisations and focus-based meditations. Sessions are customised according to three age groups: 5 and under, 6-8 and 9-12 years old.

Available on Google Play and Apple Store. ☺

For Parents & Teens:



Stop, Breathe & Think
Stop, Breathe & Think
Free

Stop, Breathe & Think was borne out of Tools for Peace, a non-profit organisation dedicated to teaching the skills of mindfulness and meditation to inner-city teens. Access peace in just five minutes with this app. Try short customised activities tuned to your emotions. Practise mindful breathing to create space between your thoughts, emotions and reactions. Lastly, broaden your perspective and strengthen your inner peace with personalised meditations and activities.

More than 2,000,000 people have downloaded this app and the number is increasing. It has also won the 2015 Webby People's Voice Award for Health & Fitness. Available on Google Play and Apple Store.



Buddhify
Mindfulness Everywhere
\$3.49

Every moment can be an opportunity for mindfulness, even when you are on-the-go.

All the meditations are categorised by what you're doing or how you're feeling. So you'll find guided meditations for *Walking, Stress and Difficult Emotion, Work Break, Going to Sleep, Waking Up* and numerous other different categories. Written and voiced by a range of hand-picked teachers, the sessions last from four minutes all the way through to 30 minutes.

This app also includes meditations which only work if you are with other people: *Your Kids, With a Friend, With your Partner, and With Colleagues*. These are lovely social practices and are really quite special. Then there is *Give*. *Give* allows you to send a targeted buddhify meditation to someone in your life who could really do with it. And they won't need the app to play it because *Give* isn't about marketing, it's about generosity and care.

Available on Google Play and Apple Store. ☺

WHAT'S NEW

Text: Esther Thien

Unique beads
to anchor
devotion
and mindful
concentration

Fancy prayer beads crafted from trees older than a thousand years for your practice?

Then, check out the rare and precious prayer beads fashioned from Yakusugi. These beads are lightly scented with a natural, delicate and unique woodsy fragrance.

Yakusugi refers to Japanese Cedar trees that grow on the island of Yakushima and are aged 1,000 years or more. The wood contains a lot of resin due to Yakushima's high rainfall and humidity, making it resistant to rotting. As a result, these trees tend to live long, and many larger trees have survived for more than 2,000 years.

Today, natural Yakusugi cedars are protected by the Japanese government. Commercial logging is prohibited. Hence, any items produced from Yakusugi cedars are made from stumps of previously felled trees or trees that fell naturally in typhoons.

**To find out more about the Yakusugi
prayer beads, please call Awareness Place
stores at 6337 7582 or 6452 1732.** ☺



DHARMA

♦ CEREMONY | PRAYERS

Vesak Auspicious Lanterns

Kindle a light to illuminate the world of darkness
Be a lamp upon yourself and spread the brilliance
to all humankind.

19 May - 3 Jun

Venue: KMSPKS

Offering : \$50 (family & individual)

\$338 (company)

Registration: Front Office

Enquiry: 6849 5333



Vesak Light Transference Ceremony

A ceremony that signifies the passing of the light of
wisdom in every direction of the world to dispel the
darkness of ignorance.

19 May | Sat | 6pm onwards

Venue: In front of Hall of Great Strength

Enquiry: 6849 5300

Vesak Celebration

The most important day for the Buddhist community
as it commemorates the Birth, Enlightenment and
final Nirvana of the Buddha on the full moon of the
fourth lunar month.

28 May, 3pm - 29 May, 4pm | Mon - Tue

Venue: KMSPKS

Enquiry: 6849 5300

Visit vesak.kmspks.org for details.

3-Step, 1-Bow Ceremony

A ceremony where devotees meditatively
circumambulate the perimeter of the monastery,
bowing once every three steps while chanting
mantras or names of the Buddha in praise of Him.

