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# awaken

*~Helping you to gain insight and make sense of life's journeys*



## awaken magazine

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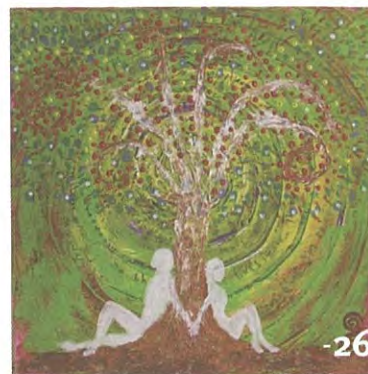
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# Editor's Note

2004 had been a pretty uneventful year for all. On 26<sup>th</sup> December 2004, tidal waves hit Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and more. In the time it takes to run a movie screening, more than 200,000 people died. Tens of thousands went missing, possibly dead too. As the waves swept in, babies were torn from their parents' hands. When the waves ebbed away, vultures gathered around survivors burying their dead. Countless bodies lay rotting along coastlines, to a point where identification was no longer possible. The pervasive stench of death hanged heavy in the air; and grief, gloom and despair blanketed everyone's hearts snuffing the light out.

But this crisis also brought out the best of humanity, unifying the world and the human spirit. Nations, big and small, even those ravaged by domestic issues quickly responded and despatched food, first aid and millions of dollars to the affected countries. People of all ages, regardless of races, religions and ethnicities too banded together to offer as much help and assistance as they could. Those who were not able to give financially pitched in and volunteered their time and effort generously to consolidate and pack the much needed aid to be sent to Sri Lanka.



In Singapore, it is heart-warming to read of little girls breaking their piggy banks and the less well-off elderly clutching crumpled wads of hard-earned cash to donate to the less fortunate far away from home, in respond to the relief efforts that were initiated island-wide unanimously by corporations, NGOs, associations and religious bodies.

This coming Lunar New Year, may all Singaporeans be able to rejoice the blessings they enjoy in life no matter how little and share them with others. May all open up their hearts for all our glaring differences and conflicts are actually insignificant. As the Buddha taught: "You too shall pass away. Knowing this, how can you quarrel?" The pain of loss is the same no matter what colour or age you are. Life is precious, no matter whose it is.

Like the enlightened ones, let us be one body united in Compassion and Wisdom, and reach out in different directions with a thousand helping hands, using diverse skilful means to benefit all beings. For that is truly what the teaching of the Buddha is all about.

Yours in the Dharma,

Sister Esther Thien

## Getting to Know the Publisher, Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery

Since its establishment, the temple has been called "Kong Meng San" which means Bright Hill in Mandarin. According to the sutras, Kong Meng San is the name of Guanyin Bodhisattva's Pureland. And "Phor Kark See" (Pu Jue Si) means "Monastery of Universal Awakening". According to the Sutra of Complete Enlightenment, which records the names of 12 great Bodhisattvas, Pu Jue Bodhisattva is the 11th, to which the Buddha taught.



Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery was founded by Venerable Zhuan Dao in 1921. In 1943, the abbotship was handed to Venerable Hong Choon. With much difficulty, he expanded the temple by clearing the deserted vegetation in its surroundings. Today, it is a renowned Buddhist place of interest with one of the largest Shakyamuni Buddha image in Southeast Asia headed by Venerable Kwang Sheng.

## Is It Okay to Be Angry Sometimes?

**Q:** I have always been a calm person. But recently, that sense of tranquillity and calmness was broken when a neighbour started an argument about an insignificant border problem. This argument made me realise that I was actually doing all the compromising, as I have been calm and tolerant of a lot of other problems he has caused me in the past. He had now appeared to be unreasonable. So, I got really angry and shot back my share of complaints at him. After I had finished, he had forgotten why he had come over in the first place, and went home without resolving the issue. Later, I can't help thinking that there is a limit to how much one can take from other angry people if they're perpetually unreasonable and angry with you. And I don't feel bad about fighting back when pushed too far - is this not the right approach? Or is there something I can learn from this? – Anonymous

**A:** If you reflect carefully, you will realise that your sense of calmness, though probably stronger than most, is yet to be perfected. That's why you found yourself bursting with anger when your neighbour came over. It could also mean that your patience and tolerance could have come from bottling things up.

When you realised you have been the one doing all the compromising, instead of being angry, let the other party know by expressing it out matter-of-factly in a calm manner.

It is often hard to resolve matters properly when both of you are shouting at the top of your lungs to be heard instead of really listening to each other. That is probably why he went home without resolving the issue he came over to address!

Likewise, did you truly resolve anything from your part? Often, we are urged to raise our voice back when someone does it to us. But if you ponder carefully, you'll discover this to be needless. Just speak normally. In fact, your neighbour might realise his awkwardness of being all charged up in the light of your composure, and calm down too.

Only when fiery emotions are out of the way can a productive and conducive discussion truly begin.

As imperfect unenlightened beings, there is a limit to how much we can take from unreasonable people, especially those who had been unreasonable repeatedly. But this precisely opens up the challenge of whether we want to be somebody who is reactive to situations, or one who is continuously stretching our limit and training our patience as part of our path to cultivate that boundless love and limitless patience of the Buddha.

Let us always remember this - the Buddha never found any cause to get angry at anyone - despite facing many unreasonable people from all walks of life and even those who openly slander him in his face.

Even in cases when He was very stern, there was not a trace of anger in him. For example, a mother who yelled at her child for playing too near a dangerous busy road does it out of love, not anger - even though the child might perceive it

otherwise. Yet, the act might be appropriate if the mother reassures the child of her love which explaining the gravity of the situation. The yelling might be a hundred times more effective than just telling the child off gently. It drives the message home for his benefit. Likewise, the wrathful manifestations of Bodhisattvas have no anger within.

Though we might need to manifest anger outwardly at times to skilfully address strong stubborn delusions of others, there is no need to get angry inwardly.

After all, as the oft-quoted teaching by the Buddha goes: "Hatred (and anger) can never be resolved by hatred. Hatred can only be resolved by love (loving-kindness and compassion). This is the eternal law."

The tricky part, of course, is cultivating the skilfulness. But it can be achieved by gaining greater insight about our own nature and human nature in general.

Here is a spiritual test for you: try expressing your apologies to your neighbour for your anger. It doesn't matter if he is unapologetic for his own anger from his side - as this isn't a contest of wills; but a personal spiritual trial for yourself.

But you should follow up on the unresolved issues by telling him that although you were angry, the points you raised earlier are still valid. In this more rational and less emotional atmosphere, both of you may come to a solution that's acceptable by both parties. If there is none, well, that's an added challenge for you to resolve in another way. Or you can even just let go of the whole matter graciously! May you be well and happy always. – Bro Shen Shi An

Are you bugged by any problems in life? Perhaps you have difficulties overcoming certain life's challenges and obstacles? Or are you just purely curious about the Dharma? We welcome you to write in to us. E-mail your problems, issues and queries to [awaken@kmspks.org](mailto:awaken@kmspks.org) or send your letters to:

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## Buddhist Meditation May Produce Long-lasting Changes in the Brain

Medical experts agree that meditation produce a calming effect. But it was only recently that research shows that the practice of Buddhist meditation may produce lasting changes in the brain.

In a study that appeared on the online edition of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*, researchers discovered that monks who spent many years in Buddhist meditation training demonstrate greater brain activity in areas associated with learning and happiness than those who have never practised meditation.

The results imply that long-term mental training, such as Buddhist meditation, may trigger both short and long-term changes in brain activity and function.

### Buddhist Meditation May Alter the Brain

Researchers compared the brain activity of eight long-time Buddhist monks and 10 healthy students. The average age of the monks was 49, and had individually undergone mental training in meditation for 10,000 to 50,000 hours over the course of 15 to 40 years.

The students' average age, on the other hand, was 21. They had no prior experience in meditation and only received one week of meditative training before the start of the study.

