

1-4月 | jan - apr

awaken 普觉

to Compassion and Wisdom on the journey of life



Buddha nature:

Our Inborn Goodness

*The real nature of our mind is pure and defiled.
By dispelling our obscurations and disturbing attitudes,
our true nature of luminosity is seen*

Freedom from Buddha Nature
How Mindfulness Can Help Amid Difficulties
Compassion is Our Nature

受戒、持戒与舍戒

生命的迴旋

人生故事书 —— 平凡人生也有故事



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Environmental protection and the Buddha's teachings

Environmental protection is one of the urgent problems facing humankind today. The risks threatening our ecology are not minor. The adverse impacts toxic substances have on our living environment are alarming.

The Buddha espouses great compassion and love. Compassionate living is a way of life taught in Buddhism. The fully Awakened One is seen as the compassionate protector of all beings, and taught those who wish to walk his way to practise loving-kindness, to protect all lives, including animals, vegetation and environment, and not harm sentient beings in any way. The essence of the Buddha's teachings is really a principle of non-violence and love for all beings. The Buddha taught, "Do not commit any wrongdoing, perfectly practise virtue." The wrongdoing mentioned here specifically meant hurting and harming others out of anger or greed.

All actions we do, big or small, will come back to us. We may not see it now, but once the conditions are ripe, the seeds will ripen and sprout. So it is important to reflect on the workings of karma and cultivate the mind of bodhicitta that wishes all sentient beings to have happiness and be free from suffering.

Regarding our environment, the Buddha saw with his perfect wisdom that all beings in the universe are equal in nature and that in the world of phenomena, the lives of all beings, animals and humans, are closely intertwined and

inseparable. "This" will lead to the development of "that".

Due to self-interest and greed, humans have abused the natural environment and resources, and are now experiencing the results of rampant environmental destruction from the polluted seeds they have planted. More than ever, the Buddha's teachings on treading the middle path, which ecologically translates to a path of moderate, sustainable living, is more relevant today than they were about 2,500 years ago.

Our external environment and surroundings are badly polluted because the inner mental world of beings is seriously afflicted, with ill-will arising from hatred, jealousy and greed. In contrast to the impure, non-virtuous and greedy mind is the spirit of simplicity and contentment, living in harmony with all beings and with nature, by those who practise the Buddha's teachings.

Excessive greed can only cause harm as people try to maximise profits, without being concerned about the negative impact of the exploitation of natural resources. They discharge deadly substances contaminating the air, water and earth, leading to environmental pollution and destroying the ecological balance.

For thousands of years, Buddhist forest

monasteries, established in the mountains and forests, have demonstrated harmonious living with nature. Wild animals may come to eat crops planted by the monastics without risks of being killed. Even today, we can still see Buddhist temples and meditation retreats located in forests with clear refreshing lakes, clean air, green vegetation, and many different species of animals and insects coexisting peacefully.

Based on the harmonious model which Buddhism always promotes, every one of us should protect the environment for all living species, starting with ourselves. We can take simple steps, such as rejecting the use of plastic bags and single-use plastics, conserve water and electricity, reduce our carbon footprints and switch to biodegradable, toxic-free personal care and household products to prevent polluting our oceans.

Just as the Buddha said, "Drop by drop is the water pot filled." Every little effort to save our planet counts before it becomes too late. ☺

Sik Kwang Sheng (Ven)

Abbot, Kong Meng San
Phor Kark See Monastery



Different traditions approach Buddha nature differently. This came about due to the Buddha's Three Turnings of the Wheel (page 70). For some Buddhist schools of thought, it is not necessary to talk about Buddha nature to attain Awakening because although past karma may limit the range of options open to the mind in the present, it doesn't determine present karma. Through our intentions, we always have the freedom to choose whether to act more skilfully or not to dispel ignorance (pages 41 & 54).

Other traditions acknowledge that all sentient beings, without exception, have Buddha nature within us: the unchanging, changeless nature of inherent purity, bliss and perfection capable of boundless compassion, wisdom and insight that is beyond birth and death (pages 53, 65 & 69).

At the moment, the essence of our Buddhahood is obscured by the stains of transient delusions (page 48). We just need to follow the path prescribed by the Buddha to cultivate wisdom (pages 46, 56, 60 & 61) and compassion (pages 57 & 58), tune in and be open to our

experience in the present moment in its natural state.

When we clear away obscurations from our mindstreams; when that very perfection of primordial awareness or clear light is perfectly seen, the continuation of our present minds transforms into the minds of the Buddhas we will become, and there is perfect liberation (page 51).

Here's wishing every being a more enlightening 2020. ☺

Yours in the Dharma,
Sister Esther Thien

Clear Light and Bliss
is Our True Nature



Participants reaped meditative benefits at retreat

Singapore – 110 participants spent a fruitful and tranquil five days last year at the monastery from 1 to 5 June and July respectively to learn and practise mindfulness meditation. In two separate retreats, participants acquainted themselves with the meditative practices in accordance to Master Chanmyay Sayadawgyi of the Mahasi tradition.

Organised in collaboration with Chanmyay Yeiktha Meditation Centre in Singapore, retreatants learnt from Sayadaw U Nyanaramsi in the June retreat and Sayadaw U Pyinnyaranda in the July one. Besides abiding by the eight precepts throughout the entire retreat, participants also upheld an additional training guideline to dwell on thoughts of loving-kindness directed towards all living beings.

For many, attending the 5-day Vipassana retreat was a very spiritually uplifting experience. “For the very first time, I practised walking and sitting meditations with such deep concentration in my life. The experience was profound as I gained a lot of insights in discovering and understanding myself,” said 60-year-old Tan Seow Khim.

The retreat also allowed some to better understand impermanence. “The practices taught at the retreat increased my awareness about impermanence and to accept everything that arises,” shared 58-year-old Kho Kim Kuan.

35-year-old Chua Lee Lea was grateful for the opportunity to

attend this stay-out retreat. “Were it planned any other way, I may not have been able to take the time off work,” she said. She revealed that the retreat gave her the opportunity to be free from distractions, to reconnect with the sense of being alive, and to observe her surroundings in that quiet, amazingly rich way that is only possible when one drops the past and the future, even if attention is not perfectly sustained.

Mr Wong Sin Hee, aged 72 also echoed the sentiments of his fellow retreatants. Although it was his first retreat, it was an eye-opener for him and had done him a world of good. “I felt transformed. I became calmer, more peaceful, and less confrontational,” he said.



The day started with a short prayer and a light Dharma talk interspersed with various sessions of interviews, sitting and walking meditations, another Dharma talk in the evening, Q-&-A and concluded with a dedication of merits. Noble Silence was observed throughout the period, even during meals and breaks. Many found the talks insightful and profound. Through this retreat, participants also had the chance to experience and to observe the Dharma in action. ☺

Editor: Watch out for our meditation retreats in the second half of 2020.

Contact the Spiritual Events Department at 68495326 or email sed@kmspks.org after June for more information.



Igniting the world in One Heart of Loving-kindness and peace through music

Singapore – Renowned Buddhist musician and vocalist, Imee Ooi is coming back to Singapore to stage another concert, *The Prajna Paramita—Heart Sutra Concert* at the Esplanade Concert Hall. To be held at 7.30pm on 11 January 2020, this concert will feature performances of the Heart Sutra in eight different languages: Sanskrit, Mandarin, Tibetan, English, Japanese, Korean, Spanish and Cantonese, amid state-of-the-art stage design and lighting.

Produced and directed by Imee Ooi, it showcases her dedicated team of artists including JSJG (JING SHI JIN GANG), the male Dharma vocal group.

The concert first premiered in Kuala Lumpur in 2018 with five sold-out performances. A multicultural audience from various religious backgrounds all came together to imbibe the wisdom of the Heart Sutra through Imee Ooi’s masterful musical renditions, marrying this ancient text with contemporary rhythm and ambience.

The Prajna Paramita—Heart Sutra Concert aspires to spread peace, harmony and loving-kindness, unifying the world in One Heart. Tickets are priced at S\$30, S\$50, S\$70, S\$100 and S\$150, and can be purchased on Apactix. ☺

Scan this to purchase ticket online:



Freedom from Buddha Nature

Text: Thanissaro Bhikkhu

Photo Credit: Truthseeker08

“What is the mind?
The mind isn’t ‘is’ anything.”
— Ajahn Chah

“The mind is neither good
nor evil, but it’s what knows
good and knows evil.
It’s what does good
and does evil.
And it’s what lets go of good
and lets go of evil.”
— Ajahn Lee

A brahman once asked the Buddha, “Will all the world reach release [Awakening], or half the world, or a third?” But the Buddha didn’t answer. Venerable Ānanda, concerned that the brahman might misconstrue the Buddha’s silence, took the man aside and gave him an analogy: Imagine a fortress with a single gate. A wise gatekeeper walking around the fortress would see that there was not even an opening in the wall big enough for a cat to slip through. Since he’s wise, he would realise that he

would not know how many people would come into the fortress, but he knew that whoever came into the fortress would have entered through the gate. In the same way, the Buddha didn’t focus on how many people would reach Awakening, but he did know that anyone who reached Awakening would have followed the path he had found: abandoning the five hindrances, establishing the four frames of reference, and developing the seven factors for Awakening.

What's striking about the Buddha's knowledge is the implied "if":

If people want to gain Awakening, they will have to follow this path, but the choice as to whether they want Awakening is theirs. The Buddha's knowledge of the future didn't mean that the future was preordained, for people are free to choose. They can take up a particular course of action and stick with it, or not, as they see fit.

As he said, if everything were predetermined by the past, there would be no point in teaching a path to Awakening. The number of people who would reach Awakening would already have been set a long time ago, and they would have no need for a path or a teacher. Those preordained to awaken would get there inevitably as a result of a long-past action or an essential nature already built into the mind. Those preordained not to awaken wouldn't stand a chance.

But these things are not preordained. No one is doomed never to awaken, but—until you've had your first sight of the deathless at stream-entry—neither is Awakening assured. It's contingent on intentional actions chosen in each present moment. And even after stream-entry, you're constantly faced with choices that will either speed up final Awakening or slow it down. Nibbāna (Nirvana), of course, is independent and unconditioned; but the act of awakening to nibbāna depends on a path of practice that has to be willed. It happens only if you choose to give rise to its causes. This, as the Buddha noted, involves determining to do four things: not to neglect discernment, to preserve truth, to develop relinquishment, and to train for peace.

Assumptions about the Mind

To stick with these four determinations, the mind has to make some assumptions about itself: its power to do the necessary work and to receive the anticipated benefits. *One of the central features of the Buddha's strategy as a teacher was that even though his primary focus was on the mind, he didn't define it. As he said, if you define yourself, you limit yourself. So instead he focused his assumptions on what the mind can do.*

To begin with, the mind can change quickly. Normally a master of the apt simile, even the Buddha had to admit that he could find no adequate analogy for how quickly the mind can change. We might say that it can change in the twinkling of an eye, but it's actually faster than that.

And it's capable of all sorts of things. Neither inherently good nor inherently bad, it can give rise to a huge variety of good and bad actions. As the Buddha said, the mind is more variegated than the animal kingdom. Think of the many species of fish in the sea, birds in the sky, animals on the land and under the ground, whether extant or extinct: All of these species are products of minds, and the mind can take on a wider variety of forms than even that.

This variety comes from the many different choices the mind makes under the influence of ignorance and defilement. But the mind doesn't always have to be defiled. Past kamma (karma) is not entirely deterministic. Even though past kamma shapes the range of options open to the mind in the present, it doesn't have to determine present kamma—the intentions by which the mind chooses to fabricate actual experiences from among those options. Thus present kamma can choose to continue creating the conditions for more ignorance, or not, because present choices are what keep ignorance alive. Although no one—not even a Buddha—can trace back to when the defilement of ignorance first began, the continued existence of ignorance depends on conditions continually provided by unskilful kamma. If these conditions are removed, ignorance will disband.

