

9-12月 | sep - dec

awaken 普觉

to Compassion and Wisdom on the journey of life



Having Love & Compassion for Ourselves

Open your heart to self-compassion and transform your life.
Through practising self-compassion we learn how to
connect with the sorrows of others.

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Progressing to repay the deep kindness of all beings

Come 2021 is the Monastery's 100th year anniversary, or centenary.

The monastery has come a long way since it was founded in 1921 by pioneer Venerable and forefather, Venerable Zhuan Dao. Under the compassionate stewardship of my master and second abbot, Venerable Hong Choon, the monastery grew. He developed the crematorium and columbarium, organised the first Great Compassion Prayer and progressively added many amenities on the nearly 22-acre monastery site.

Bearing in mind the compassionate intent of my master to always benefit sentient beings, I set up the Buddhist College of Singapore in 2005. A monastic campus building was established with the aspiration of educating monastics who are proficient in the English and Chinese languages with extensive knowledge of the Dharma. Cultured and virtuous, they will be the future generations of teachers and leaders to cater to the needs of the Buddhist community and to advance the promulgation of Chinese Buddhism in the world.

Many of our graduates have gone on to take up significant

roles in their own monasteries. A handful also continued to further their studies, graduating with postgraduate degrees. One of them is Venerable Dr Yan Zheng who recently completed his PhD at the University of Hong Kong's Centre of Buddhist Studies.

To further benefit all those who visit the monastery and in consideration of the needs of our ageing population, we are also embarking on a series of elderly-friendly upgrading and refurbishment works such as installing lifts at the ancestral halls, erecting a sheltered drop-off point and constructing a proper permanent canopy outside the Hall of Great Compassion that will promote better air ventilation for a cooler environment.

The most significant of all is the eventual birth of the five-storey high Meditation Hall. This is a building purpose-built for conducting concurrent meditation retreats of different group sizes, accommodating a total of up to 600 persons at any time. It also includes a dedicated space for monastics to carry out advanced meditation practices,

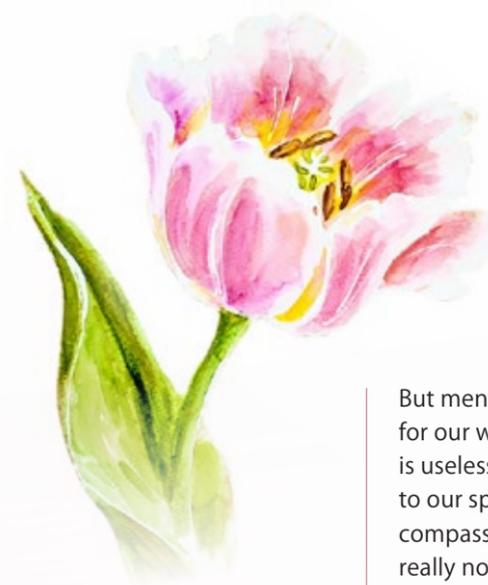
a library for self-study and other ancillary facilities.

With this modern facility, Singapore will have another dedicated place conducive for practising meditation. Internationally-renowned meditation teachers from different traditions will be invited to conduct classes and retreats in the building.

Through this, the monastery hopes to encourage greater interest in mental wellness amongst people of all ages, which is a key aspect of the monastery's many contributions to society to serve and benefit the people. ☺

Sik Kwang Sheng (Ven)

Abbot, Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery



Awakening *Self-Compassion*

Deep within all beings is the wish to be happy and free from suffering. Therefore self-compassion is the most natural thing in the world. Yet when we suffer emotionally, instead of responding compassionately to our own failings and imperfections, more often than not, we hear a harsh inner critic or what we call a heckler, calling out insults and bashing us (page 70). Children are not spared from this either, and can be victims of their own heckling and expectations of perfection (page 65).

But mentally flogging ourselves for our weaknesses and mistakes is useless, and an impediment to our spiritual progress. Having compassion for ourselves is really no different from having compassion for others. Looking back at the person we were when we erred, we can understand and have compassion for our own suffering. At that time, we did what we thought was best. Confusion clouded our mind, and we erred. Although we need to make amends for the harm we inflicted on others, we need not hate and condemn ourselves. We can forgive ourselves (page 60).

Just like in the natural world, there is no such thing as a poorly-formed wave or badly-shaped tree (page 55). We are part of nature as it should be. We shouldn't be too harsh on ourselves when we make mistakes or are imperfect, for that is the reality of the human existence and experience (page 59).

Just like how a mother cares for her only child, be gentle, kind and caring with yourself (page 58). Always learn to love yourself. Open your heart to self-acceptance and understanding. Look at your good side and learn from past mistakes. Live in the present, and remind yourself that you, too, are worthy

of love and deserve your own compassion, for guilt does nobody any good.

By embracing ourselves with kindness and care in response to pain, without judgment or self-blame, we are on the path to healing.

In fact, the practice of self-compassion has been proven to improve well-being, regulate emotions, and reduce depression and anxiety. Research shows that self-compassionate people are more likely to engage in perspective-taking, rather than focusing on their own distress. They are also less likely to ruminate on how bad things are, which is one of the reasons self-compassionate people have better mental health (page 42).

As we go through our own difficulties, we learn to bring a quality of loving care to everything we touch. Only then, can we extend compassion to all of nature and sentient beings (page 57). ☺

Esther Thien

Yours in the Dharma,
Sister Esther Thien

Fruitful Academic Year for the Undergraduates of the Buddhist College of Singapore

Singapore – The new cohort of students from China had a fruitful academic year at the Buddhist College of Singapore (BCS). Arriving in August 2018, they were accompanied by the Most Venerable Pu Fa, vice president of The Buddhist Association of China; Mr Huang Jia, United Front Work Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (research investigator of the former College Affairs Department for The State Administration for Religious Affairs, China) and the Most Venerable Yuan Ci, director of the Education Department for the Buddhist Association of China. They were warmly received by the BCS rector, Venerable Sik Kwang Sheng and the BCS management team, at a welcoming ceremony. Venerable Kwang Sheng encouraged the students to adapt to the new environment in order to learn well and make contributions to Buddhism.

In the reopening ceremony for the new academic year, Venerable Kwang Sheng also welcomed the senior students. To all students, he shared that the BCS has a team of highly qualified teaching faculty, and that the BCS would do its best to nurture students who are willing to learn. Besides awarding academic certificates to the graduates, the BCS also educates the students in the areas of critical thinking, character and integrity for an all-rounded education.

He then urged the students to attend the 2019 BCS meditation retreat, which would be conducted in a branch temple of Ajahn Chah's Thai forest tradition. He also emphasised that having a grateful heart brings a lot of positive energy, and cited scientific research that

being grateful rewires the neurons and makes a person happier. When a person has gratitude, it changes his perception and prevents negative states of mind from being amplified. Venerable Kwang Sheng then ended the ceremony by exhorting the students to nurture their vast Bodhicitta mind, and the Buddhist concepts of inclusivism and open-mindedness.

In line with the teaching philosophy of the BCS, students had the opportunity to attend a seminar jointly hosted by the BCS and the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) *Studies in Inter-Religious Relations in Plural Societies (SRP)* programme, at the Nanyang Technological University, titled *Countering Fundamentalism: Perspectives from Buddhism and Other Religions*. At the seminar, they learned about the manifestations of fundamentalism in today's modern society and how to counter them from the perspectives of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism.

The students also participated in a *Workshop on Inter-religious Dialogue: Theories, Aims, Skills and Practices*. At the workshop, the students learned from Professor Julius Lipner, Emeritus Professor of Hinduism and the Comparative Study of Religion from the University of Cambridge as he expounded on the theories and aims of Inter-Religious Dialogue (IRD), while Associate Professor Paul Hedges and Mr Gerald Kong spoke on the skills and practices of IRD. Besides Buddhism, students also took in the perspectives of other mainstream religions—Hinduism, Islam, Catholicism, Christianity and Taoism from six other speakers.

Having proven to be a successful model, the BCS also received a number of illustrious visitors last year. The Most Venerable Pu Ren, vice-president of the Buddhist Association of Jiang Su Province, president of the Buddhist Association of Su Zhou City and abbot of Xi

Yuan Jie Chuang Temple, led an entourage of eight delegates on a visit in October 2018. The Most Venerable Pu Ren highly admired the aspiration of BCS rector, Venerable Kwang Sheng to establish a bilingual educational system and affirmed that the development of Buddhist talents is paramount to the promulgation of Buddhism.

That same month, eight first-class honours graduates from the Buddhist and Pali University (BPU), Sri Lanka also visited the BCS led by the principal of the Buddhist and Pali College of Singapore, Venerable Dr Pategama Gnanarama Maha Thera.

Then in December, Assistant Professor Dr Kiattisak Suklueang from the Faculty of Social Science of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU) led a delegation of 32 monastics, lecturers, administrators and students on a study visit to the BCS.



In May 2019, eight students from the BCS Master of Arts (MA) cohort of 2017 attended a convocation ceremony at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU) in Thailand, led by vice-rector Venerable Dr Chuan Sheng. During the convocation, the supreme patriarch of Thailand, the Most Venerable Somdet Phra Ariyavangsagatayana, conferred Bachelor's, Master's, PhD and Honorary PhD degrees to an estimated 4,000 graduates from around the world, including Sri Lanka, Korea and Taiwan. This grand ceremony was graced by approximately 10,000 monks and laypeople.



A Master of Arts Graduation Ceremony was also held at the BCS. Rector Venerable Kwang Sheng gave a speech congratulating the students on getting their MA qualifications. He then encouraged the students to cultivate three personal qualities. The first is gratitude. As material goods grow in abundance and can be acquired easily, one may slowly lose a heart of gratitude. Therefore, the most important Buddhist practice is to cultivate gratitude; to be grateful for what one has and to all those who have contributed to one's academic success. The second is the attitude of continuous learning. One may think that one has nothing more to learn, but when one sees the vastness of the world, one will realise that there is much more to learn. Lastly, he exhorted the students to remain humble. Birth, maturity, decay and death is the natural order. When one is proud and egoistic, and views the world with contempt, this is the beginning of decay. He likened the ego to a scar; the bigger the ego, the larger the scar. Hence, one has to remain humble in order to further improve oneself.

Thereafter, the rector presented the certificates to the eight Chinese and English MA graduates. Following that, student representatives, Venerable Miao Hui and Venerable Shan Nian gave a thank-you speech respectively. The ceremony ended with a group photo with the lecturers to commemorate this joyous occasion. ☺

Turning Gratitude into Fruitful Greenery

Singapore – Over the past years, Kong Meng San Phor Kark See (KMSPKS) Monastery has been actively encouraging devotees to go green by setting up the Gratitude Corner, a platform to reduce, reuse and recycle pre-loved items.

Environmentalism is closely related to the Buddhist practice. Understanding the interdependence of nature and all sentient beings is in line with what the Buddha taught, hence we should be aware of the impact our actions and thoughts have on the environment.

Aside from highlighting the significance of mindful consumption, the Gratitude Corner also grooms volunteers to become green ambassadors.

During this year's Vesak celebrations, the monastery gave away more than 250 litres of environmentally-friendly and toxic-free compost to educate the public about food and landfill waste on our Mother Earth.

As part of the monastery's green efforts, it has been generating organic fertiliser from food waste through a composting machine. Since using the machine, there has been a substantial reduction in the number of garbage bags needed to dispose 30kg to 120kg of food waste each day. By promoting the importance of sustainable consumption, the monastery believes that everyone can play a part by being mindful to protect the environment in our daily lives. ☺

Inspiring Story of Guanyin for Charity

Singapore – Opera lovers can look forward to a memorable night of enchanting Yue opera at the Esplanade Concert Hall in November 2019. A charity fundraiser for the Singapore Buddhist Free Clinic in celebration of its Golden Jubilee, the performance titled *Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva* by Zhejiang Xiaobaihua Yue Opera Troupe will be staged for two nights on 9 and 10 November.

Heralded as the worldwide premiere, this large-scale original production tells the fascinating story of Bodhisattva Guanyin's birth, renunciation and enlightenment. Refreshing dialogues and melodic singing in signature Yue opera style poignantly bring out the great compassionate spirit of Bodhisattva Guanyin to liberate sentient beings and her unending quest to end the suffering of the human realm.

This performance showcases the spirit of humanity at its greatest, as it demonstrates how from an ordinary human being, Bodhisattva Guanyin transcends to become a holy being in her spiritual path. It gives us food for thought to contemplate on the wisdom of our own life journey. Tickets are priced at S\$38, S\$68, S\$108, S\$168 and S\$208.

The Singapore Buddhist Free Clinic (SBFC) was established 50 years ago. Founded in 1969 by Venerable Sik Siong Khye and the previous abbot of KMSPKS Venerable Sik Hong Choon, the SBFC has provided quality medical services in the spirit of compassion to the poor and needy for decades.

To ensure residents in all areas can receive medical care near their homes, the SBFC has added a latest branch in Tampines. This is currently undergoing renovation and will begin operating soon. With the increase in the number of clinics, the future expenses of SBFC are likely to escalate to S\$8 million each year.

If you would like to support the SBFC, please visit www.safc.org.sg or call 67487292. ☺



Practising Self-Compassion

Leading expert, Dr Kristin Neff explains what self-compassion is and how practising it can transform our lives.

What is self-compassion?