Both groups of participants were instructed to practise loving-kindness meditation (that is to generate a feeling of love and compassion without concentrating on specific things). For the

purpose of this study, researchers measured brain activity before, during, and after meditation using electroencephalograms, and noted significant differences between the two groups in a type of brain activity called gamma wave activity. Gamma wave activity is involved in mental processes including attention, working memory, learning, and conscious perception.

The researchers found that the Buddhist monks had a higher level of gamma wave activity before they began meditation, and this difference shot up drastically during meditation. In fact, researchers say the dramatically high levels of gamma wave activity are the highest ever reported. The monks were also charted to have more brain activity in areas associated with positive emotions, such as happiness.

Researchers say the fact that the monks had higher levels of this kind of brain activity before meditation began suggests that long-term practice of Buddhist or other forms of meditation may modify the brain.

Although age differences may also account for some of the differences found by this study, researchers say that the hours of meditation practice, rather than age, significantly predicted gamma wave activity.

Researchers say more studies are required to assess whether the disparity in brain activity are caused by long-term meditation training itself or by individual differences before training.

# Russian medics fascinated by the imperishable body of Buddhist lama

Russian medics were floored. “Samples taken 75 years after the burial of a Buddhist lama indicated that the organics of the lama’s hair and nails is no different from that of a living person,” states professor Galina Ershova. The body belongs to a famous religious leader by the name of Dasha-Dorjo Itigelov, who used to be the head of Russian Buddhists from 1911 to 1927.

Before this, exhumation had been conducted twice: once in 1955 and in 1973. Not a sign of decay was found on the body both times when the grave was unearthed. Nothing changed the third time the lama’s body was dug up in 2002. Afterwards, the medics decided to conduct a thorough analysis of the lama’s body.

“His joints bend easily, soft tissues can be forced effortlessly, just like with a living human being. What’s interesting is also the fact that after the coffin cover has been removed, we could all detect a sweet-smelling scent wafting out from the inside,” says G. Ershova.

According to her, “this completely contradicts of what should happen to a dead person after being buried for 75 years.” G. Ershova also highlighted that this is the first case of its kind not only in the history of Buddhism but in the entire history of the humankind.

The lama’s body has been the object of worship for Buryat Buddhists for two years now. It is situated in Ivolginsk datsan (spiritual centre for Russian Buddhists located in the capital of Burytia Ulan-Ude). According to the current head of Buddhist traditional sangha in Russia Khamba-lama Damba Ayusheev, this unexplainable phenomenon had encouraged faithful Buddhists and helped those in doubt to leave aside all their uncertainties.

Sensational results of the thorough examination of Lama Dasha-Dorjo Itigelov were released and made public only this year in Moscow, Russia.



### Intermediate Yoga Class

Fees : S\$150  
Venue : TLC Student Care Centre  
Date/Time : Every Wed until 23 March 05,  
7.30pm – 9pm  
Details : Please call Jane Tay at 6849 5317 to register or enquire.

### Yoga Retreat

Fees : S\$400  
Venue : D' Coconut Resort, Pulau Besar  
Date/Time : 17-20 March 05  
Details : Participants can get to learn about the principles and techniques of cleansing in yoga. This helps them to clear up some emotional and physical issues that they may not even be aware of. Please call Kok Tong at 6849 5318 or e-mail [koktong@kmspks.org](mailto:koktong@kmspks.org) to register or enquire. You can also register at [http://www.kmspks.org/events/evt\\_yoga.htm](http://www.kmspks.org/events/evt_yoga.htm)

### Basic Buddhism Course Year 1 & 2 (Mandarin)

Fees : S\$20  
Venue : To be advised  
Date/Time : 22 February 05 -26 April 05,  
7.00pm –9.30pm (Year 1)  
21 February 05 -25 April 05,  
7.00pm –9.30pm (Year 2)  
Details : Please call 6849 5324 / 325 or e-mail [events@kmspks.org](mailto:events@kmspks.org) to register or enquire.

### Om Recitation

Fees : Free  
Venue : To be advised  
Date/Time : 24 March 05, 23 April 05, 22 May 05,  
7.30pm –9.30pm  
Details : Please call 6849 5324 / 325 or e-mail [events@kmspks.org](mailto:events@kmspks.org) to register or enquire.

### Clay Figurine Arts, Wood Powder Figurine Arts, Butter Arts, Masks Making / Painting Arts

Details : Please call Bro Yiren at 6849 5359 or 92975901 to register or enquire for details about date, time, venue etc.

### Chinese Buddhist Music Orchestra (Chinese Orchestra-Based)

Fees : Free  
Venue : Music Studio, 1st floor, Venerable Hong Choon Memorial Hall, Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery  
Date/Time : Every Fri, 7.30pm - 9.30pm  
Details : For people who are passionate about Chinese Buddhist Music and would like to propagate the Dharma through the medium of music. Must be willing to perform when required. Please call Bro Yiren at 6849 5359 or 92975901 to register or enquire.

### Body Mind Medicine

- Yoga for Your Neck and Shoulders
- Yoga for Your Back and Spine
- Awareness Place Day (March)
- Music Therapy by Robert Boyd
- Ayurveda
- Applying Dharma in the Workplace (Chinese)
- Brain Gym

Details : Please call Cheryl Yong at 6849 5349 or e-mail [events@awarenessplace.com](mailto:events@awarenessplace.com) to register or enquire for details about date, time, venue, fees etc.

### PKS Sat/ Sunday School

Venue : Pagoda of Ten Thousands Buddhas, Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery  
Date/Time : Every Sat, 3.00pm – 5.30pm  
Every Sun, 9.30am – 12.00pm  
Details : Classes On Buddhism range from Primary 1 to Secondary 4. Registration for 2006 classes starts in November 05. Please call Gladys at 6849 5327 to register or enquire.

Youth Ministry Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery provides opportunities for young adults to be involved in community & dharma propagation through volunteering, project initiations and internships. We also seek volunteers with expertise in youth & leadership development, writing & translation & other areas. Contact us if you wish to find out more about Buddhism or just make a difference. Don't hesitate! | 6849 5346 | [youth@kmspks.org](mailto:youth@kmspks.org) | [www.kmspks.org/youth](http://www.kmspks.org/youth)

## Picturing Khyentse Norbu: Filmmaker and Spiritual Leader

by Norman New



Khyentse Norbu's name flashes to applause on cinema screens. His first full-length feature, 'The Cup' has been feted at international film from Venice to Vancouver, His latest, 'Travellers and Magicians', is still making the international film circuit.

Away from the bright lights, he is known in Buddhist circles as H.E. (His Eminence) Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche, a revered lama. Enthroned at age seven as the third reincarnation of a famous 19th-century Buddhist saint and reformer Khyentse Wangpo, he has founded numerous monasteries, colleges, and centres around the world. As the world's first film-making lama, Norbu has dedicated his life to upholding and disseminating Buddhist philosophy and his passion for film.



**AWAKEN:** To some, you are a modern, savvy, jet-setting movie director. To others you are revered as a great spiritual teacher. How do you reconcile these two seemingly disparate personas?

**KN:** I don't need to reconcile.

**AWAKEN:** Whether you like it or not, devotees will have expectations of you as a spiritual teacher. They may have thoughts like 'why would a lama become a movie director'?

**KN:** I guess because on both sides (the spiritual side and the film side), there was a mistake.

From the spiritual side, sadly in this modern world Buddhism has been interpreted as a religion, especially when we use a modern language such as English, where almost every spiritual word has a strong base in Christianity. When we talk about good or bad, doing the right thing or the wrong thing, the listeners hear it based on a Christian understanding.

In Indian philosophy, which Buddhism is one big part of, good and bad is not that simple. For instance when we talk about morality, good and bad, we talk so much more on motivation, or the intent. You could be killing someone with the right motivation and Buddhists believe that you can collect a lot of merit. We hear stories like that. Buddhist good and bad is so difficult to define. It's so individual.