This is why the Buddha said that the mind is luminous, stained with defilements that come and go. Taken out of context, this statement might be construed as implying that the mind is inherently awakened. But taken in context, the Buddha is simply saying that the mind, once stained, is not permanently stained. When the conditions for the stains are gone, the mind becomes luminous again. But this luminosity is not an awakened nature. As the Buddha states, this luminous mind can be developed. In the scheme of the Four Noble Truths, if something is to be developed, it's not the goal; it's part of the path to the goal. After this luminosity has been developed in the advanced stages of concentration, it's abandoned once it has completed its work



in helping to pierce through ignorance.

Discernment and Heedfulness

The fact that the mind's own choices can pierce its own ignorance underlies the Buddha's most important assumption about the mind: It can be trained to awaken, to see the causes of ignorance and to bring them to an end. The primary step in this training is the first determination: not to neglect discernment. This phrase may sound strange—to what extent do we consciously neglect discernment?—but it points to an important truth. Discernment is insight into how the mind fabricates its experiences. This process of fabrication is going on all the time right before our eyes—even nearer than our eyes—and yet part of the mind chooses to ignore it. We tend to be more interested in the experiences that result from the fabrication: the physical, mental and emotional states we want to savour and enjoy. It's like watching a play. We enjoy entering into the make-believe world on the stage, and prefer to ignore the noises made by the back-stage crew that would call the reality of that world into question.

This ignorance is willed, which is why we need an act of the will to see through it, to discern the back-stage machinations of the mind. Discernment thus has two sides: understanding and motivation. You have to

understand the mind's fabrications as fabrications, looking less for the *what*—i.e., what they are—than for the *how*—how they happen as part of a causal process. And you have to be motivated to develop this discernment, to see why you want it to influence the mind. Otherwise it won't have the conditions to grow.

The understanding comes down to the basic insight of the Buddha's Awakening, seeing things as actions and events in a pattern of cause and effect. It also involves seeing how some actions are unskilful, leading to stress and suffering, while others are skilful, bringing stress to an end; and that we have the freedom to choose skilful actions or not. This understanding—which forms the basic framework of the Four Noble Truths—is called appropriate attention.

The motivation to develop appropriate attention grows from combining goodwill with this understanding. You set your sights on happiness that is totally harmless. You see that if you make unskilful choices, you're going to cause suffering; if you make skilful ones, you won't. This motivation thus combines goodwill with heedfulness, the quality that underlies every step on the path. In

fact, heedfulness lies at the root of all skilful qualities in the mind. Thus, in encouraging people to awaken, the Buddha never assumed that their Awakening would come from the innate goodness of their nature. He simply assumed something very blatant and ordinary: that people like pleasure and hate pain, and that they care about whether they can gain that pleasure and avoid that pain. It was a mark of his genius that he could see the potential for Awakening in this very common desire.

Building on Discernment

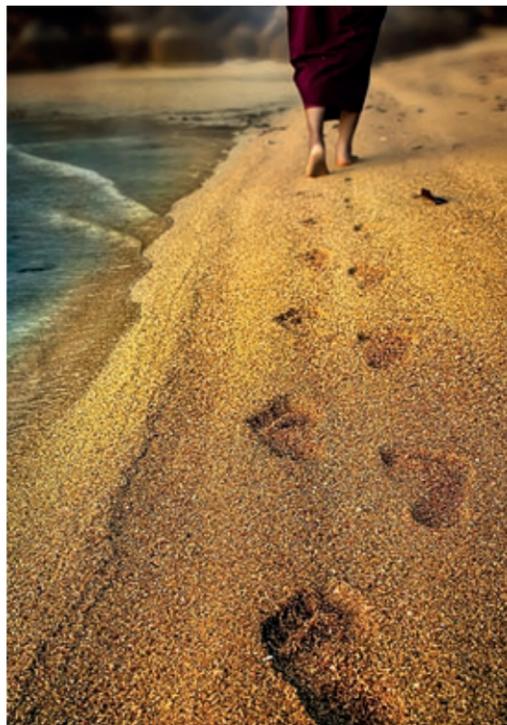
When you stick with the understanding and motivation provided by this first determination, it sets in motion the other three. For instance, the determination to preserve the truth grows from seeing the mind's capacity to lie to itself about whether its actions are causing suffering. You want to be honest and vigilant in looking for and admitting suffering, even when you're attached to the actions that cause it. This truthfulness relates to the path in two stages: first, when looking for unskilful actions that keep you off the path; and then, as the path nears fruition, looking for the subtle levels of stress caused even by skilful elements of the path—such as right concentration—once they have done their work and need to be let go for the sake of full liberation.

The determination to develop relinquishment can then build on this truthful assessment of what needs to be done. Relinquishment requires discernment as well, for not only do you need to see what's skilful and what's not; you also need to keep reminding yourself that you have the freedom to choose, and to be adept at talking yourself into

doing skilful things you're afraid of, and abandoning unskilful actions you like.

The determination to train for peace helps to maintain your sense of direction in this process, for it reminds you that the only true happiness is peace of mind, and that you want to look for ever-increasing levels of peace as they become possible through the practice. This determination emulates the trait that the Buddha said was essential to his Awakening: the unwillingness to rest content with lesser levels of stillness when higher levels could be attained. In this way, the stages of concentration, instead of becoming obstacles or dangers on the path, serve as stepping-stones to greater sensitivity and, through that sensitivity, to the ultimate peace where all passion, aversion and delusion grow still.

This peace thus grows from the simple choice to keep looking at the mind's fabrications as processes, as actions and results. But to fully achieve this peace, your discernment has to be directed not only at the mind's fabrication of the objects of its awareness, but also at its fabrications about itself and about the path it's creating. Your sense of who you are is a fabrication, regardless of whether you see the mind as separate or interconnected, finite or infinite, good or bad. The path is also a fabrication: very subtle and sometimes seemingly effortless, but fabricated nonetheless. If these layers of inner fabrication aren't seen for what they are—if you regard them as innate



or inevitable—they can't be deconstructed, and full Awakening can't occur.

No Innate Nature

This is why the Buddha never advocated attributing an innate nature of any kind to the mind—good, bad or Buddha. The idea of innate nature slipped into the Buddhist tradition in later centuries, when the principle of freedom was forgotten. Past bad kamma was seen as so totally deterministic that there seemed no way around it unless you assumed either an innate Buddha in the mind that could overpower it, or an external Buddha who would save you from it. But when you understand the principle of freedom—that past kamma doesn't totally shape the present, and that present kamma can always be free to choose the skilful alternative—you realise that the idea of innate nature is unnecessary:

excess baggage on the path.

Such an idea bogs you down. If you assume that the mind is basically bad, you won't feel capable of following the path, and will tend to look for outside help to do the work for you. If you assume that the mind is basically good, you'll feel capable but will easily get complacent. This stands in the way of the heedfulness needed to get you on the path, and to keep you there when the path creates states of relative peace and ease that seem so trustworthy and real. If you assume a Buddha nature, you not

only risk complacency but you also entangle yourself in metaphysical thorn patches: If something with an awakened nature can suffer, what good is it? How could something innately awakened become defiled? If your original Buddha nature became deluded, what's to prevent it from becoming deluded after it's re-awakened?

These points become especially important as you reach the subtle levels of fabrication on the more advanced stages of the path. If you're primed to look for innate nature, you'll tend to see innate nature, especially when you reach the undirected luminous, non-dual stages of concentration called theme-less emptiness. You'll get stuck on whichever stage matches your assumptions about what your awakened nature is. But if you're primed to look for the process of

fabrication, you'll see these stages as forms of fabrication, and this will enable you to deconstruct them, to pacify them, until you encounter the peace that's not fabricated at all.

Exploring Freedom

So instead of making assumptions about innate nature or inevitable outcomes, **the Buddha advised exploring the possibility of freedom as it's immediately present each time you make a choice. Freedom is not a nature, and you don't find it by looking for your hidden innate nature. You find freedom by looking at where it's constantly showing itself: in the fact that your present intentions are not totally conditioned by the past. You catch your first glimmer of it as a range of possibilities from which**

you can choose and as your ability to act more skilfully—causing more pleasure and less pain—improves.

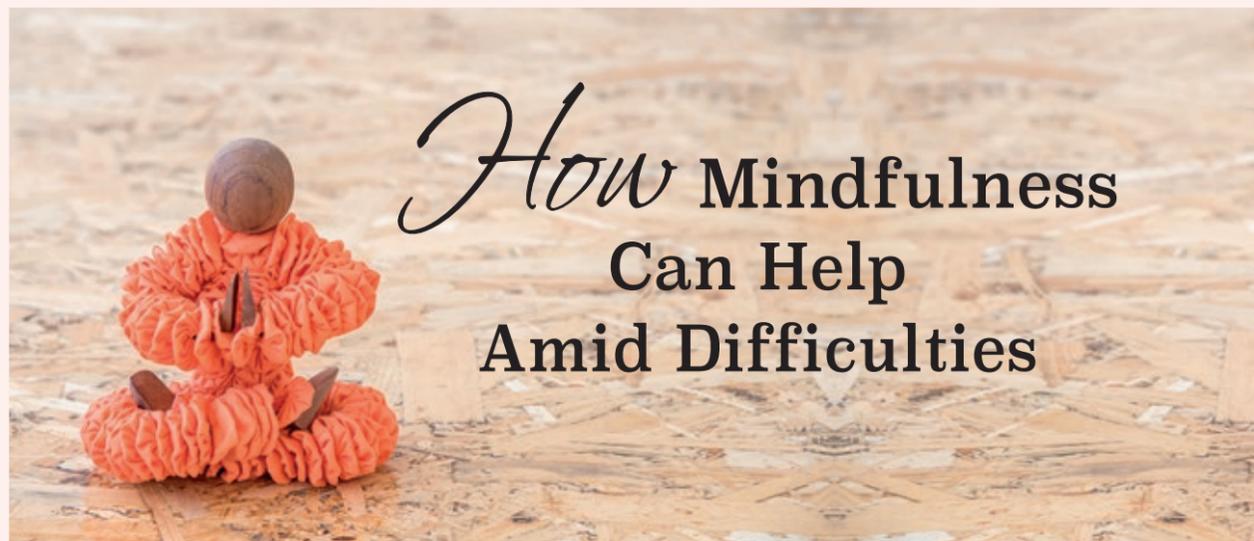
Your sense of this freedom grows as you explore and exercise it, each time you choose the most skilful course of action heading in the direction of discernment, truthfulness, relinquishment and peace. The choice to keep making skilful choices may require assumptions, but to keep the mind focused on the issue of fabrication the Buddha saw that these assumptions are best kept to a bare minimum: that the mind wants happiness, that it can choose

courses of actions that promote happiness or thwart it, that it can change its ways, and that it can train itself to achieve the ultimate happiness where all fabrications fall away.

These assumptions are the Buddha's starter kit of skilful means to get you on the path of goodwill, heedfulness and appropriate attention. As with any journey, you do best to take along only the bare essentials so that you don't weigh yourself down. This is especially true as you test the limits of freedom, for the closer you come to ultimate freedom, the more you find that things fall away. First the nouns of natures and identities fall

away, as you focus on the verbs of action and choice. Then the verbs fall away, too. When the Buddha was asked *who* or *what* he was, he didn't answer with a *who* or *what*. He said simply, "Awakened": a past participle, a verb that has done its work. Similarly, when the suttas describe the Awakening of an arahant, they say that his or her mind is released from fermentations. But when they describe how this release is experienced, they simply say, "With release, there is the knowledge, 'Released.'" No comment on what is released. Not even, as it's sometimes translated, "It is released." There's no noun, no pronoun, just a past participle: "released." That's all, but it's enough. ☸

Thānissaro Bhikkhu is an American Buddhist monk from the Thai Forest tradition. For 22 years, he studied under Ajahn Fuang Jotika who is a student of Ajahn Lee. Since 1993, he has served as the abbot of the Metta Forest Monastery in the US.



Dr Wen Tzung-Kuen, a professor of Buddhist studies at the Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts, was recently in Singapore to conduct a two-day Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Retreat at Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery. In an email interview, Oh Puay Fong speaks to him about how mindfulness can help us with negative situations on personal, family and social levels.

Q: From time to time, we hear of civil unrest, protests and riots occurring in different parts of the world—the most recent cases in Spain, Chile and Hong Kong. How can mindfulness deal with real-life macro issues in a practical manner?

