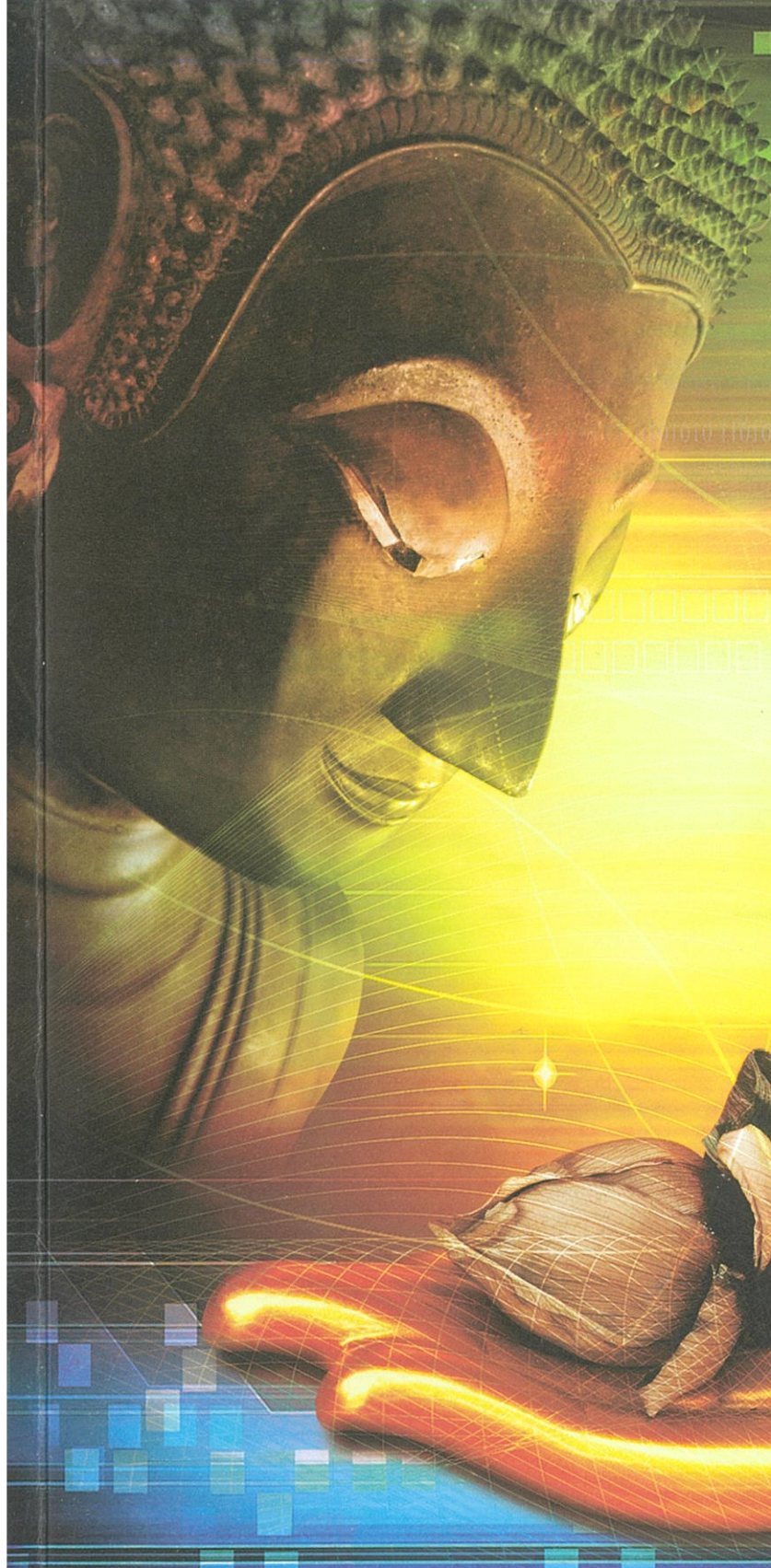
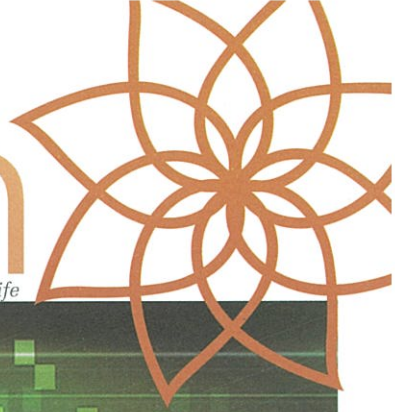


# 普觉awaken

to Compassion and Wisdom on the journey of life



在闲云下看花

阿姆斯特丹的伏虎罗汉

佛教的夫妻伦理

心灵的净土

我时常深深的思考，我真正想要的是什么样生活？我到底想追逐些什么？我最终想摆脱些什么？我不知道我的心归何处，也不知我的身归何方。

**What Scientists Say About Buddhism**

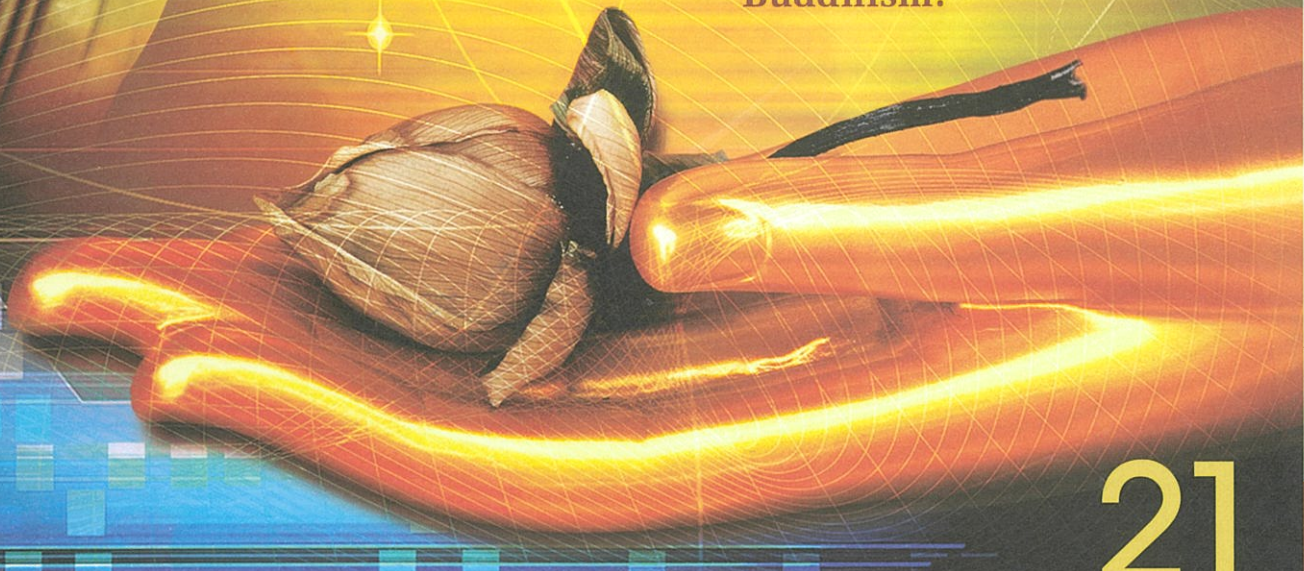
**Brain Training: The Effects of Meditation on the Brain**

**Is Seeing Believing?**

**Exploring the Garden of Our Consciousness**

Jerry Braza tells us how we can develop skills to become master gardeners of our consciousness

**What is Mind in Buddhism?**



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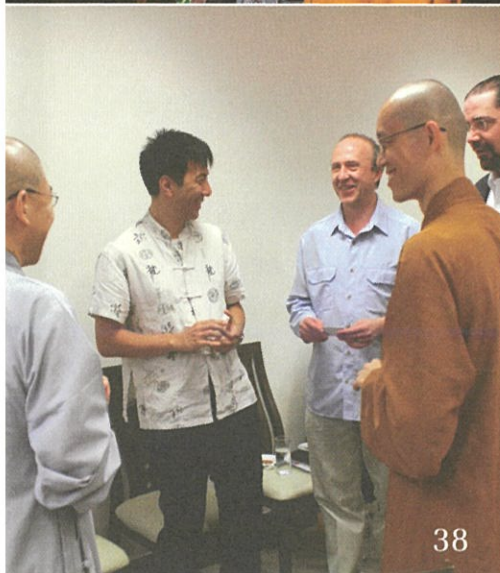
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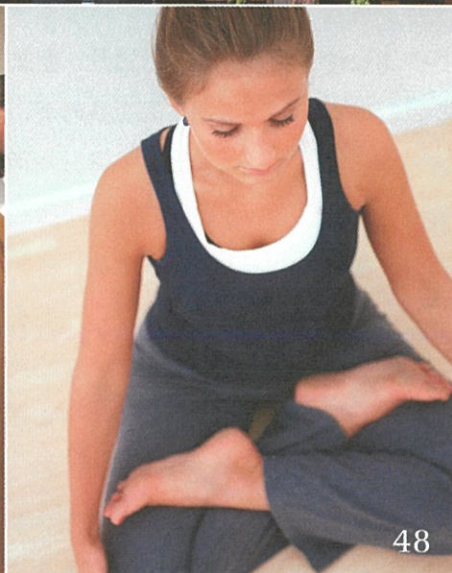
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All plants, animals and human beings complement one another's survival. Rejuvenate our environment and practise compassion at the same time through recycling. Collection hours: 7.00am – 7.00pm daily. Call 6849 5357 / 9299 2138, or visit <http://www.kmspks.org/community/> to find out more.

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To find out more, visit [www.awarenessplace.com](http://www.awarenessplace.com) or call 6336 5067 (11.30am – 6.00pm Daily. Closed on Public Holidays)



## Editor's Note

### What has Science got to do with Buddhism?

Those with no connection with Buddhism may think it is an obscure Eastern religion with different rituals and ceremonies, but these are mostly derived from ethnic and cultural influences. In reality, Buddhism is a way of life and a study of the mind (pg 36). It has a precise system which engages analytical and experiential techniques to cleanse our mind of fear, anxiety, hatred and doubt in order to achieve a state of freedom and peace (pg 63).

With a long tradition of studying the mind via careful observation, Buddhism gives clear rational descriptions of its functions and prescribes the ways to heal its afflictions and develop wholesome mental behaviour, clearly demonstrating its scientific approach. In fact, the more science discovers, the better scientific knowledge harmonises with Buddhism. The various Buddhist methods of cultivating contemplative insight, based on prior training in refining attention, bear great relevance to modern theories of clinical and cognitive psychology. Studies in neuroscience have also affirmed the very beneficial changes in the human brain that Buddhist meditation brings (pg 48).

According to Emeritus Professor of Neurology, University of Colorado Health Science Centre, Dr James H. Austin, "the chief cause of our suffering is our over-conditioned egocentric Self." Thus to enhance intuition and insight, we should engage in practices that minimise the Self and allow us to move beyond egocentric constraints, such as receptive meditation (pg 38). Being aware of the present moment, of the blossoming trees, the warm sun on our back and the sounds, sights and smells help us to see how we water our own 'seeds' that lie deep in our consciousness (pg 41).

Read what other notable intellectuals and scientists say about Buddhism (pg 45), and reflect upon Toh Sze Gee's take on "seeing is believing" (pg 52). For more interesting and revealing findings on Buddhism and science, or to harness the therapeutic power of Alpha, Theta and Delta brain waves, check out page 62.

Elsewhere in this issue, Susan Kaiser Greenland gives tips on practising external mindfulness with our children (pg 39). Also read a Buddhist reflection on the 11 March Japan disaster (pg 50) and how we can learn a thing or two by looking at the way others' lives unfold (pg 53).

Lastly, Venerables Yan Zheng and Guo Heng, graduates of the pioneer cohort of the English Bachelor of Arts Degree from The Buddhist College of Singapore (pg 37) express their earnest thoughts upon their graduation as they prepare to leave the country that they have come to love.



Yours in the Dharma,  
Sister Esther Thien

"Don't go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical conjecture, by inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, 'This contemplative is our teacher.' When you know for yourselves that, 'These qualities are skilful; these qualities are blameless; these qualities are praised by the wise; these qualities, when adopted and carried out, lead to welfare and to happiness' — then you should enter and remain in them." — *The Buddha, Kalama Sutta*

### Weekend Mindfulness Retreat

Date/Time : 10 – 11 Sep, 8am – 5pm  
Venue : 4th floor, Ven Hong Choon Memorial Hall  
Offering : \$40  
For more information, please call 6849 5300 or visit [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)

### 1 Day Vipassana Meditation Retreat

Date/Time : 8 Oct, Sat, 8am – 5pm  
Venue : 4th floor, Ven Hong Choon Memorial Hall  
Offering : \$20  
For more information, please call 6849 5300 or visit [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)

### Project Rebirth (Round #3): Rediscover, Reflect, Recharge\*

Date/Time : 6 Sep – 8 Nov, Tue, 7.30pm – 9.30pm  
Fee : \$40 (10 sessions)  
Instructor : Shen Shi'an, MA (Buddhist Studies)

### Playgroup Art & Craft Series (Mandarin)\*

Date/Time : 25 Sep – 6 Nov, Sun, 3pm – 4.30pm  
Fee : \$160 per pax (7 sessions include art materials - clay, photoframe, glitter, sand, glass, beads and t-shirt)  
Instructor : Ms. Ti Siew Lan, Graduate of Peking University, has worked in the field of children education for over 20 years, and is an experienced lecturer for pre-school teachers for over 10 years.