Anyway what I'm trying to say is from the spiritual side, Buddhism has been categorised as a religion. Automatically people think, 'Oh as a Buddhist they have to wear such and such, eat such and such, not eat such and such, not do this and that, do this and that'. So as a Buddhist, how can one make movies, watch movies, listen to music, make music, all of that.

From the film side, film is always associated with sex, violence, limousine, paparazzi and all that but that's wrong because there are so many great films that have got nothing to do with that. For instance almost all of Andrei Tarkovsky's (famous Russian filmmaker) films are portraits. They are literature but



not in the format of books, which are written and printed. It's a painting, an expression of art.

So I think from both sides, people make this mistake. They put two together and say how can he as a Buddhist make such and such?

For me, someone who understands Buddhism more as a philosophy, more as a science, to live life, even to drink a glass of water, you can drink as a Buddhist. You appreciate it moment by moment. That is Buddhism.

There's no such thing as an evil way of drinking the water, or a wholesome way of drinking the water. For someone who pursues this kind of path, film is just another tool. It's another language. I don't see any contradiction between that, therefore I don't even begin to reconcile. There's no necessity.

**AWAKEN:** What is your motivation behind making movies, to propagate Buddhism or to simply pursue your passion?

**KN:** Well if my film can influence people in a good way, a spiritual way, I will take it as a bonus. But for now, my intention is one, just to make film, and two maybe in the future, if I happen to meet a crazy financier, I'm thinking that I can make a film on the life of the Buddha.



And I say only if I meet a crazy financier because if you really want to do it properly, you have to try to do it as authentic as possible, and that means no Brad Pitt, no Keanu Reeves, and that means no money. Nobody's going to give you money, because it's a guaranteed financial flop. So basically for me (both my father and grandfather are considered great poets), I guess you can say that this is my poetry.

**AWAKEN:** Have you thought about shooting something so dramatic like the life of Milarepa (famous 12<sup>th</sup> century Tibetan Buddhist saint and poet who achieved enlightenment in one single lifetime) or Guru Rinpoche (commonly known as the founder of Tibetan Buddhism), which has all the makings of a blockbuster because it has magic, black magic, murder, intrigue?

**KN:** Well Milarepa's already done ... by one of my friends (from New York Film Academy), though not yet edited. A blockbuster is very difficult because somehow at least for the next decade, our culture is very much influenced by the West.



Take a film like *The Last Samurai*. When you watch it, you know that actually the story's about the samurai so why do we have Tom Cruise? For the money! As long as there's a Tom Cruise, who cares about authenticity? We have never seen finely combed, fluffy haired Samurai in all of Japanese history. All along we have rugged-looking, shaved hair, very stocky sort of samurai, but Hollywood doesn't care about these things. For blockbuster you have to entertain.

Yes if I cast someone like Johnny Depp as Milarepa, it might work. But then I think any artist who has a little bit of a heart will ache.

**AWAKEN:** In the West, there is a fascination with anything that's Tibetan. The Dalai Lama has a huge following in Hollywood from Richard Gere to Sharon Stone. And then there's the 'Free Tibet' concert featuring Bjork, the Beastie Boys etc. Do you think it's a passing fad or it's here to stay?

**KN:** Maybe in America, it could be a passing sort of thing. But there's something great about Western culture and Tibetan Buddhism.

In Buddhism we encourage people to ask questions... to be sceptical, to be critical. You have to ask questions, debate, argue... In fact, this is why many Westerners are beginning to ask questions to what used to be their religion, Christianity and all that.

This is also why they are more attracted to the academic and intellectual-oriented path, which is Buddhism. That is very good news. Due to the curiosity of the West, they can analyse Buddhism for centuries and it will get better because there's nothing fundamentally wrong with Buddhism.

This is the great thing about Buddhism. From the time the Buddha taught until today, Buddhism has never had to change. Almost all the other religions, they have to change. The Old Testament, the New Testament, the latest Testament, they all have to interpret according to the times, the fashion, but never Buddhism.

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Fundamental Buddhist teachings, such as all compounded elements (things which exist because of causes and conditions, hence they do not have any intrinsic existence of their own) are impermanent, from the time the Buddha taught until today hasn't changed. It's not as if now, some of the things have become more permanent, you understand? From the time he taught until today, all compounded things are impermanent. Full stop.

**AWAKEN:** The youths in Singapore, who grow up on MTVs and hamburgers, are generally not too keen on spirituality. Most are busy pursuing their materialistic needs, and instant gratification. What is the most effective and impactful way to acquaint them with Buddhism?

KN: I think we should not stop them from having fun. That should never be the agenda... They will not listen and it's not necessary. We don't need to tell them what to do... We just give them the idea of how to have more fun, more lasting, cheaper, economical, free fun!

In fact, the whole path of Buddhism, the purpose, is to have more fun. Whether you call it Nirvana or whether you call it fun, it's actually the same. In fact, Nirvana is supposed to be the greatest fun!

You see the young people today, their fun is in sex, drugs, video machines and all that but after a while they run out of ideas. Their age gets older and after a while they really don't know how to have fun because all these have become outdated.

You also have to learn to have more fun, without drugs, without needing to buy, because when you need to buy video machines and drugs then you are surrendering... to some pathetic substance. In Buddhism you don't need to buy. Free fun. You can have it, built-in, portable fun, within your own being.

**AWAKEN:** To many youths, Buddhism is passe. They see their parents and grandparents at temples offering joss sticks, worshipping idols and they think that's so uncool. How then can we change their mindsets and make Buddhism more appealing to them?

KN: I think that might change automatically. There was a period when Buddhism was flourishing intellectually and spiritually - the Golden Age. And then Buddhism became sort of a custom. The joss sticks, fortune telling, sort of all got mixed up with Buddhism.

But now the young people are getting more education. They are trained to think. That is good news for Buddhism. In fact, scientific knowledge like physics, is very good news for Buddhism. Like Einstein said, "In the future there will be one religion that will complement science and that is Buddhism."

**AWAKEN:** Let's talk about - the threat of terrorism. What do you think Buddhism has to offer in a time of much paranoia and fear?

KN: I think there's a lot. The core of Buddhism is Madyamika, the Middle Way. And what is middle way? Middle Way is non-extremism. When you practise middle way, you are not rightist, you are not leftist, you are sitting in the middle. That is what is lacking in many systems.

Extremism comes about when you have no middle. I think in this age, we have the problem of terrorism and it stems from being extremist, believing in something that is extreme. That is something, which can be combated with Buddhism, something which we could do. Individually, we can combat that.

**AWAKEN:** What are your plans for the future? Any plans for a third movie?

KN: I'm thinking of making a gong fu film, sort of a mixture of Chinese gong fu and Japanese samurai. That's in my head but there are a few stories... I don't know. Making film, especially foreign language film, is difficult, very difficult.

**AWAKEN:** Thank you Rinpoche. We wish you all the best in your film-making career and may you continue to inspire and guide.





# Building a More Compassionate World

Tan Li-Anne speaks to a new breed of Buddhists who are not content with just sending loving-kindness from their meditation cushions to the world.

Buddhists in Singapore are often seen to be a quiet lot, content to just pray, and practise their religion in peace. But not Jane Lim, Toh Ai Kit and Phua Chao Rong. They are a growing breed of Buddhists who are taking direct action to shape the world they live in.

They're not only unusual Buddhists, they're not even your average Singaporean complain Kings and Queens. They believe that their actions can make a difference to society. Jane runs an environmentally-friendly business, while Ai Kit and Chao Rong are student leaders with a strong sense of social responsibility.



## Jane Lim: Green Lifestyle, Green Livelihood

Jane is a soft-spoken, almost shy woman with a strong, inner core of resilience when it comes to the cause close to her heart—environmentalism. So much so that she gave up her job 17 years ago as a financial controller to run and own Singapore's first recycled paper supply company with her husband Richard.