A: Mindfulness allows one's mind to calm down and perceive clearly. Such a mind is able to discern issues and the unfolding situation astutely, thereby facilitating the

appropriate responses to such external challenges. Taking to the streets to demonstrate and express one's views is a civic act, but when it is done without mindfulness, it sometimes runs the risks of escalating into violent fights or making the wrong choices because one is agitated by anger or hatred during the process. Thus, cultivating mindfulness and staying engaged in social activities and macro issues are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, it is even more essential as it allows one to see the situation clearly and to choose wisely.

Q: Mindfulness training is now a global trend, yet at the same time the whole world is experiencing great instability. How can we practise mindfulness to achieve a happy family, harmonious society and world peace?

A: The macro-environment in a society, a country, even the world, is the cumulative results of every individual's actions. Every individual's actions in turn result from his or her thoughts

and state of mind. Mindfulness training cultivates a calm and radiant mind that allows one to observe clearly one's state of mind, speech and action. This self-awareness is the basis for character transformation and transcendence. *Someone who wishes to change the external environment and the world must first understand his or her own mind; one has to start by changing oneself. If one is unwilling to observe and change oneself, but wants to change others, including those in one's family, society, country or the world, it is simply wishful thinking.*

Q: On personal and family levels, how can mindfulness training help the parties involved in a difficult family issue (e.g. extra-marital affair, domestic abuse etc)?

A: Mindfulness training is about observing oneself, regulating one's emotions, perceiving the situation clearly and from such a basis, choosing the most appropriate responses. It is

applicable to anyone in any life situation. The crux is whether all parties are willing to undertake the training to understand and transform themselves.

Q: Many times, people cite making a living as the reason for not taking up mindfulness training. They do not have the time, energy or money to do so, they say. What do you say to that?

A: It takes time to cultivate mindfulness. Each of us has twenty-four hours a day. The question is how do we want to use this time. Instead of spending it on surfing the Web, watching TV or idle chatting, could we spare the time to sit in mindful meditation for an hour or more? The deciding factor is one's motivation.

For those who feel that cost is a concern, in the East, within the Buddhist tradition, mindfulness is often taught by monastics in the temples to benefit the general public and to repay the kindness of devotees or donors. Free-will donations of any amount are accepted.

In the West, mindfulness is often taught in non-religious settings like hospitals or clinics. Course fees are charged and people accept this practice like how they would pay to study in the universities. Everyone should choose the best way to learn mindfulness according to his or her own needs and economic means. Books, videos and audios of mindfulness are also easily available online these days.

Q: What baby steps would you recommend to readers who have no money and time, but would like to learn mindfulness for a happier and more fulfilling state of mind?

A: At the most basic level, just remember the following three points:

1. Throughout your day, keep coming back to observe your breath, your bodily sensations and the experiences of your five senses. Focus your attention on whatever you are doing at the moment.

2. Practise meditation daily, starting from 10 minutes and eventually, prolonging it to one hour. While sitting in meditation, adopt a stable but relaxed posture, focus your attention on the sensations of your abdomen as you breathe, while allowing sensual experiences, thoughts or emotions to arise without suppressing anything. When these appear, gently bring your attention back to your breathing, without forcing the process and resume your practice. Repeat this over and over again.

3. Realise that everything that happens in life is our teacher. We can learn about ourselves and life through this journey. The best way to start is to read a few books on mindfulness, or spend some time learning from the free resources available online.

Q: What exactly is the difference between sitting meditation, Chan meditation, insight (vipassana) meditation and mindfulness training? Or are they all the same?

A: To put it simply, sitting meditation is done seated and encompasses Chan, insight and mindfulness practices. There are many methods in Chan meditation. Some focus solely on building one's concentration or the mind's stability, whereas some other methods also enable one to better know and understand oneself. Insight meditation and mindfulness training belong to this latter category of Chan meditation, which not only builds up mental calmness and concentration, but aims to attain thorough self-understanding. ☺



The Nine Similes of Buddha Nature Taught by Maitreya

Translated by:
Acharya Konchog Gyaltsen and Glenn Mullin

The heart of Buddha abides in the hollow of delusions. It can be understood by these images:

a Buddha inside a muddy lotus,
the honey of a bee,
grain inside its husk,
gold in a sewer,
treasure under the earth,
the germ within a seed,
a statue wrapped in filthy rags,
an emperor in an ugly hag's womb, and an icon covered with slime.

Thus does the essence of Buddhahood abide within all beings, obstructed by the stains of transient delusions.

As for the transient delusions, they are likened to the muddy lotus, the bee, the husk, the sewer, the earth, the seed, the rags, the woman afflicted by the flames of misery, and the slime.

The Buddha within, the supreme sphere of natural perfection, is likened to the Buddha, the honey, the grain, the gold, the treasure, the germ of the seed, the statue, the emperor, and the precious icon.



lords work until time's end to free all from aberration.

When a man with stainless clairvoyance sees a Buddha inside a dirty lotus, he breaks open the lotus shell; likewise the accomplished ones see that all beings have Buddha-essence, obscured by stains of attachment and aversion, and, out of compassion they work to eliminate those obscurations.

When an intelligent beekeeper with ambitious eyes sees honey surrounded by a swarm of bees, he tries to separate the bees from the honey. Likewise the *maharishis*, the great seers, being omniscient, see the honey-like essence of Buddhahood and work to destroy totally its bee-like obstacles.

When a man with stainless clairvoyance sees a Buddha radiant with a thousand signs sitting inside a muddy lotus, he removes The Buddha from within that lotus. Likewise, the ones thus gone, possessing the Buddha-eye, see truth itself in every being, even those in the deepest hell; out of compassion, those unobstructed

That ambitious man disperses those billions of bees, and then uses the honey as he wishes. Likewise, when one eliminates the bee-like delusions surrounding the honey-like primordial awareness, one becomes a king of sages.

One cannot eat a grain which still lies in its husk; he who wishes to eat a grain removes it from its husk.

Likewise, the stains of mental aberration are mixed with the Buddha nature in beings. For as long as that Buddha nature is not separated from those stains, the Buddha activity does not manifest in the triple world. Rice or wheat not removed from its husk, and not cleansed of its bristles is not fit to be used as food by men; similarly, as long as the lord of reality abiding within all beings is not freed from the husk and bristles of mental distortion, one cannot give the taste of blissful truth to beings tormented by the hunger of confusion.

When a god with the eye of clairvoyance sees gold which has fallen from a wandering man's pockets into a foul and filthy place—gold which, for centuries has lain to waste—he tells others just where that gold is; he tells them to clean that precious substance, and to make jewellery from it. Likewise, the wise see the excellent in beings, but see that their excellence is sinking in the filthy sewers of delusion; they release the rains of the holy Dharma unto those beings, in order to wash away the slime of their delusions.

When a god sees gold which has fallen into a foul and filthy place, he attempts to show that supreme substance to men so that it may be cleaned and utilised. Likewise, the victorious ones see that the jewel-like Buddha-essence possessed by all beings has fallen into the sewers of delusion, and they point out reality to those living, so that it may be purified.

Under the floor of some poor man's hut lies an uncorroded treasure, but because he does not know of its existence, he does not say that he is rich. Similarly, inside one's mind lies truth itself, firm and unfading, yet, because beings see it not, they experience a constant stream of misery.

The pauper with a treasure buried under his shack does not say that he has a treasure, for he knows it not;

Likewise, the treasure of truth lies within the house of the mind, yet we live impoverished through the lack of it. Therefore the seers take a pure birth into the world, so that it may be known.

From the fertile germ found within a banyan's seed comes a sprout which, if planted and tended, gradually produces a kingly tree.

Likewise, within the seed of beings' ignorance is the precious germ of perfection, and by relying upon that germ, a king of wise men is produced.

With the conditions of water, sun, air, earth, time and space, the germ inside a banana or mango seed eventually develops into a tree; similarly, given the proper conditions, the sprouting germ of innate Buddhahood, which abides in the shell of delusion, gradually produces the vision of reality.

And when a god sees a Buddha statue made of gems, covered in stinking rags and lying on the roadside, he speaks of it to a pilgrim, to salvage it. Likewise, those with unobstructed vision see that the very substance of Buddhahood exists even in animals, but it is wrapped in the rags of mental aberration, and teach all the various spiritual methods so that it may be salvaged. When one with the eye of clairvoyance sees a precious Buddha statue wrapped in rags and lying on the roadside, he shows it to man, to salvage it. Similarly, the cosmic conquerors have seen that the seed of perfection exists even in animals, but lies on the roadside of worldliness, wrapped in the stinking



rags of mental distortion, so they teach the Dharma, to release it.

A friendless hag living in a slum is carrying in her womb one who is destined to become an emperor, but she does not announce that in her womb is an emperor, for she knows it not. Similarly, in the slums of the worldly realms live impure beings who, like that hag, carry within themselves the stainless seed which will become their own protector. Although that hag carries an emperor in her womb, she is clothed in tattered rags, is hideous, lives in a slum, and experiences every form of suffering.

Likewise, although we each carry our own protector within, we think that we are helpless, and, consequently from mental delusion, we live in confusion, propelled by misery and turmoil.

When someone sees a precious icon of pure gold covered with slime, he, knowing of the gold within, clears away the filthy covering. Similarly, the all-seeing ones perceive that our true nature, clear light, is stained, but that these stains are transient. These wish-fulfilling gems amongst men inspire beings to purify their obscurations and attain full enlightenment.



The wise one who knows that inside the slime is a beautiful icon made of stainless, radiant gold, removes that slime. Just so, the omniscient ones know the hidden mind of peace, likened to gold, and, by demonstrating the path to knowledge, they disperse and purify the obstacles obstructing it.

Thus it is, that like a Buddha in a dirty lotus, the honey of a bee, grain in its husk, gold in a sewer, treasure under the earth, the germ within a seed, a statue in filthy rags, an emperor in an ugly hag's womb, and an icon covered in slime, the ultimate nature of mind, stainless and unobstructed, abides in the coverings of worldly thoughts, yet is unmingled with and unhindered by them.

By these nine similes are shown the nine delusions: attachment, aversion, narrow-mindedness, obsession, instinctual ignorance, and the stains abandoned by the paths of vision, meditation, impurity and purity.

Thus one travels to the end of the millions of mental distortions.

It is pleasant to see a fresh lotus, but a faded and rotting lotus is not pleasing; pleasure gained through

attachment is the same. When a bee becomes angry it stings; when anger arises, it brings misery to the mind.

Obsession is likened to filth and slime, for its cause is based upon lustful greed. A hidden treasure cannot be used, for its existence is unknown; the self-originated nature of beings, buried in the earth of instinctual ignorance, lies ignored.

The gradual growth of a sprout cracks open the shell encompassing it; just so, the growth resulting from perceiving ultimate truth destroys the objects to be abandoned by the path of vision.

The heart of the destructive views related to the path of a high one, the negativities destroyed by the wisdom of the path of meditation, are likened to tattered rags.

The stains abandoned by the first seven of the ten levels of a bodhisattva are likened to the ugly hag's womb; the baby leaving that womb is likened to the ripening of the non-conceptual wisdom.

The stains dealt with on the three pure levels should be understood as the covering of slime. Thus do the nine delusions destroyed by a great being's diamond samadhi resemble the nine examples.

The ultimate truth that is discovered within, the self-born essence, is an object found only by the bold; just as the light of the sun is not seen by those without eyes, although it shines equally on all.

There is nothing to be eliminated from this, nor is there anything to add. It is the very perfection seen by a perfect one, and, when it is perfectly seen there is perfect liberation. ☺

Buddha Nature: Our Inborn Goodness

Q Our lives are constantly plagued by problems and challenges. Can those who are confused, attached and angry ever attain Buddhahood? – DK.

A: Yes, it is possible to free ourselves from this cycle of constantly recurring problems. We can attain a state of lasting peace and joy, in which we're able to utilise all our good qualities for the benefit of others. This is possible because we have within us Buddha nature, our indestructible goodness. In addition, we have precious human lives which give us the opportunity to actualise our Buddha nature.