Having compassion for oneself is really no different from having compassion for others. Think about how the experience of compassion feels like. First, to have compassion for others, you must notice that they are suffering. If you ignore that homeless person on the street, you can't feel compassion for how difficult his or her experience is. Second, compassion involves feeling moved by others' suffering so that your heart responds to their pain (the word "compassion" literally means to "suffer with"). When this occurs, you feel warmth, caring and the desire to help the suffering person in some way. Having compassion also means that you offer understanding and

kindness to others when they fail or make mistakes, rather than judging them harshly. Finally, when you feel compassion (rather than mere pity) for another person, it means you realise that suffering, failure and imperfection are part of the shared human experience.

Self-compassion involves acting the same way towards yourself when you experience difficulties and failures, or notice something you don't like about yourself. Instead of just ignoring your pain with a "stiff upper lip" mentality, you stop to tell yourself, "This is really difficult right now. How can I comfort and care for myself at this moment?"

Instead of mercilessly judging and criticising yourself for various inadequacies or shortcomings, self-compassion means you are kind and understanding when confronted with personal failings—after all, who ever said you were supposed to be perfect?

You may try to change in ways that allow you to be healthier and happier, but this is done because you care about yourself, not because you are worthless or unacceptable as you are. Perhaps most importantly, having compassion for yourself means that you honour and accept your humanness. Things will not always go the way you want them to. You will encounter frustrations, experience losses,

make mistakes, bump up against your limitations, or fall short of your ideals. This is the human condition, a reality shared by all of us. The more you open your heart to this reality instead of constantly fighting against it, the more you will be able to feel compassion for yourself and all your fellow humans in the experience of life.

There are three core elements to practising self-compassion:

- Self-kindness;
- Common humanity (the recognition that everyone makes mistakes and feels pain) and
- Mindfulness.

Self-kindness versus self-judgment

Self-compassion entails being warm and understanding towards ourselves when we suffer, fail or feel inadequate, rather than ignoring our pain or flagellating ourselves with self-criticism.

Self-compassionate people recognise that being imperfect, failing and experiencing difficulties are inevitable, so they tend to be gentle with themselves when confronted with painful experiences, rather than getting angry when life falls short of set ideals.

We cannot always be or get exactly what we want. When this reality is denied or fought against, suffering increases in the form of stress, frustration and self-criticism. When this reality is accepted with sympathy and kindness, greater emotional equanimity is experienced. When we mindfully observe our pain, we can acknowledge our suffering without exaggerating it, allowing us to take a wiser and more objective perspective on ourselves and our lives.

Common humanity versus isolation

Frustration at not having things exactly as we want is often accompanied by an irrational but pervasive sense of isolation—as if "I" were the only person suffering or making mistakes. All humans suffer, however.

The very definition of being "human" means that one is mortal, vulnerable and imperfect. Therefore, self-compassion involves recognising that suffering and personal inadequacy are part of the shared human experience—something that we all go through, rather than something that happens to "me" alone.

Mindfulness versus over-identification

Self-compassion also requires taking a balanced approach to our negative emotions so that feelings are neither suppressed nor exaggerated. This equilibrated stance stems from the process of relating our personal experiences to those of others who are also suffering, thus putting our own situation into a larger perspective.

It also stems from the willingness to observe our negative thoughts and emotions with openness and clarity, so that they are held in mindful awareness. Mindfulness is a non-judgmental, receptive mind state in which one observes thoughts and feelings as they are, without trying to suppress or deny them.

We cannot ignore our pain and feel compassion for it simultaneously. At the same time, mindfulness requires that we do not "over-identify" with thoughts and feelings, or we will be caught up and swept away by negative reactivity.

Some people may also confuse the

psychological states below as being self-compassionate, but they are not the same.

Self-compassion is not self-pity

Many people fear self-compassion is really just a form of self-pity. In fact, self-compassion is an antidote to self-pity. When individuals feel self-pity, they become engrossed in their own problems and forget that others have similar problems. They ignore their interconnections with others, and instead feel that they are the only ones in the world who are suffering.

Self-pity tends to emphasise egocentric feelings of separation from others and exaggerate the extent of personal suffering. Self-compassion, on the other hand, recognises that life is hard for everyone, and allows one to see the related experiences of self and others without these feelings of isolation and disconnection.

Also, self-pitying individuals often become carried away with and wrapped up in their own emotional drama of "poor me". They cannot step back from their situation to adopt a more balanced or objective perspective.

Research shows that self-compassionate people are more likely to engage in perspective taking, rather than focusing on their own distress. They are also less likely to ruminate on how bad things are, which is one of the reasons self-compassionate people have better mental health. By taking the perspective of a compassionate other towards oneself, "mental space" is provided to recognise the broader human context of one's experience and to put things in greater perspective: "Yes it is very difficult what I'm going through right now, but there are many other



people who are experiencing much greater suffering. Perhaps this isn't worth getting quite so upset about..."

Self-compassion is not self-indulgence

Self-compassion is also very different from self-indulgence. Many people say they are reluctant to be self-compassionate because they're afraid they would let themselves get away with anything such as having thoughts like: "I'm stressed out today, so to be kind to myself, I'll just watch TV all day and eat a quart of ice-cream." This, however, is self-indulgence rather than self-compassion.

Remember that being compassionate to yourself means that you want to be happy and healthy in the long term. In many cases, giving oneself pleasure may harm one's well-being such as taking drugs, over-eating, being a couch potato, while giving oneself health and lasting happiness often involves a certain amount of displeasure, such as quitting smoking, losing weight, exercising etc.

People are often very hard on themselves when they notice something they want to change

because they think they can shame themselves into action—the self-flagellation approach.

However, this approach often backfires if you can't face difficult truths about yourself because you are so afraid of hating yourself if you do. Thus, weaknesses may remain unacknowledged in an unconscious attempt to avoid self-censure. In contrast, the care intrinsic to compassion provides a powerful motivating force for growth and change, while also providing the safety needed to see the self clearly without fear of self-condemnation.

Self-compassion is not self-esteem

Although self-compassion may seem similar to self-esteem, they are different in many ways. Self-esteem refers to our sense of self-worth, perceived value, or how much we like ourselves.

While there is little doubt that low self-esteem is problematic and often leads to depression and lack of motivation, trying to have higher self-esteem can also be problematic. In modern Western culture, self-esteem is often based on how much we are different from others, how much we stand out or are special. It is not okay

to be average, we have to be above average to feel good about ourselves.

This means that attempts to raise self-esteem may result in narcissistic, self-absorbed behaviour, or lead us to put others down in order to feel better about ourselves. We also tend to get angry and aggressive towards those who have said or done anything that potentially makes us feel bad about ourselves.

The need for high self-esteem may encourage us to ignore, distort or hide personal shortcomings so that we can't see ourselves clearly and accurately. Finally, our self-esteem is often contingent on our latest success or failure, meaning that our self-esteem fluctuates depending on ever-changing circumstances.

In contrast to self-esteem, self-compassion is not based on self-evaluations. **People feel compassion for themselves because all human beings deserve compassion and understanding, not because they possess some particular set of traits, such as beauty, intelligence, talents and so on. This means that with self-compassion, you don't have to feel better than others to feel good about yourself. Self-compassion also allows for greater self-clarity, because personal failings can be acknowledged with kindness and do not need to be hidden.** Moreover, self-compassion isn't dependent on external circumstances, it's always available—especially when you fall flat on your face! Research indicates that in comparison to self-esteem, self-compassion is associated with greater emotional resilience, more accurate self-concepts, more caring behaviour

in relationships, as well as less narcissism and reactive anger.

Tips for practice

In short, self-compassion contains the attributes of "being with" ourselves in a compassionate way—comforting, soothing, validating; and yet it is also about protecting, providing and motivating ourselves.

Comforting is something that we might do to a dear friend who is struggling, especially by providing support for his emotional needs. Soothing is also a way to help a person feel better, and it refers particularly to helping a person feel physically calm. Validating helps a person feel better by understanding very clearly what she is going through and saying it in a kind and tender way.

The first step towards self-compassion is feeling safe from harm. Protecting means saying no to others who are hurting us or to the harm we inflict on ourselves, often in unconscious ways. Providing means to give ourselves what we really need. First we have to know what we need, then we require the conviction that we deserve to get our needs met, and finally, we have to go ahead and try to meet our needs. No one can do this for us as well as we can do it for ourselves. Most of us have dreams and aspirations that we would like to realise in this lifetime. We also have smaller, short-term goals. Self-compassion motivates like a good coach, with kindness, support and understanding, not harsh criticism.

A common thread through all these practices is a friendly, caring attitude. Sometimes compassionate care for ourselves takes the form of solace and a soft leaning-in to

difficult emotions (comforting); sometimes it involves a stern "No!" and turning away from danger (protecting). Sometimes it involves letting our body know everything is okay with warmth and tenderness (soothing) and sometimes it means figuring out what we need and giving it to ourselves (providing). Sometimes having self-compassion requires being accepting and open to what is validating, and sometimes it means we need to jump up and do something about it (motivating).

Self-compassion is often a radically new way of relating to ourselves. Research shows that the more we practise being kind and compassionate with ourselves, and compassionate with ourselves, either using informal practices such as the Self-Compassion Break, or formal meditation practices such as Affectionate Breathing, the more we'll strengthen the habit of self-compassion.

There are a few tips to practising self-compassion that are important to keep in mind for novice and experienced practitioners alike. Self-compassion is a practice of goodwill, not good feelings. In other words, even though the friendly, supportive stance of self-compassion is aimed at the alleviation of suffering, we can't always control the way things are. If we use self-compassion practice to make our pain go away by suppressing it or fighting against it, things will likely get worse. With self-compassion, we mindfully accept that the moment is painful, and embrace ourselves with kindness and care in response, remembering that imperfection is part of the shared human experience. This allows us to hold ourselves in love and

Mindfulness or Self-Compassion?

Given that mindfulness is a core component of self-compassion, how do mindfulness and self-compassion relate to each other?

- Mindfulness focuses primarily on accepting the experience itself. Self-compassion focuses more on caring for the experienter.
- Mindfulness asks, "What am I experiencing right now?" Self-compassion asks, "What do I need right now?"
- Mindfulness says, "Feel your suffering with spacious awareness." Self-compassion says, "Be kind to yourself when you suffer."

Mindfulness and self-compassion both allow us to live with less resistance towards ourselves and our lives. If we can fully accept that things are painful, and be kind to ourselves because they're painful, we can bear the pain with greater ease.



connection, giving ourselves the support and comfort needed to bear the pain, while providing the optimal conditions for growth and transformation.

Some people find that when they practise self-compassion, their pain actually increases at first. We call this phenomenon “backdraft”, a firefighting term that describes what happens when a door in a burning house is opened—oxygen goes in and flames rush out. A similar process can occur when we open the door of our hearts—love goes in and old pain comes out. There are a couple of sayings that describe this process: “When we give ourselves unconditional love, we discover the conditions under which we were unloved” or “Love reveals everything unlike itself.” Fortunately, we can meet old pain with the resources of mindfulness and self-compassion and the heart will naturally begin to heal. Still, it

means we have to allow ourselves to be slow learners when it comes to practising self-compassion. If we ever feel overwhelmed by difficult emotions, the most self-compassionate response may be to pull back temporarily—focus on the breath, the sensation of the soles of our feet on the ground, or engage in ordinary, behavioural acts of self-care such as having a cup of tea or petting your pet cat. By doing so, we reinforce the habit of self-compassion—giving ourselves what we need in the moment—planting seeds that will eventually blossom and grow. ☺

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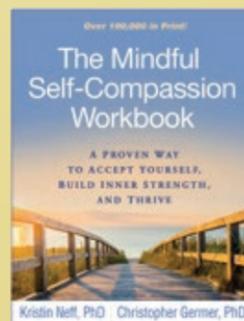


Scan this to watch videos
by Dr Neff on self-compassion



Dr Kristin Neff became interested in Buddhism in her last year of graduate school, and has been practising insight meditation ever since. While doing her post-doctoral work, she decided to conduct research on self-compassion—a central construct in Buddhist psychology but one that had yet been examined empirically then. In 2010, she teamed up with clinical psychologist, Chris Germer—a leader in the integration of mindfulness and psychotherapy—to create the empirically supported eight-week Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) programme. Since that time, MSC has helped tens of thousands of people around the globe. They also published *The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook*, a resource that is designed to help people learn self-compassion on their own.

This book is available at Awareness Place and costs S\$27.90.



Paying it Forward in the Buddhist Community



Venerable Dr Yan Zheng is the first graduate from the BCS who went on to obtain a PhD. Janice Goh interviewed him about his journey to obtaining a doctoral degree and his aspirations.

In his grey and yellow monastic robe, Venerable Dr Yan Zheng, aged 33, was often a subject of curiosity among the mostly lay students on campus at the Hong Kong University (HKU). He pursued his Masters in Buddhist Studies, then Doctor of Philosophy, at the university between 2012 and 2018.

The Venerable said his every move on campus was closely watched and he became the focus of attention. People often asked him if he hailed from the Shaolin Temple and whether he could perform martial arts.

But, he said it was the curiosity and interest of his fellow campus mates that created the perfect window of opportunity for him to share the Dharma in the course of striking up a conversation with them.

Incidentally, Venerable Dr Yan Zheng did train in martial arts at the Shaolin Temple in China as a child during his winter and summer vacations. It was also there

that he was ordained as a monk in his youth.

Born into a Buddhist family, his interest in the religion was fostered by his parents from young. After completing his high school education in Linquan County of Anhui province in China, he began his undergraduate studies at the Buddhist College in Nanhua Temple in Guangdong province as an undergraduate student.

After studying there for a year or so, and with the support of his family and friends, he arrived in Singapore in 2006 to continue his education at the Buddhist College of Singapore (BCS), which is affiliated to the Centre for Open and Distance Learning of the University of Kelaniya in Sri Lanka.