The couple embarked onto this business even before Singaporeans know what environmentalism is. No one had heard of recycled paper either. Today, her company RJ Paper is Singapore's most established recycled paper supplier. In her company, the staff gets involved with environmental clean-ups and conserve natural resources. But Jane was not always that aware of environmental issues. Her green sensibilities were awakened one day when her daughter



who was studying in Canada at that time wrote to tell her she saw “logs and logs of trees moving from under (her) windows.” “Unless more trees are being replanted, they will all be gone,” exclaimed her daughter in the letter.

“Reading this, I just felt that something is not right. We were conscious that something is happening (to the environment) and we wanted to do something about it,” says Jane. Even then, not all paper-recycling mills were equally green. Some recycling practices can be very hazardous to the environment. “When we set up this company, we selected mills that are very committed to the environment. They have environmental auditors to ensure that their mills are doing the right thing while they are recycling, and not harm the environment.”

It wasn’t all a bed of roses for Jane too when she tried to start her environmental business in those early days. “It was harder than any other business...I had to do a lot of the legwork myself,” she quips. Jane remembered having to visit 10 to 12 designers and multinational corporations on some days just to educate potential clients and promote her earth-friendly paper. She also made time to give educational talks to schools.

Now that RJ Paper is an established company, they have been able to extend their social action further. Many charities have benefited from RJ’s contributions in kind. They donate paper stock to many charities for their publicity and donation-drive materials. “It is an act of recycling for a good cause. We could have sold our off-cuts of paper for pulping and get some money but we would rather give it to a good cause,” smiles Jane. Even her work environment and home do not escape her attention. Surrounding her office building are plants to attract butterflies. Her own home garden is a catchment area for birds. Once a year, the whole office takes half a day off during work to clean up the estates that their office is located in. They clear out monsoon drains and rubbish, weed paths and compost the organic materials from their cleaning session.

Giving back to Mother Nature and doing what’s right in life and business give Jane enormous satisfaction. “I am happy that things are going on the right course...it is just a great feeling of satisfaction and inner peace that nothing can replace.”

## Toh Ai Kit: The Meaning of Life in Community Work

“I think young people need to be socially-conscious. It seems we are always complaining about stuff. Instead of sitting there and complain, you have to do something about it. If you don’t succeed at least you tried to change it,” declares Ai Kit, a second-year accountancy student at Nanyang Technological Institute.

And as President of NTU’s Campus Buddhist Society, she is hoping to do just that through community service. She has been heavily involved with an annual project called “Compassion in Action”. This project had Buddhist and non-Buddhist students raising funds campus-wide for various charities. It was an opportunity for students to demonstrate that they care about the society and of others in fund-raising and various activities conducted in conjunction with the elderly and special needs children. Last year’s activities saw them garnering S\$11,000 for two charities through collections and a car wash. Compassion in Action even had members of the public from the Bishan estate volunteering their time in the car wash event.

Ai Kit feels a strong sense of community because it was nurtured in the family. Besides, she had been heavily involved with community and welfare projects in junior college. Coming from these influences, adjusting to university life was initially a culture shock for her.



“The people (I used to mix with) in junior college actually discussed and voiced their opinions about current affairs and what’s in the papers. But undergrads in campus seem to be more concerned about manicures, pedicures and the latest hairstyles. To them, discussing and talking about current affairs seem really weird,” she says. That was until she found a natural home for her sense of community action in the Campus Buddhist Society.

Community work has prompted Ai Kit to understand more fully about what gives her life meaning, “Personally, I have benefited from the practice (of community service) and know this will benefit other people. I really hope that instead of chasing after material things, Singaporean youths can delve deeper into their own psyche, discover and understand what they are really looking for in life. I believe they will be able to lead a happier life,” she explains.



## Phua Chao Rong: Leading to Serve



Since junior college, Chao Rong, now an undergrad at the University of London in the United Kingdom, had a vision. It “was to create a revolutionary economic system which has its natural mechanics of wealth distribution.” This vision came from his experience of growing up under financial strain and community work as a teenager.



“My mother is a dialysis patient since I was secondary three. That impacted me because my family was cash-strapped with dialysis fees. Then the NKF got involved and cut the costs a substantial bit and I could see a slight change for the

better (in family conditions). Their work inspired me. NKF showed me the meaning of community service and the importance of developing yourself for society in the future.” So inspired was he that Chao Rong, even as a teenager, got himself involved in social and community projects in Singapore and Asia. He has built and furnished a clinic in Cebu and fed street children.

Now the president of the University of London Union Buddhist Association, his community and study efforts and his leadership potential have been recognised. Chao Rong is Singapore’s first winner of the Goldman Sachs Global Leaders Award 2004 at his college.

Even with little time on his hands as a scholarship student and a member of the student government, he manages to

squeeze in little acts of kindness—“because they all add up”. When he is not mentoring fellow international students to help make their stay in London more comfortable, he matches friends with differing abilities and skills with various social and community organisations that are in need. He also puts his singing talent to good use for various charities and Buddhist organisations, spearheads community projects and develops leadership among his union members.

As president of the Association he has encouraged members to refurbish a primary school, clean a park and even sell food at charity food fair. Chao Rong also firmly believes circumstances like wealth are impermanent, and that it is only through the cultivation of the self by practising generosity and compassion to benefit society can it help us weather the ups and downs of life better.

“You can be rich today and poor tomorrow. No one likes to be poor but the important thing here is contentment by practising some kind of generosity. You can be money-minded but not a slave to money,” adds the down-to-earth young man.

“There are a lot of societal values such as helping people, having a good family life, having a healthy group of friends etc, that can create more joy and contentment. To have control over your life (and its impermanence) you have to, like the Buddha says, understand the way things flow and to ride with it rather than go against it,” he continues.

For now going with the flow means accepting that his vision of wealth distribution will “piece up slowly”. “I do not see that this vision of mine will happen until at least 200 years later,” he says. In the meantime, he is happy to do what he can in whatever way he can, to build his ability to lead and serve the society he is in.



# Go Green

## this Festive Season

By Shen Shi An & Esther Thien

You have heard the medical experts, greens are good for you. You should have two servings each of fruits and veds a day. Not only are they loaded with plenty of antioxidants, vitamins and minerals, eating just greens in your diet for a short or long period of time is also good for the environment and your health in another way.

Often, meat reared in cramped and unhygienic animal farms is injected with all kinds of chemical and hormones to get these animals to fatten up in the shortest possible time before they are sent to the slaughter house. When we consumed the meat of these animals, our body too received the chemicals and hormones that they were injected with and these could bring about adverse health effects in the long run.

You have read about the detrimental health aspect, let us hear what the Buddha has to say about going vegetarian.

**“If a person does not harm any living being... and does not kill or cause others to kill- that person is a true spiritual practitioner.”**

- *Dhammapada (The Buddha)*

**“In order to satisfy one human stomach, so many lives are taken away. We must promote vegetarianism. It is extremely important.”**

-*Live in a Better Way: Reflections on Truth, Love and Happiness*  
 (His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama)

**“The Bodhisattva, whose nature is Compassion, is not to eat any meat... For fear of causing terror to living beings... let the Bodhisattva who is disciplining himself to attain Compassion, refrain from eating flesh.”**

-*Lankavatara Sutra (The Buddha)*

**“The eating of meat extinguishes the seed of great Compassion.”**

-*Mahaparinirvana Sutra (The Buddha)*

Buddhism is a religion that advocates compassion and wisdom. In the Bodhisattva practice of minimising harm to all beings and benefiting them as much as possible, the practice of vegetarianism plays an essential role.

All true practitioners walking the Bodhisattva path eventually relinquish meat-eating. In one of His former lives, the Buddha (when he was still a Bodhisattva) would rather cut His own flesh to feed an eagle than allow it to devour a smaller bird. Such is the compassion of the Bodhisattvas!