### Vegetarian Basics (Mandarin)\*

Date/Time : 13, 20, 27 Nov & 4 Dec, Sun, 3pm – 5pm  
Fee : \$60 (4 sessions)  
Instructor : Mr. Wong Kew Yew, Bach. Biotech, dedicated to public education including interviews and cooking demos on Radio FM 95.8

### Vegetarian Cooking (Mandarin)\*

Date/Time : 11 & 18 Dec, Sun, 3pm – 5pm  
Fee : \$30 (2 sessions) + \$6 ingredients fee  
Instructor : Mr. Wong Kew Yew

### Yoga for General\*

Date/Time : (1) 5 Nov – 7 Jan, Sat, 9.15am – 10.45am  
(2) 10 Oct – 2 Jan, Mon, 7.30pm – 9pm  
Fee : \$160 (10 lessons)  
Instructor : Ms. Helen Goh, certified Yoga Instructor

### Lunch-time Yoga\*

Date/Time : (1) 13 Oct – 15 Dec, Thurs, 12.45pm – 1.25pm  
(2) 15 Nov – 31 Jan, Tue, 12.45pm – 1.25pm  
Fee : \$140 (10 sessions with 1 free organic take-away every session)  
Instructor : Ms. Ong Ju Lee, Diploma in Teaching, the Science and Art of Yoga

### Afternoon Yoga for Golden Years\*

Date/Time : 15 Nov – 31 Jan, Tue, 3pm – 4.30pm  
Fee : \$120 (10 lessons)  
Instructor : Ms. Ong Ju Lee

### Yoga for General\*

Date/Time : (1) 12 Oct – 21 Dec, Wed, 7.30pm – 9pm  
(2) 15 Nov – 31 Jan, Tue, 10.30am – 12pm  
(3) 13 Oct – 15 Dec, Thurs, 10.30am – 12pm  
Fee : \$160 (10 lessons)  
Instructor : Ms. Ong Ju Lee

\* Venue : Awareness Place Well-Being Centre, Bras Basah Complex #03-39  
Details : Please visit [www.awarenessplace.com](http://www.awarenessplace.com), email [sem@kmspks.org](mailto:sem@kmspks.org) or call 6336 5067 to register or enquire.

### Y.talk

A lifestyle sharing programme for young professionals to relax and discover Buddhism and its relevance in daily life.  
Date/Time : Every 2nd and 4th Thurs of the month, 7.30pm – 9.30pm  
Venue : Awareness Place Well-Being Centre  
Details : For more information, please call 6849 5345 or email [ytalk@kmspks.org](mailto:ytalk@kmspks.org)

### Y.care

Monthly visit to Bright Hill Evergreen Home. We will be taking residents on wheelchairs out for some fresh air.  
Date/Time : Every 3rd Sun of the month, 8.30am – 12 noon  
Venue : Bright Hill Evergreen Home, 21 Senja Road Singapore 677736  
Details : To volunteer email [youth@kmspks.org](mailto:youth@kmspks.org) or call 6849 5345

### Y.cultivation

Learning the profound Dharma, walking the Buddha's path through cultivation. Led by Venerable in a complete, yet simple way through chanting, Sutra and Dharma Teaching.  
Date/Time : Every 1st & 4th Sun of the month, 1.30pm – 3.30pm  
Venue : Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery, Level 1 Venerable Hong Choon Memorial Hall, Classroom 5  
Details : For more information, please call 6849 5345 or email [youth@kmspks.org](mailto:youth@kmspks.org)

### Y.lifestyle

Programmes that aim to promote the confidence, personality and well-being of the individual  
Date/Time : Every 2nd Sun of the month (timing and location may vary)  
Details : For more information, please call 6849 5345 or email [youth@kmspks.org](mailto:youth@kmspks.org)

### English Buddhism Course

#### Year 1 Module 3

Date/Time : 5 Sep – 14 Nov, Mon, 7.30pm – 9.00pm  
Venue : 1st floor, Ven Hong Choon Memorial Hall

#### Year 2 Module 3

Date/Time : 4 Sep – 30 Oct, Sun, 2.00pm – 3.30pm  
Venue : 1st floor, Ven Hong Choon Memorial Hall

#### Year 3 Module 3

Date/Time : 1 Sep – 3 Nov, Thurs, 7.30pm – 9.00pm  
Venue : 1st floor, Ven Hong Choon Memorial Hall  
Fee : \$30 per Module  
Details : For more information, please call 6849 5300

### Medicine Buddha Sutra Recitation (Mandarin)

Date/Time : Every Sat, 7.30pm  
Venue : 2nd Level, Pagoda of Ten Thousand Buddhas

### Pureland Sutra Recitation (Mandarin)

Date/Time : Every Sun, 9.00am  
Venue : Hall of Great Compassion

### Diamond Sutra Recitation (Mandarin)

Date/Time : Every Sun, 2.00pm  
Venue : Hall of Great Compassion

### The Great Compassion Puja (Mandarin)

Date/Time : Every 27th of the lunar month, 10.00am  
Venue : Hall of Great Compassion

### Recitation of 25th Chapter of the Lotus Sutra (Pu Men Pin)

Date/Time : Every Fri, 8.00pm  
Venue : Hall of Great Compassion  
Details : For more information, please call 6849 5300



## What is mind in Buddhism?

**Q**: What is mind in Buddhism? What is the relationship between the mind and the consciousness? Where exactly is our mind located?

— Mr Curious

**A**: The word “mind” in Buddhism means any part of us that cognises, perceives or is aware of our emotions and attitudes. The mind, in essence, is the part of us that is cognitive, aware and conscious. It is the consciousness that distinguishes a corpse from a living being. The Buddhist word “mind” also means the heart in which the intellect and emotions are not separate but exists as a whole entity that does different functions at different times.

In Buddhism, the mind is not the brain. The brain is made up of matter and can be examined with scientific instruments. The mind, on the other hand, is formless. It is immaterial and cannot be examined by scientific instruments. But the mind and the brain interrelate. We can see that when there is brain damage, it affects the mind, our emotions and the way we perceive things. In turn, the state of our mind - if we are happy or angry etc - affects our physical body.

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The mind has two qualities. It is clear and aware. It reflects objects. For example, when you are looking around in the room, you perceive objects, and images of those objects arise in your mind. The mind also has the ability to engage with objects.

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It interrelates. The mind cannot be touched like many things that exist in this world that cannot be touched. But this doesn't mean they do not exist, just like love and democracy. You cannot measure those with scientific instruments but they certainly exist. Similarly, the mind exists in that way. Buddhism emphasises more on the mind while science stresses more the brain but I think the two can go together in many ways. Buddhism is in no way contradictory to science. In fact, Buddhism elaborates on some parts of science.

In Buddhism, we say that the mind is our source of happiness and pain, because it is the mind and what goes on in our mind that determines if we have spiritual realisation or whether we live in confusion.

Mind and consciousness are synonymous. Whatever is conscious is aware. We have different types of consciousness. We have visual consciousness, auditory consciousness, a consciousness for each sense, and a mental consciousness, and I am defining all these different consciousness to mean the mind.

I am not sure the mind has a location, actually, since it is not made up of atoms and molecules. For example, a watch consists of atoms and molecules, so we can look through our senses and find it and say “Here's the watch”. But our mind is not like that. Sometimes, we feel our mind is in our body. But when we sit down to investigate “where in my body is my mind?”, it's hard to pinpoint and hard to find. 🐉

— Ven. Thubten Chodron  
[www.thubtenchodron.org](http://www.thubtenchodron.org)  
[www.sravasti.org](http://www.sravasti.org)

# 19 Graduates Newly Minted from The Buddhist College of Singapore

BY | Esther Thien



**Singapore** – The Chinese Buddhist world welcomed with open arms 19 more graduates in July this year. Newly minted from The Buddhist College of Singapore, they were part of the college's pioneer cohort of monks, who were conferred Bachelor of Arts degrees in Buddhist studies.

Located within the Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery, the college offers five-year courses taught in both English and Chinese. The English degree is jointly awarded by the University of Kelaniya in Sri Lanka, and the Chinese degree, by the Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University in Thailand. The students were educated on subjects ranging from Buddhist history and culture, sociology, secular philosophy, management, economics to conflict management. Besides attending five hours of classes each weekday, the student Venerables also performed morning and evening chants, observed monthly Dharma practices and participated in the annual 3-Step-1-Bow ceremony. A new five-storey building costing \$35 million for the college is in the works. Expected to be ready by 2013, it houses facilities such as computer labs, language labs, lecture halls, tutorial rooms, dormitory and sports hall with basketball and badminton courts.

The college recruits about 45 Venerables during each recruitment exercise from all over Asia, particularly China. To qualify for admission, applicants have to pass an entrance exam on Buddhist teachings as well as an interview. Those applying for the English degree also need to pass a proficiency test in the language. As the entire programme, including food and accommodation, is completely funded by the monastery at a cost of about

\$2 million a year, students have to perform consistently well at the yearly exams to keep their places. This resulted in 16 students, out of the initial 40 who joined the programme in 2006, withdrawing from the course. Five graduated last year and the remainder graduated on 15 July 2011 in a dignified inaugural graduation ceremony

graced by Director-General Lu Jin Guang of the State Administration For Religious Affairs of China, Ven. Zhanru, Vice President of the Buddhist Association of the People's Republic of China (P.R.C); and Chen Jiang, Culture Counsellor of the P.R.C. Embassy.

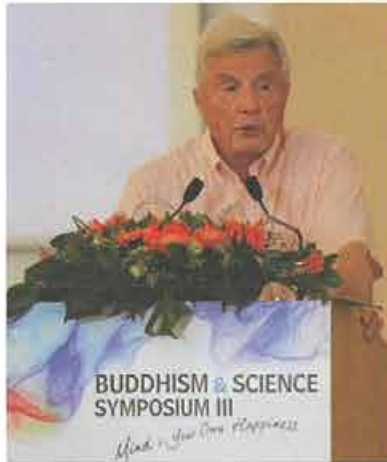
The chance to learn English and the range of modules offered appeal to the students. "I wanted to learn how to spread the Buddhist teachings in English," said Ven. Xin Tian, 24. For 32-year-old Ven. Yao Xiong, it was the opportunity to learn about the Theravada tradition. "I came from a Mahayana background. The Theravada tradition is more common in countries such as Thailand and Sri Lanka. Over here, students at the college get to learn both the Theravada and Mahayana traditions," he explained. "The concepts and skills taught in the course provide useful training for the Sangha," said Dr Teo Kian Seng, one of the professors at the college. "Learning the administrative aspects of how to run a monastery, and learning how to resolve disputes between people are skills that could come in handy," he said.

In a heartfelt and moving speech at the graduation ceremony, Ven. Yao Xiong deeply and sincerely thanked the Rector, Ven. Kwang Sheng, lecturers, staff, donors, volunteers and everyone who made it possible for him and the other graduates to study at the college. "We were not born here, but we come here to be groomed, to train ourselves, and we will develop and blossom on the different paths we shall be embarking, that is the best reward for our college," added Ven. Yan Zheng. For more information about the college, visit [bcs.edu.sg](http://bcs.edu.sg).

# 1500 People Thronged the Buddhism and Science Symposium

BY | Esther Thien

**Singapore** – 1500 people from all walks of life gave up a Sunday of rest and leisure to participate in the Buddhism and Science Symposium. The third in a series of symposia, this year's event built upon last year's focus on emotional awareness, delving deeper into the relationship between thoughts and the physiology of the body. Called "Mind, Your Own Happiness", leading scientists from US and Hong Kong presented findings on how meditation practices and changes in self-awareness influence the brain, mind and body. Held on 31 July at the Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery, the symposium was graced by His Excellency President S.R. Nathan.



According to keynote speaker, Dr James H. Austin, Emeritus Professor of Neurology, University of Colorado Health Science Centre, "the chief cause of our suffering is our over-conditioned egocentric Self." In neuroscience, there are two ways to understand reality: a self-centred or egocentric approach and an other-centred or allocentric approach. In the first approach, a 'top-down' form of attention seemingly localised at the top part of the brain is detected. This part of the brain perceives through touch and senses located near the body. 'Top-down' attention is more commonly observed in concentrative meditation.

The second approach sees a 'bottom-up' form of attention seemingly localised at the bottom part of the brain, and perceives through vision and hearing. 'Bottom-up' attention is more commonly observed in receptive meditation. Dr James Austin continued to explain that concentrative meditation entails a more deliberate, effortful, one-pointed attention that requires voluntary top-down processing while receptive meditation entails a more open, effortless and universal bare awareness that expresses involuntary modes of bottom-up processing. It has been discovered that when external attention is active, the sense of self is minimised and vice

versa. To allow intuition and insight to flow, we should engage in practices that minimise the Self. To enhance selfless meditation, it is good to meditate outdoors, listening to your surroundings, gazing up to the far distant, observing trees, clouds, birds, the moon and the vast expanse of the sky. Let go of preoccupations with self-centred fears, ideas, discursive thoughts and plans. "As long as you stay

preoccupied with your physical and mental Self, you remain attached to its monkey-mind forms of internal dialogue. Receptive approaches help you move outward, beyond egocentric constraints and their inherent attachments to discursive word-thoughts," said Dr James Austin. In daily life, practise mindful introspection to discover why you cling to and cannot let go of certain thoughts, feelings, strong opinions and beliefs.


Added Ven. Guang Xing, "Buddhism is really about the study of the mind, about mental development; cleansing the mind of impurities and disturbances, such as lustful desires, hatred, ill-will, indolence, worries and restlessness, and cultivating qualities of awareness, analytical faculty, joy and tranquillity. It uses an analytical method and a two-way process to tame the mind. Through Right Effort, practitioners prevent and nip unwholesome states of mind in the bud, while promoting and prolonging wholesome states of mind. Therefore, Buddhist meditation is not concerned with what kind of meditation techniques you adopt but whether your mind is fully concentrating on whatever you do." "When you are aware, mindful and can observe the process of the mind jumping from likes to dislikes, from happy to unhappy experiences, that's the first step to shaping and freeing the mind," expressed Ven. Chuan Guan. When you can know your mind and shape your mind, you free your mind and as a result, you become unperturbed and as stable as the mountain in the face of all circumstances, good or bad. ☸





# Practising External Mindfulness

your children be more aware, appreciative and mindful too! Practising this more relational form of mindfulness doesn't have to take any extra time or preparation. Just look for occasions in your daily routine where it makes sense to integrate it. At dinner time, for instance, take a moment to talk about all the people, places and things that came together to bring *this* meal to *your* table.

Another powerful time to practise external mindfulness is when you are physically caring for your child. Brush your child's hair with awareness and appreciation. At bath time, notice how fleeting and precious your time together is and take advantage of this opportunity to be fully present with your child. 

By Susan Kaiser Greenland, author of *The Mindful Child*, and Founder of the Inner Kids Foundation which developed the Inner Kids mindful awareness programme for children, teens and families. ([www.susankaisergreenland.com](http://www.susankaisergreenland.com))

**W**hen parenting mindfully we practise both internal and external mindfulness. Sometimes we focus only on the internal form of mindfulness that's emphasised in classical teachings and developed through formal sitting and walking meditation. But external mindfulness, where we focus on being present, aware and attuned to what's happening in our surroundings, is also emphasised in classical teachings and may be more useful in helping us parent mindfully.

