

FREE

no. 51 | sep-dec 2021

# Awaken

to Compassion and Wisdom on the journey of life



Don't underestimate  
small acts of  
*Kindness*

The  
**Sutra on Wisdom**  
at the hour of  
*death*

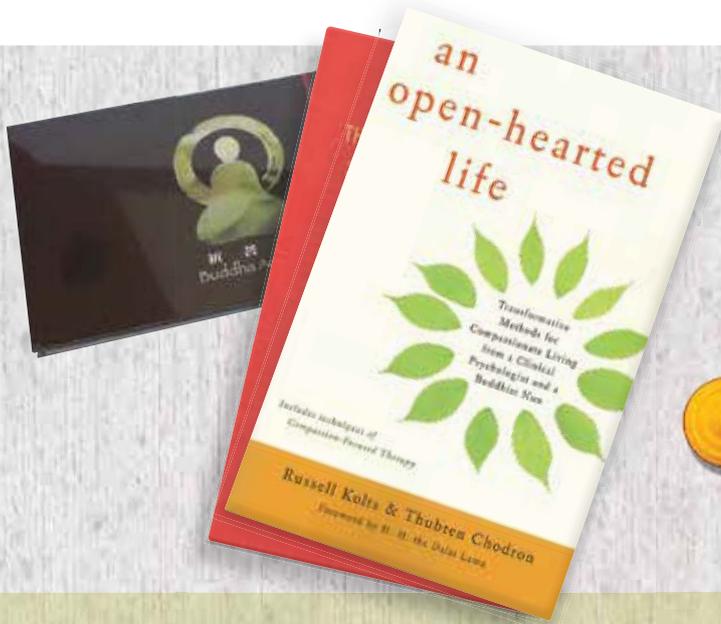
Finding  
*Refuge*

*Faith* in a time of  
**Crisis**

Seeking  
**ENLIGHTENMENT** in the  
*Triple Gem  
& Prayers*

Ven Kwang Sheng

*Spirituality  
& Faith*  
in times of **COVID-19**



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**FOUNDER/MANAGING DIRECTOR**  
Venerable Sik Kwang Sheng

**AWAKEN CHIEF EDITOR**  
Esther Thien

**AWAKEN CONTRIBUTORS**  
Ajahn Jayasaro  
Benny Liow  
Chloe Huang  
Felicia Choo  
Jack Kornfield  
Janice Goh  
Jos Tan  
Law Wen Hui  
Oh Puay Fong  
Susan Griffith-Jones  
Susan Kaiser Greenland  
Raymond Anthony Fernando  
Robert Yeo  
Venerable Thubten Chodron  
Wong Kee Yew

**GRAPHIC DESIGNER**  
Jane Nah

**EDITORIAL COORDINATOR**  
Isabel Lee

**PRINTER**  
Times Printers Private Limited  
16 Tuas Ave Singapore 639340  
Tel: 65 6311 2888

**PUBLISHER**  
Awaken Publishing and Design  
Dharma Propagation Division  
Tel: 6849 5342 Fax: 6452 8332  
e-mail: publication@kmspks.org

**KONG MENG SAN**  
**PHOR KARK SEE MONASTERY**  
88 Bright Hill Road  
Singapore 574117  
www.kmspks.org Tel: 6849 5300

Awaken is owned, published and distributed tri-annually by Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery

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ISSN: 1793-298X



Published with environmental mindfulness  
Printed in Singapore on eco-friendly paper



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# Spirituality & Faith in times of COVID-19:

*Strengthening Faith and Unity  
to Overcome the Pandemic*

## Faith, Refuge & Prayers in Times of Crises

abbot's message

editor's note

**T**he COVID-19 pandemic continues relentlessly even today, causing great disruptions to our daily life, society and economy. In particular, it is causing immeasurable psychological distress to people, who are experiencing anxiety, worries and fears. As Buddhists, how should we strengthen our faith and adapt ourselves to overcome this current calamity?

Faith is the gateway to enter Buddhism and the basis for sustaining the Buddha Dharma. According to the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*: *Faith is the foundation to cultivate the Way, and the mother of merit and virtue, because it is capable of nourishing wholesome roots. The Buddha Dharma is like a vast sea; only by faith can it be entered. Therefore, the single word "faith" is the key to escape from birth and death, and is the wonderful means for returning to the source.*<sup>1</sup>

It is also said in the *Mahaprajnaparamita Sutra* that "the Buddha Dharma is like a vast sea; only by faith can it be entered." In the immense oceans of Buddhist wisdom, the prerequisite to obtain tangible benefits from the Buddha Dharma is to possess the Right Faith. The Right Faith is the abode for our mind and the basis for the three Dharmic, karmic and wisdom bodies. Only with Right Faith in Buddhism will we derive the impetus and motivation to study the scriptures in depth, and sever the roots of our doubts and ignorance, thereby putting the teachings into practice, and thus experiencing first-hand the joy and bliss that comes from having our mind purified with the radiant light and cool cleansing water of the Buddha teachings.