Thus, all advanced practising Bodhisattvas are almost always vegetarians, for they cannot bear the pain of sentient beings.

While nothing we eat makes us impure, our selection and choice of diet are themselves actions with implications. If our choice of diet arises from greed, sustaining the greed obviously makes us impure.

In addition, supply and demand is an obvious vicious cycle. The whole universe of meat-eating and animal slaughtering is an intricate web of interdependence, and of related cause-and-effect. When we buy meat, we play a part in the circle of life and death of other beings.

Therefore, Buddhists practising the Bodhisattva path should do all they can and as much as they can in their ability to avoid killing and protect life.

But at the end of the day, the choice is still yours. A vegetarian diet is not obligatory for Buddhists. Buddhism is a free religion and the Buddha leaves it to you to choose. Though there are always kinder and wiser choices you can make, you are also free to choose otherwise.



# The 6 Benefits of Being a Vegetarian

## 1. Personal well-being

No diseases can come from a balanced vegetarian diet. Medical proof states that all kinds of diseases spring from meat-eating, while having a vegetarian diet not only prevents, but helps cure many diseases.

In addition, our body constitution is also not designed for meat digestion. For example, our teeth and intestine structure are virtually identical to that of herbivorous, not carnivorous animals. When we eat animals that had die in great fear and hatred, we also devour along with the meat their toxins of fear and hatred, which affects both our spiritual and physical health.

## 2. Well-being of animals

Animals that are bred for the sole purpose to be served on our dinner tables live imprisoned and tortured lives from day one until they were sent to the slaughter house.

While alive in the farms, they suffer from overcrowding, castration and countless other cruelties.

## 3. Well-being of the environment

Animal-rearing depletes the Earth's resources of energy, land, crops and water. It also creates large amounts of harmful animal sewage and greenhouse gases.

## 4. Well-being of fellow humans

Do you know that more than two-thirds of the Earth's croplands are used to cultivate animal feed for animals to be slaughtered as meat? No human starvation would have existed if these crops meant for animal rearing were converted as food for citizens of the Third World Countries.



## 5. Peace on Earth

Wars, racial riots and other forms of related human unrest are collective karmic results of generated hatred when group-slaughtered animals, which die in great fear and hatred, are reborn as humans.

“For hundreds and thousands of years

The stew in the pot has brewed hatred and resentment

That is difficult to stop.

If you wish to know why there are disasters of armies and weapons in the world,

Listen to the piteous cries from the slaughter house at midnight.”

*-Ancient Chinese Verse translated by Gold Mountain Monastery Staff*

## 6. All beings have at one point or another been reborn as our kin

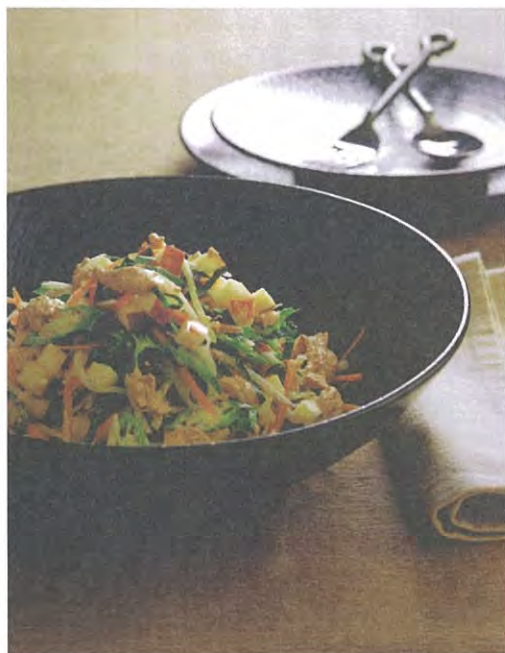
In Buddhism, we believe that as long as we have yet to achieve Enlightenment, we will always be subjected to the cycle of birth, death, rebirth and of Karma. The practice of vegetarianism is thus the practice of filial piety, for all beings would have at one point or another in our endless cycle of birth and death been reborn as our relatives.

By going vegan, Buddhists are also practising qualities of Loving-kindness, Compassion and Equanimity to all beings, as they keep in mind and recognise that animals too have the Buddha Nature (the potential to become Buddhas) in them, just like us.



Now that you have read the benefits of being a vegetarian, why not take the opportunity to celebrate the Lunar New Year with these easy-to-cook and yummy dishes.

### Fusion Salad



#### Salad

- 2 lady's fingers, cut fairly thin and cross-wise
- 2 winged beans, cut fairly thin and cross-wise
- 2-3 caixin (also spelled chye sim) leaves finely cut (or xiao pai cai / kai-lan)
- 100-150 gm cucumber cut/grated fairly fine length-wise or cross-wise
- 150 gm jicama (or known as sweet turnip/ yam bean/ ban-kuang) cut or grated
- 150 gm carrot cut/grated
- 1 small apple, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp currants/raisins

#### Dressing

- 5 dates
- 250 g cashew nuts
- red sepals of 5-6 Hibiscus Roselle calyx
- 2 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice

#### Method

1. Mix salad ingredients together
2. Blend dates, cashew and sepals with enough water to make a thick but slightly runny paste.
3. Mix in freshly squeezed lemon juice.

Serves: 4

### Quick & Tasty Soup



#### Ingredients

- 1 litre filtered water
- 1 carrot, cubed
- 1 ear of sweet corn cut into 4 pieces
- 1/3 bitter melon, sliced
- 1/2 cucumber sliced
- 1/4 cup of shiitake mushrooms
- 1/4 cup of baby bamboo shoots
- 1/2 tsp of mushroom stock crystals
- Salt to taste
- 2 cloves garlic (optional)
- 1/4 cup of onion (optional)

#### Method

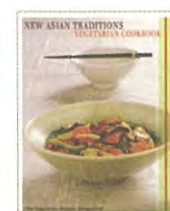
1. Bring the water to the boil.
2. When the water boils, add the spices and mushrooms.
3. Add the vegetables in order according to how soft you want each to be.

Like other soups, this one is great for reheating, as soups often taste best when eaten later in the day or week. You can always add in any other vegetables you may have in your kitchen.

As with all vegetable cooking, it's good to use a low heat to cook and reheat soups. This conserves some of the nutrients which would be destroyed by rapid cooking and high heat.

Serves: 4

Recipes published with permission from Vegetarian Society (Singapore) from their *New Asian Traditions Vegetarian Cookbook*. The book is available at all major book stores in June 2005.



## Tan Li-Anne speaks to a stressed out rebel on her journey inwards.



# Clear Mind,

The faith we grew up with can be weighed down with baggage—filled with too many rules and rituals we don't understand—till we jettison dead weight to find the enduring kernel of truth.

Ching Wi, a social activist for many years, social worker and former arts administrator grew up suspicious of organised religion. Yet two years ago, she surprised herself by taking refuge in Buddhism. This momentous but low-key ceremony synchronistically led to a different lifestyle, and even a surprising new job that exceeded all expectations. She now works for the largest temple in Singapore, Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery, to promote Buddhism among youth.

"Buddhism is just like a detox process. It involves unlearning certain attitudes and mindsets and having that clarity and the necessary courage to know that you don't have to think like everybody else," declares Ching Wi.

A self admitted rebel who likes to shake things up, Ching Wi has always been socially engaged, standing up for those who need someone in their corner—especially women and the elderly—through her social work, policy research and even her work with theatre group Necessary Stage, a company known for their concern with social issues.

Little did she know that some preconceived notions that she needed to detoxify from her mind included faith and religion.

Just more than two years ago, her brush with Buddhism started

innocently enough. "I wanted to learn how to meditate. I was hoping that with meditation I would be clearer in my thinking, and therefore work."

So she and her sister signed up for four weeks of meditation at The Awareness Place, run by Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery. There, they learnt a different type of meditation each week.