28 May | Mon | 5pm onwards (for ticket holders)

10am onwards (for non-ticket holders)

Venue: KMSPKS

Enquiry: 6849 5300

Threefold Refuge & Five Precepts Ceremony (Conducted in Mandarin)

Undertaking of Threefold Refuge & Five Precepts

Jul (to be advised) | 11.45am - 2.30pm

Venue: VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form

Free Admission

Registration:

1) Online: www.kmspks.org

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

Enquiry: 6849 5300 | sed@kmspks.org

♦ TALKS | WORKSHOPS | COURSES

Threefold Refuge & Five Precepts Preparatory Class

Teachings on the Observance of Threefold Refuge
& Five Precepts

Jul (to be advised) | Sun | 9.30am - 10.30am

Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom

Free Admission

Registration:

1) Online: www.kmspks.org

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

Enquiry: 6849 5300 | sed@kmspks.org

Buddhist Etiquette & Introduction to Cultivation (Meditation)

Teachings on Basic Practice, Observance of Buddhist
Etiquette & Meditation

Jul (to be advised) | Sat | 9am - 3pm

Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom

Free Admission

Registration:

1) Online: www.kmspks.org

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

Enquiry: 6849 5300 | sed@kmspks.org

Buddhism 101 - Four Noble Truths

5 Aug - 30 Sep | Sun | 2pm - 4pm

Fee: \$50 (8 sessions)

Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom

Registration:

1) Online: www.kmspks.org

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

Enquiry: 6849 5300 | 6849 5345 | ded@kmspks.org

Sunday Dharma Practice

Sunday Dharma Practice includes short chanting,

guided meditation and Dharma sharing led by a

Venerable.

8 Jul - 29 Jul, 2 Sep - 30 Sep | Sun | 2pm - 3.30pm

Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom 5 & 6

Fee: Free

Registration:

1) Online: www.kmspks.org

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

Enquiry: 6849 5300 | 6849 5345 | ded@kmspks.org

English Dharma Talk - Right Views

A four-part series for beginners to Buddhism

14 Jun | Thu | 7.30pm - 9pm

Fee: A nominal donation of \$5

Venue: Awareness Hub

Registration:

1) Online: <https://goo.gl/Aa4Zru>

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

3) Awareness Hub | 11.30am-6pm

Enquiry: 6336 5067 | awarenesshub@kmspks.org



MEDITATION | RETREAT



Plum Village Retreat: Breathe, You Are Alive (5-day Stay-in retreat)

A retreat led by Plum Village Monastic in the tradition
of Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh

13 Jun - 17 Jun | Wed - Sun

Check in at 1pm, check out at 2pm

Fee: \$220 (Adult), \$80 (Full-time student)

**Student aged 7 and above are welcome. A guardian
is required to accompany participating primary and
secondary school students.*

Check in Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Ju Yuan Fang

Retreat Venue: VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form

8-Day Vipassana Meditation Retreat by Most

Ven. Chanmyay Sayadawgyi (Stay-out)

Intensive Vipassana & Metta Meditation Retreat of
Mahasi Tradition.

18 Jul - 25 Jul | Wed | 8am - 8pm

Fee: To be advised

Venue: KMSPKS

3-Day Vipassana Retreat with Sayadaw Tejaniya (Stay-out)

To help practitioners possess skills which they can
continue to apply throughout their lives in the
absence of a teacher.

3 Aug - 5 Aug | Fri - Sun | 9am - 5pm

Fee: \$70

Venue: VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form

Registration:

1) Online: www.kmspks.org

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

Enquiry: 6849 5300 | sed@kmspks.org

Basic Meditation

Cultivate your mind through guided meditation and
develop peace from within as you conduct your daily
life with mindfulness.

10 Aug - 31 Aug | Fri | 7.30pm - 9pm

Fee: \$40 (4 sessions)

Venue: Awareness Hub

Registration:

1) Online: <https://goo.gl/rW7bD1>

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

3) Awareness Hub | 11.30am-6pm

Enquiry: 6336 5067 | awarenesshub@kmspks.org



LIFESTYLE

♦ ART

"Our Real Home" A Photo Exhibition

Featuring monks and laity in meditation, Our Real
Home: A photo exhibition tells a story of how the
Buddhist faith brings about a home for the devoted -
the inner peace within one's heart.

21 Apr - 2 Jun | Daily | 10am - 4.30pm

Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Ju Yuan Fang

Free Admission

Enquiry: 6849 5300 | sed@kmspks.org

Ani Choying Drolma Vesak Day Concert

25 May & 26 May | Fri - Sat | 8pm-9.30pm

Ticket Price: \$30, \$50, \$100

Venue: VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form

Ticket Purchase and Enquiries:

1) Online: www.kmspks.org

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

Enquiry: 6849 5300

Five Stones

Join us for a nostalgic day of Five Stones as we teach
you how to make your very own stones and challenge
each other with this simple yet fun game.