The next five years at the BCS enriched his knowledge in Buddhism and his efforts towards personal development.

“All those years of studying enabled me to acquire a lot of knowledge in Buddhist doctrines and Buddhist histories, and my interest in Buddhism has grown stronger and stronger with each passing year,” said Venerable Dr Yan Zheng, who obtained his Bachelor of Arts (General) from BCS.

“I also learned a lot about being a good person. I learned that we must always be grateful. I am always grateful to Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery (KMSPKS),

the BCS, my teachers at the college and, especially, to Master Kwang Sheng.”

Indeed, KMSPKS holds a special place in Venerable Dr Yan Zheng’s heart. The monastery not only sponsored his basic English language course at the British Council, but also his undergraduate,



masters and doctoral studies.

The rector of BCS, and abbot of KMSPKS, Venerable Kwang Sheng, has also been a notable figure in his journey.

Venerable Dr Yan Zheng expressed deep gratitude and admiration for Abbot Kwang Sheng’s kindness and generosity. Most importantly, he recalled Abbot Kwang Sheng’s words that ‘gratitude is the foundation of spiritual practice and character building.’ Hence, we must always be grateful.

On the whole, Venerable Dr Yan Zheng described his undergraduate days at the BCS as fun, full and precious.

“Not only did I gain knowledge, but I also made many friends. The studying experience at the BCS is a great resource of my life,” he said.

Deeper Commitment to Buddhism

According to him, there are about 20 graduates from the BCS who have gone on to pursue further education in world-famous universities.

He said, “These achievements are not only the results of our own efforts, but also due to the good guidance of our teachers, as well as the material and spiritual support of Master Kwang Sheng. Therefore, we have to always put ethics or virtuous conduct and gratitude first.”

Although more monastics are upgrading themselves, it is still a surprise to many laypeople to hear that monastics are pursuing postgraduate programmes, particularly doctoral studies.

When asked why he decided to get a PhD, Venerable Dr Yan Zheng said he recognised that the process could teach him how to do research requiring critical analysis, which would enable him to serve better as a Buddhist monk contributing to Buddhism.

In the six years of his postgraduate studies at the HKU, Venerable Dr Yan Zheng said he picked up a deeper appreciation of the religion.

“Not only did I acquire knowledge of Buddhism, but I also learned about the various ways of studying Buddhism, such as interpreting the classics, and looking at issues from broader, more comprehensive and different perspectives.”



He added, “On the whole, I think my experience at the university was valuable and meaningful.”

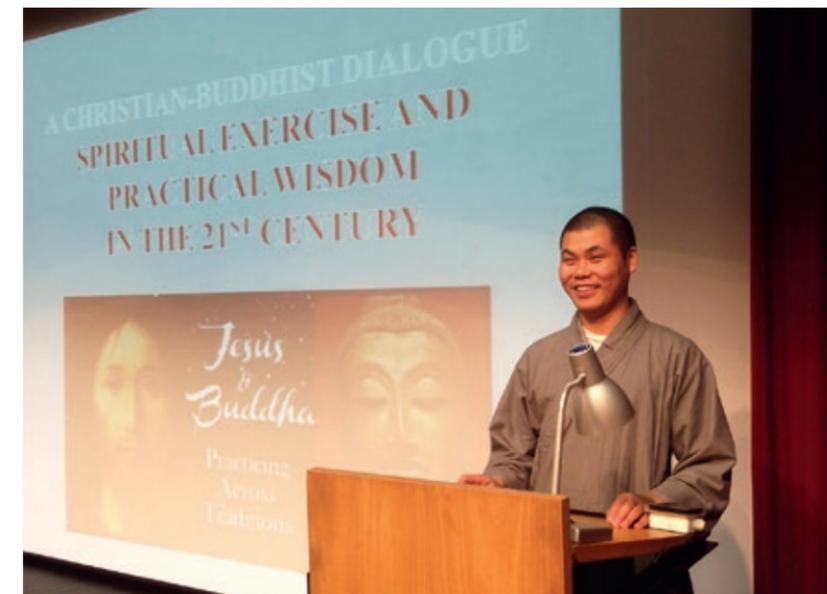
He obtained his Masters in Buddhist Studies (Pass with Distinction) in 2013 and his Doctor of Philosophy in 2018.

Aspirations and Advice

The PhD holder now wants to pay it forward within the Buddhist community.

He said, “I want to use what I have learnt to let more people know about Buddhism, learn about the Dharma, and benefit from it. I hope to repay my *alma mater* with better achievements in the future.”

In addition, he hopes to make more significant strides in academia.



Currently, the Centre of Buddhist Studies of HKU has accepted him as a staff member in recognition of his performance and results.

His sights are next set on publishing his thesis in Europe, the United States and the United Kingdom.

He added, “If it is possible, I want to do a post-doctoral degree in the US. I hope that one day I can spread the Buddha’s wisdom to more people and benefit more sentient beings.”

To aspiring monastics and novices undergoing their monastic and academic training, he shared a few words of wisdom.

“As a monastic student, we must put the same emphasis on studies and Buddhist practice and maintain the living habits and traditions of the monk. No matter what kind of environment we are in, we have to combine work and rest, and practise the middle way in everything we do,” he said.

For those pursuing PhD studies, he advised further.

“Attend as many academic conferences as possible. Publish more papers as these will be your academic achievements.”

“In addition, while learning is important for a student, as monks, we need to bear in mind that, to some extent, spiritual cultivation is even more important than learning. Therefore, we have to keep learning, and practising Buddhism simultaneously.”





A Glittering Gem under Singapore's Sunny Skies: Traditional Rooftop Decoration at KMSPKS

Postgraduate Scholar, Huang Hsiu-Hui from the Graduate Institute of Architecture and Cultural Heritage, Taipei National University of the Arts shares her with readers after conducting a workshop on rooftop decorations at the Monastery. Translated from Chinese by Oh Puay Fong

With Singapore being near the equator the roof of Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery (KMSPKS) glitters and shines under the golden sunlight. The roof spines of the Hall of Great Compassion (大悲殿) and Hall of Great Strength (大雄宝殿) are based on the Southern Chinese (Minnan or Hokkien) architectural style with upward slanting ends and meticulously-crafted artistic motifs. The rooftop is constructed based on the traditional Chinese architectural design of "gable and hip roof with multiple eaves" (重檐歇山屋面), using yellow glazed tiles. Yet, under the eaves are imitation decorations like colourful interlocking brackets (五彩斗栱), with the door or window frames painted with circular patterns (旋子彩画额枋) etc. Such features are particular to the Northern Chinese traditional architectural style, which are used to both decorate and reinforce a building's structures.

Based on lineage

The design of a Buddhist temple is mainly based on its lineage, differing according to the tradition it follows. Venerable Hong Choon came from Fujian province in China. However, when he started to develop and expand the temple, he did not completely follow the Southern Chinese architectural style. Singapore in the 1960s saw the emergence of the so-called "Chinese traditional renaissance architecture", in which buildings blend modern techniques with the Northern Chinese traditional style. During this period (1966-1976), China was going through the Cultural Revolution and viewed religion harshly. Under such circumstances, the Buddhist holy site of *Foguang Shan* (佛光山) was established in Kaohsiung, Taiwan in 1967, with revitalising Chinese culture as one of its aims. Venerable Xingyun personally designed the temple based on the Northern Chinese traditional architectural style, and it became the archetype

for subsequent Buddhist temples to emulate. After 1970, the Northern Chinese practice of using glazed tiles on the roof became mainstream in Taiwan's Buddhist and Taoist temples, replacing the Southern Chinese architectural style.

Professor Wong from the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Faculty of Architecture located the artisan who worked on KMSPKS Monastery's rooftop decoration, Mr Huang Shu-chi who came to Singapore in 1990¹. At that time, Taiwan already had many factories mass-producing prefabricated cement arches etc for mega projects to build new temples using reinforced concrete. While the Northern Chinese traditional architecture style was becoming standard practice in Singapore and Taiwan, Venerable Hong Choon took special care to incorporate the Southern Chinese traditional rooftop design with its decorative elements, perhaps to showcase its lineage, and to include elements

that the Venerable thought should be present in a Buddhist building.

Traditional rooftop decoration

Rooftop decoration is an architectural practice that came from the Fujian and Guangdong provinces of Southern China, and subsequently spread to Taiwan and Southeast Asia etc. Craftsmen originally made use of whatever materials were available, such as loose tiles with glazed painting, to mount on the roof spine as a form of decoration, with the added advantage that they could withstand different weather conditions. This entails combining various techniques of modeling, detailing, installing and painting etc; using stable but easily manipulated materials as the frame or backbone; adding malleable soft padding to flesh out the body; then setting pre-processed colourful ceramic or glass chips on it etc. As long as the backbone, body, outer appearance, supporting materials etc are available, and with a few pieces of important tools like scissors, pencil, scraper etc, it is possible to create designs that range from big to small; of various shapes; either flat, semi-flat or three-dimensional, using techniques from the most basic to most complex.

This craft is performed and passed on by artisans, who often incorporated local flavours and folk images into their work, reflecting not only the culture of material mastery, but also of artistic and spiritual expression. It plays a decorative function on the beams, frames or walls of buildings, seamlessly fusing all the elements into one, creating both a feeling of spirituality and a sense of stability in religious architecture. In actuality, it is viewed as an integral part of the whole building. Through such artistic methods and techniques,

the overall aesthetic and cultural meaning of the building is expressed. The English scholar, John Ruskin (1819-1900), in his 1849 book, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, elevated decoration to an art form, declaring it as good for people's mental health, energy and joy.



Decorating the roof of Taiwanese temple, Zong Gan Gong (總趕宮)



An artisan shearing glass chips with a pair of scissors

Rooftop decoration at the Hall of Great Compassion

From the front, on the main roof spine:

There are two twirling dragons with head erect, gazing towards the nine-storeyed stupa or pagoda in the middle. They are called "Two Dragons protecting the pagoda" or "Two Dragons paying homage to the pagoda". Pagodas typically have five or seven floors. In Buddhism, since the time of India's Mauryan Dynasty (approx. 324 – 187 BC), they were originally used to store Buddhist objects or sutras, or the relics of meritorious practitioners. Originally in the shape of a dome in ancient India, it gradually took a tower-like form after its spread to China. Since ancient times, the dragon is regarded as a mythical



"Two Dragons protecting the stupa" top the Hall of Great Compassion

animal. Together with the phoenix, turtle and *qilin* (麒麟), it is one of "The Four Divine Creatures". As their leader, the dragon is capable of soaring above the clouds to help sentient beings, gobbling up ferocious animals such as tigers and leopards on land, devouring aquatic monsters (蛟螭) in water, deterring evil and is thus regarded as a god. Installed on the roof, it symbolises protection against fires. The two dragons are depicted as spinning through the air while turning their heads back, with their heads held high and mouths open, their five talons wide open, seemingly alive and churning. The body is slender and flowing, with fire stripes swirling throughout its length. Beneath each dragon, there are patterns of rolling waves which perform the additional function of stabilising the dragon's weight. These patterns of water ripples were probably cast by mould.



A dragon in fluid motion turning back to look at the stupa



At the back of the hall, there is a green dragon on the ridge



At the back of the hall, there is a white elephant and a phoenix depicted on the left side of the roof spine



At the back of the hall, there is a lion and a peacock depicted on the right side of the roof spine

At the back, on the main roof spine:

The frontal view shows ridges that are decorated with blooming flowers and lush greenery. A *qilin*, the divine creature, strolls along, with a phoenix or bird soaring through the air. Using emerald green (佛頭青色) as its base colour, the overall effect showcases Buddhist architecture's refined and restrained air.

The displays at the back are more elaborate. Below the finial right in the middle, the central space is occupied by a green dragon, its

head erect with open claws, its long, slender body twirling from the extreme right towards the centre, with its tail at the extreme left end, which is a rare sight.

One end of the spine displays a lion and a peacock surrounded by a field of yellow flowers and greenery. The lion is depicted as lifting a paw to step forward but turning back to look at the magnificent peacock fanning its tail. As the King of Beasts, the lion is what Bodhisattva Manjushri inside the Hall of Great Compassion rides on,

whereas the peacock is a symbol of literary brilliance and elegance because of its gorgeous feathers. In contrast, the other side features a white elephant and a phoenix among a bed of red flowers and greenery. An auspicious animal, the white elephant is what Bodhisattva Samantabhadra inside the Hall of Great Compassion rides on, and it symbolises longevity. As the Monarch of Birds, the phoenix is a magical bird believed to appear only when a wise leader is born. In Buddhist art, such as painting, sculpture, embroidery etc, it often conveys auspiciousness.

On the upper, inner diagonal ridges:

Depicted here are curls of lush grass called "scrolling grass" or "wish-fulfilling grass". Normally, the growth pattern of climbing plants like passionflower, Japanese honeysuckle, etc are used as the basis to create the simplified, idealised twirling pattern that looks like the infinity symbol (∞) used to signify beginninglessness. Using lush scrolling grasses to decorate the ridges also has fire prevention symbolism.

On the upper, outermost diagonal ridges:

A flying dragon gnashing its teeth while peering afar, its four claws stretching five talons, its body striped with swirling fire streaks, with a benevolent demeanour, creates an overall impression of flowing gracefulness. The dragon's body is in touch with the diagonal ridge at two places, where they are decorated and reinforced by mould-casted rolling clouds. On its back are sharp, piercing white scales—though it is unclear if these were later embellishments—woven against its tightly-knitted blue scales, giving off a majestic air. The dragon is a mythical creature, created out of man's imagination based on an amalgamation of the distinctive features of different animals. According to the ancient Chinese dictionary *Erya* (爾雅·異), the dragon combines "the antlers of a deer, the head of a donkey, the eyes of a ghost, the ears of a cow, the neck of a snake; an abdomen like lips, scales like a carp's, claws like an eagle's and paws like a tiger's."