Have you ever stood on a mountain and looked at a completely clear and empty sky? The feeling of space, calm and clarity is awesome and inspiring. But when we peer up at the sky from the middle of a city, our view is limited by the high-rise buildings around us, and we can't see the sky because the clouds and pollution obscure it. From the point of view of the sky, nothing has changed. The sky is still pure, empty and filled with light. However, we aren't able to see it; our outlook is narrow and the sky is obscured by clouds and smog.

The nature of our minds is similar. Ultimately, it's pure and undefiled. The clouds that prevent us from seeing this real nature of our minds are the disturbing attitudes like attachment, anger and ignorance, as well as the imprints of the actions done under their influence.

The sky and the clouds aren't the same entity. They aren't inseparably

united. The clouds and pollution are temporary obscurations which can be dispelled, revealing the clear, empty sky. Similarly, our disturbing attitudes and the imprints of the actions created by them are not the ultimate nature of our minds. They can be purified and removed forever, letting us perceive and be unified with our own spacious nature.

How do we know the disturbing attitudes and imprints of actions are not the nature of our minds? If anger, for example, were the nature of our minds, we would always be angry. But that is not the case: our anger comes and goes. The karmic imprints are also not the nature of our minds because they can be purified and removed.

Is it possible to eliminate our anger forever? Yes, because anger is a false mind, based on a misconception. Anger is generated when we project negative qualities onto people and things. We misinterpret situations so they appear harmful to us. Absorbed in our own projections, we mistake them for the qualities of other people and get angry at what we ourselves have superimposed on them. The tragedy is that we're not aware of this process, and mistakenly believe the rude, insensitive person we're perceiving really exists out there.

Through the development of wisdom, we'll come to recognise

that an external enemy is an exaggerated projection of our own mistaken minds. At this time, our anger will automatically vanish, for wisdom and ignorant anger can't manifest at the same time. Through constantly developing our wisdom, we can totally eliminate our anger.

Disturbing attitudes such as anger, jealousy and conceit are based on the faulty foundation of wrong projections and thus can be eliminated. Positive qualities such as patience, love and compassion have a valid basis, because they recognise the good qualities all other beings have. Thus, such attitudes can never be extricated from our mindstreams. Rather, they can be developed limitlessly.

Each being has the possibility to become a Buddha because each of us has two kinds of Buddha potential. One is the ultimate nature of our minds, the way in which our minds exist. This is a phenomenon which is a negation: it's the absence or lack of fantasised ways of existing of our minds. The other is an affirmative phenomenon. It is the conventional nature of our minds, the qualities of our minds.

The ultimate nature of our minds is called the natural Buddha potential. It's like pure and vast empty space. That is, our ultimate nature is empty of all fantasised ways of existence. It's empty of all false projections of being unchanging or independent. Our minds are free from inherent existence.

The ultimate nature of our minds is untainted by the disturbing attitudes. It's without beginning or end. Nothing can destroy it. No one can take it away from us. This empty nature of our minds is our

birthright. Knowing this, we'll have self-confidence, for we can become Buddhas.

At the moment our natural Buddha nature is obscured by disturbing attitudes. As we clear them away through practising the path, our Buddha nature will become more apparent to us.

The second type of Buddha potential is the evolving Buddha potential. This includes both the conventional nature of our minds—their clarity and awareness—and the positive mental states such as compassion.

The mind is a formless entity, not composed of atoms or material substance. It is clear in that it illuminates or makes objects clear. It's aware because it has the ability to cognise or perceive objects.

Both anger and compassion are states of mind and thus are clear and aware. This nature of clarity and awareness is one of our evolving Buddha potentials. However, anger itself isn't part of our Buddha potential because it's based on false conceptions that can be eliminated.

Compassion, on the other hand, isn't based on false projections and thus can be developed infinitely. Similarly, other mental states that perceive things accurately—love, patience, confidence, non-attachment, consideration for others, joyous effort and so on—can be increased limitlessly. These good qualities, existing in us at this present moment, will evolve as we follow the path. At the end of the path, they'll transform into the minds of the Buddhas that we'll become. For this reason, they're also called the evolving Buddha potential.

The great Indian logician and sage, Dharmakirti, said:
*The nature of the mind is clear light.
The obscurations are adventitious.*

Dharmakirti is reaffirming our possibility to become Buddhas by asserting that the nature of our minds is clear light. This has two meanings, corresponding to the two types of Buddha potential. First, our minds are clear light in that they are empty of all fantasised ways of existence. When our wisdom directly perceives this clear light, the emptiness of inherent existence, then we're capable of totally eliminating our disturbing attitudes from their root.

Second, our minds are clear light because their nature of clarity and awareness is always there. Our disturbing attitudes and the karmic imprints aren't mixed with this clear and cognising nature of our minds. In other words, we aren't our anger; we aren't our bad qualities. These are obscurations that can be removed.

The topic of Buddha nature is a profound one, so we may not understand it well at the beginning. But, we can get a sense of our inner potential and inner beauty, our Buddha nature which is temporarily obscured by the clouds of anger, attachment and other disturbing attitudes. As we start removing the clouds, the meaning of our two Buddha natures will become clearer.

The *Hevajra Tantra* says:
*Sentient beings are just Buddhas
But they are obscured by temporary stains.
When those are removed, they are Buddhas.*

The first line doesn't mean we are already Buddhas, for then we would be ignorant Buddhas! It means we have the two types of Buddha natures. When we clear away the

obscurations from our mindstreams, the continuation of our present minds transforms into the minds of the Buddhas we will become.

Thus, Buddhism takes a very positive and optimistic view of life and of human nature. Each of us has within us the seeds of perfection—the natural and evolving Buddha potentials—and these seeds can neither be stolen nor destroyed. There is no reason for us to ever feel hopeless and helpless. Because our Buddha potential is inseparably within us, there is always a basis for self-confidence and positive aspiration.

At the moment, our Buddha potential is dormant within us, covered by the clouds of our disturbing attitudes and karmic imprints. Sometimes our Buddha potential is compared to honey surrounded by angry bees, or pure gold wrapped in impurities. The bees and the impurities, just like our disturbing attitudes and the imprints of actions, are temporary obscurations.

How do we remove them? By following the path described by the Buddha: cultivating wisdom and compassion. The wisdom realising emptiness enables us to perceive our natural Buddha potential, which is empty of fantasised ways of existence. Compassion is a realistic attitude wishing everyone to be free from all unsatisfactory and miserable conditions. Determining to be free from our constantly recurring problems is the first step of the path. It sets the stage for developing our compassion and wisdom, thus allowing our Buddha potential to blossom. We can learn the techniques to purify and develop our minds by studying the teachings of the Buddha. ☺

- Venerable Thubten Chodron
www.thubtenchodron.org
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Everyday
Zen

The Inner Buddha

Illustration & text: Johny Tay • facebook.com/everydayzencartoons

I was a spiritual “seeker” for the earlier part of my life. I read extensively on the world's spiritual philosophies from Buddhism to Native American Shamanism, and dedicated significant personal time to the practices of *Qigong*, *Taiji* and meditation.

As I experience the teachings of the various methods, along with the personalities of the teachers, I learnt one thing that may surprise the less initiated—teachers across all spiritual traditions are as human as you and me. That is, they can have very visible flaws and are just as vulnerable to the ten fetters as ordinary people.

Does this mean they are poor teachers and should not be taken seriously? It depends. Some teachers can be misguided, abusive or exploitative—these need to be distanced from. Others are simply human; if their intentions are good and their actions are true to their words, they are good teachers by any standard.

However, all teachers exist to merely show us the way. We, ourselves hold personal, ultimate responsibility in walking the path. As the old saying goes: You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot force it to drink.

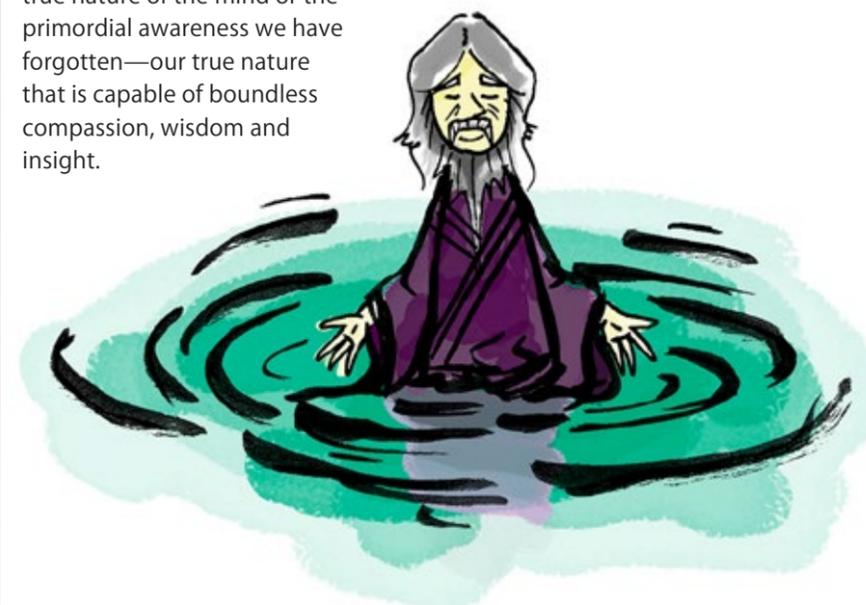
It is a blessing to find a good teacher, but a good teacher's true goal is to eliminate a student's dependency on a teacher, and to awaken the deepest source of wisdom—the Inner Buddha from our Buddha nature.

In my own journey, I progressed far enough to do some teaching of my own. My biggest personal lesson was to learn how to drink like the horse led to the water. At that point, the Inner Buddha became my most powerful teacher, beyond all teachers of flesh and blood.

Shakyamuni Buddha was inviting us to cultivate wisdom with these words of advice:

“Don't believe anything you see, read, or hear from others, whether of authority, religious teachers or texts... Do not give up your authority and follow blindly the will of others... Find out for yourself what is truth, what is real.”

Like all names, “Inner Buddha” is merely a term. It refers to the true nature of the mind or the primordial awareness we have forgotten—our true nature that is capable of boundless compassion, wisdom and insight.



*When you seek things, you find the mind;
when you seek the mind, you find only things.
They are one and the same...*

However, most humans do not even know the existence of our true nature, our Buddha nature. It is in everyone, like a grain inside its husk, and is our precious legacy as sentient beings. But this all-knowingness is not immediately apparent as it is covered by the whirlwinds and tsunamis of the *fetters*, and distractions from the five *skandas*.

Only with dedicated practice, suffering and life experiences can we discover our true nature.

When the Inner Buddha finally speaks, there are no words. Only an inner knowing that you suddenly have the truest answers to what you have always been seeking. ☺

HOW KARMA WORKS

Lonaphala Sutta: The Salt Crystal (A.N 3.99)

Illustrations & text : Law Wen Hui



Hi Yuna!

Sure Siha! I often wonder why evil-doers do not always get punished!

Today, we shall do a science experiment on karma.

First, take a spoonful of salt, add it to this cup filled with a little water and drink it. How do you feel?

Oh my! It is super salty!

Now, take another spoonful of salt, mix it into this cup of water that is filled almost to the brim and drink it. How do you feel?

The salt is diluted by the water. It is not salty at all!

But what does this have to do with karma?

Well, Yuna...

If one had done a bad deed and has never done many good deeds, the effect of the bad deed will be significant.

But if he or she has done many good deeds, the effect of the bad deed will be less significant.

If that is so, can we erase the bad karma we have?

That is not possible Yuna. Not even Buddha could erase his past bad karma when he was alive, nor can anyone erase someone's else karma.

Remember Yuna, one single mistake does not determine your whole life. Although we may not be able to erase any bad karma created by us, we can still do more good deeds to lessen the effect.

Just as the experiment earlier has shown us, by adding more water to the cup without adding more salt, the saltiness will one day be insignificant and our water luminous.

*Think not lightly of evil, saying, "It will not come to me."
Drop by drop is the water cup filled.
Likewise, the fool, gathering little by little, fills himself with evil.*

*Think not lightly of good, saying, "It will not come to me."
Drop by drop is the water cup filled.
Likewise, the wise man, gathering little by little, fills himself with good.*



What Wisdom Is...