Ever suspicious of organised religion, meditation in a neutral place, not at a temple, was something Ching Wi felt she could dip her toes in.

"What I found out about myself in the process was amazing because the usual ways that I understand religion didn't become a blockage," she recalls. "If you told me one and half years ago that I would have to go to a temple and meditate, I would have freaked out," she smiles.

"{I had believed} that in organised religion and its group dynamics, there is some leader telling followers what to do all the time, you have to behave in a certain way and as an individual if you tend to be different, the difference will be highlighted because there is some kind of peer pressure."

# Open Heart



Buddhism class, working less and having a greater sense of well-being brought the clarity Ching Wi sought. It even became clear that her misgivings about religion were “just me being really uncomfortable about giving openness a try.”

This openness meant laying down her sceptical defences and finally taking refuge in the Triple Gems—the Buddha, the Dharma (Buddhist Teaching), the Sangha (the religious community)

Only that never happened. Instead she found a natural progression into Buddhism and a doorway to knowing her nature, and her self.

Although she could not completely immerse herself in the meditations in class then, the insight to herself had begun. “My sister and I were so tired and uptight, and using our brains so much that we couldn’t get anything.”

Unfazed, she repeated the course. This time round she found herself getting closer to the concepts of Loving-Kindness Meditation. One thing led to another and soon Ching Wi finds herself attending a basic Buddhism course that lasted for nine months.

“I wanted to find out about Buddhism beyond books, how it could apply to life. If they had just gone with explanations from the book I would have been bored. Instead the explanations from real-life made sense,” she explains.

Since the Buddhist class wasn’t just about concepts but touched upon more on meditation, it taught Ching Wi to become even more reflective and aware of her life. Though she loved her job, she realised it had taken over 24 hours of her life. She had become too tired to truly be joyful about life. So she quit her job to listen to herself more.

“I realised it was about me taking care of me.” Buddhism is about wisdom, of compassion ...It is about showing loving-kindness to yourself. If I don’t fix myself and I don’t understand about showing loving-kindness to myself, how do I know if I’m sending loving-kindness to the universe?”



This simple ceremony touched something deep within. There was a small talk by a monk about the true meaning of taking refuge. Then a “magical” thing happened. “You know how you are touched and your heart just opens and you feel very teary. It was one of those moments...what was said really resonated.”

“From an observer with my intellectual mind, I had switched from an outside observer to an insider doing”, as she described herself offering joss sticks to Kuan Yin and paying respects to the monk...I was no longer just taking part in an empty ritual. It has meaning for me.”

Months later, she decided to volunteer at the temple but was offered her present job instead. Now, she counts herself lucky for being able to combine social action with her growing spirituality. These days, she uses her spunk to

find new and relevant ways to speak to other modern 20 to 30-somethings like her. It has allowed her to promote a Buddhism that can be “socially engaged” and relevant to the educated professional.

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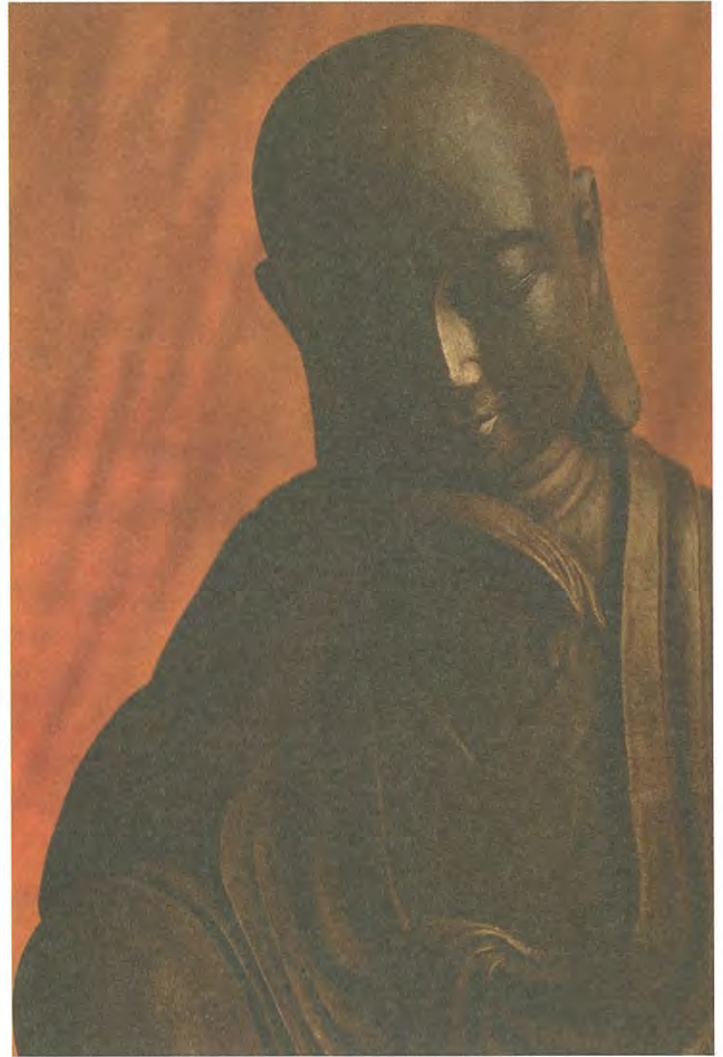
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By Shen Shi An

I saw an interesting account recently. Two cars had, for some reason, decided to park at the side of the curb on a little road in a temple. Only a narrow gap that separated the two cars allowed pedestrians to walk through. I was walking behind an old lady when she suddenly stopped in her tracks at the start of the gap and began to gesticulate wildly, yelling madly in dialect at the drivers within, of their inconsideration in inconveniencing others. As I came closer, I shifted my body to get around her, to go through the gap. Some distance away, I still hear her ranting on.

## What Got in Your Way?

What is the moral of this story? While indeed the cars were generally parked too close for comfort, I started asking myself: "How much space do we need others to give, for our body, or rather ego, to get by without feeling unfair?"

This incident reminded me of a saying of Venerable Sheng Yen: "Our wants are too many; Our needs are few."

Though the drivers in this case were not very thoughtful, I believe they had no real intention, whatsoever, to obstruct anyone. In fact, there was no obstruction in the truest sense – this is because though the gap was small, it was still adequate for pedestrians to go through.

If you asked me, I believe the lady was obstructed not by the cars or her body, but by the "fatness" of her ego – as she felt she deserved more space.

Even if she was genuinely concerned with letting the drivers realise their mistake, so as to benefit other pedestrians, there was no need to scream at both drivers - especially



since you can't tell, for sure, who was the "guilty" driver who created the gap.

Ironically, while the lady was complaining of the cars "blocking" her way, she had also unmindfully become an obstacle herself in blocking my path. Looking back, I realise she had left even lesser space for me than the gap created by the cars.

If she felt that the drivers deserved her scolding, well does that mean I have more ground to grumble at her?

**Suddenly, the following Dhammapada verse enunciated by the Buddha made a lot of sense: "Not the faults of others, nor what others have done or left undone, but one's own deeds, done and left undone, should one consider."**

The very moment we find faults in others, we lose vigilance in guarding our own deeds and might end up as "faulty", perhaps even more than the ones we criticise.

The verse advises us to spend more effort in being mindful of our own thoughts, speech and actions than those of others. Being unenlightened, we only have so much mindfulness to spare so we should make full use of it wisely.

Of course, this is not to say we should keep mum when we see others make mistakes - it's just that it is spiritually unproductive to oneself to deliberately find faults with others more than to check on ourselves.

We should also ensure that we are not guilty of the same mistakes before we patiently inform others of theirs. As I have managed to let go of the obstructions set by my ego in that moment, I swiftly and silently passed through the two gaps - one set by the lady and the other by the cars. While she, on the other hand, remained stuck, obstructed by herself, and unnecessarily making others and herself unhappy.