From the front, the upper, outermost diagonal ridge features a dragon with fluid grace, but its mosaic chips had mostly fallen off

In Taiwan, the artisans have their own mnemonic: First, draw deer antlers. Second, draw prawn's eyes. Third, draw a dog's nose. Fourth, draw a cow's mouth. Fifth, draw a lion's mane. Sixth, draw fish scales. Seventh, draw a snake's body. Eighth, draw fire blazes. Ninth, draw chicken feet. And that's all to drawing a dragon.

On the lower, inner diagonal ridges:

A peacock turning its head to look

back, with its wings outstretched and giving out a shrill cry, its long tail—double the length of its body—fanning on the ridge, looking even more magnificent. Underneath its claws are flowers and greenery, which help to stabilise the standing peacock. From the scattered chips remaining on its body, it appears to have had seven colours like its tail, with two reams of colours from the inside out. What can be seen now is that there is green with orange, purple or blue, etc with green being dominant. A few irregularly-stacked feathers suggest they are fluttering in the wind. The peacock is commonly called "the bird of culture". According to the *I-Ching*, the peacock wears three green feathers on its head, has a slim neck, a high back, and from its back to tail is displayed beautiful circular patterns, with lustrous and gleaming bright green feathers. Among the Buddhist scriptures, there are *The Great Peacock King Dharani*, *The Golden Peacock King Dharani*, *The Peacock Wisdom King Sutra*, etc, as well as the Mauryan ("Peacock") Dynasty, Peacock Throne, etc. It is believed this is likely why a peacock is depicted on the four corners of the Hall of Great Compassion.

On the lower, outermost diagonal ridges:

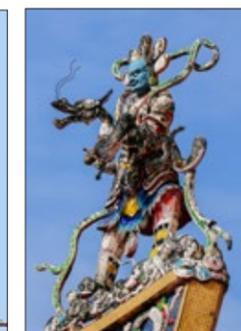
Normally, on entering a traditional Buddhist temple, one usually comes into the Maitreya Buddha Hall, which gains its name from the statue of the Maitreya Buddha, the future Buddha, in the middle of the hall. Behind Maitreya Buddha would be a statue of Bodhisattva Skanda, and on both sides would be the statues of the Four Heavenly Kings, hence it is also known as "The Hall of Heavenly Kings". KMSPKS Monastery differs in this aspect from other temples. The Four Heavenly Kings were originally gods of protection in ancient India,

but after Buddhism, they became Dharma protectors in the four directions, and are also known as "Four Kings protecting the country" or "Four Heavenly Kings protecting the world". They reside halfway on Mount Meru, guarding the Buddha Dharma and preventing evil spirits from harming sentient beings. Future generations extended this cosmology to have them watching over the four corners of Mount Meru, i.e. as guardians of the four directions, and more broadly, to the whole Buddhist world. In the Chinese Mahayana tradition, the Dharma instruments held by each Four Heavenly King together symbolise harmonious weather (风调雨顺, literally means "regulated winds and timely rains").

From the front, on the lower, outermost diagonal ridge, they are presumably displayed in an anti-clockwise order, based on the Dharma instrument in their hands. On the right, stands the Southern Heavenly King Virudhaka, whose



Southern Heavenly King Virudhaka represents the "wind" (风) element



Western Heavenly King Virūpākṣa represents the timeliness of rains

name means "able to summon the masses to grow their wisdom and protect the Buddha Dharma". He is holding a sword symbolising wisdom and for protecting the Dharma, which represents the "wind" (风) element. On the left is the Western Heavenly King Virūpākṣa, whose name means "he who observes the world with perfect sight and protects the people". He is the leader of the dragon-gods and holds a dragon

The upper and lower diagonal ridges at the back of the hall are each divided into an inner and outermost section

Upper, outermost ridge with dragon

Lower, outermost ridge with one of Four Heavenly Kings

Lower, inner ridge with peacock

Upper, inner ridge with scrolling grass

and a snake to symbolise the unpredictability of worldly affairs. He represents the timeliness (顺) of rains that come at appropriate seasons. The chips on the Southern Heavenly King Virudhaka statue have almost completely fallen off, exposing its cement body, though the face mask painted with drip enamel (淋搪面具) is still clearly visible.

The statues on the lower, outermost diagonal ridges at the back are better preserved. On the right strumming the *pipa* (a Chinese musical instrument) is the Eastern Heavenly King Dhṛtarāṣṭra, representing regulation (调). The tuning of the musical instrument—neither too tight nor too loose—symbolises taking the middle path and using music to attract beings to take refuge in Buddhism. He wears a crown and has a drip enamel mask on his face, with highly-arched arrow brows and smiling lips, to depict gentleness and dignity. On the upper body, he wears a vest-like double armour, with a silk sash gently weaving down across his body. On his lower body, he wears a short skirt, revealing pants underneath and laced-up boots. His feet are firmly planted on miniature human-like figures with horns. Some say he's stepping on ghosts, while others say he's stepping on demons and monsters. Based on the Hall of Great Compassion's mandate to liberate all departed beings, the latter explanation appears more plausible. The image of the Eastern Heavenly King Dhṛtarāṣṭra is beautifully crafted, the flowing sash creating a roundness of form that made him appear larger than life. The meticulous care the artisan(s)

took to create his image can be discerned from traces of the chips that still remain on the cement body, as well as the finely and colourfully arranged glass pieces on the short skirt.

On the left, holding a precious umbrella is the Northern Heavenly King Vaiśravaṇa, who wears a crown with radiating arches. Sporting an unpainted face, he appears faded in colour and grimy, wearing a vest-like double armour. He is also stepping on struggling miniature human forms with horns. His sash is streaming down alongside his umbrella, completing the whole look to symbolise rains (雨).



Eastern Heavenly King Dhṛtarāṣṭra, holding a pipa representing the regulation of wind



Northern Heavenly King Vaiśravaṇa holding an umbrella symbolising rain

Conclusion

KMSPKS Monastery was handed from Venerable Zhuan Dao to Venerable Hong Choon to take over as its Abbot to build up this sacred Buddhist site in Singapore. He once told his disciple, Venerable Kwang Shou that building this monastery was extremely hard work, and he endured numerous hardships to do so². He spent decades of strenuous efforts to transform this desolate hill temple into a renowned attraction. Venerable Hong Choon developed this temple under difficult

conditions out of a compassionate motivation to liberate beings using Buddhist teachings, skilfully utilising the principles of *fengshui* (风水geomancy) in its construction. From the main entrance to the Hall of Great Compassion, the path meanders to the sides, facilitating circulation to the surrounding garden and spaces. Using geomancy to design temple grounds is a departure from the scientific blueprint on space usage, but because of this unusual approach, the temple has achieved worldwide fame.

The Hall of Great Compassion was the focal point where Venerable Hong Choon started teaching the Dharma and expanding the temple. It holds great significance for KMSPKS Monastery. Besides its remarkable aesthetic achievement in architectural art, it reflects Venerable Hong Choon's emphasis on the importance of Dharma lineage. At a time when Singapore was experiencing the "Chinese traditional renaissance style architecture" merging modern techniques with Chinese traditional styles, KMSPKS Monastery's Halls of Great Compassion and Great Strength, together with the other buildings, bore witness to Singapore's own Buddhist architectural development, a hybrid of both Southern and Northern Chinese styles. In the history of Singapore architecture, such building clusters must have been unique, and the grand scale is considered unsurpassed even today.

1. Letter from Professor Wong: A Mr Huang Shi-chi. In 1981, he was reported as 50 years old. He also reported that his first 'big achievement' was the sculpture of Spring and Autumn Pagoda on Kaoshiung when he was 24 years old.

2. Page 73 of "A Tribute to Master Hong Choon" Special Commemorative Magazine



METTA SUTTA

The Discourse on Loving-kindness (Sn 1.8)

Illustration : Law Wen Hui

One of the kittens I used to foster died yesterday. The kitten fell from the window of the adopter's house. I am the one who arranged for her adoption. I feel responsible for her death.

I am ashamed of myself, and I think I am unfit to take care of any other abandoned kittens. Everyone hates and scolds me. I really hate myself. I am so useless, and I am a failure. Can meditation help me feel better?

What happened, Christina?

Always learn to love yourself. We need to be kinder and more forgiving towards ourselves. Sometimes, people are so blinded by hatred and anger that they cannot see the good anymore.

Everyone makes mistakes and nobody is perfect. Living in the past only brings us more pain and suffering.

Always look at your good side. Don't dwell on your mistakes. We have to learn from our mistakes, accept ourselves for who we are, let go of the past and move on. Guilt does nobody any good. Live in the present.

Let's meditate now. Be still, be calm and listen well.



There are a few stages in loving-kindness (*Metta*) meditation. Before radiating our compassion to others, we have to put in constant effort to perfect our morality.

Second, we cultivate mindfulness of the body and awareness of the breath. Be calm, and be at peace with ourselves.

Third, we generate loving-kindness and acceptance in the body and mind, accepting who we truly are.

Lastly, we practise to generate a genuine compassion to all beings. Do note, however, that if you experience serious depression, you have to seek professional help.



Ready!



Ready?

Everyday
Zen*Discovering the Self in Nature*

Illustration & text: Johny Tay

Now, take two or three deep breaths with slow, long and complete exhalations. Let go of any concerns or preoccupations. Feel your breath from your nose to the centre of your chest for a few minutes.

We have to practise loving-kindness with ourselves first. We will have difficulty loving others without first loving ourselves. Sitting quietly, mentally repeat slowly and steadily:

*May I be happy. May I be well. May I be safe.
May I be peaceful and at ease.*



After some time, bring to mind a friend or someone in your life who has deeply cared for you. Hold him or her in your thoughts and slowly repeat:

*May you be happy. May you be well. May you be safe.
May you be peaceful and at ease.*



Then, continue by bringing to mind other friends, neighbours, acquaintances, strangers, animals, the departed and finally people you have conflicts or difficulties with. Repeat the same phrases or compose phrases that better represent the loving-kindness you feel towards these beings.



Sometimes, feelings such as anger, remorse, grief or sadness may arise. Be calm and direct loving-kindness towards them. Be mindful of these feelings and be aware of their arising and ceasing. There is no need to identify with these feelings, or judge yourself for having them.

Just like how a mother cares for her own child, you should be kind, caring and accepting of yourself too. May you be well and happy.



There was once a Queen who posed this question to a Zen master. "People need to be ruled. How can anyone live without laws or a ruler?" The master's response was, "During spring, the grass emerge by themselves."

We are surrounded by nature but often overlook its significance in our modern, technology-dominated lives. Nature is not an 'alien' element that is separate from us. We are part of nature; we emerged from nature. Therefore, observing and learning from nature can give us valuable insights about ourselves.

The Chinese characters for 'nature' are worth meditating on. 'Nature' is '自然', which roughly translates as "of itself, so it is". There are no references to plants, animals, landscapes or other things we commonly associate with the natural world.

And rightly so! As children of nature, we do many miraculous things on our own without even thinking about them. No one is beating your heart. No one is growing your nails. No one is digesting your food. All of these happen every moment—by themselves.

In the natural world, there is no such thing as a poorly-formed wave or badly-shaped tree. Objects are as they should be—of themselves. Once you see this connection, you may realise that it applies to your higher-level thoughts, feelings, speech and actions as well.

Making the 'wrong' choices, falling short of goals, or even just choosing to do nothing are perfectly natural outcomes. What you perceive as 'right' or 'wrong' outcomes are brought about by your subjective judgments at that point in time. You probably acted your best based on what you knew at that time.

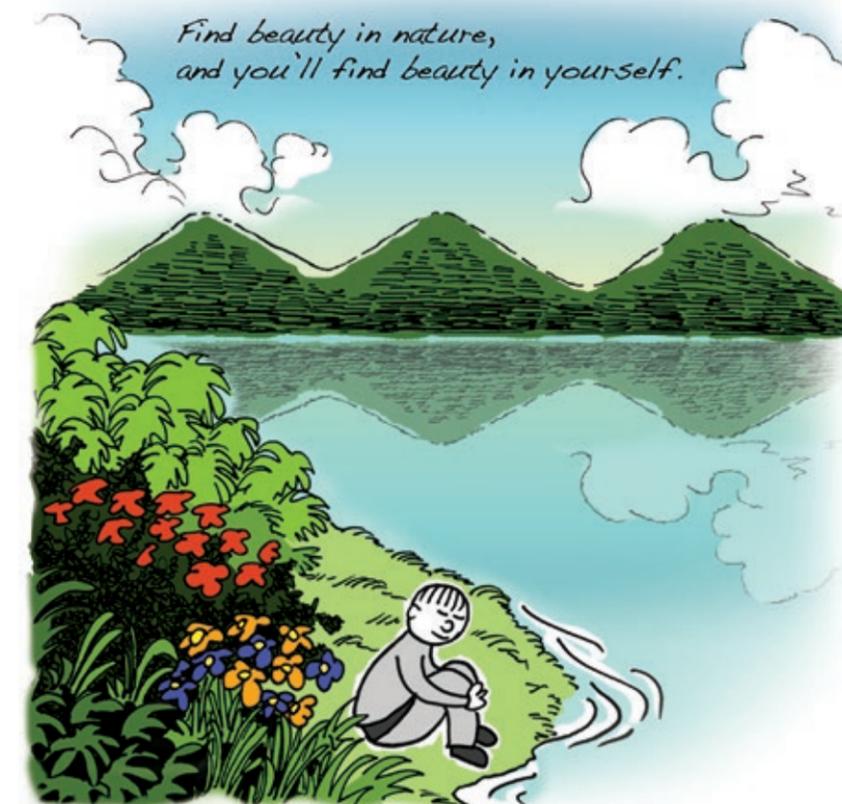
Herein lies the root of self-compassion and empathy.