Text: Ajahn Jayasaro

Photo Credit: Daniel Kirsch

Sitting atop a mountain, a teacher asked his student, "What do you see?" The student replied that he saw mountains and trees, rocks, the sky, clouds and birds. The master then asked, "What else do you see?" The student described the scene in more details. The master repeated, "What else do you see?" This went on for some time until finally, the student could think of nothing more to add. The teacher told him that he was missing the most important thing of all. The student, by now quite confused, asked, "But, Master, what is it that I missed out?" To which the teacher replied, "Light."

On another occasion, the teacher said to his student, "Close your eyes. Look within, what do you see?"

The student replied, "Images, thoughts, emotions, memories, desires." The teacher said, "What else do you see?"...

When you are in the presence of a teacher like Ajahn Chah, you feel completely exposed. It is as if he is holding up a big mirror in which you can see every defilement as soon as it appears in your mind. Some people might think that you would feel ashamed or discouraged, but you don't. You feel grateful. You think, "So this is the work that I need to do. I will do it."

The path of life is not easy for anyone. Whatever vehicle we are driving, we will have to cross bumpy patches on the road. Practising the Dhamma (Dharma) does not mean that we can bypass all the cracks and potholes. What Dhamma gives us is the inner resources to deal with the challenges we face without creating unnecessary suffering to add to the physical pain.

Wise people let go of self-pity like a dirty rag. They don't get caught up in poisonous questions like "Why me? Why always me?" They don't shout out in their minds, "It's not fair!" They don't lecture themselves, "How could you be so stupid? If you'd just done this rather than that, none of this would have had happened. You know this already. Why didn't you listen to him or her? You should be smarter than this."

Wise people don't spend hours worrying about an uncertain future to no purpose.

Wise people say, "Right now, it is like this. It is just this way. Being like this, what is the best thing I can do right now? What is the best thing I can do with my mind at this very minute? Is it possible in some small way to turn a disaster into an opportunity?" ☺

Our Inner Goodness Motivates us to be Kind

Text : Raymond Anthony Fernando



We all have the potential to be awakened; and that means we have, in us, that inner goodness to care deeply for one another. That also means we would help our fellow beings, rather than turn a blind eye or walk away from anyone who needs a helping hand.

Research shows that refusing to help others can have debilitating, long-term mental and physical consequences for ourselves.

Our inner goodness reminds us that to seek happiness, peace and tranquility, we must practise compassion, empathy and kindness.

In short, our conscience or inner goodness tells us, like a gentle whisper, to look out for one another. This inner goodness motivates us to show compassion, love and understanding to anyone who is going through suffering or facing challenges in life.

On all accounts, demonstrating our inner goodness can inspire others to make this a far better world.

Inner goodness means having positive traits

Good thoughts are good for our bodies. When we do good, we feel good. We will also realise that kind wholesome thoughts give us joy, while

negative ones give us pain. Invariably, thoughts associated with positive qualities, such as love, compassion, happiness, knowledge and so on—make us feel better.

We must always strive to be a blessing to others, and be the greatest good we can be. Success should not just be focused on making money, but rather in making the lives of others better, even if it is just to give a smile or a kind word.

We all go through periods of darkness or difficulties in life. No one is spared from this. Since we all share this common experience and are interdependent, this gives us a good reason to be kind and gentle with others.

In today's uncertain world, it's crucial to create a people-centric culture and fully understand that working together helps us to achieve our common goal. How about lending a helping hand to the helper when it comes to doing household chores?

Children who observe such kindness in adults will also grow up to be more caring citizens.

I have seen helpers carrying the school bags of their



employers' children and showering them with love and kindness. Ultimately, such virtues will translate into lifelong relationships and help to make this world a far better place.

Kindness starts with simple and small acts

More than 50 years ago, in Taiwan, a Buddhist nun observed that there were many poor people struggling to cope with daily living, which gave her a bright idea.

Seeing housewives buying fresh food from the market almost every day, she decided to place a cash box at each stall, encouraging the women folk to donate a small portion of their grocery expenses to the stall holders to be used for charity.

It is abundantly clear to me that this Buddhist nun acted in this way out of the sheer goodness in her heart which translated into acts of kindness and charity

The idea was well-received by the housewives who would give 50 cents or a dollar from their marketing budget as they came out in full support of a worthy cause started by the Tzi Chi Foundation.

This goes to show that no effort is too small if it can make this world a kinder and better place for all. ☺



Text : Jack Kornfield

From the perspective of Buddhist psychology, compassion is natural. It derives from our interconnection, which Buddhism calls “interdependence”. This can be readily seen in the physical world. In the womb, every child is interdependent with its mother’s body. If either of them is sick, the other is affected. In the same way we are interdependent with the body of the earth. The minerals of the soil transform into our wheat and bones, the storm clouds become our drinks and our blood, the oxygen from the trees and forests breathe with us, interdependent with our own life. The more consciously we realise this shared destiny, the more compassion arises for the earth itself.

The human community is equally interconnected. Nobel Prize winner, Archbishop Tutu puts it simply, “In Africa when you ask someone ‘How are you?’ the reply you get is always in the plural even when you are speaking to one person. A man would say ‘We are well,’ or ‘We are not well.’ He himself may be quite well but his grandmother is not well and so he is not well either. The solitary, isolated human is really a contradiction in terms.” Fortunately, we are becoming more and more aware of our global interconnection. Every meal we eat is intertwined with the sweat of farmers and migrant workers, with long haul truckers, and earthworms, with centuries of experiments in crop rotation, Gregor Mendel’s scientific breakthroughs in seed selection, the earliest agriculture

in Mesopotamia and the market rates at the Chicago mercantile exchange.

Just as we are interdependent with the earth and one another, we are also connected in consciousness. Western psychology does not yet acknowledge this, but it is true. Years ago when my wife and I were studying at an ashram in the mountains of India, my wife had a very clear but difficult vision of a death in her family. I tried to reassure her that images of death were simply a part of the meditative process. But sadly, I was wrong. Ten days later, we received a telegram which began, “Your brother Paul has died.” When we read further we discovered that the telegram was sent on the day of her vision, and that Paul had died on that day in

exactly the manner she had seen. We have all heard of stories like this. This is because we are connected in consciousness. This fact is the basis for compassion.

There is a neurological basis for compassion as well. In the 1980’s, Italian scientist Giacomo Rizzolatti and his colleagues discovered a class of brain cells called “mirror neurons”. Extensive research since that time has shown that through our mirror neurons, we actually feel the emotions, movements and intentions of others. Researchers describe this natural empathy as part of the social brain, a neural circuitry that connects us intimately in every human encounter.

In Buddhist psychology, compassion is not a struggle or a sacrifice. Within our body, compassion is natural and intuitive. We don’t consider, “Oh, my poor toe or finger is hurt, maybe I should help it.” As soon as it is injured, we instantly respond because it is a part of us. Through meditation, we gradually open the boundaries of consciousness to compassion for all beings, as if they were part of our family. We learn that even when our compassion is lost through fear and trauma, it can be reawakened. Faced with a crying child in a burning house, a hardened criminal is as likely as anyone else to take the risk of rescuing her. We all have moments when the openness and beauty of our Buddha nature shines through.

D.S. Bennet, writing in the *Sun* magazine, shows how compassion can bloom even in the midst of a terrible childhood. She wrote, “Mother always assured me that unspeakable punishments were bound to befall any child as naughty as I was. ‘If I were you,’ she’d say, ‘I’d be afraid to go to sleep at night,

for fear God would strike me dead.’ She would speak these words softly, regretfully, as though saddened by her errant daughter’s fate...”

After describing years of abuse and violation, Bennet went on, “The most devastating words my mother ever spoke to me came when I asked her if she loved me, (I had just been escorted home by the police after one of my many attempts to run away, so it was bad timing on my part.) She answered, ‘How could anyone ever love you!’ It took me almost fifty years to heal the damage from all her ugly remarks.”

“Recently, I remembered a childhood ritual of mine that helped me survive. From the age of five or six until I was well into my teens, whenever I had trouble sleeping, I would slip out from under my covers and steal into the kitchen for a bit of bread or cheese, which I would carry back to bed with me. There, I’d pretend my hands belonged to someone else, a comforting, reassuring being without a name—an angel, perhaps. The right hand would feed me little bites of cheese or bread as the left hand stroked my cheeks and hair. My eyes closed, I would

whisper softly to myself, ‘There, there. Go to sleep. You’re safe now. Everything will be all right. I love you.’”

In the life-denying landscape of her childhood, D.S. Bennet shows how caring floods through us like an inner angel of mercy; like green shoots forcing their way through cracks in the sidewalk. We can see the natural hand of compassion in all the ways we try to keep ourselves from harm, in a thousand daily gestures of self-protection. ☺

This excerpt is taken from the book, “The Wise Heart”

Jack Kornfield trained as a Buddhist monk in the monasteries of Thailand, India and Burma under Buddhist masters Ven Ajahn Chah and Ven 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 Ph.D. 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.



Don't let the **STRESSES** of daily life **SNUFF OUT** your *happiness!*

Text loosely translated by: Oh Puay Fong

Original Chinese article, 别让生活的压力挤走快乐心灵的空间 written by Shan Yuan is published in issue 42

Humans enter this world wailing and are immediately confronted by the challenges of survival. In order to live, competition is unavoidable. With competition, comes stress. Therefore, as long as one chooses to live, it is inevitable one faces stressors of all kinds, at school and work etc. The list is endless and diverse.

We have to manage our stressors with courage and learn to withstand stress. Only then can we thrive. Sports enthusiasts or physical trainers know that in order to strengthen their core muscles or lower limbs, they have to repeatedly lift heavy weights, often under supervision. Through such repetitive strength training, their core muscles and lower limbs will rapidly become stronger, enhancing their running or jumping prowess. Of course, the weights must be appropriate—too light and the results will be inconsequential; too heavy and they risk injury. Hence, the weights must be individually tailored and added gradually.

This prompted me to think that weights are analogous to the stressors that we must each deal with in life. Taking on an appropriate level of weights allows us to train our core strength and resilience, and also facilitate the progress of society. However, if the stress is overwhelming and

exceeds the ability of our physical and psychological limits, it would injure us and even cause a total breakdown. When you feel that you really cannot take it anymore, give yourself a break. In short, treat stressors like muscle-building weights that sports people lift in regular workouts. We have to lift weights daily if we want to develop and maintain our running and jumping power. The key is to remember to keep adjusting the weights on both left and right sides of the bar you're lifting.

There are countless paths in life to choose from, pick the one that matches your abilities to avoid the pain and disappointment from being unable to achieve your goals. Everything in life is two-sided, with both positive and negative aspects. Everyone has his own reasons for being happy or unhappy. The key is do you proactively seek out those reasons that make you happy? For instance, some people have jobs that are flexible with little stress but pay little. If they want to be happy, they have to focus on how carefree the work is, instead of thinking of the low wages. Conversely, some people are highly paid but experience great stress and rigidity at work. If they want to be happy, they have to stop obsessing over the stress level and focus instead on the high salary beyond what most ordinary people earn.

Obsessing over what makes us unhappy while ignoring what makes us happy is the cause of our perpetual suffering.

Therefore, we need to assess ourselves accurately, and avoid doing things that we are not passionate about. According to a Chinese saying, "Too much and it overflows. A half-bloom flower, a half-drunk but conscious state, these are the ideals." To undertake what is beyond our capability is asking for trouble. We should do the best we can, letting go when it is necessary, stopping when it's appropriate, then we will be able to find success that is uniquely ours at a relaxed, happy pace.

Our mind is like a spacious room that accumulates dust and junk if we do not clear it regularly. We all have happy and unhappy experiences in life. If painful emotions and unhappy memories are allowed to accumulate, the mind becomes depressed, snuffing out happiness. Therefore, regular decluttering will spruce up and brighten the mind space. Only by dealing with our mind's junk can we abandon unnecessary suffering and bid farewell to unhappiness.