How often do we do the same? How often do we let our ego get in the way? If we are able to let go of our ego, what else can't we? When we set everything free, we become free of everything.

In a stanza found in the Infinite Life Sutra, the Buddha describes the Bodhisattvas in Pureland as "like the wind, they are not attached to anything, and so they are without obstruction. They are like the lotus flowers that are not affected by the filthy mud..."

This means to experience Pureland now, we only have to open our heart and let go of our ego, our true obstacle. Are you in Pureland yet? What got in your way?

Dear Reader,

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



painting courtesy of Sherry Giang

# 4 Golden Rules to being a Good Spiritual Lover

By Shen Shi An & Esther Thien

Ever wondered what it means to be a good spiritual lover? Well, here are four rules that you may like to follow this Valentine's Day to establish a good spiritual love relationship with your potential significant other. Note these rules work only if you follow them in the order that they are listed.

Happy mate searching and have a Happy Valentine's!



## Rule #1 : Be Friends

Don't jump the gun and leap before you look where you're going. Be friends first if you like to establish a relationship that is grounded on more than just pure physical attraction. You can't really love somebody you don't know much about unless your karmic attraction is so huge that it greatly compelled the both of you to come together like magnets. Even then, you should be aware that "love at first sight" is almost always mere infatuation. Trust your gut feelings only if they have never failed you before.

Also remember this: the essence of a person is always more important than his or her outer form. One's form or appearance is only a very rough and often vague guide to a person's true essence. A beast might have great beauty within and vice versa. The essence of that person (be it traits of wholesomeness, kindness or wisdom) is what one should be attracted to, and something one can learn from. Otherwise what you are attracted to is only the pleasing appearance of the person. What happens when that eye-candy appearance fades away? Although it's natural for lust of some sort, obvious or subtle, to be involved in the initial courtship stages, it is important that you try to keep that love spiritual.

Learning to love someone spiritually does not mean automatically or forcefully erasing or denying the sexual tensions between you and your partner, rather, it is the mindfulness in not allowing lust to dominate the reason for being together.

Loving spiritually also means gradually reducing the lust and craving in good time. Spiritual love purifies each other. It does not further taint or defile. You are to free each other, not embrace each other to fall deeper into Samsara. It is obvious the Buddha would not approve of worldly love at all, if it hardly evolves towards spiritual love.

## Rule #2 : Be Good Friends

Just as good friendship is needed to foster any long-lasting friendship, good friendship is also a prerequisite to sustain the lovingness of a romantic relationship. Good friendship here refers to spiritual friendship. Spiritual friendship is vertical, not horizontal friendship.

By horizontal friendship, we mean the superficial friendship that merely skims the surface of understanding each other. Vertical friendship, on the other hand, is an in-depth friendship rooted in the deep understanding of each other's psyche. Such a friendship addresses important issues such as supporting each other's spiritual growth towards the path of Enlightenment, not just mundane ones like "Where shall we shop and dine tonight?"

If you can learn lessons from nature, there should be much more you can learn and teach each other. If there is none, such a relationship is spiritually futile.

## Rule #3 : Be Best Friends

If you're already best friends, continue your best to sustain the well-developed spiritual friendship for this is a continual process.

As the law of impermanence has it, everything and everyone is changing constantly. Do not become complacent that you already know another person inside-out. You can only understand someone in the moment, not for every moment.

If you are yet to be best friends, work towards it. Best lovers are not only spiritual; they are also best of friends who are able to motivate each other to walk the spiritual path. It's all about communication - baring one's innermost thoughts and feelings to each other.

Best friends have nothing to hide from each other, and it is only so, that they can know each other well, thoroughly knowing and accepting each other's imperfections, while encouraging each other to work towards perfection. If you still have deep dark secrets which you hide from your partner, it almost certainly means you do not trust him or her completely yet.

The more secrets you keep from each other, the less intense and enduring is your relationship. Just as you would bare all your misgivings to a Buddha image in confession, likewise you should be able to confess your innermost thoughts and feelings to your partner, since you are supposed to be life-long Bodhisattvas to each other.

If there is any catch word crucial for you to remember from these four golden rules, it would be "Communication". Relationships are about honest communication, and benefiting from it. It is the heart and life of any relationship. Don't you find it bizarre and unsettling that many couples confide best in their best friends who are not each other? What is the real use of being together then, when the union is not a communion of minds, but just physical togetherness?

## Rule #4 : Be Others' Best Friends

Realise that spiritual love neither starts nor ends with the two of you. If it is genuine untainted love, it would and should naturally overflow to positively affect others, changing their lives for the better.

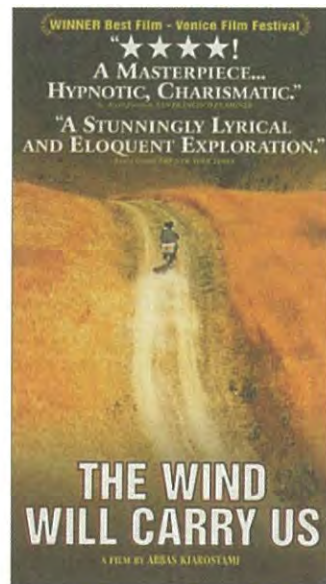
A healthy spiritual couple has many good friends whom they try to benefit, and from whom they still benefit from spiritually. If your love becomes an exclusive relationship that shuts the rest of the world out, then take note as it has mutated into a selfish, ungrowing and confining relationship; a personal Samsara for each other, mistaken to be a personal Pureland.

Do not seek perfect love. Instead, perfect your love. This is the natural way to attract True Love. It never fails.

May all love well, for loving is the essence of fruitful living.

# Seen

The road movie can be life-affirming, and in the right hands, is often a quest for self and a spiritual journey for its heroes. Also partake of the infectious energy of soccer-mad monks.



## The Wind Will Carry Us

Directed by: Abbas Kiarostami

Starring : Behzad Dourani and Farzad Sohrabi

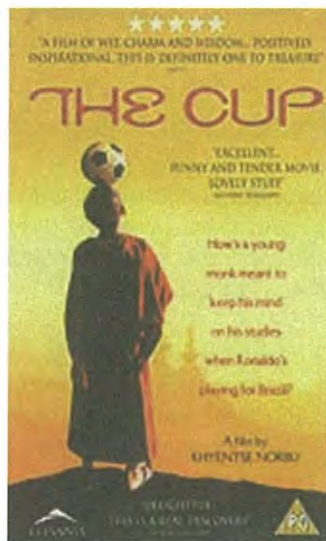
Why should you watch this? Well, it left famed Japanese director Akira Kurosawa speechless with admiration. Kiarostami explores themes of isolation, community, nature and the cycles of life. Contrasting motion with stillness and physical with spiritual, his films are a visual meditation. A city man and a television crew drive into an Iranian village to film a local burial ritual. Days drag on as the crew waits for an old woman to die, only she doesn't. Yet the non-event leads to a new respect for life. Filled with breathtaking compositions, gentle humour and deep insights.

## Paris, Texas

Directed by: Wim Wenders

Starring : Harry Dean Stanton and Nastassja Kinski

Set in the sun-bleached Texan desert along the Mexico border, Paris Texas is a road movie about a world-weary man. Amnesiac, Travis has mysteriously disappeared only to resurface years later in the desert. Tracing his path back to family, he rebuilds life with his brother, son and ex-wife. You can taste the raw grit of this journey of loss, slow inner transformation and final transfiguration. This film is deeply introspective but never pessimistic. Paris Texas clinched the Cannes Palm Dor for Best Film in 1984.



## "The Cup"

Directed by: Khyentse Norbu

Starring: Orgyen Tobgyal, Jamyang Lodro and Lama Chonjor.