Put yourself in the shoes of an observer and look upon your battered, suffering self as a loved one or close friend. What would you tell this person, seeing the situation he or she is in? Would you berate and demand, or show compassion?

Just as you would have kind words for your most cherished kin, you would probably have kind words for this 'person'.

When you plant a seed and it does not grow well, you re-evaluate the conditions around the seed. You don't blame the seed for not growing as you expected. This applies to persons as well. No blame or demands. Only empathy. Only compassion.

Remind yourself that you, too, deserve your own compassion. Only then, can you have the proper state of mind and energy to extend compassion to all sentient beings and all of nature. ☺



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Awakening Self-Compassion

Text: Jack Kornfield

*Hold yourself
as a mother holds her
beloved child.*

– The Buddha

We are so quick to judge one another. Just as we are hard on others we are even harder on ourselves. With mindfulness, our natural compassion grows. We can see that we are all carrying our own burden of tears. You and everyone you meet are sharing some measure of the pain that is present on the planet. You are called upon to witness this pain—in yourself and



others—with compassion. But how can we do this when we live at a time where it seems we have lost contact with the power of mercy and compassion, when we have closed off to the suffering of ourselves and others?

We have to begin to sense the tears for ourselves before we can cry for others. These tears are actually a great gift. They are the same moisture that brings new life out of the dry earth every spring. For the Lakota Sioux, grief is considered a great gift because they believe the gods are closest to us when we are

suffering. When a Lakota Sioux has suffered a great loss and is grieving, he or she is considered *wacan*, or “most holy”. Their prayers are believed to be especially powerful, and others will often ask one who grieves to pray on their behalf.

This doesn't mean that compassion will be easy, especially when you've been betrayed or you've suffered some irreplaceable loss. As the Sufis pray, “May I overcome any bitterness that may have come because I am not up to the magnitude of the pain that has been entrusted to me.”

You may want to heal, but still find yourself slipping back into old habits of anger and resentment. This can be most frustrating. After struggling for half a century with the British Empire, Mahatma Gandhi said that his most formidable opponent was not the British Empire or the Indian people, but a man named Mohandas K. Gandhi—himself. “With him I seem to have very little influence.”

But it is necessary to learn that you are worthy of being loved. As the Buddha put it quite simply: “You can search the whole tenfold universe and not find a single being more worthy of love and compassion than the one seated here—yourself.” Self-compassion and self-forgiveness are not weaknesses, but the roots of our courage and magnanimity. Sometimes compassion for ourselves and others seems hard to find. But even if you lose touch with these feelings during your most intense suffering, compassion is an essential part of our true nature. In fact, it is in this

self-compassion and self-love that you find the strength to carry on through your darkest nights. **It is by first practising self-compassion that you find not only a way to hold your own struggles and sorrows in your heart—but through them you learn how to connect with the sufferings and sorrows of all those around.**

This self-compassion helps us all survive. It causes us to jump out of the way of an unexpected fast car as we enter the street. We treasure our life. Self-compassion struggles to keep us alive even in situations of complete abandonment and abuse.

As you go through your difficulties, you can learn to bring a quality of loving care to everything you touch. You will find that love and care have an extraordinary capacity to transform the sorrows of your life into a great stream of compassion.

Be gentle with yourself—it should not be a struggle. Know your limitations. Extend your compassion only as far as you feel your heart opening naturally. Plant your seed of trust. It will grow in its season.

As you face loss, frustration, hurt and conflict, invite a sense of your own dignity. Sit up, stand up tall. Have respect, patience and compassion for yourself. With these, you can handle anything. ☺

Jack Kornfield trained as a Buddhist monk in the monasteries of Thailand, India and Burma under Buddhist masters Ajahn Chah and Mahasi Sayadaw. He has taught meditation internationally since 1974 and is one of the key teachers to introduce Buddhist mindfulness practice to the West. Over the years, Jack who holds a PhD in clinical psychology, has taught in centres and universities worldwide, led International Buddhist Teacher meetings, and worked with many of the great teachers of our time. His books have been translated into 20 languages and sold more than a million copies.

©Jack Kornfield



Write to Heal

Text: Raymond Anthony Fernando

Life is challenging and like a roller coaster ride, there will be many ups and downs. But through these challenges, we can with sheer determination and a positive mindset, gain knowledge and experiences to transform lives.

I have a special fondness to pen articles on those with special needs: The elderly, students who experience loneliness, the mentally ill and persons with disabilities. I enjoy writing poems and with two grants which I was successful in securing, I wrote two books of poetry to kick-start my writing career.

The successful sale of these two books inspired and motivated me to write my very first novel on my wife's battle with schizophrenia.

With the novel, *Loving A Schizophrenic* published and well-received from within and outside Singapore, many people who are grappling with mental disorders, either themselves or their loved ones, approached me for assistance as they realised that my experience could help them cope better with mental illnesses.

Sharing life experiences and skills benefits others

In my four decades of managing my wife's schizophrenia, I acquired valuable insightful peeks and knowledge into her illness, and then learned the value of providing unconditional love to Doris. I also gradually practise self-compassion, being kind towards my frustrations and limitations as a caregiver, especially on days when things didn't seem right, no matter how hard I try to make them work.

Before long, Doris wrote her version of her battle with the illness and that novel sold 1,000 copies. She was so motivated by the love and support I rendered her that before she passed on in April 2014, she wrote eight successful books.

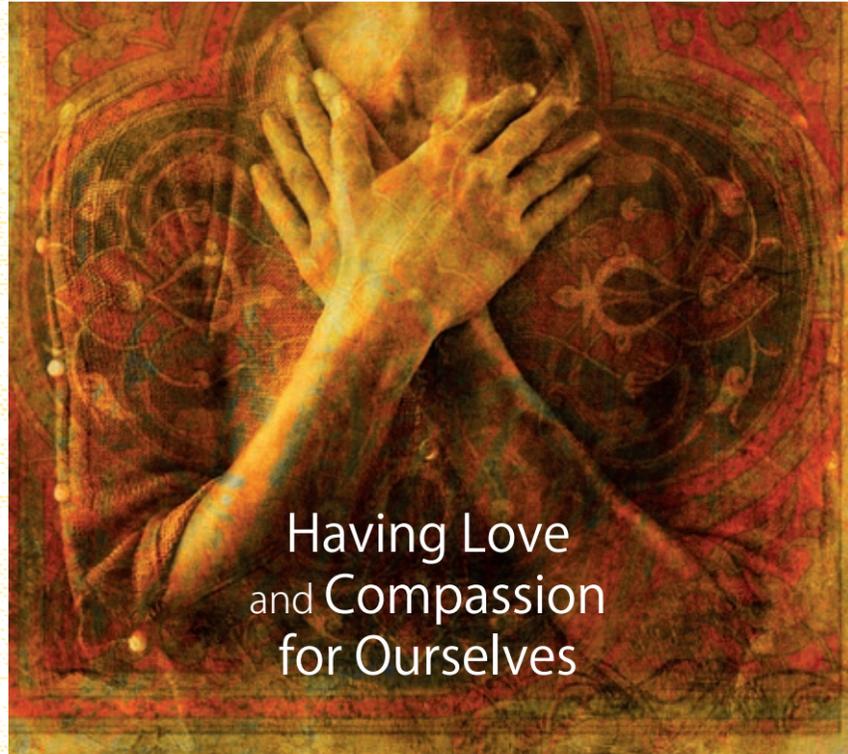
Kindness and mutual teamwork

Later, several people who are facing challenges contacted me to help them write their own stories, one of whom is a student in the Philippines. Just like me, she felt all alone, and gave me an idea to write a book on loneliness. Her poems on sadness and joy impressed me. I convinced her that her poems which had strong emotions could be a ride-on to writing a book, and she agreed with my positive outlook in life. She gradually moved away from feeling isolated and disconnected as she penned her experiences into emotive, uplifting poems.

I decided to coach her into writing a book and thus made her my co-author. She was delighted when our novel, *I'm So Afraid to be Alone* was well-received. Uplifted, my co-author decided to further her studies in High School.

Even though life is not easy, we can still maintain a gentle kindness towards our sense of self and see our life struggles as part of human existence. We can choose to be less harsh towards ourselves and accept our humanness when we fall short of our ideals.

With my passion for writing, I always strive to coach others so that they too can also carve out a writing career for themselves—and then see that beautiful rainbow from afar. ☺



Having Love and Compassion for Ourselves

Q I notice that I often become angry with myself, blaming myself for not being good enough. Because of this, I often suffer a negative state of mind. What can I do to change this? – H.

A: While recognising our mistakes and weaknesses is wise, we needn't hate ourselves for having them. We are sentient beings—just like everyone else—caught in cyclic existence due to our disturbing attitudes, negative emotions and karma. Of course we aren't perfect. We have foibles, but we do not need to identify with them so strongly. They are not our identity; they are not an inherent part of us. By reflecting in this way, we can become more patient with ourselves and still be motivated to change.

Love is the wish that sentient beings have happiness and its causes, and compassion is the wish that they be free from suffering

and its causes. Since we, too, are sentient beings, our love and compassion must encompass ourselves, as well as others.

Many people confuse loving themselves with being selfish. They have a low opinion of themselves, feel guilty if they are too happy, and deny themselves pleasures. From a Buddhist viewpoint, low self-esteem and this type of self-denial are as caught up with self-centredness as pride is, for they all over-estimate the importance of the self and focus on it in an unhealthy way.

Others, thinking loving themselves is good, fall to the extreme of self-indulgence and selfishness. Activities done with this attitude do

not really make us happy, because our mind is focused on only our own immediate pleasure. We are trying too hard to be happy, and thus real satisfaction eludes us.

How then do we correctly differentiate self-love from selfishness? Selfishness in Buddhism means self-centredness and self-preoccupation—that is, thinking of ourselves first and foremost. **Whether we think of ourselves as the worst or the best of all, we are nonetheless exaggerating the importance of the self. Both self-hatred and self-indulgence are extremes. Neither brings happiness or eliminates misery. We are one among countless sentient beings, all of whom want to be happy and to avoid suffering as intensely as we do. We are neither more important nor less important than others. Thus, in wishing all beings to be happy and free from suffering, we must include ourselves. No sentient being is more or less deserving than any other in this respect.**

When we are angry at ourselves, we frequently see only what is flawed in our lives. This view is extremely narrow and is comparable to focusing on one spot on the table while ignoring the beauty of the whole table. Also, we often focus on a few circumstances in our lives that aren't going well instead of all those that are. Although we all have problems, when we over-emphasise their importance, we easily begin to think that we are incapable and worthless. Such self-hatred immobilises us and prevents us from developing our good qualities and sharing them with others.

When we look at the broad picture, however, we see that many positive things are in our lives. We can rejoice that we are alive and appreciate whatever degree of good health we have. We also have food (often too much!), shelter, clothing, medicine, friends, relatives, and a myriad of good circumstances. Many of the people reading this live in peaceful places, not in war-torn areas. Many have jobs they like, and family and friends they appreciate. We shouldn't take these for granted. Most importantly, from a spiritual viewpoint, we have access to an authentic path, qualified teachers to guide us, and kind companions who encourage us. We have genuine spiritual aspirations and the time to cultivate these. Thinking about these good conditions one by one, we will be filled with joy, and any sense of being incapable and hopeless will vanish.

Mentally flogging ourselves for our weaknesses and mistakes is useless, and an impediment to spiritual progress. How then can we view our foibles? With self-acceptance, we let go of judgment and acknowledge what we are or have done. Looking back at the person we were when we erred, we can understand and have compassion for our suffering. At that time, we did what we thought was best. Confusion clouded our mind, and we erred. Although we need to make amends for the harm we inflicted on others, we need not hate and condemn ourselves. We can forgive ourselves. While the action was mistaken, the person who did it was not evil.

On the deepest level, the nature of our mind is untainted. The cloud-like destructive emotions can be

eliminated. In addition, we have the seeds of all enlightened qualities in our mindstream, and these can be developed limitlessly, until we attain full enlightenment. This Buddha nature is an unalienable part of our mind and is always present.

Having the determination to be free from suffering of cyclic existence is compassion for ourselves. When we make mistakes, rather than wallowing in guilt, we benefit from purifying them and continuing on the path. The Buddha prescribed a four-step process for doing this. First, we review our actions and genuinely regret those that harmed others or ourselves. Regret differs from guilt. Based on a balanced view of the self, regret arises from accurately assessing our actions. Guilt, on the other hand, is a form of self-hatred. Based on a negative view of the self, it arises from over-emphasising the negativity of our mistakes. By regretting our errors, we can learn from them and improve in the future, whereas by feeling guilty, we remain locked in an unproductive downward spiral.

Second, through regret, we are determined not to act destructively again. While we can confidently say we will abandon some harmful actions forever, we may know that we are yet unable to avoid others completely. In those cases, we set ourselves a reasonable period of time during which we will be especially mindful and not engage in those actions. In this way, we will gradually become confident in our ability to develop positive habits.

Third, we make amends to those whom we have harmed or towards whom we have had negative attitudes or feelings. In the case of other sentient beings, we

develop love, compassion, and the altruistic intention to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all. This counteracts the force of our previous negative intentions towards them. In the case of religious figures and refuge objects, we recall their good qualities and generate faith and trust in them.