No matter what happened yesterday, no matter how embarrassing, helpless, or hurt one felt yesterday, it is all over now. The past is gone, never to come again and there is no way to change it. So let all pains, fatigue, suffering depart to a faraway place with the passing of yesterday. Resolve to start today—this brand new day—afresh. Let the times you have been greatly inspired and touched reside permanently in your mind's spacious room instead. So that should there ever be a day when you must carry an extremely heavy burden, you'll never give up your passion for life. ☺

THE ROOT OF HAPPINESS

Text loosely translated by: Oh Puay Fong

Original Chinese article, 心是快乐之根 written by Shan Yuan is published in issue 45

I'm often asked, "Are you happy?" To which I've always replied, "I am very happy."

"Do you feel blessed?"

"Yes, I feel blessed."

"Then, tell me—what is happiness? What is it like to feel blessed?"

The root of happiness is really in your own mind. Feeling blessed is a feeling that cannot be described with words.

This would often provoke their shocked reaction, "How come you speak like you have transcended this mortal world? Is it true happiness, or are you faking it?"

I have no words to respond with, except to smile. I don't know any deep philosophies and won't be able to explain any. I do remember vividly, however, a tale I once read about—"The Legend of the Happiness Vines".

According to the story, in the region of Zhongnan Mountain grew a special species of plant called the "Happiness Vines". Those who obtain it would experience such joy that they won't stop smiling as they forget what troubles are. In his pursuit of happiness, one young man spared no effort to make the arduous journey and finally arrived at Zhongnan Mountain. He searched high and low for this vine and finally found it. Alas, the promise of the legend did not materialise—he was still unhappy. That night, he sought accommodation from an old man living at the foot of the mountain. Staring at the brilliant moon, he let out a long sigh.

He asked the old man, "I have obtained the Happiness Vines, so why am I still unhappy?" His question tickled the old man who merrily pointed out, "Actually, the Happiness Vines do not grow only in Zhongnan Mountain. It is in everyone's mind. As long as you have the root of happiness, no matter where you are in the world, you can be happy."

The old man's words startled the young man, who became puzzled, "What is the root of happiness?" The old man replied, "Your own mind is the root of happiness." The young man experienced a sudden flash of insight, and burst out laughing. That's right! All sentient beings seek happiness during their lifetime. It is the wish of every being. Yet, how do we obtain this happiness?

"Your own mind is the root of happiness"—how aptly said!

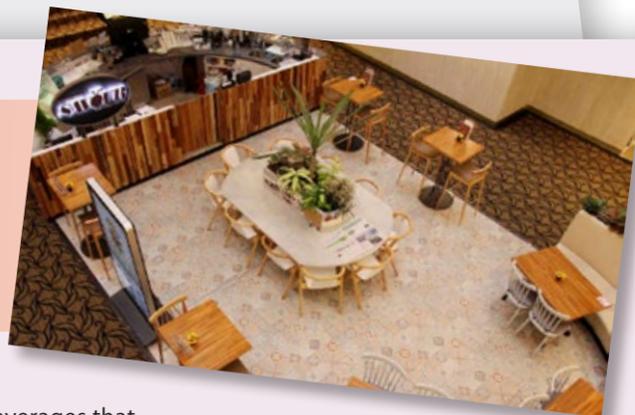
There is a saying that goes like this—oceans are broad but the skies are wider still, yet the most expansive of them all is the human mind. Our mind is unlimited and all-encompassing, but if we let it be occupied by selfishness, greed, despicability, hatred or laziness, then even if we are rich or powerful, we would still be

unhappy. On the other hand, if our mind is constantly replenished by the fountains of steadfastness, determination, conscientiousness, or purity, even if we are poor or of a lowly social status like an ant, we would be happy. Within a short lifespan, everyone pursues different goals. Some people want to have many descendants. Others crave high status and power, while some others seek wisdom. Everyone has different desires but underlying all these is the wish for a happy state of mind.

I do not possess palatial houses, or flashy cars, or celebrity status, but I have a happy state of mind and a loving family; I do not have millions of dollars or tons of jewellery to flaunt, but I have affectionate siblings who respect and give in to one another. Even though I am born in an average family, my pragmatic parents taught us since young to work conscientiously and live a down-to-earth life. I may be small in the larger scheme of things, but my existence is intrinsically worthwhile. I may be ordinary, but I experience joy daily in my life.

Dear friends, open your heart and mind. You shall find that like me, your life is full of happiness and blessings. ☺

Fish ball noodles without fish ball please!



Being a vegetarian or vegan in Singapore does not mean that we need to sacrifice our taste buds. There are restaurants and food stalls that offers meatless or in this case fishless local delights!

Based on the concept of "Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food", Wholesome Savour, a vegan and gluten-free, plant-based cafe develops its menu that offers healthy fishless local delights such as Fishless Fish Ball Noodle soup (S\$10), Fishless Yong Tau Foo Noodle (S\$10), Nasi Lemak (S\$12), snacks and healthy herbal beverages.

Adopting a vegetarian or vegan diet does not necessarily make one healthy. Many vegetarians/vegans still suffer from health issues like high blood pressure. I am rather intrigued by the chef's efforts to design healthy

dishes and beverages that seek to boost customers' health.

I had a taste of the Fishless Yong Tau Foo, with Mycoprotein paste mixed with black fungus and Shiitake mushroom stuffed in eggplant, beancurd and okra. It did not have a cakey texture and was served with "spicy" wolfberry and "sweet" raisin sauce. The menu states that this dish improves gut health. For my beverage, I had the Anti-Fatea which is an energy booster brewed with nutritious herbs like Astragalus Root, Ginseng Root and



Dendrobium Nobile. It reduces any bloating after food.

Although the prices are comparatively high, I do feel healthier and lighter after the meal. Why not treat your parents or friends to a healthy meal here on a special occasion? 🍵

**Mycoprotein is made from natural nutritious fungi from the soil.*

Overall Ratings:

Food : 8/10
Ambience: 7/10
Service: 7/10

Address:

Wholesome Savour
B1-06A Palais Renaissance,
390 Orchard Road.

Opening Hours:
9am to 9pm daily
Website:
www.wsavour.com

Text & Photos: *Chloe Huang*



Vegetarian sweet and Savoury scones

Cheryl Scones, a vegetarian café, is a new kid amongst mature blocks. Opened on 8 November 2019, it specialises in various savoury and sweet scones. The scones are baked in-house every day from fresh ingredients including herbs and French butter. No preservatives, additives, colouring and artificial flavouring are used. The scones are egg-free and thus suitable for vegetarians.

Unlike mass-produced scones, their scones are flavourful, light and have a lightly chewy texture. They are reasonably priced, ranging from S\$2.80 to S\$4.80. The savoury scones (Rosemary Parmesan Cheese and Thyme Double Cheese) and sweet scones (Sea Salt Caramel, Cranberry and Lemon Glaze and Dark Chocolate Chips) can be an afternoon snack on their own, paired with a pot of tea or coffee. Food adventurers might want to try the spiced scone, which comes in a uniquely Singapore laksa flavour.

I tried the Thyme Double Cheese scone, which is baked using parmesan and



cheddar cheese as the key ingredients. Although it uses two types of cheese, it is not overpowering and instead offers a well-balanced palate with the use of thyme herb. This feat makes the scone even more impressive.

The other signature dish which I tried was the Curried Potato Vegetable Soup which came with a finger scone (S\$5.80). It is a refreshing change from having rice or bread with curry. The soup's consistency was good and the vegetables were well-stewed.

The La-la Puffs is a bite-sized mini sweet dessert served with whipped cream. I would consider this a healthier snack for adults and young children for the occasional binge and a good substitute

for deep-fried snacks. It has a soft inner texture with slight crispy edges.

What's more, the café also provides online ordering and delivery services. The venue is also available for hosting private events with less than 20 persons. 🍵

Overall Ratings:

Food : 9/10
Ambience: 8/10
Service: 8.5/10

Address:

Blk 465 Crawford Lane, #01-04
Singapore 190465

Contact Number:
9061 2596

Email: enquiry@cherylscones.com

Opening Hours:

Tuesdays to Fridays:
11am to 5pm

Saturdays:
11am to 7pm

Website:
www.cherylscones.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/
cherylscones

Text & Photos: *Jos Tan*



La-la Puffs

A healthy start to the day is important. That's why it is crucial to have a hearty wholesome breakfast that will allow your body to function at its best.

Brown rice and sesame seeds are naturally packed with nutrients and phytonutrients. According to health websites, brown rice is said to improve cardiovascular health and bodily functions, lower cholesterol and the chances of getting type 2 diabetes or asthma, and prevent gallstones. Sesame seeds, on the other hand, may reduce blood pressure and inflammation, support healthy bones, thyroid health and the immune system, plus aid in blood cell formation and blood sugar control.

Sesame Brown Rice Milk

Ingredients (Serves two to three):

200g Cooked brown rice
1 tbs Sesame (toasted)
20g Molasses powder
800ml Filtered water

Method:

1. Mix all ingredients in a pot with filtered water.
2. Bring the pot to boil.
3. Place in blender, and blend till smooth.
4. Serve warm.



"Brown rice milk is very simple to make, but it is extremely nutritious. It is also easily absorbed by the body for people of all ages. I will have a mug of freshly-made, hot brown rice milk every morning, so I don't have to worry about the lack of nutrients. Instead of sesame seeds, you can also modify the recipe using steamed red beans, black beans, walnuts or almonds. You will then add more variety to your breakfast rice milk." — Wong Kew Yew

Pumpkin Kaya

Ingredients (Serves three):

300g Pumpkin (diced, steamed, skinned)
50g Brown sugar
¼ cup Raw cashew nuts
250ml Filtered water
1 pc. Pandan leaf

Method:

1. Blend cashew nuts, pandan leaf and filtered water until smooth
2. Sieve off the particles with cheese cloth and retain the pandan-cashew milk.
3. Submerge steamed pumpkin in pandan-cashew milk.
4. Mix brown sugar and bring mixture to boil in a pan.
5. Mash pumpkin and stir continuously into thick paste while simmering.
6. Kaya is ready when the paste reaches the desired consistency.

"Kaya is a Singaporean delight loved by the young and old. But the traditional recipe uses eggs and coconut milk, and is high in calories. In this recipe which uses pumpkin and cashew nuts, our home-made kaya is low in calories yet rich in fibre and potassium. It is also very good for digestion." — Wong Kew Yew



Recipe & photo provided 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.



Discovering the Peaceful Place that is Already Inside You

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



Just as each and everyone of us has Buddha nature, the vast and limitless potential within us all, we can train ourselves and our children to be open to our present moment experience and discover the peaceful place that's inside all of us.

- Sit comfortably in your chair and place your hands on your knees, feet flat on the floor, back straight, chin tucked, and eyes softly gazing downward or closed, whichever is most comfortable.
- Briefly scan your body with your attention, and if you notice any physical discomfort, adjust your posture so that you are more comfortable. If you cannot sit upright comfortably, lie flat on your back on the floor with your eyes closed or gazing softly down towards your chest.

- Once you feel comfortable, turn your attention to the movement of breath through your body and settle into the physical sensation of breathing for a moment or two.

- After your body is relaxed, turn your attention to your mind.
- Sometimes we can feel as if our minds are locked up in our bodies, but they are not; when we meditate, they can be as open as space.
- Wherever we look for our mind—legs, fingers, stomach, heart—we'll find it because the nature of mind is everywhere and nowhere at the same time.
- The mind is a force of nature like the sky, an ocean or a river.
- The mind in its natural state is just like the great expanse of the sky with no clouds.

- We know it is there and understand what it is, but we cannot touch it. Nor can we identify just one place where it resides. We cannot always conceptualise a force of nature nor break it down into component parts.
- Just as there is no way you can put a stream in a bucket, or the wind in a bag, the mind is also a manifestation of nature and cannot be separated from the whole.
- It's not locked up in our hearts or in our heads. It doesn't start at one point or end at another.
- Let's relax our bodies, let's relax our minds, and without great effort or expectation, let our minds settle. Let's allow our minds to be open, expansive, and rich with colour, like a summer sky at sunset, as we give both our bodies and our minds an opportunity to rest in their natural state. ☺



Jazz up with this stylish collection of mantra necklaces

Do you enjoy wearing mantra necklaces? Or have a friend who likes wearing exotic necklaces? Then you may want to check out this classy range of unique necklaces crafted in shimmering crystal glass set with glittering pure silver and engraved with various seed syllables and mantras of Buddhas and meditational deities.