As the mental state of one person can induce a similar frame of mind in others nearby, being more aware and appreciative with external mindfulness will help

## What notable intellectuals & scientists say about Buddhism

Buddhism is a combination of both speculative and scientific philosophy. It advocates the scientific method. It takes up where science cannot lead because of the limitations of the latter's instruments. Its conquests are those of the mind.

- Nobel-prize winning British mathematician, philosopher and author *Bertrand Russell* (1872 - 1970)

Buddhism is the most colossal example in the history of applied metaphysics.

- British mathematician and philosopher *Alfred North Whitehead* (1861-1947)

The message of the Buddha is a message of joy. He found a treasure and he wants us to follow the path that leads us to the treasure. He tells man that he is in deep darkness, but he also tells him that there is a path that leads to light. He wants us to arise from a life of dreams into a higher life where man loves and does not hate, where man helps and does not hurt. His appeal is universal, because he appeals to reason and to the universal in us all: 'It is you who must make the effort. The Great of the past only show the way.' He achieved a superior harmony of vision and wisdom by placing spiritual truth on the crucial test of experience; and only experience can satisfy the mind of modern man. He wants us to watch and be awake and he wants us to seek and to find.

- *Juan Mascan* Spanish Academic and Educationalist, Lecturer at Cambridge University

continue on Pg 44

In June this year, The Straits Times reported that eating yoghurt and nuts are shown to exert a beneficial effect in weight loss.

US researchers found that consuming yoghurt introduces a healthy amount of "good" bacteria into the digestive tract and this can improve your digestion and immune function, helping to alleviate certain gastrointestinal conditions like constipation, diarrhoea, colon cancer, inflammatory bowel disease and H. pylori infection.

Scientific evidence also suggests that people who eat nuts regularly may reduce the risks of heart disease. In 1996, the Iowa Women's Healthy Study found that women who ate nuts more than four times a week were 40% less likely to die of heart disease. The 1998 Harvard School of Public Health study also found similar results in another group of women subjects.

In this issue, we show you how to make fresh home-made yoghurt and enjoy healthy, delicious muesli drinks containing almond, walnuts, flax seeds and oats.

### Yoghurt 乳酸



#### Ingredients:

1tbsp active/live yoghurt, 1 packet unsweetened fresh milk.

#### Method:

1. Mix active/live yoghurt into packet of unsweetened fresh milk. Make sure the packet comes with a screw cap.
2. Secure the cap and shake the packet of milk vigorously for 5 mins to ensure a good mix.
3. Place the packet of milk under room temperature, 25-30°C, for 6 to 8hrs allowing fermentation to take place.
4. When the yoghurt is set, keep in the fridge at 3-8°C

#### 材料:

活性酸乳酸一汤匙, 原味牛奶一包

#### 做法:

1. 将一汤匙的活性酸乳酸放进一包有盖子的原味包装牛奶。
2. 把盖子锁上再用力摇动约五分钟使滚合均匀。
3. 将牛奶放置在室温25-30°C行发酵6到8小时即可。
4. 最后把作好的乳酸放置在冰柜3-8°C贮藏。

### Muesli Drinks 麦果泥



#### Recipe 1:

3tbsp rolled oat flake, 2-3pcs banana, 4-5pcs almond, 1pc honey date, 1tsp flaxseed, 1/2 - 3/4 cup water

#### Recipe 2:

Rolled oat flake 4tbsp, fig 4-5pcs, walnut 4-5pcs, lecithin 1tsp, brewer's yeast 1tsp, water 1/2 - 3/4 cup

#### Method:

Blend all ingredients (recipe 1 or 2) in blender.

#### 食谱 1:

燕麦片3汤匙, 香蕉2-3条, 美国杏仁4-5粒, 蜜枣1粒, 亚麻仁1茶匙, 水1/2-3/4杯

#### 食谱 2:

燕麦片4汤匙, 无花果4-5粒, 胡桃4-5粒, 大豆卵磷脂1茶匙, 啤酒酵母1茶匙, 水1/2-3/4杯

#### 做法:

把全部材料(食谱1或2)放进搅拌机搅拌即可。

As we develop our skills as master gardeners of our consciousness, we become deeply aware of how the quality of our lives is influenced by the seeds that have been watered. Everything that affects our consciousness enters metaphorically as a seed. The master gardener serves as gatekeeper and protector of the mind's awareness.

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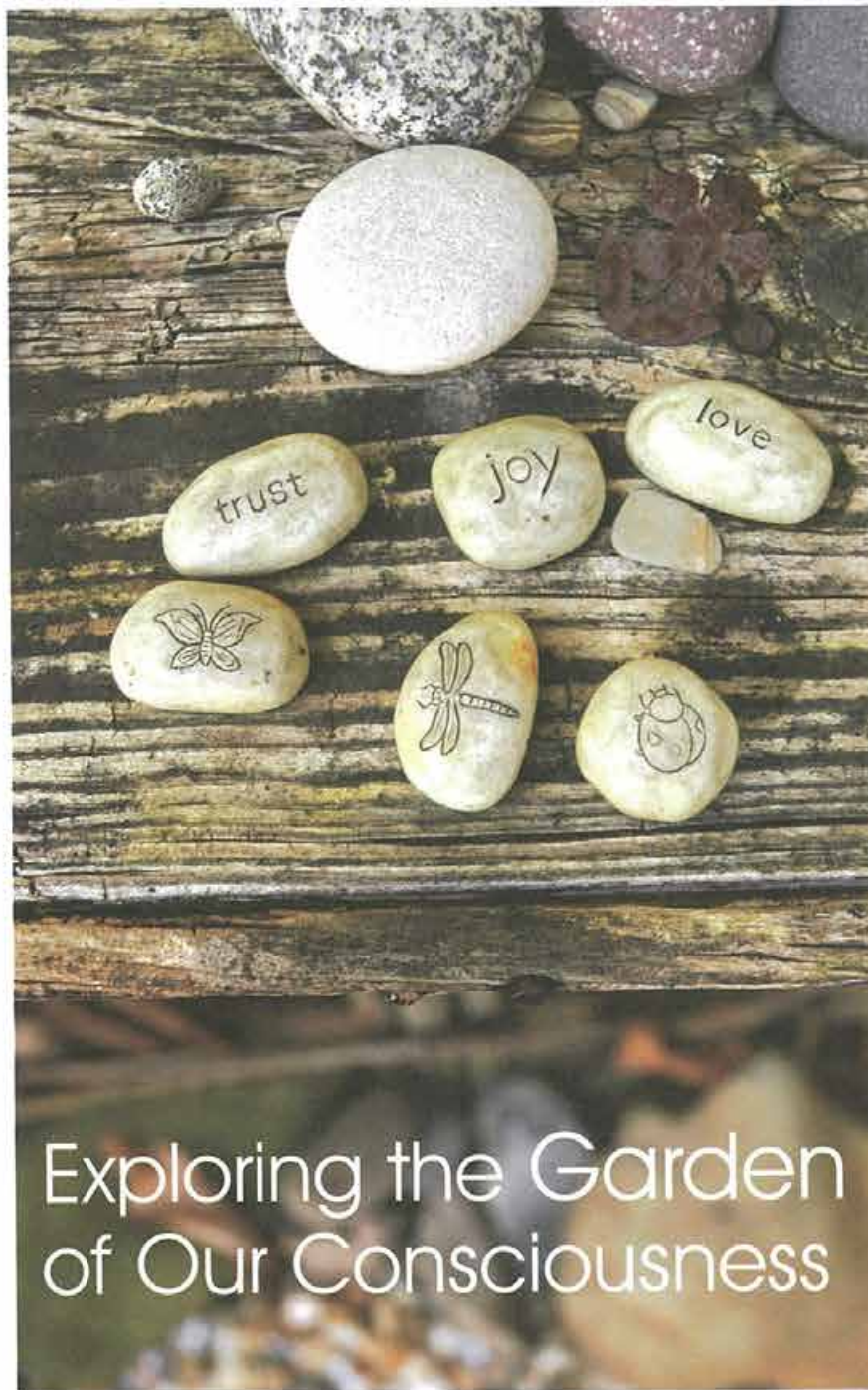
According to Thich Nhat Hanh, "Our mind is a field, in which every kind of seed is sown—seeds of compassion, joy and hope, seeds of sorrow, fear and difficulties."

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Seeds refer to all the emotions and qualities that enter our awareness and get stored in our consciousness. Using this awareness, think of a typical day. What seeds or feelings are you allowing to enter your awareness through the media, the people in your life, and your everyday conversations? For parents and those who tend to the well-being of others, how do we protect the precious potential of the human gardens in our care?

Previous generations cultivate life's seeds and pass them on through interactions with family, friends and the world around them. From the time we're born, these seeds are nourished. They grow through every interaction and transform through mindfulness in every season of our lives. A grandmother's happiness watered the seed of happiness in her daughter, who in turn nourishes that seed in her unborn child. A grandfather's anger watered the same seed in his son, who continued with his own children. The process of sowing, watering, nourishing and cultivating the seeds of consciousness is an integral part of the life cycle supporting a healthy or unhealthy lineage. Mindful parents learn to rely on being happy and peaceful, transmitting the best gift

we can give to our children. Like all living things, seeds go through cycles of birth and death. A cherry pit has the potential to produce a cherry tree—and eventually more fruit and seeds. All seeds require the proper conditions to manifest, just as a garden



## Exploring the Garden of Our Consciousness

"The quality of our life depends on the quality of the seeds that lie deep in our consciousness."

— Thich Nhat Hanh

needs nutrients in order for plants to grow. Master gardeners apply their skills to the seeds that need watering (loving-kindness, joy, compassion and equanimity) and the seeds to be transformed (anger, fear, jealousy and doubt) to develop a beautiful garden.

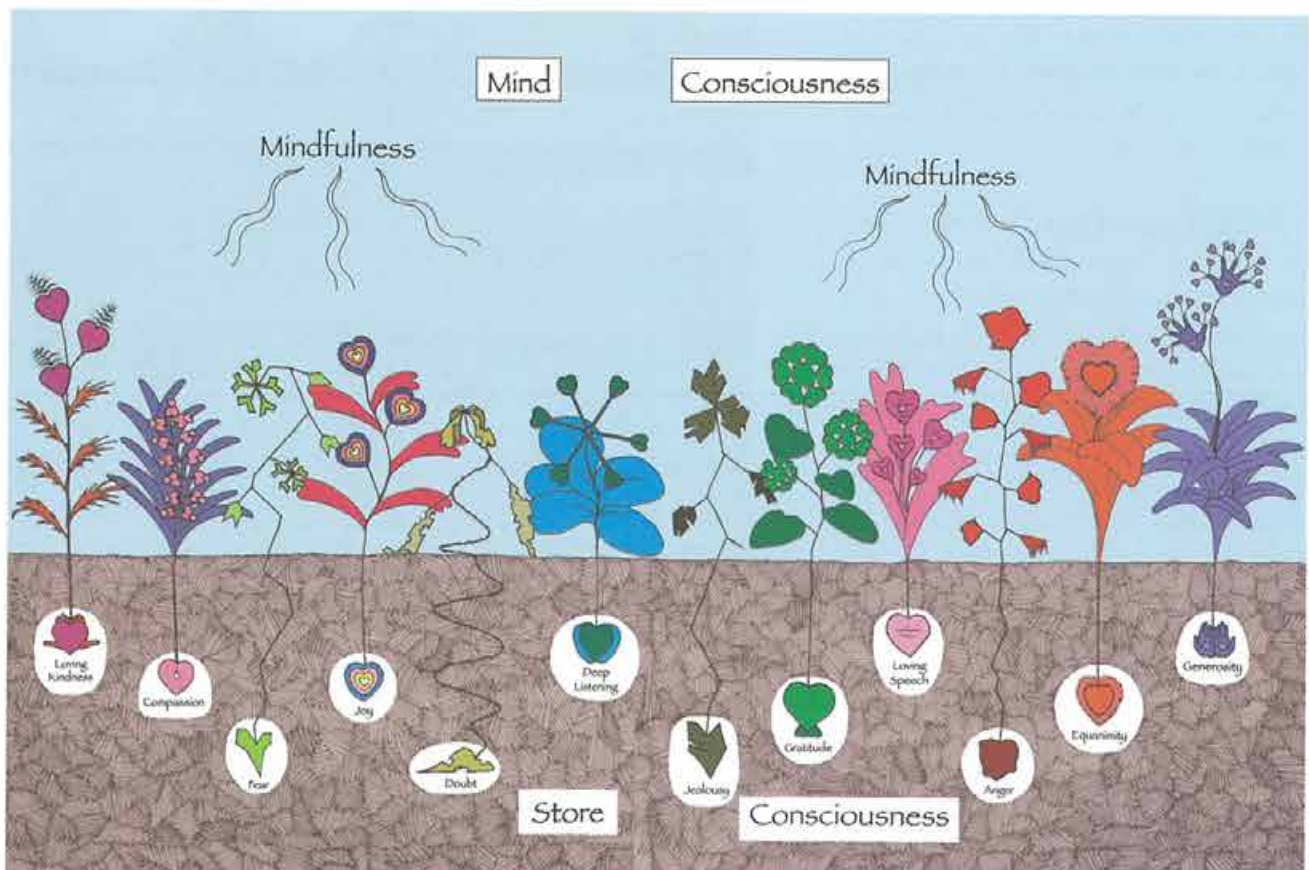
Through the seed metaphor, we can deeply explore some of the causes and conditions that influence personal growth and development. “Seed language” is comparable to developmental psychology, which centers on the characteristics and changes that occur with time and maturity. Among the various lexicons used to describe relationships, seed language offers an overview similar to the “love languages” popularized by Dr. Gary Chapman. He suggests that each person has their own “language” to demonstrate love including words of affirmation, quality time, receiving gifts, acts of service, and physical touch. In a similar way, using a Buddhist paradigm, learning which seeds to water in ourselves and how to selectively water those seeds in others is the basis of understanding and love.