11 Jun | Mon

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

Fee: \$10 (per person)

Material Fee: \$3 (payable to instructor)

Venue: Awareness Hub

Registration:

1) Online: <https://goo.gl/Gcyh6M> (2pm - 4pm)

<https://goo.gl/Uwhaq> (7pm - 9pm)

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

3) Awareness Hub | 11.30am-6pm

Enquiry: 6336 5067 | 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.

7 Jun & 28 Jun | Thu

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

Fee: \$40 (two sessions)

Material Fee: \$48 (payable to instructor)

Venue: Awareness Hub

Registration:

1) Online: <https://goo.gl/LzjsU6> (Grp 1)

<https://goo.gl/SpVwXp> (Grp 2)

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

3) Awareness Hub | 11.30am-6pm

Enquiry: 6336 5067 | awarenesshub@kmspks.org

Mother's Day Floral Class

4 May | Fri | 7pm - 8.30pm

Fee: \$30

Material Fee: \$35 (payable to instructor)

Venue: Awareness Hub

Registration:

1) Online: <https://goo.gl/7h3XLs>

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

3) Awareness Hub | 11.30am - 6pm

Enquiry: 6336 5067 | awarenesshub@kmspks.org

Hand Bouquet & Floral Arrangement Module (II)

• Five different hand bouquet designs (including new
ROM bouquet design)

• Three trend style table floral arrangement

8 Jun - 3 Aug | Fri | 7pm - 9pm

Fee: \$220 (eight sessions)

Material Fee:

\$45 (per session, payable to instructor)

Venue: Awareness Hub

Registration:

1) Online: <https://goo.gl/3HVFoA>

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

3) Awareness Hub | 11.30am - 6pm

Enquiry: 6336 5067 | awarenesshub@kmspks.org

Rhythm Rejuvenation

21 Jun, 30 Aug | Thu | 7pm - 9pm

Fee: \$30 per session

Venue: Awareness Hub

Registration:

1) Online: www.kmspks.org

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

3) Awareness Hub | 11.30am-6pm

Enquiry: 6336 5067 | awarenesshub@kmspks.org



Pastel Nagomi Art: Colours of Seasons

A healing touch of heart through the Japanese way
of painting using finger touches and pastels

12 Aug | Sun | 10am - 5pm

Fee: \$155

Starter Kit : \$45 (payable to instructor)

Venue: Awareness Hub

Registration:

1) Online: www.kmspks.org

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

3) Awareness Hub | 11.30am-6pm

Enquiry: 6336 5067 | awarenesshub@kmspks.org

♦ CHILDREN

Children's Art - Colours of Life

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

5 May - 21 Jul, 28 Jul - 29 Sep | Sat | 2.30pm - 4.30pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

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

Registration:

1) Online: www.kmspks.org

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

3) Awareness Hub | 11.30am - 6pm

Enquiry: 6336 5067 | awarenesshub@kmspks.org

Rainbow Child Yoga

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

Term 3: 10 Jun - 15 Jul | Sun

Fee: \$88 (4 sessions)

Term 4: 22 Jul - 26 Aug | Sun

Fee: \$110 (5 sessions)

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

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

Venue: Awareness Hub

Registration:

1) Online: www.kmspks.org

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

3) Awareness Hub | 11.30am - 6pm

Enquiry: 6336 5067 | awarenesshub@kmspks.org

♦ COMMUNITY

Footwashing for Parents & Elders

Express the virtues of respect, love and gratitude

10 Jun | Sun | 9.30am - 1.30pm

Fee: \$20 (inclusive of washing basin, towel and
flowers)

Venue: VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form

Registration:

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

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

Enquiry: 6849 5300 | community@kmspks.org

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.

6 May & 8 July | Sun | 9am - 12pm

Venue: Bright Hill Evergreen Home

Enquiry: 6849 5359 | community@kmspks.org

Community Tuition & Quarterly Student Engagement

A free tuition programme for Secondary Four & Five
students.

Every Sun | 9am - 3.30pm

Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom 2 &