Who can fail to be charmed by the innocence and passion of football-mad monks in Khyentse Norbu's "The Cup". Inspired by a true story and set in a small monastery in Tibet, Orgyen a soccer-crazy, 14-year-old monk attempts get the older monks to trade Buddhist chants for soccer chants. But how will they get a television into the monastery to watch the World Cup?

The inner journey is an experience of finding our own innate truths. These books are a good start.

# Read

## “Sacred Journey of the Peaceful Warrior”

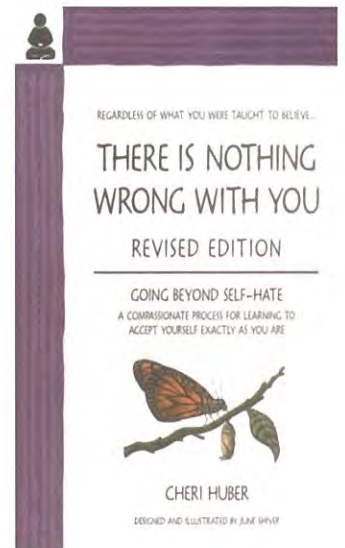
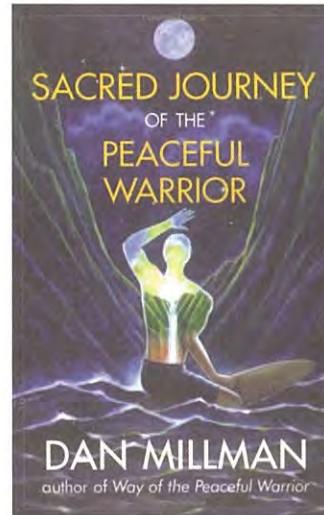
Dan Millman

Leaving a broken marriage, Dan Millman shares his spiritual learning with a woman shaman as he learns deep self-acceptance. In his search for what is sacred, his experiences with the people he meets on road become profoundly transformative. For instance, working with lepers helped him face and conquer his fear of sickness.

## There Is Nothing Wrong With You: Going Beyond Self-hate

by Cheri Huber

Do you take blame but not credit, hold grudges, and try to be perfect? These attempts to be “good”, merely keep us imprisoned in self-hate. If you’ve spend lots of energy and money to become the person you think you should be for a perfect life, this is for you! It explains that there is nothing wrong with you and a lot 'wrong' with what you’ve been taught to believe about yourself and life. Learn how self-hate works and how to let it go.



# Heard

Music to nourish the heart and mind.



## Einstein's Dream

by J.S. Epperson

Relax while heightening your mental abilities. This music will synchronise both halves of the brain—with Hemi-Sync technology combined with interpretation of Einstein's favourite classical music. Einstein's Dream can stimulate creativity and may be helpful for ADD/ADHD, dyslexia and other learning challenges.

## Voice From Tara

by Kelsang Chukie Tethong

This is a beautiful addition to any world music collection. Tibetan vocalist, Kelsang Chukie Tethong, has an amazing purity of voice, suitably showcased by the spare instrumentation for piano, woodwinds and violin. Her sincerity and love for Tibet just shines though in folk songs and Buddhist chants set to music. This remarkable gem is bound to engender a sense of spaciousness and meditation.

CDs available from Awareness Place.

Knowing that the other person is angry,  
one who remains mindful and calm  
acts for his own best interest  
and for the other's interest, too.  
- *Samyutta Nikaya I, 162 (The Buddha)*

You can wash the dishes to have clean dishes,  
or you can just wash the dishes.  
(enjoying the here and now)  
- *Thich Nhat Hanh*

To find a Buddha,  
all you have to do is see your nature.  
Your nature is the Buddha.  
- *Bodhidharma*

If we are evolving over infinite time,  
then every action in our lives has infinite consequences  
for ourselves and others.  
- *Robert Thurman*

Nothing can be right  
if the intention is wrong.  
- *Zen Saying*

To believe you are humble  
is to know you are not.  
Are you humble?  
- *Stonepeace*

To endure suffering is to end suffering;  
To spend blessings is to end blessings.  
- *Buddhist Saying*



painting courtesy of Sherry Giang

# Dhammavada



Remember always that you are  
just a visitor here,  
a traveller passing through.  
Your stay is but short and the moment of  
your departure unknown.

None can live without toil and a craft that  
provides your needs is a blessing indeed.  
But if you toil without rest, fatigue and  
weariness will overtake you,  
and you will be denied the joy that comes  
from labour's end.

Speak quietly and kindly and be not forward with either opinions or  
advice.

If you talk much, this will make you deaf to what others say,  
and you should know that there are few so wise  
that they cannot learn from others.

Be near when help is needed, but far when praise and thanks are being  
offered. Take small account of might, wealth and fame,  
for they soon pass and are forgotten. Instead, nurture love within you  
and strive to be a friend to all. Truly, compassion is a balm for many  
wounds.

Treasure silence when you find it, and while being mindful of your  
duties,  
set time aside, to be alone with yourself.

Cast off pretence and self-deception and see yourself as you really are.  
Despite all appearances, no one is really evil.  
They are led astray by ignorance.  
If you ponder this truth always you will offer more light,  
rather than blame and condemnation.

You, no less than all beings have Buddha Nature within.  
Your essential Mind is pure.  
Therefore, when defilements cause you to stumble and fall, let not  
remorse nor dark foreboding cast you down.  
Be of good cheer and with this understanding,  
summon strength and walk on.

Faith is like a lamp and wisdom makes the flame burn bright.  
Carry this lamp always and in good time the darkness will yield  
and you will abide in the Light.

# Glossary

**Bodhisattva:** One who aspires to save all beings from suffering, while saving oneself.

**Buddha:** An aspect of the Triple Gem-The Awakened or Enlightened One. A Buddha is one who has attained liberation from all suffering, attaining True Happiness, Perfect Wisdom and Perfect Compassion, among all other virtues for the sake of helping all sentient beings. "The Buddha" refers to the historical Shakyamuni or Gautama Buddha, who is the founder of Buddhism in our world.

**Buddha Nature:** The potential of being a Buddha in all of us-the Buddha within us.

**Compassion:** The quality that makes us aspire to help others with no selfish intention, the end of selfishness.

**Compassionate:** possessing the quality of "Compassion".

**Defilements:** Our negative qualities-chiefly Greed (Craving), Hatred (Aversion) and Ignorance (Delusion).

**Delusion:** See 'Ignorance'.

**Dharma:** An aspect of the Triple Gem-the teachings of the Buddha or the general teachings of Buddhism.

**Dhammapada:** A collection of sayings by the Buddha.

**Enlightenment:** The realisation of the reality of all things as they truly are. True Happiness is a result.

**Equanimity:** The calm and balanced state of mind of not being affected by attachment or aversion to anything.

**Ignorance:** The quality of lacking Wisdom, not knowing the reality of all things. Same as delusion.

**Karma:** The moral law of cause and effect which states that what we experience is the result of what we had done, that what we do will result in what we will experience.

**Karmic:** Pertaining to "Karma" or relating to it.

**Loving-kindness:** The quality which makes us wish for the happiness and well-being of others.

**Mindfulness:** An aspect of the "Noble Eightfold Path"-the quality that enables us to remember, and keep our awareness and attention on what is beneficial to one and all in terms of thoughts, speech and actions.

**Mindful:** Possessing the quality of "Mindfulness".

**Pureland:** A world without defilements created by a Buddha out of Compassion, for sentient beings to seek birth in, to perfect the practice of the Dharma. The best known being Sukhavati Pureland created by Amitabha Buddha.

**Rebirth:** The continual cycle of birth and death.

**Samsara:** This world of rebirth and suffering.

**Sangha:** An aspect of the Triple Gem-the holy community of monks and nuns.

**Suffering:** The physical and mental feeling of dissatisfaction.

**Sutra (s):** The recorded teachings of the Buddha, such as the Dhammavadaka Sutra mentioned in this issue.

**Triple Gem:** The Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.

**Venerable:** An honorific addressing of a member of the Sangha.

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