### Mind and Store Consciousness

Our store consciousness, or the subconscious mind, is

everything below the soil; our mind consciousness is everything above the soil. The garden illustrates the concept of the seeds being below the soil, in the store consciousness, and the flowers and weeds being above the soil, in the mind consciousness. Whatever we experience is a manifestation of our awareness of the present moment filtered through our mind consciousness. For example, this spring I was sitting on the shoreline of a small pond in a park, and I jotted down everything I was aware of: *I am aware of the blossoming trees, the warm sun on my back, and a variety of sounds, sights and smells. I stop and take a few breaths. I am aware of a cacophony of birds and the sound of a meandering stream cascading down some rocks in the distance. I am aware of some chatter and movement in the bushes behind me of small birds rustling through the dried leaves. The radiating sun warms my body.*

Mind consciousness is present-moment awareness — this is a beautiful day. Occasionally my mind drifted to happy experiences in my childhood, like playing in nature. In that intimate moment, I was aware of my thoughts, feelings, body, and the story I was creating about the moment, including how



© 2011 by Tuttle Publishing: *The Seeds of Love: Growing Mindful Relationships* by Jerry Braza, Ph.D. ([www.theseedsoflove.net](http://www.theseedsoflove.net)); Illustration by Linda McGill ([www.wyndvisions.com](http://www.wyndvisions.com))

quickly I reflected on similar stories or experiences from the past. The environment and my peace of mind activated memories in my store consciousness, which is also known as the root consciousness — an appropriate name to represent the place where all the seeds are stored in our garden.

### **Seeds of Suffering and Seeds of Love**

Seeds of consciousness fall into two distinct categories — seeds of love and seeds of suffering. Consider what happens when we witness or experience someone's anger, hatred, violence, abuse, jealousy or craving. The behavior is first noted in our mind consciousness. Immediately thoughts, feelings and perceptions arise and cause us to create a mental formation or story. We then experience this story in our mind consciousness — the part of the garden that we see — which simultaneously triggers a response in our store consciousness, underground. When the "seeds of affliction" are experienced or watered, our typical response is to avoid or suppress them by pushing them deep into the store consciousness. The same holds true when the seeds of love are experienced or nurtured. We don't suppress them, but we do allow them to take root in our store consciousness. Thus we must become aware of and water the positive seeds of love and embrace and transform the negative seeds and afflictions that have been suffered.

Over the years, my experience as a prison volunteer has taught me how the seeds of affliction can dramatically impact a person's life and happiness. In the prison I visit, one of the inmates (JR) is serving a life sentence with no chance of parole. Living in the small Intensive Management Unit with nearly twenty other inmates, he is constantly bombarded by the collective seeds of suffering that have been planted in the store consciousness of his "cellies." During his own early years, the seeds of suffering — primarily anger, jealousy, fear, hate and violence — were watered by an abusive family, alcohol and drug abuse, and numerous attempts to assert himself in destructive ways. The soil and conditions for his life were already primed at an early age. Unlike this inmate, some children grow up in a family where love abounds and where they are nurtured and held by parents who recognize the importance of positive interactions for their beloved child. The seeds of joy, love, compassion and peace are visible in such families. Every smile is a celebration, every

cry an opportunity for compassion, and the overall home environment is peaceful. Family and friends support this child in loving ways. At school she is surrounded by other loving people who truly see her as a miracle and fortify her positive attributes or seeds. Her parents take time to "be" with her and convey that she is valued and important. It is easy to imagine what this child's life will be like as she grows and learns. With such an upbringing, she will be less inclined to stealing, violence and/or self-medicating to avoid the pain of life. Despite the horrific life my prison friend experienced, he writes to me and shares that his mindfulness meditation practice has been a saving grace, a refuge to cope with the ongoing violence and verbal assaults that take place in the prison environment.

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He continues to transform the seeds of affliction on a daily basis through his meditation and understanding of how to cultivate the garden of his consciousness. In a recent letter, he wrote, "Cultivate peace in the garden of your heart by removing the weeds of selfishness and jealousy, greed, anger, pride and ego. Then all will benefit from your peace and harmony."

---

I often pause to reflect on the seeds that have been watered to lead me to this place in time, in which I have the opportunity to share these ideas. Likewise, I have learned through my own difficulties the importance of transforming the seeds of affliction that arise from my store consciousness. In every moment, I recognize that I have choices regarding the people with whom I interact, the materials I read, the programs I watch on television and video, and the music I play. As every master gardener knows, you must tend to your own garden to have the skill to tend those around you. 🌱

Excerpts from *The Seeds of Love: Growing Mindful Relationships* by Jerry Braza. Available at all leading bookstores and Awareness Place shops in Singapore.

continued from Pg 39

## What notable intellectuals & scientists say about Buddhism

The more I studied satipatthana, the more impressed I became with it as a system of mind training. It is in line with our Western scientific attitude of mind in that it is unprejudiced, objective and analytical. It relies on personal, direct experience, and not on anyone else's ideas or opinions. It is exceedingly simple and makes use of 'bare attention' within a carefully chosen and disciplined system. It gets you out of the rut and bondage of yourself, your prejudices, your clichés, your blindness and your self-opinionatedness.

- Eminent British Physician Dr E. Graham Howe

If we ask whether the position of the electron remains the same, we must say 'no'; if we ask whether the electron's position changes with time, we must say 'no'; if we ask whether the electron is at rest, we must say 'no'; if we ask whether it is in motion, we must say 'no.' The Buddha has given such answers when interrogated as to the conditions of man's self after his death; but they are not familiar answers for the tradition of 17th and 18th century science. - American physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer (1904 -1967) made an analogy to Buddhism when describing the Heisenberg uncertainty principle

It is a system of thought, a religion, a spiritual science and a way of life which is reasonable, practical and all-embracing. It appeals to those in search of truth because it has no dogmas, satisfies the reason and the heart alike, insists on self-reliance coupled with tolerance for other points of view, embraces science, religion, philosophy, psychology, mysticism, ethics and art, and points to man alone as the creator of his present life and sole designer of his destiny. - Eminent British Judge, Justice Christmas Humphreys (1901-1983)

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

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**Awaken: Venerables, when did you join the Buddhist College of Singapore (BCS)? What were your feelings at that time?**

**Ven. Yan Zheng:** I came over and started my study on 20th August 2006. When I first joined the College, everything was so strange and I was very curious.

Venerables Yan Zheng and Guo Heng, graduates of the pioneer cohort of English Bachelor of Arts Degree from The Buddhist College of Singapore, expressed their contemplative thoughts and deepest feelings to Esther Thien upon their graduation as they prepare to leave Singapore that they have come to love.

**Ven. Guo Heng:** Like Ven. Yan Zheng, I joined five years ago, in 2006. Looking back, I remembered I came to the College with gusto, great determination, and cherishing hopes of proud achievements. At that time, I was just like a young sailor without much knowledge and experiences of a voyage.

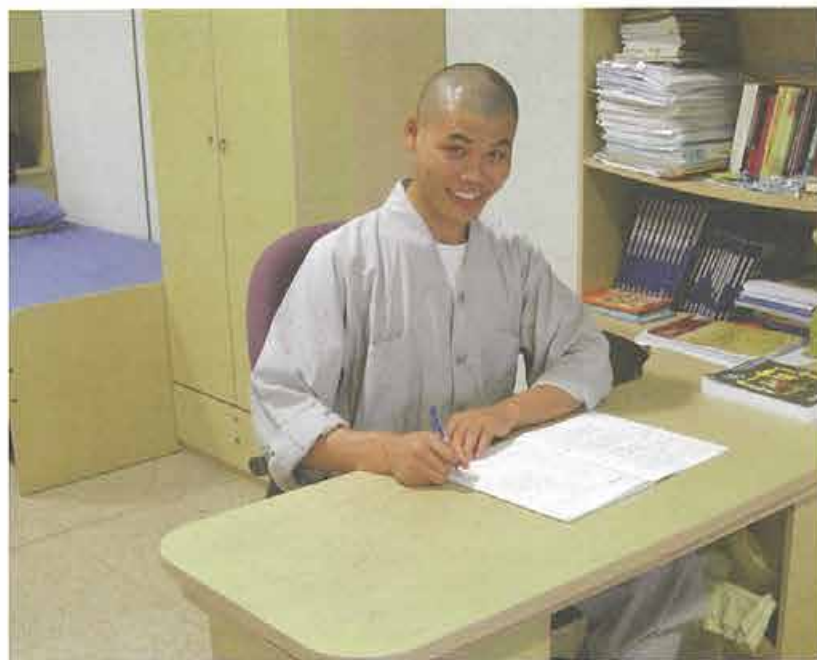
**Awaken: Any memorable stories of your stay in the College to relate?**

**Ven. Yan Zheng:** I remembered experiencing many "firsts" coming to Singapore. The first time I travelled overseas and boarded a plane, I felt excited and proud. It was also joyful for me to walk in the school yard for the very first time, and memorable to experience living in a dormitory with other student monks for the first time. I remembered the sleepless nights I used to have. Then there was the first time of experiencing tropical climate,

## *A Heartfelt Valediction*



of eating durians in a Malaysian durian plantation, of attending an English class, of writing an English essay and of winning the second prize in the English course. I also recalled conversing in English with a taxi driver for the very first time! Participating in monks' sports competitions and performing in the



Buddhist concert, *Voices of Harmony*, also brought pleasant memories to me.

**Ven. Guo Heng:** Once, I was tucked in a corner of the Monastery's library with a book in my hands when a thought struck me that I would not have these many English Buddhist books in front of me when I leave here. Where I come from, there isn't such an environment where English is commonly spoken and where English books are widely available. So I cherish and seize every minute of the time I still have here in seeking knowledge.

**Awaken: What have you gained from College life at BCS?**

**Ven. Yan Zheng:** The many good experiences I had here greatly enriched my life. I had experienced both successes and failures in my study at BCS. I have also made many new friends, both Singaporeans and people of other nationalities. Over the years, I have become more mature with a newfound sense of calmness. I did not like to study in the past, but now

I would eagerly go to the library. To me, the library now feels like such an inviting place!

**Ven. Guo Heng:** After five years of study and self-improvement, I have become comparatively more mature and poised. BCS is unlike any Buddhist college in China, not just in its geographical location but also in the way the teachers taught. We are encouraged to develop critical thinking and an open-minded, non-dogmatic approach to the Buddhist teachings. Learning English and being able to study Buddhism in English is one of my biggest gains. I greatly thank our Rector, Master Sik Kwang Sheng, the donors and all those who made it possible for us to study at the BCS.

**Awaken: What feelings do you have now that you have graduated from College?**

**Ven. Yan Zheng:** Once, I had hoped that I could leave this College soon. But now that the time has come and I have to leave, I realise that I have come to love this place. Previously, I dislike taking photos, but now I'm trigger-happy. I took photos of every corner in the campus and of every good friend. I hope to retain more beautiful memories.

Every one of us needs to work very hard. Though a feeling of uncertainty hovers over me, I will work with great effort. There are too many things I would like to do in the future. I will face the future with my best memories. Having faith and belief in myself, I will grab any opportunity that comes my way, and use English to propagate Mahayana Buddhism to the Western world. I will utilise good Western management techniques, good academic research methods to improve my ability in order to elevate the quality and calibre of the Sangha. Only then can Buddhism reach out to more people due to globalisation. We were not born here, but we come here to be groomed, to train ourselves, and we will develop and blossom. That is the best reward for our College. I would like to express my greatest appreciation to our Rector, Master Sik Kwang Sheng, and to all the lecturers of BCS!

**Ven. Guo Heng:** I will cherish the memories I have here with the other schoolmates – drinking tea, playing, studying and taking strolls in the park after



dinner. Although five years isn't a long time, my pending departure from the College gives me a deep feeling. I too think that with English, Buddhism is better able to relate to the contemporary world, especially to the intellectual elite. The world has changed; society has changed. People are more educated than before, so it's necessary to reinterpret the Buddha's profound teachings correctly for modern society through the use of life-oriented Dharma.

**Awaken: What last words do you have for your schoolmates?**

**Ven. Yan Zheng:** The reality of our society forces us to go forward. Just a slight pause would cause one

to be left behind. Leaving is painful, but it takes a kind of courage. It is also a test and the beginning of a new chapter in our lives. I hope my classmates can use English to prepare for a good future.

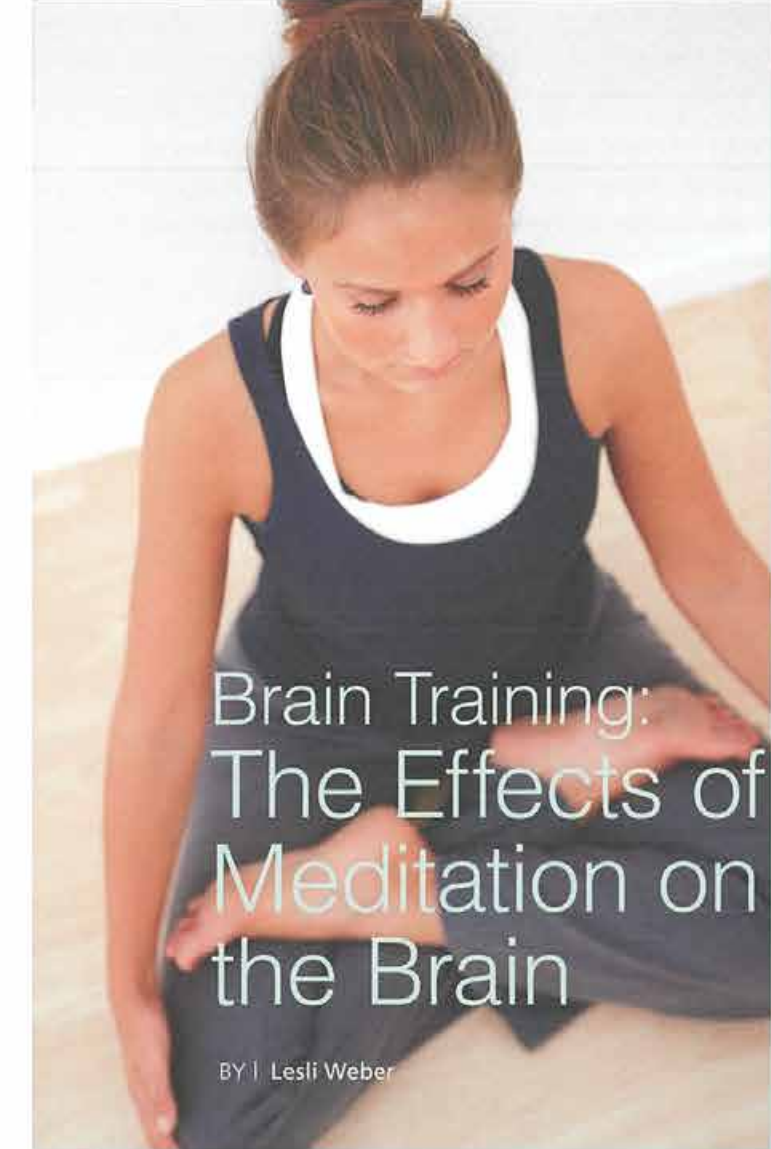
**Ven. Guo Heng:** As the founding principle of the College is to groom bilingual Sangha members grounded in right view and knowledge to contribute to the continual development of Chinese Buddhism and its spread in the English-speaking world by providing the necessary human resources through education, we graduates have a heavy mission and purpose: to transform the rich resources of Chinese Buddhism for the English-speaking world. We still have a long way to go.