This latest collection is available in four colours: jade green, citrine yellow, garnet red and lapis lazuli blue.



Representing the liberator Green Tara, the jade green necklace features the *Tam* syllable in the centre encircled by the powerful Green Tara mantra, *Om Tare Tuttare Ture Svaha*, in a mandala design.

The citrine yellow design which signifies Yellow Dzambhala, also known as the God of Wealth and contains the *Dza* syllable at its core is surrounded by the enriching Yellow Dzambhala mantra.

Symbolising the dakini Kurukulle, the garnet red necklace showcases the *Hri* syllable at its hub enfolded by the magnetising mantra of Kurukulle, also called Red Tara, in a lovely lotus design.

Finally, my personal favourite is the the lapis lazuli blue necklace. Signifying Medicine Buddha, it holds at its heart the *Hung* syllable, embellished by a silver ring inscribed with the mantra of the Medicine Buddha.

Each necklace is beautifully fashioned with good quality material, and looks just as good worn by men or women.

They are perfect as gifts or for personal wear. Priced at S\$39.00 each.

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



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

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

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

Send your entries to
awaken@kmspks.org or:

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

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

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

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Issue 46 / Jan 2020

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

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

Alternatively, you may log onto: www.kmspks.org/career to view our job vacancies.

THE CELESTINE PROPHECY

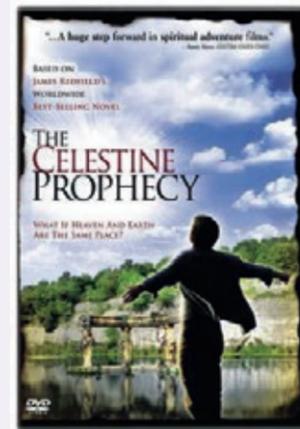
Directed by: Armand Mastroianni

Starring: Matthew Settle, Thomas Kretschmann and Sarah Wayne Callies

The film starts off with John, a history teacher in a regular school, suddenly being dismissed from his job. We understand from the beginning that he is a conscientious person who has put much effort into his work. Having studied history, he is always questioning where humans are heading, and as if to set the ball rolling for the rest of the film, writes several words at the end of a chart of evolution in the classroom as he is leaving, saying, "What's Next?"

As if to answer this question in the context of his own life, a series of synchronicities or coincidences immediately follow, whereby he gets a call from an old friend who tells him about 'The Prophecy'. This and other unexpected coincidences lead him to board a plane to Peru within just a few days. From that moment on and after he lands in the country, everyone he meets has a message and some measure of guidance for him. Without making any plans or having any pre-conceived notions about it, he finds himself swept into a mystery that is arousing interest from even the highest echelons of society—the church and military, in Peru.

On a journey out into the Peruvian jungle to a place where everyone involved



in the mystery has naturally assembled, John finds himself brought into knowledge of each of the eight already revealed sayings of 'The Prophecy' by different members of that group, first intellectually, then in actuality. As he's introduced to this new way of seeing the world, his perception of it and people around him automatically transforms.

We come to learn that there is nothing else to do, but to be aware of what is going on in any moment, respond to the insights of our own mind, act on intuition that feels correct and enhance the energies of giving towards situations and people, and to assist in amplifying them, and facilitate everyone else towards their evolution. This is contrary to what we learn by rote from our current world ethos, where self-seeking prevails.

Coming down to the bottom-line issue of egotistical individualism, we're told that as we seek to gain from others, we not only harm them materially, but also deplete their energy and this is the real tussle that keeps the world in pain. The idea of altruistic interdependency is reinforced

here as we see how the coming together of the group and the members' ability to embrace the whole, allows them to reach their goal and find the ninth insight of 'The Prophecy' that they are searching for throughout the whole movie.

This one is the key teaching, and states that humanity is now evolving towards a higher state of perception, towards the enlightened state. It tells us that this is already within us, we simply have to recognise it and that in order to reach the next evolutionary stage of human experience, the world will have to go through quite an unsettled period of change as perceptions adjust. All the other eight insights that had previously been revealed, are pointing towards an eventual future where humans can see the state of enlightenment manifest in the world. It is already there, just that we have to learn how to see it.

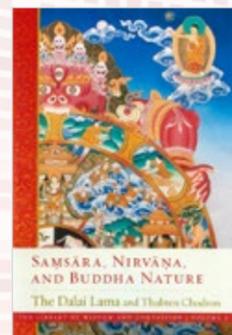
Even though some of the terminology used, such as 'heaven', sounds Christian on the surface, we are emphatically told that the meaning of all the nine insights of 'The Prophecy' are relevant to all religions, cultures and creeds, all of humanity. Indeed, these are spiritual truths beyond religious context, and mirror the teachings of the Buddha, who never actually wanted to set up a religious structure as such, but for us to know the Dharma, the Universal Law. ☺

The enlightened state is already within us, we simply have to recognise it Text: Susan Griffith-Jones

SEEN

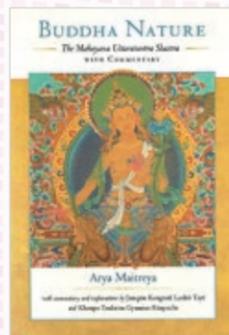
READ

Delve deep into the various teachings on buddha nature for your practice Text : Esther Thien



Samsara, Nirvana, and Buddha Nature
By The Dalai Lama and Thubten Chodron
S\$32.90

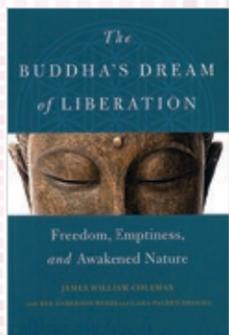
Samsara, Nirvana, and Buddha Nature is a thick book that covers all you want to know about *duhkha* in cyclic existence, its true origins, arising and antidotes of afflictions, the karma created, which leads one to cycle in samsara and the way to obtain freedom from cyclic existence. It also covers in-depth the teachings of Buddha nature propounded by the various schools over two chapters. A must-read for anyone who wants to contemplate and do a more careful study of the Buddhist teachings.



Buddha Nature: The Mahayana Uttaratantra Shastra
By Arya Maitreya
S\$42.90

This is a profoundly insightful book to anyone who would like to study the text on Buddha nature on a deeper level. All sentient beings, without exception, have Buddha nature—the inherent purity and perfection of the mind, untouched by changing mental states. This book, *The Mahayana Uttaratantra Shastra*, said to have been dictated to Asanga by the Bodhisattva Maitreya presents the Buddha's teachings on how we should understand enlightenment and clarifies the nature and qualities of Buddhahood. It also contains the commentary and explanations by Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye, an intensely learned and realised master who lived from 1813 to 1899.

All books are available at Awareness Place stores.



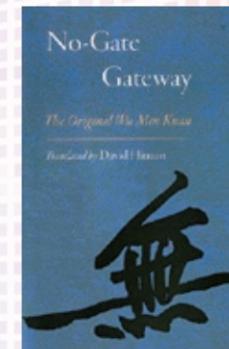
The Buddha's Dream of Liberation: Freedom, Emptiness and Awakened Nature
By James Silliam Coleman
S\$20.90

In simple and clear language, James William Coleman, Professor of Sociology at the California Polytechnic State University, gives a concise summary of the Buddha's Three Turnings of the Wheel, illuminating their meaning for today's world and tying together the Buddha's wisdom for us. It is a work that provides wonderful introduction to Buddhist teachings, including guidance for practitioners and teachings on awakened Buddha nature. Finally, the book concludes with chapters from two great teachers, Reb Anderson from the Zen tradition and Lama Palden from the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, on how to use meditation to bring the Buddha's wisdom into our daily lives. Highly recommended for anyone who wishes to more fully understand the Buddha's teachings.



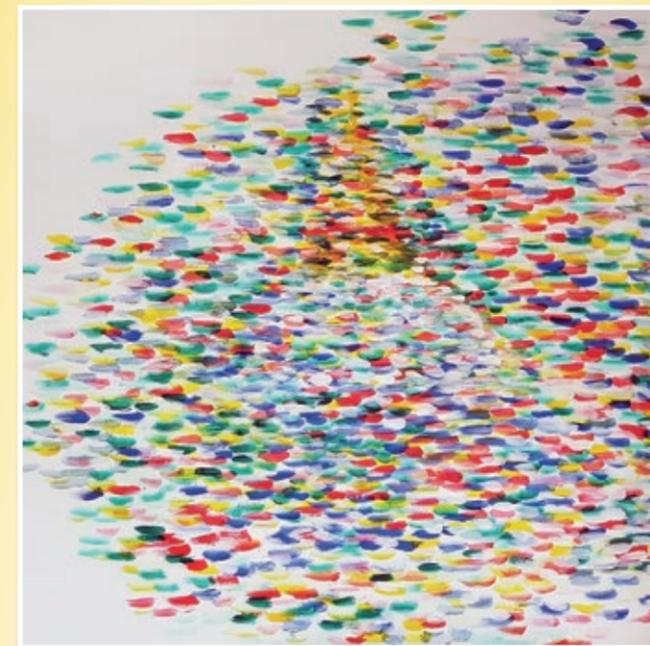
Be More Yoda: Mindful Thinking from a Galaxy far, far away
By Christian Blauvelt
S\$14.90

Are you a Star Wars fan? Always love the wisdom that you see in Yoda, and wish to mirror that wisdom in your own life? This book, *Be More Yoda*, may just be your answer to achieving that. Designed in a bright apple green hard cover, this book features 63 pages of easy-reading wise verses to help you seek mindfulness, overcome obstacles, find mindful moments to awaken your potential and unleash your mastery. Reflect, contemplate and meditate on the inspiring words of wisdom from Master Yoda and a host of other Star Wars mentors, and gradually be one with the Force, you will.



No-Gate Gateway: The Original Wu-Men Kuan
Translated by David Hinton
S\$24.90

No-Gate Gateway is used as a teaching text in the Chan or Zen Buddhist tradition. It is written by Wu-men Hui Kai, a quirky Chan master who lived from 1183 to 1260 CE during the Sung Dynasty, and a patriarch in the Lin-chi school of Chan. This is an interesting book as it also relates the emptiness expounded in the Buddhist teachings to the Absence and Presence of the Tao taught in *Tao Te Ching*, *I Ching* etc. Read this for a new way of understanding Zen that may just jolt you into a sudden awakening that's beyond logic and explanation.



Prayers

Acrylic on Canvas 36"x36"
by Law Wen Hui

This is a painting inspired by the prayer flags of Tibetan Buddhism, or *Lung-ta flags*. The five colours represent different elements: blue symbolises the sky and space, white symbolises the air and wind; red symbolises fire; green symbolises water; and yellow symbolises earth.