The best way of making amends is through transforming our attitude, letting go of any hostility or other destructive emotion we may still harbour towards another person. In addition, if we can directly apologise to the person we harmed and compensate any physical damage we have done, it is to our advantage to overcome our pride or shame and do so. Nevertheless, this is not essential, for sometimes the other person has already passed away or does not wish to receive communication or help from us.

Fourth, to ensure that our future actions correspond to our improved attitude, we engage in some type of remedial action. This may include activities such as community service, volunteer work, service work, meditation, or religious practice such as bowing, reciting prayers and mantras, and meditating.

Many Buddhists engage in these four opponent powers on a daily basis. In this way, they avoid stockpiling any negative feelings or karmic imprints over time. **Psychologically healthy, as well as spiritually beneficial, regularly purifying our mistakes lays the foundation for a happy mind, which, in turn, reduces the likelihood of anger arising within us. By developing and cleansing our minds through Dharma practice, we can become Buddhas.**

☺

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

Teng Bespoke Vegetarian Dining: The Place for Bespoke Japanese Vegetarian Cuisine



2. **White Radish:** a big bowl of refreshing salad made up of shredded radish, baby tomatoes, sliced cucumber, corn and Teng's Bespoke peanut-based dressing.

3. **Avocado Fried Rice:** a staple dish best suited to those who enjoy the taste of truffle and love avocado.

4. **Green Tea Chendol:** a fusion dessert that brings out the best in coconut and green tea. This dessert is high on the chef's recommended list!

The restaurant is located right in the middle of Sunshine Plaza, alongside several other eateries. It has a warm and relaxing atmosphere with friendly service staff. There were several small groups of diners the evening that I went. Waiting time for food was about 10 minutes. As the restaurant was not particularly crowded on weekday evenings, it was a perfect place to enjoy a slow dinner after a hectic day at work.



Konnichiwa! Let's explore some Japanese cuisine today, shall we? The vegetarian version, of course.

Teng Bespoke Vegetarian Dining serves almost every Japanese cuisine that you can find in any regular Japanese restaurant. Sashimi, tempura, yakitori, tonkatsu no less, the difference being the absence of meat. In fact, I was almost fooled by how the meatless Unagi Maki (a.k.a. rolled sushi) resembles the real unagi, visually and in taste. It was definitely *oishii* (tasty)!

A few other dishes that are worth trying are:

1. **Sweet Potato Roll:** crispy spring roll filled with warm mashed sweet potato.

The main dishes are mostly priced around S\$12, while appetisers can range from S\$8 to S\$10 while desserts are about S\$5. The portion sizes are good for sharing. *Itadakimasu!!* 🍴



Overall Ratings:

Food : 8/10
Ambience: 8/10
Service: 9/10

Address:

91 Bencoolen Street #01-50
Singapore 189652
(Located in Sunshine Plaza)
Contact Number:
6337 7050

Opening Hours:

Mondays to Fridays:
11.30am to 3pm,
5.30pm to 10pm
Saturdays to Sundays:
11.30am to 10pm

Website:

www.tengbespoke.com
Facebook:
https://www.facebook.com/tengbespokevegetarianrestaurant/

Text & Photos: **Jos Tan**

Quorntoni: Meat-free Bento Anyone?

Boy, oh boy! I am so excited to share that vegetarian Japanese bento is now available in Singapore!

Recently, Quorn collaborated with Ichiban Bento to create meat-free bento recipes which are now available at Ichiban Bento Outlets. I was so elated when I saw the news on social media that I rushed down to one of the outlets to dig into their new dishes.

So what's on the menu? They have the **Meat-Free Katsu Curry (S\$10.80)**, **Meat-Free Tsukune Bento (S\$13.80)**, **Meat-free Chawanmushi (S\$2.50)** and **Meat-Free Nuggets with Yuzukosho Dip (S\$4.80)**. I tried both Meat-Free Katsu Curry Bento and Meat-Free Tsukune Bento. I must say they tasted like the real stuff! The Quorn "meat" still retains the juicy and tender texture of "meat" after frying and grilling. It goes well with the fragrant vegetable curry too. It does not taste like those mock char siew that we used to have with our *zeh* (dialect word that means vegetarian) bee hoon.

However, we might have concern about what ingredients are used in Quorn products. The "meat" is made up of a natural nutritious fungus from the soil, which is fermented to produce a dough called mycoprotein. It is high in protein and fibre, low in saturated fat, and contains no cholesterol. It is created for a more sustainable diet movement, because producing mycoprotein requires less land and water than producing animal proteins. Mycoprotein has a 90% lower carbon footprint, so it is better for our planet.

Although it sounds safe, healthy and eco-friendly, eating in moderation is still the best motto to follow when it comes to food nutrition. 🍴



Overall Ratings

Food: 8/10
Ambience: 5/10
Service: 5/10

Locations

D'life Signature

10 outlets:

<https://ichibanbento.com.sg/en/>
Islandwide delivery service:
<https://ichibanbento.oddlife.me/>

Opening Hours

11am to 9.30pm daily

Text & Photos: **Chloe Huang**

Amaranth Cereal Drink

Nurture your bodily health with this nourishing drink. Loaded with wholesome nutrients and antioxidants, amaranth seeds are said to reduce inflammation, lower cholesterol levels and increase weight loss, according to health websites.



Recipe courtesy of Wong Kew Yew.

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

INGREDIENTS (SERVES THREE)

1/4 cup	Amaranth seeds
2 cups	Filtered water
1pc	Cinnamon stick
1 tbs	Agave nectar
1 pinch	Sea salt

METHOD

1. Mix filtered water with amaranth seeds and cinnamon stick.
2. Bring filtered water to boil in a pot.
3. Simmer for 20 to 25 minutes.
7. Stir in agave nectar and sea salt before turning off the fire.
8. Serve warm.



Dealing with the Heckler on your Shoulder

By Susan Kaiser Greenland,
author of *The Mindful Child*.
(www.susankaisergreenland.com)

Children can be victims of their own heckling, calling out insults. Inner hecklers are remarkably creative when it comes to making kids feel awful about themselves. One of kids' inner hecklers is expectation of perfection. I've never met anyone who admits to thinking it's possible to be perfect, but I have met many who act that way.

Regarding the issue of perfectionism, this advice from Jon Kabat-Zinn is most helpful:

"You are perfect as you are, including all your imperfections. Nurture what is deepest and most beautiful in yourselves, which is already present, and not something you need to attain. Your original nature is already and always luminous, beautiful and whole, perfectly what it is. The world needs all its flowers, and each of us needs to realise what flower we are."

Early research has associated self-compassion with other positive qualities like wisdom, personal initiative, curiosity, happiness and optimism. Here's a self-compassion practice you can teach your kids guiding them to be kind to themselves, and recognising the beauty of their true nature.

- Lie on the floor and pay attention to what's happening in the body. How do the different parts feel right now? Notice how it feels to lie on the floor. Feel your head on the pillow, the crook of your neck, your shoulders on the blanket.
- Our top priority is to take good care of ourselves and rest, not think about what we want to change in our bodies. If thoughts come, try not to get caught up in them, but return your attention to your body.
- How your arms feel lying by the sides of your body; notice how the small of your back feels against the floor, your rear, your legs, the backs of your heels, your feet. Just observe.
- If the heckler turns up, ignore it and gently bring your attention back to the body.
- There is no place you have to go right now. There is nothing you need to do. There's no one for you to please. There's no one else you have to be. You don't need anything other than what you have right here. All we are doing now is resting. Nothing more and nothing less.
- As you feel your body against the floor, pay attention to the sense that your weight is releasing or yielding to the floor and the earth below it. Imagine your tension leaving your body like a cloud of

grey smoke, sinking into the earth below the floor.

- Then imagine your own safe place, your sanctuary. It can be an imaginary place, somewhere you would like to visit, or have visited.
- Visualise the space where our hearts are, glowing with warmth, that expands deeper, wider and sweeter until it radiates out to warm your head, torso, neck, shoulders, arms, hands, fingers, hips and legs to your feet and toes. Your whole body is filled with warm light that is vast and limitless. Rest in that warmth for a while.
- Rest in your safe place knowing that you are complete and whole just as you are. You don't need to change, or be anyone else.
- Part of our life's journey is to experience good times and bad times. They are like the tide that comes and goes, but they always change in the end. Sometimes, it's hard to wait but just hold on.
- Imagine yourself in your sanctuary, happy and having lots of fun—perhaps singing, dancing, reading, resting or playing a guitar, whatever it is you love to do. Now send friendly wishes to yourself: *May I be healthy and strong. May I be with people I love and who love me.* Everyone in your safe place is also free and having fun; relaxed, peaceful and at ease. ☺



PAPA, MAMA

Acrylic on Canvas 24"x18"
by Law Wen Hui

This painting of the clouds is meant to reflect impermanence and the ever-changing forms of life and death. The painting was inspired by Venerable Master Thich Nhat Hanh's response to Oprah Winfrey's question on what his belief of life after death is.

"It's like a cloud in the sky. When the cloud is no longer in the sky, it doesn't mean the cloud has died. The cloud is continued in other forms like rain or snow or ice. So you can recognise your cloud in her new forms. If you are very fond of a beautiful cloud and if your cloud is no longer there, you should not be sad."

(As transcribed from a conversation between Oprah Winfrey and Buddhist monk, author and Nobel Peace Prize-nominated peace activist, Thich Nhat Hanh.)

Quite recently, I went to a Day of Mindfulness retreat organised by Plum Village. During the sharing session, someone asked about how to cope with the passing of a beloved family member. I began to contemplate on death and realised that everything is constantly transforming. Just like in this painting. The cloud becomes

About the artist

"My subject matter is Buddhism. I try to incorporate the basic principles and teachings of Buddhism in my contemporary Buddhist art works. I hope that my art can be a means to better enhance one's existence in this world while invoking a peaceful and happy state of mind in each individual viewer. As Buddhist concepts are sometimes difficult to grasp, I hope that through my paintings, I can help people to understand Buddhism better."
- Law Wen Hui

rain that falls to the land. Soon after, the water evaporates and becomes clouds again. Everything transforms due to conditions and everything is a phenomenon.

I hope that this painting can help people to contemplate death. I painted the sky black to represent death. However, once we understand the concept of impermanence, we should not be afraid of death, feel sad or gloomy anymore.

FEAR

Acrylic on Canvas 12"x9"
by Law Wen Hui



This is a painting of cockroaches, and an artistic expression of a contemplation on fear. I stay near the ground floor. Hence, it is quite inevitable that cockroaches appear uninvited in my house. As it happens, I am quite terrified of cockroaches. As a Buddhist, I try my best not to kill them in view of the first precept. However, they appear ever so often, which causes me distress.

Their constant appearances triggered me to contemplate

about them, myself and my fear or aversion towards them. *What am I afraid of? How did the fear arise? Why did the fear arise? Did the fear arise due to my own exaggerated imagination? Who is the one in fear? Do I fear the cockroaches because of their physical looks? If so, is it because my mind is a discriminating mind, which always seek to look at the beautiful and avoid the ugly?*

I think that aversion and desire are both sides of the same coin. Just like aversion causes suffering, so does desire. I intentionally left the upper half empty and white to

contrast against the black roaches which represent desire and aversion respectively.

Last but not least, I also wonder about who is in fear. Is there a someone, a 'me', inside of this physical body, who is having this feeling of fear? If there is non-self, then how and why should this fear even arise? Cockroach for thought, anyone? ☺

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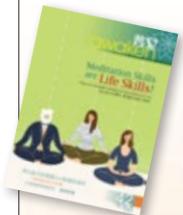
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Having a sense of compassion towards oneself, or rather, just being plain kind to oneself, always presents a psychological dichotomy. Where does that fine line exist, between becoming selfish *per se*—as in being more interested in your own self than in the lives of others—and yet making sure you do not step out of the space in which you're allowing yourself the right to have the freedom to be who you naturally are. Standing in your own truth, you become more useful to others, because you are aligned with your individual purpose in the whole scheme of things. Treating oneself in a respectful way may also be considered an act of self-compassion. The natural by-product of well-being is happiness or contentment that will enable you to benefit others. By emanating this sense of truth through manifesting your own life, you are simply being just who you are, kind to your true persona, no more, no less.

In the movie *Yesterday*, Jack Malik is an ordinary guy, a naturally considerate person, humble and not full of himself at all, who is trying to establish himself as a song-writer and musician. Having written some songs, he gets to play in various small venues like pubs, clubs and bars on a regular basis, but it's not the kind of exposure he wants and dreams of more. Here, we see a dilemma between meeting the demands and expectations of society as in following a seemingly moral path of conventionality versus one of fame and gain that meets the criteria one may have set for oneself. We have to ask which is an act of 'self-compassion' and how close to its cousin, 'self-righteousness' this may be. Jack is constantly toying with the idea of giving up music professionally as he



YESTERDAY

Directed by:
Danny Boyle

Starring:
Himesh Patel, Lily James, Kate McKinnon, Ed Sheeran

seems to be getting nowhere with it, but an old and very dear school friend, Ellie, who totally believes in him and is acting as "his manager"—more as a self-imposed role and not because Jack actually needs a manager—along with a small group of friends, encourages Jack to keep on playing. Ellie forbids Jack to give up his dream, or to fall back into a stable teaching job, which Jack is starting to think may be a better option.