May the rest of undergraduate Sangha cherish their time, do their best, make better use of their day in seeking the great Truth. 🙏



Ven. Guo Heng





# Brain Training: The Effects of Meditation on the Brain

BY | Lesli Weber

**D**oes mental training, more commonly known as meditation, affect the physical brain?

Modern science indicates that meditation does, in fact, have many effects on the physical brain. Meditation produces very beneficial changes in the human brain. Both short-term and long-term effects on brain function and structure have been observed by scientists, ranging from reduction in stress to slower age-related cerebral deterioration. Excitingly, science is just beginning to look at meditation's effects on the brain, and we've already seen mountains of information on its benefits emerge.

## Short-term effects

What we have discovered begins with the short-term effects of meditation on brain function. Brain function is primarily measured by brain waves, the electrical impulses brain cells (neurons) use to communicate with each other, as measured by an electroencephalogram (EEG). Brain waves at different frequencies indicate different neural functions. Additionally, the brain is divided into various parts

and regions that are responsible for performing specific functions. Brain wave activity of certain frequencies in particular parts of the brain can tell a scientist a lot about what is happening within the brain, and what the result or perception of that activity is to the brain's owner.

In a study conducted by neuroscientist Richard Davidson of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, the function of the brain during meditation was found to differ from the typical, non-meditative functioning in which we spend most of our waking hours. During meditation, "[a]ctivity in the left prefrontal cortex (the seat of positive emotions such as happiness) swamped activity in the right prefrontal cortex (site of negative emotions and anxiety)". In layman's terms, the act of meditating made the study participants feel measurably happier. This increased cortical activity suggests that meditation "seems to help regulate emotions", possibly by increasing the strength of the neural connections responsible for feelings of well-being through increased use of those connections, specifically, during meditation.

Also, Davidson noticed a "dramatic increase in high-frequency brain activity called gamma waves". Gamma waves are known to be "involved in higher mental activity and consolidation of information", such as self-awareness, comprehension and retention of information and ideas. Interestingly, both of these changes in activity were significantly greater in the brains of the Tibetan Buddhist monks involved in the study than they were in the brains of the novice meditators, suggesting that happiness, self-awareness, and concentration may, in fact, not be inherent, unchangeable predispositions, but may instead be skills that can be learned and improved with mental training.

In addition to increased gamma wave production, which indicates heightened awareness and concentration, the brains of meditators have been shown to have increased production of alpha, then theta waves, and decreased production of beta waves. According to [www.brainandhealth.com](http://www.brainandhealth.com), "alpha waves... occur when we are relaxed and calm", "theta waves... are associated with sleep, deep relaxation..., and visualisation", while "beta waves... occur when we are actively thinking, problem solving, etc.". The results of a study

published in *Time* magazine reported that even first-time meditators showed a decreased production of beta waves, “a sign that the cortex is not processing information as actively as usual”, after just a single 20-minute session. After these same meditators trained for an eight-week period, their brain wave patterns during meditation shifted “from... alpha waves...to the theta waves that dominate the brain during periods of deep relaxation”, an indication that a state of deep relaxation was achieved with greater efficiency as experience with meditation increased.

The *Time* study also noted changes in specific regions of the brain. During meditation, the frontal lobe “tends to go offline”. The frontal lobe is the area of the brain responsible for higher functions like “reasoning, problem solving, judgment, and impulse control”. This decrease in frontal lobe activity correlates to a simultaneous decrease in activity in the parietal lobe. The parietal lobe, which, along with the thalamus, processes sensory information about one’s environment, slows down to “a trickle”.

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**This seems to indicate that during meditation, one’s brain ceases attempts to absorb and interpret the outside world, instead turning one’s focus of attention inward, producing a deeply calm mental landscape.**

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### Long-term effects


Short-term effects on the brain during the actual process of meditating aren’t the only effects that scientists have noted, however. Several studies show that practising mental training regularly changes the actual physical structure of the brain. One such study, presented by research scientist Sara Lazar of Massachusetts General Hospital in Charlestown, reveals that certain areas of the brains of seasoned meditators are actually thicker than those same cerebral areas in non-meditators. The “parts of the brain’s cerebral cortex responsible for decision making, attention, and memory” were thicker in the study participants than in the average brain. Both “the prefrontal cortex, important in higher thought and planning, and the insula on the right side, a region that integrates emotions, thought and senses” showed signs of increased thickness in the study’s meditators after the completion of the study.

An exciting aspect of this observed thickening is the implications it has on the way we perceive age-related mental decline as inevitable, or at the least, expected. The very areas of the prefrontal cortex that showed increased thickening in the study’s meditators are areas of the brain that have been shown to be vulnerable to thinning, corresponding to decreased mental function, as we age. Whether the cause of the thickening is due to an increased number of neural connections, or greater blood flow to those areas during meditation, the “effect seems to reverse the usual cortical thinning” that is often seen in the elderly.

### Anyone can experience the benefits

One of the more interesting facets of this particular study is the participants themselves. Lazar’s study participants were not Buddhist monks, but a selection of 20 average men and women from the Boston area who practised meditation for 40 minutes a day for the duration of the study. The indication that the beneficial effects of meditation don’t require Olympic stamina or Buddhist vows to achieve holds global implications: they are potentially available to everyone. In another study conducted by Bruce O’Hara of the University of Kentucky, the results suggest that meditation may have a restorative effect on neural connections, much in the same way sleep does, but without the accompanying grogginess.

In yet another study, conducted by Richard Davidson and his colleagues, a group of 25 meditators’ immune systems were found to function more efficiently than those of a non-meditating control group. For years, the medical community theorised that “the brain was shut away from the actions of the immune system”. Now, medical science shows that the brain and the immune system are, indeed, linked.

With all these benefits as the payoff for a comparatively small amount of effort, one could almost conclude that not meditating may even, in the long run, be a form of self-neglect. Arguably the best news of all: this is just the proverbial tip of the iceberg. Given what we already know, considering that we’re just starting, how much more might there be to discover? 

Read the full report on [http://www.thubtenchodron.org/ScienceAndBuddhism/effects\\_of\\_meditation\\_on\\_the\\_brain.pdf](http://www.thubtenchodron.org/ScienceAndBuddhism/effects_of_meditation_on_the_brain.pdf)



# A Buddhist Reflection on the Japan Disaster

BY | Ven. Fa Xun (Bhikkhuni Shin)

The March 11th Earthquake and Tsunami caused devastating damage to Japan. The response has been enormous, pouring in from all levels both internationally and locally. At the international level, many governments donated emergency personnel and equipment as well as medical supplies to help the victims. Religious organisations conducted services to help ease the fears and sorrows of the Japanese, while at a personal level many sent their condolences and encouragement through social networks such as Facebook.

For a period, the suffering of the Japanese continued to grow with the uncertainty of radiation poisoning resulting from the damage to a nuclear reactor. The fear and anxiety caused by the devastation in Japan spread like a large wave across our world, affecting us all. Yet, in spite of this anxiety, have we awakened from it? Have we in any way, in our day-to-day living, contributed to such natural disasters?

According to the Buddhist teachings on “Interbeing”, all our actions have an impact on others and the natural environment, and in all things including the cosmos. If we look deeply at the way we eat, the way

we farm animals, the way we use natural resources, in fact, in all aspects of our “civilised” way of living, we see that we have caused untold harm to our Mother Earth, and this in turn, threatens our own survival.

There are many examples of the ways we humans cause damage to Mother Earth. Although we know forest depletion is harmful, we continue to clear forests. At the macro level, we clear forests so that urbanisation can spread in the name of economic development of a country. At the micro level, we continue to use disposable plates and chopsticks, and waste paper mindlessly to satisfy our selfish convenience. Yet when natural disaster strikes, we pray for well-being and we live in the name of HOPE.

Various scientific studies have reported that the way we farm animals for food is a threat to the planet. Factory farming has caused pollution to the environment while consuming huge amounts of water, grain, petroleum, pesticides and drugs. According to a report by Compassion in World Farming (CIWF), animals consume up to 30% of the grain grown in the world, while in America, this

figure is even higher, with up to 70% of grain fed to factory animals. Yet ironically, billions of people in the world have too little to eat. Each day, 40,000 children die of starvation. In spite of that, in many rich nations, grain is used to feed animals rather than to reduce the suffering of starvation, all in the name of profit.

About 4,200 million animals are slaughtered for human consumption each year. By eating more meat we increase the demand for meat, which in turn increases the number of animals farmed and which thereby increases the suffering of the animals taken to the slaughterhouse. In traditional farming methods, animals grew naturally, living in a natural environment. Today, under capitalism, animals are no longer raised on green farmlands, but are reared in factories. Kept in metal cages, animals are forced to grow faster than Nature has intended them to. Their life is short and they are quickly sent to the abattoir for profit. If half of the world's population stopped meat consumption, more arable land could be used for growing grain for human consumption. As a result, there would be less carbon dioxide emission by factory animals. Most importantly, with this collective awakening and effort, our world would be a kinder and more liveable place.

"Peace begins from your plate." Knowing the law of "Interbeing", let's make an effort to help stop global warming and other natural disasters. Let us be more mindful of our diet and the way we live our life. As

Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh put it:

*"Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful consumption, I vow to cultivate good health, both physical and mental, for myself, my family, and my society by practising mindful eating, drinking and consumption. I vow to ingest only items that preserve peace, well-being and joy in my body, in my consciousness, and in the collective body and consciousness of my family and society."*

*"I understand that a proper diet is crucial for self-transformation and for the transformation of society."*

Polio Vaccine inventor, Jonas Edward Salk commented that if all insects disappeared from the Earth, within 50 years all life forms on Earth would end, but if all human beings disappeared, within 50 years all life forms on Earth would flourish. Humans are considered the most intelligent life forms, and so we have a responsibility for all lives on Earth. Yet how have human beings made use of their intelligence? How kind have we been to the animals and to Mother Earth? In our "civilised" living habits, how much aggression and destruction have we brought to this world?

**As Buddhists who follow the footpath of the Buddha, as we practise loving-kindness meditation, may we also be more compassionate in our day-to-day living. May we be kinder and wiser in the way we eat and the way we use natural resources. May all beings live a healthy and harmonious life and may we make this world a kinder and more liveable place.**

Editor: If you are new to a vegetarian diet, check out the newly-introduced ethno-botanical living cuisine created by Diana Von Cranach for the Green Room Café @Bishan Park 2. All the dishes are freshly prepared to order, offering inspiring, plant-based combinations of fruits, vegetables, pulses, sea vegetables, herbs, spices, seeds, leaves and edible flowers and no animal products of any kind. Visit [greenroomcafe.com.sg](http://greenroomcafe.com.sg) or call 6556 1533 for more information.

# Is Seeing Believing?

BY | Toh Sze Gee

Once upon a time, people used to say, "Seeing is believing."

In 1927, the German physicist Werner Heisenberg introduced his first formulation of the uncertainty principle. In that now famous article, he considered measuring the position of an electron by a microscope.

The shorter the wavelength of the light employed, the more accurate is the measurement of the position. At the same time, this results in a larger change in momentum, and hence less precisely can the momentum be known.

This experiment illustrates the idea that the very process of observation unpredictably affects what one observes.

Likewise, we may be proud of our intelligence and knowledge, but as ordinary beings, we lack the ability to perceive things exactly as they really are.

Just as a short-sighted person cannot see clearly what is far away; a long-sighted person is unable see well what is close; and a person with astigmatism sees objects blurred.

As soon as we try to see how things are, the truth has already started to slip away from us.

For things do not exist the way they appear to those afflicted by the cataracts of ignorance.

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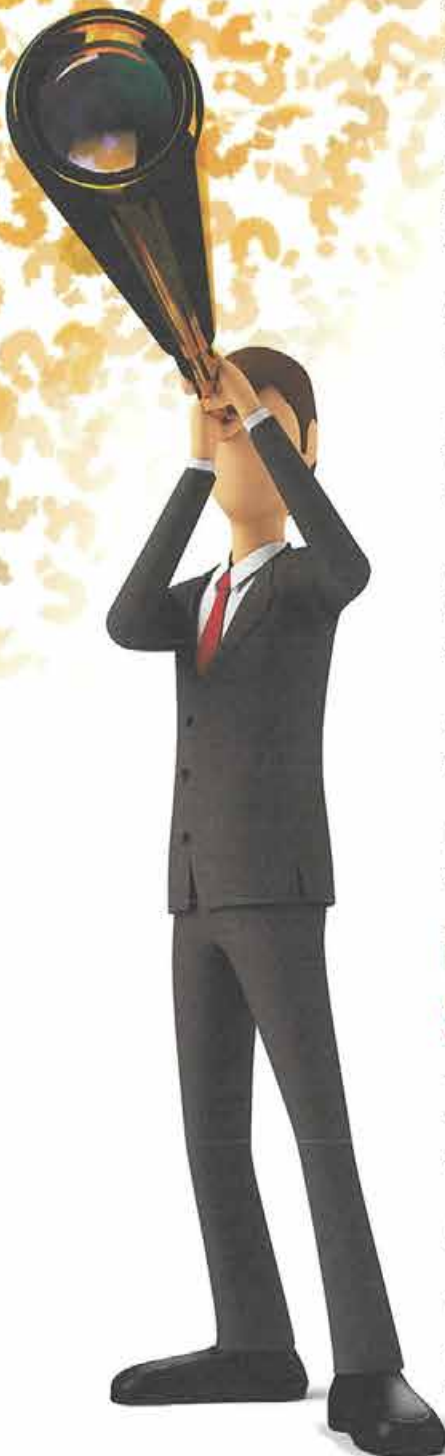
**Phenomena are like illusions, reflections, mirages, echoes, and so on, explained our All-Knowing Teacher.**

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Through developing the wisdom eye that penetrates the obscuring ignorance and all its latencies, distorted vision will be eliminated;

Only at that time can we claim that "Seeing is believing."

Until then, when we see something good and feel excited, or when we see something bad and generate aversion, we should ask ourselves, "Is seeing believing?"



## Lessons from the lesser:

# a LEAF FROM THE DOGS

**W**e have six dogs in the meditation centre now. The numbers kept changing over the years, most recently we had seven. But that seventh was sent away because she didn't know where to draw the line. Anyway, we will talk about her later as we go on.