It is believed that the prayers are blown by the wind to spread goodwill and compassion to the whole world. Every stroke painted from right to left, symbolises that the prayers are constantly being carried off by the wind. ☺

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 hard to grasp, I hope that through my paintings, I can help people to understand Buddhism better."
- Law Wen Hui



Calendar of Events 2020

01 Jan 04 Apr



DHARMA

CEREMONY | PRAYERS

Offering to Heavenly Realms
1 Jan | Wed | 6am
Venue: Hall of Great Compassion
Fee: \$10 | \$38 | \$108 | \$168
Registration: Front Office
Enquiry: 6849 5333 | 6849 5300

Alms Offering to the Sangha

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

1 Jan | Wed
Alms Offering: 8am – 10am
Venue: Hall of Great Compassion
Offering to Sangha: 11.30am – 12pm
Venue: VHCMH | Level 2 | Dining Hall
The Grand Diamond Gem Repentance Ceremony: 1.30pm
Venue: Hall of Great Compassion
Fee: \$50 | \$188 | \$388
Enquiry: 6849 5333



Lunar New Year Wish-fulfilling Lanterns

24 Jan – 8 Feb
Venue: KMSPKS
Fee: Company / Family: \$338 | Individual: \$50
Registration: Front Office (from 1 Dec onwards)
Enquiry: 6849 5333



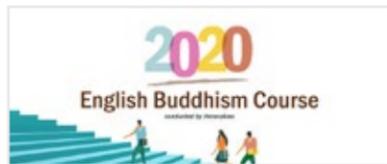
Lunar New Year Prayers

24 Jan | 2 Feb | 8 Feb
Venue: KMSPKS | Various Halls
Registration: Front Office
Enquiry: 6849 5333 | 6849 5300

Qing Ming Prayer

4 April | Sat
Venue: KMSPKS
Registration: Front Office
(from 4 Feb onwards till fully registered)
Enquiry: 6849 5333 | 6849 5300

TALKS | WORKSHOPS | COURSES



English Buddhism Course Year 1 | By Venerable

12 Feb – 21 Oct | Wed | 7.30pm – 9pm
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom
Fee: \$110 for full year (3 modules)

English Buddhism Course Year 2 | By Venerable

17 Feb – 19 Oct | Mon | 7.30pm – 9pm
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom
Fee: \$110 for full year (3 modules)

English Buddhism Course Year 3 | By Venerable

20 Feb – 29 Oct | Thur | 7.30pm – 9pm
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom
Fee: \$110 for full year (3 modules)



The Way to Buddhahood | By Venerable

This course contains methods that leads one to the supreme Buddha realm.
Module 3 (16 lessons)
9 Jan – 23 July | Thur - alternate | 7.30pm – 9pm
Fee: \$60
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom



On Taming the Monkey Mind | By Tenzin Palmo

We have what the Buddha refers to as a 'Monkey Mind', which is untamed and out of control. So how can we develop healthy and well-balanced minds in our stress-filled lives?
11 Jan | Sat | 3pm – 4.30pm
Venue: VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form
Free Admission (Registration is Required)

Registration:

1. Online: www.kmspks.org
2. Reception Office@KMSPKS 9am – 4pm
(Closes 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.
8 Mar | Sun | 9.00am – 10.30am (YTBC)
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom
Free Admission



Threefold Refuge & Five Precepts Ceremony

(conducted in Mandarin)
8 Mar | Sun | 11.45am – 2.30pm (YTBC)
Venue: VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form
Free Admission

Buddhist Etiquette

(conducted in Mandarin)
Teachings on basic practice, observance of Buddhist etiquette.
7 Mar | Sat | 9am – 11.30am (YTBC)
Venue: VHCMH | 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

6-Day Retreat with Ajahn Sumedho (YTBC)

21 – 26 Apr | Tue – Sun
Fee: YTBC
Venue: Meditation Hall
Registration
1. Online: www.kmspks.org
2. Reception Office@KMSPKS 9am – 4pm
(Closes for lunch: 11.30am – 12.30pm)
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | sed@kmspks.org



LIFESTYLE

CHILDREN

Children's Art – Colours of Life

Free expression, reflection and exploration in arts for children to appreciate the beauty of things and their surrounding environment. This programme is specifically designed for children between 4 and 12 years of age.
14 Mar – 16 May | Sat | 2.30pm – 4.30pm
Fee: \$60 (for 10 sessions), excluding art materials
Venue: Awareness Hub

ART

Western Floral Arrangement and Hand Bouquet (I)

Learn three different geometric designs and three lessons on basic hand bouquet styles.
17 April – 29 May (except 1 May) | Fri | 7pm – 9pm
Fee: \$120 per person
Material Fee: \$30 per session (payable to instructor)
Venue: Awareness Hub

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

Registration:

1. Online: www.kmspks.org
2. Reception Office@KMSPKS 9am – 4pm
(Closes for lunch: 11.30am – 12.30pm)
3. Awareness Hub 11.30am – 6pm
Enquiry: 63365067 awarenesshub@kmspks.org

TOUR



KMSPKS Guided Tour

Join us on a guided tour around KMSPKS and learn more about Buddhism, its history and arts.
23 Feb & 26 Apr | Sun | 10am – 12pm
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Ju Yuan Fang
Free Admission
Registration:
1. Online: www.kmspks.org
2. Reception Office@KMSPKS 9am – 4pm
(Closes for lunch: 11.30am – 12.30pm)
3. Awareness Hub 11.30am – 6pm
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | guidedtour@kmspks.org

WELLNESS

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Health Series
Discovering Your Body Type & Balance it with Acupressure.

*** Qi Deficient Type**
22 Mar | Sun | 3pm – 5pm
Fee: \$35 (per person)

*** Yang Deficient Type**
26 April | Sun | 3pm – 5pm
Fee: \$35 (per person)

Humble Cooking

How to prepare healthy nutritious vegan breakfast:

1) Raw Plant milk
2) Home-made Breadsread
3) Life Force Combo
12 Mar | Thur | 2pm – 4pm
Venue: Awareness Hub
Fee: \$90

Mindfulness Foundation Course

Learn how to cope with stress in daily life through mindfulness practices.
7 Feb – 28 Feb | Fri | 7.30pm – 9.30pm
Fee: \$160 (4 sessions)

Therapeutic Movement Classes

6 Mar – 27 Mar | Fri | 7.30pm – 8.30pm
Fee: \$100 (4 sessions)

Yin Yoga

Learn to improve flexibility and mental focus while relieving stress and anxiety.
3 Mar – 5 May | Tue | 6.30pm – 7.45pm
Fee: \$170 (10 sessions) | Walk-in \$23 per lesson

Yoga for Diabetes

Learn postures that stimulate insulin production to help manage diabetes.
26 Mar – 4 Jun (except 7 May) | Thur | 10.30am – 11.30am
Fee: \$120 (10 sessions) | Walk-in \$15 per lesson



Hatha Yoga for Beginners

18 Jan – 18 Apr (except 25 Jan / Mar 7,14,21)
Sat | 6.30pm – 8pm
25 Apr – 27 Jun | Sat | 6.30pm – 8pm
31 Jan – 3 Apr | Fri | 10.30am – 12pm
17 Apr – 26 Jun (except 1 May) | Fri | 10.30am – 12pm
Fee: \$180 (10 sessions) | Walk-in \$25 per lesson

Yoga Flow (Hatha)

5 Feb – 8 Apr | Wed | 6.30pm – 7.30pm
15 Apr – 17 Jun | Wed | 6.30pm – 7.30pm
Fee: \$160 (10 sessions) | Walk-in \$22 per lesson

Hatha Yoga

26 Feb – 29 Apr | Wed | 7.45pm – 9.15pm
29 Feb – 9 May (except 7 Mar) | Sat | 9.30am – 11am
9 Mar – 11 May | Mon | 8pm – 9.30pm
17 Mar – 19 May | Tue | 10.30am – 12pm
Fee: \$180 (10 sessions) | Walk-in \$25 per lesson

Hatha Yoga (Lunchtime)

17 Mar – 19 May | Tue | 12.10pm – 1pm
Fee: \$140 (10 sessions) | Walk-in \$18 per lesson

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

Registration:

1. Online: www.kmspks.org
2. Reception Office@KMSPKS 9am – 4pm
(Closes for lunch: 11.30am – 12.30pm)
3. Awareness Hub 11.30am – 6pm
Enquiry: 63365067 awarenesshub@kmspks.org

Gentle Hatha Yoga

14 Feb – 24 Apr (except 10 Apr)
Fri | 2.30pm – 4pm
17 Mar – 19 May | Tue | 2.30pm – 4pm
Fee: \$160 (10 sessions) | Walk-in \$22 per lesson

Chair Yoga

14 Feb – 24 Apr (except 10 Apr)
Fri | 12.30pm – 1.30pm
Fee: \$160 (10 sessions) | Walk-in \$22 per lesson

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

Registration:

1. Online: www.kmspks.org
2. Reception Office@KMSPKS 9am – 4pm
(Closes for lunch: 11.30am – 12.30pm)
3. Awareness Hub 11.30am – 6pm
Enquiry: 63365067 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 Tue, Thu, Sat | 9am – 2pm
Venue: VHCMH | 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

21 Jan | Tue | 9am – 1.30pm
8 & 20 Feb | Sat & Thur | 9am – 1.30pm
20 & 29 Mar | Fri & Sun | 9am – 1.30pm
4 & 19 Apr | Sat & Sun | 9am – 1.30pm
6, 7 & 19 May | Wed, Thur & Tue | 9am – 1.30pm
18 Jun | Thur | 9am – 1.30pm
Venue: Corridor between Dining Hall & Front Office
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | gratitude@kmspks.org

COMMUNITY



Basic Training Course

(Compulsory for New Volunteers)
14 Mar | Sat | 8am – 5.30pm
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom
Registration & Enquiry:
6849 5318 | volunteer@kmspks.org



Community Tuition

Free academic coaching for Secondary school English, Maths, Physics and Chemistry.
9 Feb – 25 Oct | Sun | 9am – 4pm
Venue: VHCMH | Level 3 | Classroom
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | community@kmspks.org



Community Food Ration

Join us to deliver food to low-income families.
16 Feb | 15 March | 26 April
Sun | 9am – 11.30am
Venue: KMSPKS
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | community@kmspks.org

Chinese Calligraphy Basic Foundation

The structure of Kaishu or Regular Script & correct brush handling and writing techniques are emphasised to help participants acquire an understanding of the art of calligraphy.
8 Feb – 2 May | Sat | 9am – 4pm
9 Feb – 3 May | Sun | 2.30pm – 4.30pm
Fee: \$110
Venue: VHCMH | Level 3 | Classroom
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | community@kmspks.org



Ven Hong Choon Museum

10am - 3pm
Venue: VHCMH | Level 3
Free Admission

On:
27th of each lunar month
Qing Ming (4 Apr)
Vesak Day (7 May)
Ullambana Festival (2 Sep)
Birth anniversary of Ven Hong Choon (19 Oct)
Death anniversary of Ven Hong Choon (23 Dec)

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

Like us on facebook.com/kmspks



2020

BCS Admission Exercise

(English and Chinese Course)

OBJECTIVE

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

TEACHING STAFF

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

BENEFITS

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

POST-GRADUATION OUTLOOK

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

APPLICATION PRE-REQUISITES

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

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

- 1 The closing date for non-Chinese applicants is **24 April 2020** ; Chinese applicants is **22 May 2020**.
- 2 Interested parties may download the application form from our website **www.bcs.edu.sg**. Application forms should be completed accordingly and legibly. Please provide a valid contact number and/or email address.
- 3 Please submit the completed application form together with the following materials to the Registrar's Office. Please email us after you have sent out the application form.
 - a. Two different referral letters from either the applicant's Master, the Abbot / senior monks at the applicant's current Monastery or former Venerables / Lecturers who had previously taught the applicant.
 - b. Photocopy of the latest academic transcript and certificate attained by the applicant.
 - c. Photocopy of Personal Identification card and passport.
 - d. Three passport-sized, matte-finished photographs (35×45mm) of the applicant's front profile. Applicants should be dressed in monk's robes with no headdress, on white background.
 - e. Medical check-up form (inclusive of blood test, liver test, chest X-ray) from a Government-registered medical institution.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND CURRICULUM

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

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

SELECTION PROCEDURES AND INTAKE

- 1 A total of 70 students will be selected for both English and Chinese programmes.
- 2 Applicants will be selected based on the results of the entrance examinations.
- 3 Scope of Examination: Interviews and examinations for both courses will be conducted at the same time. English course applicants will sit for a Pre-Intermediate English Language examination while Chinese course applicants will sit for 3 examinations: Buddhism, Chinese Linguistic Skills (both conducted in Chinese) and Elementary English Language Examination.
- 4 The college will apply for student visas and permits on behalf of all selected applicants.
- 5 Selection results will be announced via telephone, email and the college website.
- 6 According to the policy stipulated by the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority of Singapore (ICA), all foreign students are required to pay a security deposit. The student shall bear half of the amount, while the remainder will be subsidized by the college. Please visit the college website (<https://www.bcs.edu.sg/admissions/ba/>) for details on the deposit amount.

The closing date for Non-Chinese applicants is
24 April 2020

Start of Semester : **31 August 2020** | Successful applicants are required to report to the college by **24 August 2020**

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

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

Telephone
0065-6715 6900
Please contact us between Mondays to Fridays,
9am – 4pm, Singapore time

Fax Number
0065-6456 0180
Email
enquiry@bcs.edu.sg
Website
www.bcs.edu.sg