When Jack finally gets a slot at a music festival, he imagines that this will be his big break, but in reality he ends up playing a few of his songs to a handful of elderly people and kids inside a mostly empty tent. He decides to give up his music dream, but while riding his bicycle home, a strange phenomenon occurs across the world causing the electricity to go out everywhere. In that split second when all turns to darkness, Jack gets hit by a truck, ends up in hospital, but is largely unharmed. While recovering, he slowly begins to realise that some things have changed since the accident. Although the people and places around him are the same, no one has heard of Coca

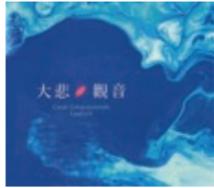
Cola, Harry Potter, or the Beatles! So when Jack starts strumming the Beatles songs casually on his guitar for his friends, they are amazed by the brilliance of his new work. He quickly gets noticed. Even the celebrity, Ed Sheeran, personally meets Jack and arranges to have Jack play as a back-artist on his tour.

This takes Jack into a whole new league in the music world, when he finally succeeds in dehumanising himself into a 'product'. He starkly realises that he's intensely unhappy in this lonely isolation of fame, yet he cannot find anonymity. Surrounded by the glitz and glamour of having a music label, he feels constant shame that he's living a lie. The rest of the movie describes his intense struggle between pursuing the dream he's always wanted, even though it is a lie, and having a life with the girl he meets in the thick of this, who he deeply loves.

Through watching Jack navigate this quandary, we learn about self-compassion. Taking time to consider what you yourself need as a human being, with the individuality you find yourself equipped with, actively working with that and creating a life that you fit into and that fits in with others around you, is an act of self-compassion. Why? Because it leads to you being well, sane and comfortably present within your own space, while consciously aspiring to and actually making honest efforts to participate in the section of humanity you personally belong to, contributing your skills and talents. ☺

Standing in your own truth is an act of self-compassion Text: Susan Griffith-Jones

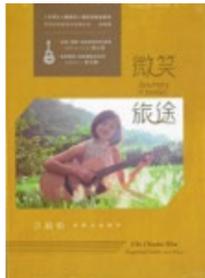
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Great Compassionate Guanyin
S\$15.00



Nature Music Force: Harmony of Gongs, the Ocean and the Forest
By Ming Xuan
S\$19.90



Journey of Smiles
By Chi Chuan Hsu
S\$19.90



We Should Play
By Ali Chen
S\$19.90

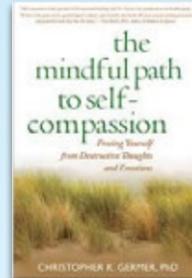
All four titles are available at Awareness Place stores.

Produced by Dharma Drum Publishing Corporation, the *Great Compassionate Guanyin* album is sheathed in tranquil shades of blue. Containing 11 Mandarin tracks and two instrumental tracks singing the praises, mantras or sutras of Guanyin, the CD provides an hour of peaceful and calm vibrational energies emoted by the singer in soothing mellow tracks.

In the second album, *Nature Music Force*, attune to the spiritual resonance between nature and gongs. Ming Xuan, who has provided therapy for more than a thousand people, noticed that many children fall into a deep sleep upon hearing gongs. She then realised that children and adults alike need the cleansing energies of the gong; and produced this gong therapy album. Listening to the gongs' vibrational sounds coupled with nature's twitter and crashing waves, can allow you to cleanse the toxins within, relax completely, replenish your energy, plus sharpen your creativity and intuition.

Beautifully packaged in a sunny egg-yellow hard cover with soft photos of Taiwan's lush greenery, *Journey of Smiles* is a mini album showcasing fingerstyle guitar performances by Chi Chuan Hsu. Track one tells us to have courage and persistence when we encounter hardships in life when embarking on an unknown journey; track two reminds us of how beautiful an ordinary day can be, and the need to deeply appreciate and cherish all that we enjoy in life. Track three sings of the joy that a soulmate gives. Through understanding and support, our soulmates make us feel safe and unafraid to show our true selves and be comfortable in our own skins.

We Should Play! is a fun, cheerful song album for kids. It contains a mixture of 11 tracks of lively English and Mandarin songs and 10 narrative tracks. The producer Ali is a Taiwanese composer and producer with a PhD in music composition from the Michigan State University. A mother of two young kids, her dream is to create musical resources for children and parents, so that little musical seeds can blossom creatively on their paths of growth. Your little ones are sure to enjoy the energetic and jolly music. 🎵



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By Christopher K. Germer, PhD
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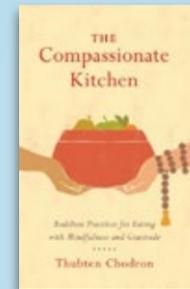
By Mitch Abblet
S\$24.90

Deep within all beings is the wish to be happy and free from suffering. Therefore self-compassion is the most natural thing in the world. Yet when we suffer emotionally, more often than not we hear a harsh inner critic bashing us. Dr Christopher Germer learned that paradoxically, even though we all want to avoid pain, by letting pain in and responding compassionately to our own imperfections, without judgment or self-blame, we are on the path to healing. This wise and eloquent book illuminates the power of self-compassion and offers creative, scientifically-grounded strategies for putting it into action.

The practice of self-compassion has also been proven to improve well-being, regulate

emotions, and reduce depression and anxiety. As an add-on tool, if you need more help to practise self-compassion, try out the 50 practices listed in the *Self-Compassion Deck* which you can use anytime, at home, in the classroom or office. Read tips like "Give yourself credit for that small thing you did in the past week that took courage." Or "If you've made a mistake or fallen short in some way, and the self-blame won't relent, go to a mirror. Yes, now. Look yourself in the eyes and say 'I forgive you'."

Text: Esther Thien



The Compassionate Kitchen: Buddhist Practices for Eating with Mindfulness and Gratitude

By Thubten Chodron
S\$22.50

Venerable Thubten Chodron's book, *The Compassionate Kitchen*, delves deeper than the physical nourishment food provides by also examining spirituality with mealtime practices.

This book is an accessible and straightforward read that provides helpful insight into mindfulness and the act of eating. She takes time to describe Buddhist practices regarding meals, including preparation, the offering made prior to the meal, what to eat and how to conclude the meal. Thoughtful discussion regarding Buddhist precepts and customs on food is also presented.

But Venerable Chodron does not preach about becoming vegetarian or vegan. She acknowledges that

people's diets depend on their spiritual practice, but also on health requirements, affordability and what is available or offered to them. When it comes to food, she advises avoiding harm to other sentient beings as much as possible. She believes that vegetarianism is good for the environment and protects life, but that "harping about it to others does not create harmony." I appreciate her balanced approach of explaining the benefits of eating vegetarian without making it a mandatory requirement to study the Dharma.

The five contemplations that monastics reflect on prior to meals are discussed in great detail, but there are also several chapters adapted for family life and laypeople. I found her chapter on how to introduce mindful eating to children especially helpful. Dinner can be the perfect opportunity for people to bond and communicate, and a way to inculcate ethics and build trust.

Venerable Chodron explores positive motivation while eating, stating that the act of eating gives us "the possibility to be vividly alive and present, free from the three poisons of confusion, attachment and anger." She proposed that we can pay attention to our experience—whether we're eating quickly or slowly—and that our attachment to food can be easily replaced by gratitude towards sentient beings if we consider the five contemplations.

We also should take the time to notice the difference between "expectations and experience". We may expect a meal to taste a certain way based on how it looks or how it has been plated, yet it may taste dry or lack flavour and we are disappointed because of our attachment to pleasure. We tend to exaggerate the good qualities of an object when we are attached to it. By focusing on the experience rather than the expectation, we can appreciate our meal more fully.

Reflecting on the causes and conditions of the meal is helpful, due to "the kindness and efforts of others". A few people work very hard to feed many (from farming, transportation of goods, and so on). This can increase overall gratitude and appreciation of a meal, even if it's not a favourite or to one's liking.

The final portion of the book includes three perspectives on mindful eating from laypeople, including a woman who had an eating disorder and a nurse practitioner. Their personal accounts offer wisdom from their life experiences and relate to their Buddhist practice. For the woman with the eating disorder, by practising the Dharma, she learned how to alter her feelings of self-esteem when it came to body image and food. She no longer bases her self-worth on how she looks or if people like her.

The nurse practitioner discusses how eating healthy can become complicated because of the meanings we associate with food and body size. She points out that people who go on a diet may end up overeating or become preoccupied with food. She emphasises the middle path and that a balanced diet involves moderation. Research-based mindful eating habits are also provided.

This book is a valuable resource from a spiritual perspective and for its practical advice on mindful eating. 🙏

Text: Jennifer Mazzone

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All books are available at Awareness Place stores.

Calendar of Events 2019

09 sep 12 dec



DHARMA

• CEREMONY | PRAYERS



Grand Offering to Buddha and Celestial Beings
(Conducted in Mandarin)
21 Sep | Sat | 9pm – 22 Sep | Sun | 6am
28 Sep | Sat | 9pm – 29 Sep | Sun | 6am
Venue: VHCMMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form
Fee: \$5,000 | \$688 | \$188
Registration: Now till fully registered
Enquiry: 6849 5333 | g_fo@kmspks.org

Medicine Buddha Prayer
(Conducted in Mandarin)
30 Sep – 5 Oct | Mon – Sat | 7.45pm
6 Oct | Sun | 9am
Venue: Hall of Great Compassion
Registration of Names (now till fully registered)
6 names - \$100 | 2 names - \$50 | 1 name - \$10
Enquiry: 6849 5333 | g_fo@kmspks.org



The Grand Prayer that Blesses and Benefits All Sentient Beings
(Conducted in Mandarin)
One of the grandest and most meritorious Chinese Buddhist Pujas to liberate all sentient beings from suffering, including the deceased. By offering food and the Dharma, sentient beings generate extensive merit, attain happiness and enter the path of Buddhahood.

Consecration: 1 Dec | Sun | 2pm
Prayers: 2 – 7 Dec | Mon – Sat
Sending Off: 8 Dec | Sun | 1pm
Venue: KMSPKS
Registration of names:
Inner Shrine: \$36,000 | \$21,000 | \$11,000 | \$5,600 | \$3,200
Grand Shrine: \$2,000 | \$1,000
Shrine of Various Sutra: \$300 (5-6 names) | \$200 (1-4 names) | \$20 (1 name)
Pureland Shrine: \$300 (5-6 names) | \$200 (1-4 names) | \$20 (1 name)
Food Offering to Triple Gem: \$3,000 | \$2,000 | \$1,000 | \$500 | any amount
Registration: Front Office @ KMSPKS 9am – 4pm (1 Sep onwards till fully registered)
Enquiry: 6849 5333 | g_fo@kmspks.org

Sutra Recitation Group Practice
(Conducted in Mandarin)
Diamond Sutra Prayer
Every Sun | 2pm | Hall of Great Compassion
Pureland Group Practice
Every Sun | 9.30am | Hall of Great Compassion
Medicine Buddha Sutra Prayer
Every Sat | 7.30pm | Hall of Great Compassion
The Great Compassion Prayer
Every 27th of lunar month | 10am | Hall of Great Compassion
The Great Compassion Prayer @ Guanyin Dan
19th of second, sixth & ninth lunar months | 10am | Hall of Great Compassion

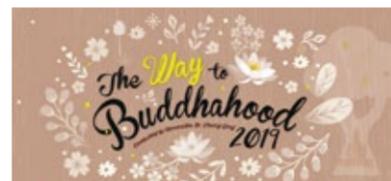
Usher in 2020 with prayers and 108 "Bell Resonance"
Join us to make wholesome aspirations in our prayers and offerings.
31 Dec | Tues | 10pm – 2am
Venue: Hall of Great Compassion
Enquiry: 6849 5300

• TALKS | WORKSHOPS | COURSES
English Buddhism Course Year 1 | By Venerable
4 Sep – 30 Oct | Wed | 7.30pm – 9pm
Fee: \$40 (Module 3)

English Buddhism Course Year 2 | By Venerable
2 Sep – 21 Oct | Mon | 7.30pm – 9pm
Fee: \$40 (Module 3)

English Buddhism Course Year 3 | By Venerable
31 July – 2 Oct | Wed | 7.30pm – 9pm
Fee: \$40 (Module 3)

English D-Talk Series
Dharma talks by Venerable Dr Chuan Sheng
8, 15 & 22 Sep | Sun | 12.30pm – 2.30pm
Fee: \$40



The Way to Buddhahood | By Venerable
This course contains methods that leads one to the supreme Buddha realm.
Module 2 (11 lessons)
25 Jul – 26 Dec | Thur | 7.30pm – 9pm
Fee: \$50

Venue: VHCMMH | Level 1 | Classroom
Registration:
1. Online: www.kmspks.org
2. Reception Office@KMSPKS 9am – 4pm (Close for lunch: 11.30am – 12.30pm)
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | 6849 5345 | ded@kmspks.org

Threefold Refuge & Five Precepts Preparatory Class
(conducted in Mandarin)
Teachings on the observance of the Threefold Refuge & Five Precepts.
6 Oct | Sun | 9.00am – 10.30am (YTBC)
Venue: VHCMMH | Level 1 | Classroom
Free Admission



Threefold Refuge & Five Precepts Ceremony
(conducted in Mandarin)
Through taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, one enters the Buddhist path, whilst keeping the precepts helps one to develop mindfulness.
6 Oct | Sun | 11.45am – 2.30pm (YTBC)
Venue: VHCMMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form
Free Admission

Buddhist Etiquette & Introduction to Cultivation
(conducted in Mandarin)
5 Oct | Sat | 9am – 11.30am (YTBC)
Venue: VHCMMH | Level 1 | Classroom
Free Admission

Registration:
1. Online: www.kmspks.org
2. Reception Office@KMSPKS 9am – 4pm (Close for lunch: 11.30am – 12.30pm)
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | sed@kmspks.org