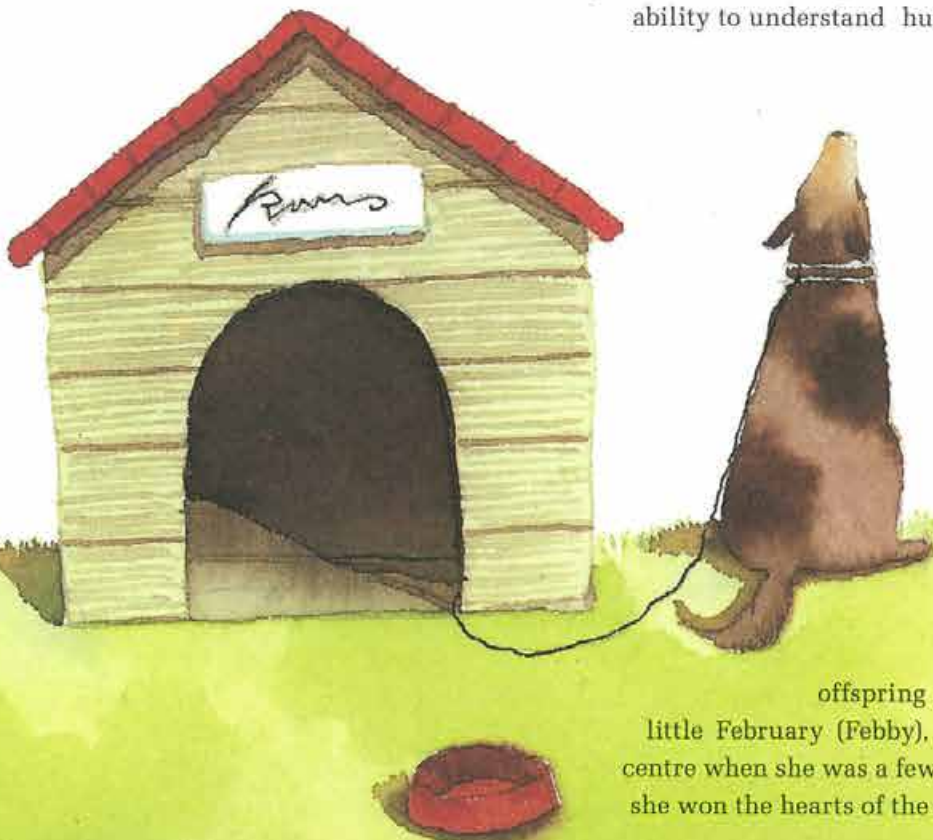
The oldest two are Sorn Tin Ba (Sorn Sorn) and Moe Moe. These two are sisters, but they are like mortal enemies, trying to bite each other to death at least once a year. It doesn't help that three of the other dogs are born to Sorn Tin Ba, so it's pretty much a gang versus a lone defender sometimes. Both sisters had puppies over the years, but the many batches either died or were given away (strangely enough, even those that were given away passed away too). These two are descendants of the legendary Mahooya.

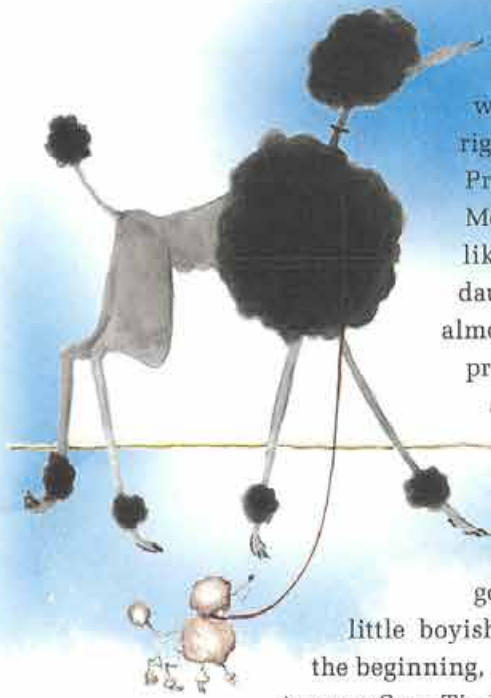
It was told to us that Mahooya came when the centre was still under construction about six years ago. After arriving here, she refused to go home (to the anger and dismay of her owners) and stayed here as if it was her duty to protect this place. Fed by the construction workers, she later gave birth to our two eldest, Sorn Tin Ba and Moe Moe. Mahooya was well-known in the whole village for her intelligence. There are many stories of her intelligence, courage and ability to understand humans, especially her dedication

to the centre. Unfortunately, her genes seemed to have lost those amazing qualities as she gave birth to her next generation. She suddenly disappeared one day a few years ago, and we understood that to mean that she had gone away where humans could not see to die.

Of all the puppies that were born in this centre, we are only left with Ju-Ro, October (Toby), and November (Novvie), offspring of Sorn Tin Ba. There is also little February (Febby), who came on her own to our centre when she was a few months old; tiny and beautiful, she won the hearts of the meditators and got to stay.

Each of them has its own character, and it is interesting to see how they have evolved over the years.





Sorn Tin Ba and Moe Moe were at loggerheads right from the start. Proud and pretty, Moe Moe had airs like a rich man's daughter. One could almost imagine her prancing around in a high waist dress holding on to a parasol. Sorn Tin Ba was carefree, easy-going and maybe a

little boyish in behaviour. In the beginning, Moe Moe managed to scare Sorn Tin Ba, but because she

was picky and slow in eating, the easy-going and easy-eating Sorn Tin Ba quickly outgrew her in size and strength. From then on, if there was a bloody fight, Moe Moe would almost always be the sorer (and more painful) loser. Moe Moe wasn't on good terms with her mum, Mahooya. Moe Moe was always aloof, sometimes even aggressive if any dog stepped into her private space (which was very big!). So as a puppy, Sorn Tin Ba learned more about protecting the place and fighting outside dogs from her mum, while Moe Moe always lagged behind, producing more wind element from her lungs than exerting any actual physical presence in the face of outside intruders. Unpopular as she is with the other dogs, she has charm for the humans. She knows how to capture their hearts, stand and seemingly 'dance' for them on her dainty paws to beg for treats. Her sister isn't as streetwise, and so isn't as popular.

But pride comes at a certain price. Moe Moe seems to know that she is pretty and popular. Her behaviour with the other dogs is ugly. Mostly, she was the one who picked fights. But that wasn't very wise, because she was always at the losing end. Occasionally, she would play with her mother or sister, and Sorn Tin Ba always graciously forgave and played with her. But mostly, she is the growling, sulking co-resident to the other dogs. She had very strong attachment and her possessive streak came out clearly when she had her first litter of puppies. She was so possessive and sensitive that if any other dog came within three feet of her

puppies, she would get up snarling and threatening with such force that it seemed as if her lungs would rupture. It didn't matter that her mother was so compassionate and kind. (Mahooya actually assisted Sorn Tin Ba in her puppy birth believe it or not!) Moe Moe just didn't want any dog to come near her and her puppies. Maybe because of her nasty temper, she is always suffering from boils and messy pus infections to her skin, and she is physically much weaker than her sister. All those toxins that anger produced just had to seep out somewhere! That was probably the reason why most of her puppies were weak and sickly, and did not manage to survive into dog-hood. Now she seems to have mellowed with age, but she still stays aloof, marking her territory in front of the office building. Maybe because she had less births over the years compared to her sister, she remains youthful and graceful while her sister now has the sagged, tired look of a many-time mother. These days, Moe Moe seems so much more carefree and light.

Sorn Tin Ba was ordinary right from the start, but she is an obedient and dutiful dog. She conscientiously learnt from her mother the skills to attack and defend. The story of her first puppy-birth was a dramatic one. Perhaps she was a male in her previous life! She didn't seem to know how to take care of her puppies and in fact, she was terrified of them! We were amazed to see her mother stepping in to help nurse her little ones immediately after childbirth, while she hid in the adjoining box. We had to slowly coax her to nurse her puppies over the next few weeks. Moe Moe on the other hand, had a natural mother's instinct. It was hilarious to watch Sorn Tin Ba and her first puppies. She behaved more like a first-time father left home alone with a crying, hungry infant to take care of. When her babies cried, she panicked. She would look at them, whine in anxiety, not knowing what to do. Then she would jump into their box to feed them, but quickly jump out again, when the pain of four little ones suckling on her at the same time terrified her. The same process happened continuously a few times, and her babies were still crying for milk. Her heart went out to them, but oh, she was so fearful of their tugging and suckling! She would look at us humans pleadingly to solve her problem. Moe Moe had no such problem. Since being a mother did not come naturally for Sorn Tin Ba, the humans had to get involved. We took turns to feed the puppies with



milk through a syringe, trying to encourage Sorn Tin Ba to feed them sometimes (when we could find her or get her to come near!). One time, panicky and torn with anxiety, she ran away from her other puppies, taking only a favourite with her. Such drama with Sorn Tin Ba and her first babies!

There was another pregnancy from which we were happily expecting at least three or four puppies from Sorn Tin Ba. When the pregnancy came to a head, she disappeared for a while. We finally tracked her hiding place to under the woodshed and eager to see her puppies, we shone lights underneath trying to get a peep at her newborn babies. We searched and searched, but there was only one tiny, black ball of fur. Only one?! There should be more! But we couldn't find the bodies (if they had died during childbirth) of the others. Then we realised that the upset mother must have buried them somewhere we couldn't see. The death of the other children seemed to have affected Sorn Tin Ba. For the first few weeks after birth, she refused to bring her baby out from under the pile or to allow humans to go near. She did not growl like Moe Moe, but she pleaded in her crying way for us to stay away. She was the perfect epitome of *metta* (loving-kindness) as a mother. She would spend most of the day guarding her newborn under the wood pile, and emerged briefly when there were fewer people around, to quickly relieve herself or to eat her meal. She lost much weight during that time. We respected her *metta* so much, that we would put her feeding bowl as near as possible, so that she did not have to go far.

One night, as we were chanting the *Karaniya Metta Sutta*, there was this verse that struck me, "Just as a mother would protect her only child, just so, let us cultivate loving-kindness towards all beings without boundaries."

The picture of Sorn Tin Ba came into my mind! And indeed over the years, Sorn Tin Ba proved to be a loving and patient mother, grooming and taking care of her children even into their adult doghood. A vast difference from her initial panic with motherhood.

That lucky sole survivor was named, Ju-Ro, which we were told, meant 'long life' in Japanese. And indeed, he survived the initial puppy years to adulthood, unlike all his previous siblings and cousins who came and went.

Ju-Ro, from the very onset of his life was much loved and in fact, showered with attention and care. When he finally emerged into public view, all we could see was one round, plump little ball of fur. He was so fat he could barely walk! His mother had indeed provided all the best nutrition for him! He was an instant favourite and everyone loved him. As he grew, he seemed to know that he was handsome and that all eyes were on him. His mother would groom him as soon as he was near, and the indulgent little dog would stand there for as long as his mother would care to do so for him. When she stopped and walked away, he would go near and stand in front of her again. Everyone loved to give him treats. "Ju-Ro, Ju-Ro" could be heard every morning when he received little treats from the human residents. His character was gentle, and he liked human company. He would sit down with some of us as we did our morning gardening duties. He would also faithfully follow us around when we went for walks outside.

But he had his rebellious months too. He was like the overprotected child who became rebellious from all that control and protection. He would disappear for outings to the chicken farms nearby. The first time he was lost, we sent his

mother and auntie out to look for him. He was found gazing longingly at the nearby chicken farm. The second time it happened, his mother and auntie learnt his style. Instead of going all the way, they went a little



distance, then stood and howled for a while. Our pampered young boy would reappear, running back to meet them from a distance. At first, he would be afraid of the humans waiting to scold him for not being back on time. Then he rebelled. He would disappear for the whole night, and not appear until morning. When he was disciplined, he growled back.

Then he met his *kamma*. One day, he came back limping and we hypothesised that he had been beaten up for trying to steal some chicken. Either that or he had gotten into a fight. A few days later, he came down with a wheezing cough accompanied by mucus running down his nostrils. Then he had boils on his body. We sent for a vet, and were told that he had caught a virus, probably infected when other dogs bit him. He limped for months until he recovered. During that time, he was a pathetic sight. He wanted to go out, but we feared that his injury would literally make him a sitting 'dog' if he met bigger and stronger ones. He had come of mating age, and that made things worse. The rebellious streak sizzled with the restless hormones within him. He wanted to go out even with the limping injury. One time, he disappeared for a few days and was found lying down, exhausted in the drizzle under the jackfruit tree. He seemed to know that there was discipline waiting if he went right in, so he waited for a while. He was a pathetic sight, glassy-eyed, drenched and sulking but still many people loved him. They nagged, preached and scolded him as they helped to dress his wound, and fed him to help him regain his energy.

Nowadays, that restless energy has toned down. He mostly lazes around in the shade, and he loses out to his younger brother, Toby in speed and alertness. When the pack runs to investigate some human presence outside, he lags behind, sometimes getting up only when the rest have run past him. Sometimes, though, he still sneaks out to try to get some fresh chicken.

A year after Ju-Ro, came Toby, Novvie and Didi. At first, we thought that the pampered elder brother would be jealous of the little ones. But he proved to be a protective big brother, patiently playing with his little siblings. By the time these three came along, we had exhausted our vocabulary of names. We had had so many visitors before them, baby birds

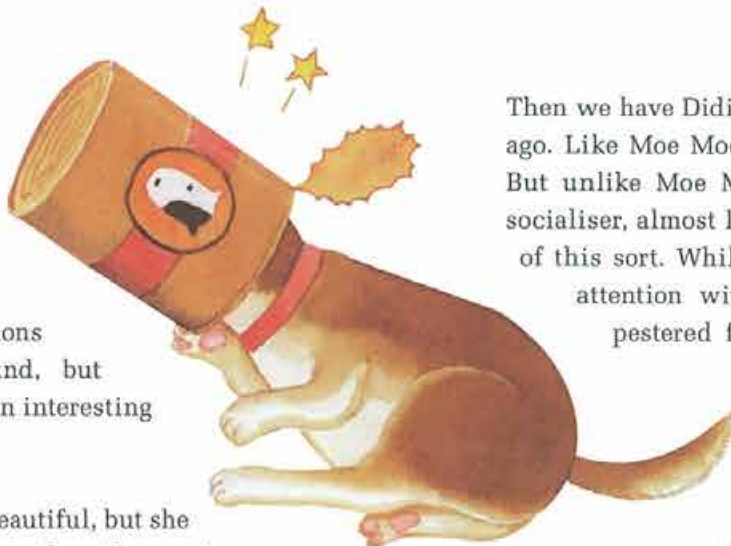
that fell from their nests, puppies thrown into our compound, puppies our own dogs gave birth to, that there were numerous 'Metta's, 'Karuna's, 'Mudita's etc and after that special name 'Ju-Ro' to make sure he survived, we became practical. Toby, Novvie and Didi were born in October, so we thought we would name the one we thought was the eldest as October, the next as November and the last as December. You can guess by now why the latest addition is named February. Yup, she came to us in the month of February!

Toby is a possible example of how Ju-Ro would have turned out if there had been less fuss, pampering, attention and over-protectiveness in his life. As a puppy, Toby was ugly with a flat snub of a nose, always hungry and not beautiful like Ju-Ro or Didi. So he was nobody's favourite. Everyone had favourites, but in the early weeks, almost no one chose Toby. He is best known for his food-sniffing nose. He walks quickly, with his nose to the ground, furiously sniffing. When he eats, he digs in with his nose, sometimes eating so quickly that his bowl moves around with each plunge and often ends up with rice on his nose to show that he has been eating very diligently. He is always hungry, frequently scavenging in the rubbish bins after finishing his allocated feed. Because he was not anyone's favourite, he went about his own way and he grew up more athletic and adventurous than Ju-Ro, probably because he had more time. (Ju-Ro spent a lot of time socialising with the humans, basking in their attention). Toby sniffed out rats' hide-outs, chased after birds flying in the sky, tried to gobble down grasshoppers, and he played when not looking for more food. He was an independent and simple puppy who knew how to entertain himself. Slowly as he reached adolescence, the characteristics of his breed started to show, and he became more fine-looking, long, tall and slim, now more athletically-built than his elder brother.

Toby grew up as one ordinary puppy in a litter of three, so the attention given to him was balanced. Sometimes, you can almost feel that Ju-Ro is depressed or lonely when those who love him most are not around. You can almost feel him sulking or just lounging around in a depressed mood. He gets jealous and possessive too. Toby spends his day well without much human attention, and he gets on with his siblings, is boyishly playful but not aggressive.

Well, who knows how each would have turned out had the conditions switched around, but these two are an interesting pair to watch.

Novvie is not beautiful, but she resembles her mother the most. Even her behaviour mirrors her mum's — a little tomboyish, athletic and strong. But she is hopelessly timid. She would bark ferociously at little children or those smaller and weaker than her. When Febby came, Novvie loved to bully her, probably because it was so easy, with the latter half her size. Sometimes she would bully Didi too, because her sister was less athletic than her. However, she is a nervous wreck. When she wagged, she wagged so hard with her tail, sometimes with a hint of placation, wagging till her whole bottom moved with her wag while she looked at you with her head down, looking to see if you would kindly offer her a pat. It was her way of saying, "Please, please!" When she barked at strangers, she started barking from a distance with her tail between her legs (a sign that we understood later as fear), moving back as the person approached nearer. Finally, she would run back behind the safety of the gate and continue to bark. Sometimes, there would be workers in the compound walking up and down in the day. She would bark at them a few times everyday, even though they had already been working in the centre's compound for weeks. The other dogs glance up when she starts barking and when they see what she is barking at, they go back to their nap. Sometimes if we happen to walk past holding a foreign object, like a hoe or a long, stick-like object, she would quickly turn back, run to a distance and bark. She reminds me of myself sometimes. When we are obviously afraid, we may try to put up a brilliant barking show to put off any possible advance towards us. The tactic is to scare the other party before we are really threatened! Sometimes because of the anxiety, we bark even at the slightest non-incident. That kind of bark can only scare those who are weaker and less confident or raise an eyebrow or two and perhaps, a puzzled look.



Then we have Didi. She was here till a few months ago. Like Moe Moe, she was proud and beautiful. But unlike Moe Moe who is a seasoned human socialiser, almost like a performer, Didi had no art of this sort. While Moe Moe performed for your attention with her grace and beauty, Didi pestered for attention. When she wanted attention, she would come close with her head low, wagging her tail hard at the same time and edging nearer, nearer and nearer until she was very, very close to you.

But because her way was so intruding, most people found her irritating as she grew older. Sometimes people would push her away, but she would interpret that to mean, "Hey, they are responding to me!" and she would keep coming, pestering until the person stands up and walks away in exasperation. When she was very young, she had people's attention because she was beautiful. But as she matured, her character soured people's impression of her. She was not only proud, but stubborn. While the other puppies responded to teaching and training, she did not. When she slept on top of the flower bed and people disciplined and made her move, she snapped back and refused to budge until she had to be literally dragged off the plot. When she played with the other dogs, she liked to play damsel in distress. She would allow the other dogs to overcome her, lay down on her back with four limbs to the sky and she allowed the rest to mock attack her, to nibble on her in group-play. That was her favourite role. She was hopelessly timid too. While the other dogs ventured out from the gate a little from time to time, she always remained behind, not daring to go out. When the pack barked, she was always behind or not involved. Her doom came because she pushed her luck too far. While Moe Moe stood her ground only against fellow dogs, Didi thought she could stand up against the humans. Sometimes when she needed to be disciplined, she would resist stubbornly, sometimes growling back or attempting to bite despite her intense fear. Maybe she thought she had something more? But other than her beauty, she had neither the grace nor intelligence of Moe Moe. She represented pride without wisdom and that was the cause of her downfall. During one of the retreats, she threatened to bite on a few occasions and it was decided that it was too dangerous to keep her here. So she was sent away.

The last is Febby. Febby is the epitome of resilience. She is a survivor. When she first walked through the centre's back gate, one wondered how a puppy so young could wander alone and find its way into this centre. Febby is beautiful. In fact she resembled Toby and Didi, fully black, with a white tip on her tail. Right from the start, Didi found a competitor in her. They looked similar and Ju-Ro took it upon himself to be Febby's protector in the beginning. Novvie had jumped at the opportunity to bully one smaller and weaker than herself. Toby too looked for every opportunity to attack Febby, jealous that his elder brother had taken an interest in this newcomer. In fact, Ju-Ro's *metta* was commendable. For the first few days, he stayed close to Febby, playing with her, protecting her and he would come running if he heard her cry or saw another dog approaching her. As the days went by, Ju-Ro lost interest in this duty and Toby changed from his initial aggressor role to become Febby's best friend in the whole centre.

It was an ordeal for Febby to accepted in this centre, by the dogs I mean; the humans loved her right from the beginning. She has charm. When she saw you and you called out to her, you could feel her happiness bouncing out from her body, she would gallop, bounce and dance towards you in her happy way. She was always so cheerful and happy. But to the other dogs, a newcomer meant they had to share their food. So they snarled at her, threatened to bite her, especially if she came near their feeding bowls. It was so scary for her that sometimes, she would be waiting at the gate early in the morning, waiting for it to be opened so that she could go out and be safely away from the other dogs. The humans protected her, loved her and scolded the other dogs for ostracising her. But it took some time for her to find acceptance in the dog world.

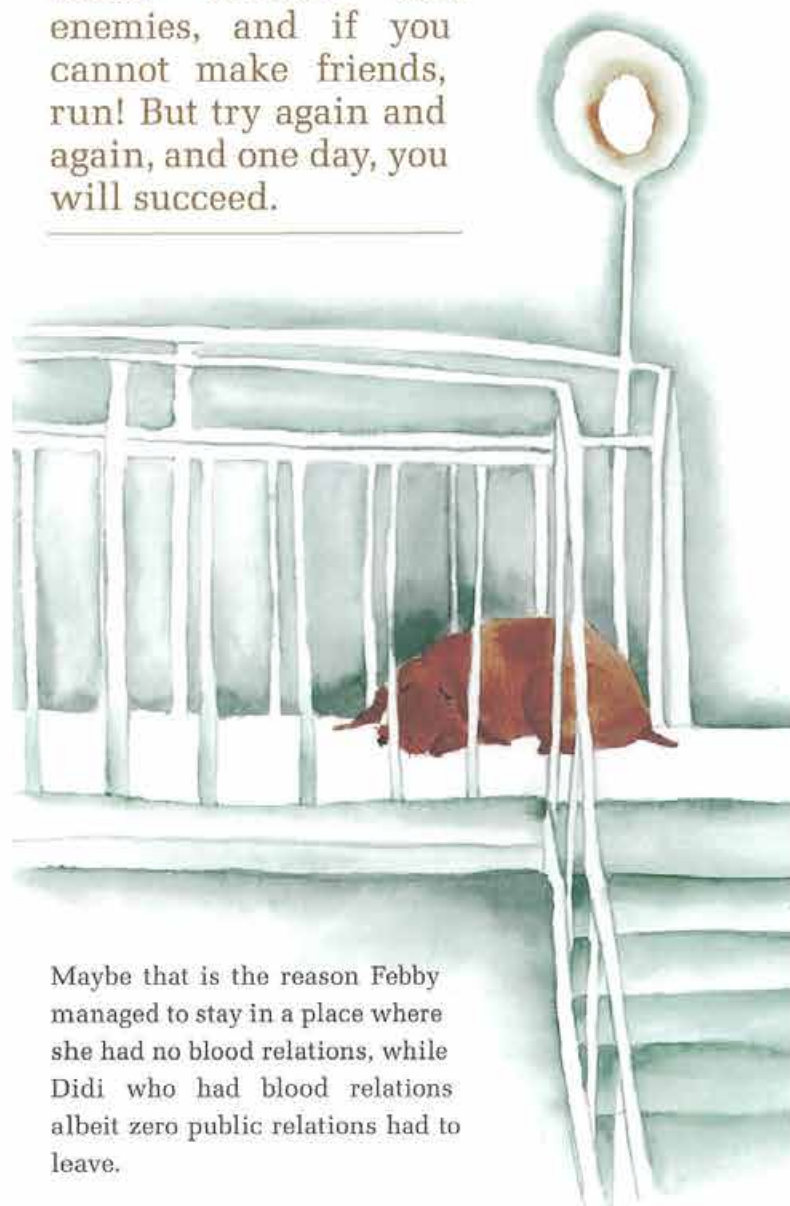
Febby had a special knack for public relations. Even though the bigger dogs snarled, barked and warned her often, sometimes attacking her as a group she would sometimes try to approach them individually, with her nose low down to the ground. Then if they allowed her, she would approach them and try to lick their face to make friends. If they snarled before she got close, she would quickly flip over on the ground in a surrender position, freezing herself with four limbs in the air, wagging her white-flag tail tentatively, then slowly turning over and escaping to a safer distance if it seemed that the other dog

would try to attack her. Sometimes she would stay in the surrender position and allow the other dog to sniff her. Sometimes they would sniff her and walk away. Then immediately, she would bounce up, walk beside the older dog in her bouncing way and try to make friends again. Only when it was clear that they did not want to be friendly that day, would she escape to a safe corner.

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It is amazing to see how she almost never got angry with the other dogs for bullying her. She was terrified of Didi and Novvie, her closest competitors but it was amazing how sometimes, even proud and aloof Moe Moe would play with her. Her principle in life is simple: Better friends than enemies, and if you cannot make friends, run! But try again and again, and one day, you will succeed.

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Maybe that is the reason Febby managed to stay in a place where she had no blood relations, while Didi who had blood relations albeit zero public relations had to leave.

There is so much to learn just looking at them. I am not a big lover of dogs. In fact, before I arrived here, I was terrified of them. My mum says that I fell down trying to run away from a dog when I was a toddler. That scar stays on my knee still. So coming here, pardon my ignorance, I was amazed to find that each dog has its own personality and that though we do not share a common language, communication is not a problem. Sometimes you can feel their moods too, or you can differentiate whether they mean "I'm hungry" or "I want to go out". In fact, they are very sensitive. There are days when I am hopelessly depressed and Sorn Tin Ba comes and stays near me the whole day, looking into my eyes, as if telling me that 'I understand'. I often talk to them like I would a human, and sometimes they respond amazingly. They helped to find a missing, depressed meditator; locate fellow missing dogs and they know when they are being pampered and when they are being disciplined.

The *kamma* and reasons for us being born in diverse types of lives are different. Sometimes I can almost feel that Moe Moe is like a dainty lady or deity; Sorn Tin Ba, a muscular, honest albeit not-so-bright lad; Ju-Ro, a lazy, disinterested youth at times and so on. Who knows? We are flowing on and on in this cycle of rebirths, changing from one type of life form to another.

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It is interesting how much we can learn looking at how their lives have unfolded. There are many lessons of life that we can learn: about parenting a child, like comparing how Ju-Ro and Toby have turned out; the depth of a mother's love, even from a dog; about how good public relations can balance off pride and haughtiness while the lack of it could threaten one's livelihood; how our inner states force us to take up extreme stances which merely expose the insecurity even more (as with Novvie); and lastly of how Febby has taught us the simple trick of survival.

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Nowadays, Sorn Tin Ba is showing signs of ageing. She and Moe Moe should be about six dog years old by now. Sorn Tin Ba has a terrible stench emitting from her body because of tooth decay, and recently the gums have been bleeding too. It is evident that her strength and stamina have dropped. Moe Moe looks more youthful compared to Sorn Tin Ba, but her teeth too are getting weak. She eats slowly and has difficulty biting hard foods. The other dogs seem to know that Sorn Tin Ba is less able to defend herself now. Her children start to fight with her for food, and Moe Moe instinctively knows that her sister is now much weaker than her. She taunts her more frequently now. When I look at Sorn Tin Ba, I see what happens in our human society too. When one gets older, one is less able and the younger ones take advantage of that. While in the dog world it may mean less food or a higher threat of being killed in a fight, in our human society, it also relates to the themes of reduced productivity and vulnerability. Because of age and thus her stench, even I cannot stand being near Sorn Tin Ba sometimes. I remember my grandmother's bad breath and her constant burping when she stayed with us in the final years of her life. I am shameful to say that I was repelled by her in the beginning, thinking that she was making too big a fuss about her pain, her frailty, and her idiosyncratic needs. Now as I look at Sorn Tin Ba, how she sometimes stands further away from the other dogs when we feed them, knowing that she is less able to compete – that resignation and helplessness in her eyes – I regret not being kinder and more compassionate to my grandmother while she was still staying with us.

It is a privilege to witness how these dogs' lives have unfolded. They have indeed grown and evolved with us over the years. As we continue to stay together, I would like to learn from Sorn Tin Ba's easy-going manner and her motherly patience; from Toby's independence and non-attachment; and Febby's attitude to life and her knack of connecting with others.