MEDITATION



Weekly Meditation Group Practice
Every Mon & Fri
Venue: Hall of Great Compassion | Hall of Great Strength
Free Admission
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | sed@kmspks.org
For the latest schedule, please refer to <http://bit.do/2019WWMGP>



LIFESTYLE

• TOUR



KMSPKS Guided Tour
Join us on a guided tour around KMSPKS and learn more about Buddhism, its history and arts.
29 Sep & 24 Nov | Sun | 10am – 12pm
Venue: VHCMMH | Level 1 | Ju Yuan Fang
Free Admission
Registration:
1. Online: www.kmspks.org
2. Reception Office@KMSPKS 9am – 4pm (Close for lunch: 11.30am – 12.30pm)
3. Awareness Hub 11.30am – 6pm
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | guidedtour@kmspks.org

• ART

Pastel Nagomi Art – Heart Mandala
Create unique mandalas that resemble the light within you.
• Learn to blend pastel colours harmoniously
• Learn to create mandalas of petals and flora shapes
1 Sep | Sun | 10am – 5pm
Fee: \$155 | Starter Kit: \$45 (payable to instructor)

Pastel Nagomi Art
24 Nov | Sun | 10am – 5pm
Fee: \$155 | Starter Kit: \$45 (payable to instructor)

Western Floral Arrangement and Hand Bouquet (I)
Learn geometric designs and basic hand bouquet styles of flower arrangements.
10 – 31 October | Thur | 7pm – 9pm
Fee: \$80 (Four sessions)
Starter Kit: \$30 (per session, payable to instructor)

Zentangle Calender
A mindfulness meditative art to facilitate and enhance relaxation, focus and self-discovery.
15 Sep | Sun | 2pm – 4pm
Fee: \$48
Starter Kit: \$10 for Beginners / \$5 for those with own basic kit (payable to instructor)

100 Bliss Blanket Workshop
Express your love to your dear ones by giving them a 100 bliss blanket.
12 Sep | 3 Oct | 7 & 28 Nov | Thur
Grp 1: 4pm – 6pm | Grp 2: 7pm – 9pm
Fee: \$40 (two sessions)
Starter Kit: \$48 (payable to instructor)

Venue: Awareness Hub (#03-39 Bras Basah Complex)



Rhythm Rejuvenation
Stress Reduction & Relaxation
Enhance body immunity through rhythm
Develop self-love and awareness
13 Oct | Sun | 3pm – 5 pm
Fee: \$30

Venue: Awareness Hub (#03-39 Bras Basah Complex)
Registration:
1. Online: www.kmspks.org
2. Reception Office@KMSPKS 9am – 4pm (Close for lunch: 11.30am – 12.30pm)
3. Awareness Hub 11.30am – 6pm
Enquiry: 6336 5067 | awarenesshub@kmspks.org

• CHILDREN & CULINARY

Children's Art – Colours of Life
This programme is specifically designed for children between 4 and 12 years old.
12 Oct – 14 Dec | 21 Dec – 29 Feb 2020 (Except 25 Jan 2020)
Sat | 2.30pm – 4.30pm
Fee: \$60 (for 10 sessions, excluding art materials)



Managing Menopause through Vegan NutriMeals
6 Oct | Sun | 3pm – 6.30pm
Fee: \$80 (includes organic ingredients)

Korean Temple Delights
3 Nov | Sun | 3pm – 6.30pm
Fee: \$88 (includes organic ingredients)

Chinese New Year Vegetarian Cuisine
1 Dec | Sun | 3pm – 6.30pm
Fee: \$88 (includes organic ingredients)

Chinese New Year Vegan Baking
8 Dec | Sun | 3pm – 6.30pm
Fee: \$88 (includes organic ingredients)

Venue: Awareness Hub (#03-39 Bras Basah Complex)
Registration:
1. Online: www.kmspks.org
2. Reception Office@KMSPKS 9am – 4pm (Close for lunch: 11.30am – 12.30pm)
3. Awareness Hub 11.30am – 6pm
Enquiry: 6336 5067 | awarenesshub@kmspks.org

• WELLNESS

Mobile Radiation – Your Invisible Health Threat
Find out how we can protect ourselves and reduce radiation from the frequent use of mobile phones and electronic devices.
29 Sep | Sun | 3pm – 5.30pm
Fee: \$28

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Health Series
Balancing your body meridians through acupressure
Triple Warmer and Pericardium Meridians
22 Sep | Sun | 3pm – 5pm
Fee: \$30 (per person)
Ren and Du Meridians
20 Oct | Sun | 3pm – 5pm
Fee: \$30 (per person)

Mindfulness Foundation Course
Learn how to cope with stress in daily life through mindfulness practices.
11 Oct – 1 Nov | Fri | 7.30pm – 9.30pm
Fee: \$160 (4 sessions)

Yin Yoga
24 Sep – 26 Nov | Tues | 6.30pm – 7.45pm
5 Oct – 7 Dec | Sat | 11.30am – 12.45pm
3 Dec – 3 Mar 2020 | Tues | 6.30pm – 7.45pm (Except 24 & 31 Dec / 21 & 28 Jan 2020)
14 Dec – 7 Mar 2020 | Sat | 11.30am – 12.45pm (Except 28 Dec / 4 & 25 Jan 2020)
Fee: \$170 (10 sessions) Walk-in \$23 per lesson

Yoga for Diabetes
26 Sep – 28 Nov | Thur | 10.30am – 11.30am
5 Dec – 20 Feb 2020 | Thur | 10.30am – 11.30am (Except 23 & 30 Jan 2020)
Fee: \$120 (10 sessions) Walk-in \$15 per lesson

Chair Yoga
20 Sep – 22 Nov | Fri | 12.30pm – 1.30pm
29 Nov – 14 Feb 2020 | Fri | 12.30pm – 1.30pm (Except 24 & 31 Jan 2020)
Fee: \$160 (10 sessions) Walk-in \$22 per lesson

Hatha Yoga (Lunchtime)
22 Oct – 24 Dec | Tues | 12.10pm – 1pm
31 Dec – 17 Mar 2020 | Tues | 12.10pm – 1pm (Except 21 & 28 Jan 2020)
Fee: \$140 (10 sessions) Walk-in \$18 per lesson

Hatha Yoga
18 Sep – 20 Nov | Wed | 7.45pm – 9.15pm
5 Oct – 7 Dec | Sat | 9.30am – 11am
7 Oct – 23 Dec | Mon | 8pm – 9.30pm (Except 28 Oct & 18 Nov)
22 Oct – 24 Dec | Tues | 10.30am – 12pm (Except 25 Dec / 1, 22 & 29 Jan 2020)
14 Dec – 22 Feb 2020 | Sat | 9.30am – 11am (Except 25 Jan 2020)
30 Dec – 9 Mar 2020 | Mon | 8pm – 9.30pm (Except 27 Jan 2020)
31 Dec – 17 Mar 2020 | Tues | 10.30am – 12pm (Except 21 & 28 Jan 2020)
Fee: \$180 (10 sessions) Walk-in \$25 per lesson

Gentle Hatha Yoga
Suitable for beginners, the elderly, the wheelchair-bound & those recovering from illness.
20 Sep – 22 Nov | Fri | 2.30pm – 4pm
22 Oct – 24 Dec | Tues | 2.30pm – 4pm
29 Nov – 14 Feb 2020 | Fri | 2.30pm – 4pm (Except 24 & 31 Jan 2020)
31 Dec – 17 Mar 2020 | Tues | 2.30pm – 4pm (Except 21 & 28 Jan 2020)
Fee: \$160 (10 sessions) Walk-in \$22 per lesson

Yoga Flow (Hatha)
6 Nov – 5 Feb 2020 | Wed | 6.30pm – 7.30pm (Except 25 Dec / 1, 22 & 29 Jan 2020)
Fee: \$160 (10 sessions) Walk-in \$22 per lesson



Hatha Yoga for Beginners
6 Sep – 8 Nov | Fri | 10.30am – 12pm
15 Nov – 17 Jan 2020 | Fri | 10.30am – 12pm
19 Oct – 28 Dec | Sat | 6.30pm – 8pm (Except 14 Dec)
21 Dec – 29 Feb 2020 | Sat | 6.30pm – 8pm (Except 25 Jan 2020)
Fee: \$180 (10 sessions) Walk-in \$25 per lesson

Venue: Awareness Hub (#03-39 Bras Basah Complex)
Registration:
1. Online: www.kmspks.org
2. Reception Office@KMSPKS 9am – 4pm (Close for lunch: 11.30am – 12.30pm)
3. Awareness Hub 11.30am – 6pm
Enquiry: 6336 5067 | awarenesshub@kmspks.org

• ENVIRONMENTALISM

Sorting of Recyclables @ Gratitude Corner
Assist us in sorting out items that can be recycled and reused for sale at the Gratitude shop.
Every Tues, Thur, Sat | 9am – 2pm
Venue: VHCMMH | Level 1 | Outside South Wing Office

Gratitude Shop
Check out our thrift shop for cheap and good deals. Garden Compost is also up for sale!
Sun – Fri | 10am – 3pm
Sat | 12pm – 4.30pm
Venue: Next to Awareness Place Convenience Store (Outside Dining Hall)



Mobile Kiosk
1 Sep | Sun | 9am – 1.30pm
25 Sep | Wed | 9am – 1.30pm
17 Oct | Thur | 9am – 1.30pm
25 Oct | Fri | 9am – 1.30pm
23 Nov | Sat | 9am – 1.30pm
8 Dec | Sun | 9am – 1.30pm
22 Dec | Sun | 9am – 1.30pm
Venue: Corridor between Dining Hall & Front Office
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | gratitude@kmspks.org

• COMMUNITY

Blood Donation
Donate blood, save lives.
21 Sep | Sat | 9am – 3pm
22 Dec | Sun | 9am – 3pm
Venue: VHCMMH | Level 1 | Ju Yuan Fang
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | community@kmspks.org

Community Tuition
Free academic coaching for Secondary school English, Maths, Physics and Chemistry.
Every Sun | 9am – 2pm
Venue: VHCMMH | Level 1
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | community@kmspks.org

Nursing Home Visit
Bring joy as you learn something wise in your interaction with seniors.
1 Sep & 3 Nov | Sun | 9am – 11.30am
Venue: Bright Hill Evergreen Home
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | community@kmspks.org

Community Food Ration
Join us to deliver food to low-income families.
22 Sep | 20 Oct | 17 Nov | 29 Dec | Sun | 9am – 11.30am
Venue: KMSPKS
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | community@kmspks.org



Master Class for PSLE & GCE O Level Students
Intensive revision for students taking their PSLE and GCE O Levels exams.

PSLE – Science
1 Sep | Sun | 2pm – 4pm
GCE O Levels – Additional Mathematics
14 Sep | 5 Oct | Sat | 10am – 1pm
GCE O Levels – Chemistry
14 Sep | 5 Oct | Sat | 2pm – 5pm
GCE O Levels – Biology & Physics
1 Sep & 15 Sep | 6 Oct | Sun | 10am – 1pm
GCE O Levels – Elementary Mathematics
1 Sep & 15 Sep | 6 Oct | Sun | 2pm – 5pm

Venue: VHCMMH | Level 1 | Classroom
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | community@kmspks.org
Registration:
PSLE online: <https://bit.ly/2YFKAep>
GCE O Level online: <https://bit.ly/2Xoz8W>
Reception Office @ KMSPKS (9am – 4pm)
(Close for lunch: 11.30am – 12.30pm)



Ven Hong Choon Museum
10am – 3pm
Venue: VHCMMH | Level 3
Free Admission
On:
27th of each lunar month
Qing Ming (5 Apr)
Vesak Day (19 May)
Ullambana Festival (15 Aug)
Birth anniversary of Ven Hong Choon (1 Oct)
Death anniversary of Ven Hong Choon (4 Dec)

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

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道場

宏船老和尚圆寂廿九周年纪念

启建法界圣凡冥阳两利

普度大斋胜会

水陸

报名日期
2019年
9月1日起
至牌位满额为止

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

- 报名日期：2019年9月1日（农历八月初三起至牌位满额为止）
- 报名地点：光明山普觉禅寺 寺务处
- 法会地点：光明山普觉禅寺

净坛

1/12/2019
农历十一月初六
(星期日·下午2时)

法会

2-7/12/2019
农历十一月初七至十二日
(星期一至星期六)

送圣

8/12/2019
农历十一月十三日
(星期日·下午1时)

内坛·大坛·供斋·超荐功德金表

一 内坛功德主

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

二 大坛功德主

\$2,000
\$1,000

三 诸经坛 | 消灾植福

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

四 净土坛 | 附荐超度

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

五 供斋香积金类别

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

水陆法会是佛教中最隆重、最殊胜的一种经忏佛事法会。全名是：**法界圣凡水陆普度大斋胜会**。**法界**：是指诸佛与众生本性平等，理同一故，通称法界。**圣凡**：是指十法界中，有四圣界即佛、菩萨、缘觉、声闻；有六凡界是天、人、阿修罗、地狱、饿鬼、畜生。**水陆**：是指在水、陆中三界众生居住受报之处。空中飞行之众生，须依陆地而休息，故属于陆地，加上水中生灵，共称水陆。**普度**：是指悉皆度化六道众生，使之解脱六道轮回之痛苦。**大斋**：是指不限量的给予众生饮食。**胜会**：是法施之意。除布施众生饮食外，又有诵经持咒之法施，令受苦众生心开意解，得法水之滋润，故名胜会。**会者**：聚集之意，教渡者与被教渡者集会于一堂。**即是说**：藉此启建水陆法会普度大斋之功德，超度六道中受苦众生，使之离苦得乐，趣入佛道。