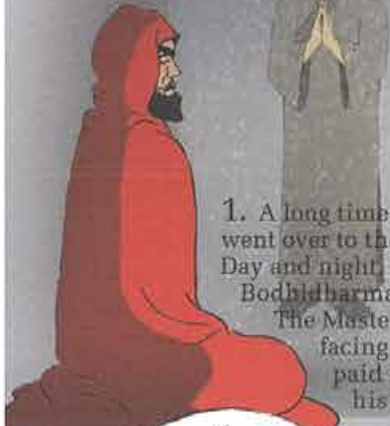
Who knows? Maybe more dogs will come, and we will learn even more each day from them. 🐾



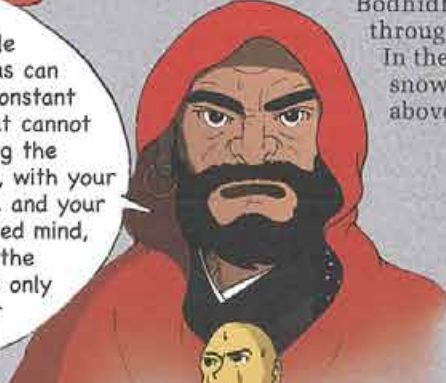
# Bodhidharma & No Mind

ADAPTED BY | Esther Thien


ILLUSTRATIONS | Bee Li



1. A long time ago, Shenkuang went over to the Shaolin temple. Day and night he beseeched Bodhidharma for instruction. The Master sat in *zazen*, facing the wall and paid no attention to his pleas.




4. The incomparable truth of the Buddhas can only be attained by constant striving; practising what cannot be practised, bearing the unbearable. How can you, with your small virtue and wisdom, and your easy-going and conceited mind, dare to aspire to the true teaching? It is only so much labour lost.




6. Your disciple's mind has no peace as yet. I beg you, Master, please put it to rest.

Bring me your mind, and I will put it to rest.


I have searched for my mind, but I cannot find it.




2. One evening, Shenkuang stood unmoving before Bodhidharma right through a snowstorm. In the morning, the snow had reached above his knees.



3. You have been standing in the snow for a long time. What is it that you seek?



I beseech you, Master, open the gate of the Dharma and save all of us beings.



5. Hearing this, Shenkuang drew out a knife and cut off his arm, placing it before Bodhidharma. At this, Bodhidharma relented and accepted him as a disciple, giving him the Dharma name Huike.



7. I have completely put it to rest for you.

This story of Bodhidharma is one of the most familiar of all Zen koans. According to Mary Jaksch, Bodhidharma is pointing to the fact that all things — though they may come and go, be born and die — are complete and eternally at rest. If

we can truly see into that complete rest, our life is transformed. Explained Barry Magid, "A mind not at rest is a mind that is at odds with itself, plagued by judgment and separation. When Bodhidharma sends Huike away to seek his mind, he goes to fully confront the fact of that restless separation between what is 'mind' and 'non-mind'. Seeing all the self-centredness on display, thinking that the self is all there is, and is the limit of who and what we are in the universe, we are stuck in delusion. When we practise the Dharma, practising what can't be practised, bearing the unbearable, everything shifts. The boundary between self and life dissolves and there is just this moment. In this moment, where is the world, where is the mind? There is no place outside the world to observe the world, no place outside the mind to observe the mind, no place outside of this moment to be or know anything at all. When there is no separation from mind, there is no finding, no knowing the mind. Then this mind, this body, this life is completely sufficient, with nothing lacking. Practice becomes the natural expression of who we are, and the natural expression of who we are is our practice. Nothing to attain, everything to be. The mind that has completely forgotten about its own condition is, as Bodhidharma says, completely at rest. And such a state of "being at rest" is indistinguishable from the activity of just being in this moment."

# SEEN

## Alive is the Buddha

### > The Buddha

**Directed by:** Krismant Wattananarong

"The Buddha is a dead person. How can someone who is dead help us?" When I heard this remark recently, the thought that came immediately to my mind is that the Buddha is very much alive, through his wonderful teachings that guide us to find real happiness in life. And I felt especially so after watching this animated film at the *2nd Asian Buddhist Film Festival* on 8 May 2011 at Golden Village Grand.

The film tells the life story of the Buddha, from his birth as Prince Siddhartha, embarking on an uncertain journey to discover the Truth, to becoming the Enlightened One, travelling to different parts of India to spread the Truth. Imagine in the olden days, the Buddha had no classrooms, not to mention Internet access! He taught on any occasion, and at any place, as long as there was an opportunity appropriate for him to expound the Dharma. And he did it with such skillfulness and wisdom.

Today, there is no lack of communication tools and apparently everyone is overloaded with information through the Internet. But are we truly benefiting from all this information that is easily accessible? I only hope more people will be mindful and compassionate enough to create content that is beneficial for the masses.

It was with such noble intention that *The Buddha* was created. Produced by Media Standard, a film company in Thailand, it took more than three years to complete. The final production displays the delicate animation skills by the team led by director Krismant Wattananarong. It has the rich colours of Indian cultures, while infusing some Thai elements, which makes it interesting and unique.

In addition, the producer, Dr Wallapa Pimthong painstakingly went to India to personally supervise the casting of the English dubbing artistes and the dubbing process (the film was originally in Thai). I was especially impressed with the voice of the Buddha which was calm and earnest.

With the guidance of a consultative panel which included respectable Sangha members, the director weaved the essential teachings of the Buddha into the film. He said, "I sincerely hope that this edutainment film will be of remarkable use and help to those who are eager to know or learn about the Buddha's life and his teachings."

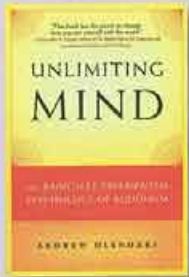
The life story of the Buddha is so fascinating that you will be touched and inspired by one of the greatest teachers in history. Watching the film reminds one that there is no time to lose for spiritual practice, that one ought to cultivate compassion and wisdom, and to realise the true meaning of life.

(The animated film *The Buddha* is distributed free on a first-come-first-served basis from the Reception Office at Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery, 8.30am to 4.30pm daily. Limited to 2 copies per person. For organisations wishing to obtain more copies, please call 68495342.)



# READ

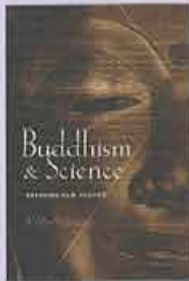
Settle the mind, gather and concentrate its insight to know deeply



## > **Unlimiting Mind: The Radically Experiential Psychology of Buddhism**

By Andrew Olendzki

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By B. Alan Wallace

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By Chuck Wild

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A truth will never change  
Spiritual truth is like this  
The same principle applies forever  
Scientific truth is like this  
The same phenomenon exists forever

Our body is not truth  
For it changes  
Our emotions are not truths  
For they change  
Our thoughts are not truths  
For they change  
Our suffering and happiness are not truths  
For they change  
Everything around us is not truth  
For they change

So let go of all attachment  
to our body, emotions, thoughts,  
suffering and happiness;  
and realise their illusionary nature.  
Just focus on the true nature of our mind  
For it is the truth that brings us to enlightenment.  
- Yeshe Osel

The great benefit of science  
is that it can contribute tremendously  
to the alleviation of suffering  
at the physical level,  
but it is only through the  
cultivation of the qualities of the  
human heart and the  
transformation of our attitudes  
that we can begin to address and  
overcome our mental suffering.  
In other words, the enhancement of  
fundamental values is  
indispensable to our basic quest for happiness.  
- His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Without the discipline  
of guarding the mind,  
what use are  
any other disciplines?  
- Nagarjuna

Photo: Tohy

**Abhidhamma:** The third great division of the Pitaka. It is a huge collection of systematically arranged, tabulated and classified doctrines of the Buddha, representing the quintessence of his Teaching.

**Afflictions:** Another name for negative or disturbing emotions, also known as kleshas. The three main emotional obscurations are passion or attachment; aggression or anger; and ignorance or delusion. The five kleshas are the above three plus pride and envy or jealousy.

**Attachment:** Attachments are what keep us turning on the wheel of rebirth. In the Four Noble truths, Buddha Shakyamuni taught that attachment to self is the root cause of suffering: From craving [attachment] springs grief, from craving springs fear; For him who is wholly free from craving, there is no grief, much less fear. (Dhammapada) Becoming enlightened is nothing other than severing all our attachments. What is meant by "attachment"? It is the investing of mental or emotional energy in an "object". We can become attached to people, things, experiential states, and our own thoughts and preconceptions. In Buddhist teachings attachments are usually divided into two general categories: attachments to self and attachments to dharmas. For the seasoned practitioner, even the Dharma must not become an attachment.

**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.

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

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

**Emptiness:** The truth that all mind and matter are constantly changing, thus being empty of any fixed self.

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

**Five Precepts:** The basic guidelines of moral conduct - not killing, not stealing, not having sexual misconduct, not lying and not taking intoxicants.

**Four Noble Truths:** 1. Life is full of dissatisfactory experiences - ageing, sickness, separation, death etc 2. Causes of dissatisfactory experiences - craving, aversion and ignorance 3. Life can be without dissatisfaction - by attaining Enlightenment or Nirvana 4. The path leading to the end of dissatisfactions - The Noble Eightfold path.

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

**Impermanence:** All compounded things are constantly changing, as a result or effect of changing causes and conditions. All living and non-living elements are thus subject to decay and renewal.

**Interdependence:** Also called dependent origination or conditioned arising. The principle that nothing exists independently, but comes into existence only on dependency of various previous causes and conditions. In other words, a phenomenon exists on condition that the other exists; it has on condition that others have; it extinguishes on condition that others extinguish; it has not on condition that others have not.

**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.

**Koan:** A brief anecdote recording an exchange between master and disciple or a master's enlightenment experience. Koans are used to bring a student to realisation or to help clarify his enlightenment.

**Liberation:** The state in which defilements and karma have been eliminated and no longer subjected to uncontrolled rebirth in cyclic existence.

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

**Mahayana:** The dominant Buddhist tradition of East Asia that emphasises on the Bodhisattva ideal.

**Mantra:** Prescribed syllables (in Sanskrit) to protect the mind from defilements. They express the essence of specific energies. Recitation of mantras is always done with specific visualisations.

**Meditation:** A practice to habituate ourselves to positive and realistic states of mind.

**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. 'Satipatthana' in Pali language.

**Merits:** Blessings, positive potential. Imprints on the mindstream of positive actions, leading to future happiness.

**Nirvana:** Nirvana is a Sanskrit term that is interpreted in various ways: 1) cessation, or extinction, referring to the elimination of the afflictions at the time of enlightenment, 2) freedom from desire; and 3) no longer either coming into being or ceasing to be. 'Nibbana' in Pali language.

**Noble Eightfold Path:** A systematic and complete formula to rid dissatisfaction and attain true happiness and peace by following Perfect Speech, Perfect Action, Perfect Livelihood, Perfect Effort, Perfect Mindfulness, Perfect Meditation, Perfect Understanding, Perfect Thought (pls read Be A Lamp Upon Yourself published by KMSPKS for detailed info).

**Perfection:** Refers to the six practices, the perfection of which ferries one beyond the sea of suffering and mortality to Nirvana.

**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.

**Refuge:** In the Buddhist context to take refuge means to accept the Buddha and the Buddhist teachings as the path one wants to take.

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

**Sentient Beings:** Living beings with feelings in the six Samsara realms of hells, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, demi-gods and gods.

**Shamatha:** Tranquility meditation. This is basic sitting meditation in which one usually follows the breath while observing the workings of the mind while sitting in the cross-legged posture. The main purpose of shamatha meditation is to settle or tame the mind so that it will stay where one places it.

**Six Realms of Existence:** Also called the Six Paths of Rebirth, it refers to the six categories of living beings who are not enlightened. They are 1) Gods, 2) Humans, 3) Asuras, 4) Animals, 5) Ghosts, 6) Hell-dwellers. The particular category that one finds oneself reborn in depends upon one's karma at the time of rebirth.

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

**Sutra(s):** The recorded teachings of the Buddha. Spelt as 'Sutta' in Pali language.

**Threefold Refuge:** Taking refuge in the Triple Gem.

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

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

**Wisdom:** The understanding or discernment based on the direct realisation of the Four Noble Truths, Impermanence, Interdependent Origination, Non-self and Emptiness. The Buddha taught that all things are impermanent, arising and passing away, subject to change, and that knowing this — not in a rational, but empirical manner — is wisdom.

**Zazen:** The posture of zazen is seated, with folded legs and hands, and an erect but settled spine. The legs are folded in one of the standard sitting styles such as full-lotus or half-lotus. The hands are folded together into a simple mudra over the belly. In many practices, one breathes from the centre of gravity in the belly and the eyelids are half-lowered, the eyes being neither fully open nor shut so that the practitioner is not distracted by outside objects but at the same time is kept awake. The aim of zazen is just sitting, "opening the hand of thought" that is, suspending all judgmental thinking and letting words, ideas, images and thoughts pass by without getting involved in them.

**Zen:** A school of Buddhism. Also known as Chan.

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

1. One's light karmic misgivings will dissolve, while heavy ones lighten.
2. One will be protected by devas, and be unharmed by natural and man-made disasters.
3. One will always be free from the suffering of hatred and vengeance.
4. One will be unharmed by yaksas, evil spirits and wild beasts.
5. One's mind will be at peace, free from harm and nightmares.
6. One's complexion will be radiant.
7. One will be full of auspicious energy.
8. One who practises the Dharma wholeheartedly will have adequate living necessities.
9. One's family will be harmonious and be blessed with fortune and wisdom.
10. One who practises what one preaches will be respected and loved by all.
11. One who is dull-minded will gain wisdom.
12. One who is ill will gain health.
13. One who is poor will gain wealth.
14. One will be free of being reborn in the negative realms.
15. One will be able to help others grow in wisdom and gain great merits in doing so.
16. One will always be able to learn the Dharma, till one's wisdom and spiritual penetrations are fully grown and one becomes a Buddha.

Dear Reader,

## "The Gift of the Dharma Exceeds All Other Gifts."

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Issue 21



## Seeking Fulfilling Careers?

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

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

You may send your resume to: [hrdept@kmspks.org](mailto: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](http://www.kmspks.org) and click onto "kmspks", followed by "Livelihood" to view our job vacancies.

## NURTURING THE YOUNG MIND

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as a part of our big family!

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