In Buddhism, "faith" refers to the unity of body and mind, an alignment between our inner and outer activities to pay homage and apply the Buddha's teachings so as to attain liberation. By imbuing and manifesting these teachings personally, we purify our mind, enact good moral values, improve the quality of our daily living, and discern the truth of our existence.

Buddhism objects to blind or unquestioned faith, but promotes Right Faith based on wisdom and understanding. The Buddha cautioned in the *Nirvana Sutra* that "Faith without understanding fosters ignorance; whereas understanding without faith breeds the wrong views." In other words, having faith without the correct understanding gives rise to ignorance and worries. Moreover, the activities of such a person may not be in accordance with the Buddhist teachings. On the other hand, having understanding without faith generates false or mistaken views. Therefore, the basis of faith in Buddhism is wisdom. Buddhists should strengthen their faith through wise discernment and cultivate their religious piety through wise practice, which would result in their faith deepening with growing wisdom. That is why the Buddha emphasized the paramount role of wisdom in the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*: "Of all the teachings, wisdom is foremost."

The Buddha taught four ways to keep Right Faith steadfastly.

- 1 Seek and keep spiritual guidance.** We should surround ourselves with a spiritual community. We do this by getting acquainted with learned practitioners with the right views and understanding, namely the Buddhist Sangha. As noted in the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*: "All Buddhist teachings achieve fruition through the efforts of conscientious practitioners, who are the pillars." Moreover, "One who seeks the Bodhisattva path, who wishes to attain the Perfect Wisdom, should diligently seek out good company. Seek them out without fatigue; and when one encounters them, do not grow weary or complacent; comply instantly with their teachings without defiance." Thus, it can be seen that seeking and keeping good spiritual guidance is the first step in practising Buddhism.
- 2 Listen to the true Dharma.** This means that we should listen frequently to the teachings of the Sangha. As stated in the *Verses about Hearing (Srutivarga)*: *Through much hearing, one understands the Dharma. Through much hearing, one distances oneself from wrongdoing. Through much hearing, one discards what is meaningless. Through much hearing, one attains Nirvana.* Only by listening extensively to the right teachings can we gain insight into the true empty nature of phenomena and discern the ultimate reality of our existence.
- 3 Ponder wisely:** After listening to the teachings, we must continually reflect on them based on the correct understanding of Buddha Dharma, to deepen our understanding and truly grasp the spirit and meaning of the teachings. This is in sharp contrast to thoughtlessly or superstitiously following what is said.
- 4 Apply the Dharma in our daily life.** This means that we apply to real life what we have learned or understood about the Buddha Dharma, achieving unison of thought and action. All four methods are interconnected. Starting with seeking out spiritual guides, we get to hear the true Dharma as a result, thereby leading

to us acquiring right views and understanding, which we then put into everyday practice.

The current pandemic is a common crisis confronting humanity. In this scenario, Buddhists should strive even harder to enact the Buddhist values of compassion, gratitude, wisdom and rationality. We should steady ourselves, reframe our mindset, strengthen our faith and deploy the right understanding to overcome this challenge together. During this pandemic, the medical front-liners have stepped up selflessly to answer the call of duty, the cleaning staff have worked tirelessly without complaints, volunteers have served willingly, and the law enforcement officers have discharged their responsibility admirably. They are demonstrating the goodness inherent in human nature and spreading warmth to all others around them. Due to their staunch commitment to forge ahead, we can have some respite and sense of security. Therefore, we should be grateful and show our appreciation.

Only people who are grateful can face the daily grind with optimism and positivity, accepting life's challenges. As the pandemic rages on, all Buddhists should start with themselves by maintaining Right Faith and views, unite and collaborate cohesively, comply proactively with safety measures, so that we can surmount this challenge together.

Self-discipline will lead us to freedom, and having a common goal will allow us to march forward in tandem. I sincerely pray for strength and protection for all beings to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and that the pandemic will end soon so life may return to normalcy. May everyone stay healthy, happy, safe and blessed.

**Sik Kwang Sheng (Venerable)**  
Abbot, Kong Meng San  
Phor Kark See Monastery

**S**ince time immemorial, periods of ordeals and crises usually strengthen people's faith, and our current stressful time is no different.

Psychologists believe religious faith helps people to transcend difficult times, fostering a sense of connectedness and making them a part of something larger than themselves (page 8).

Victor Frankel, the founder of logotherapy and a concentration camp survivor discovered that those who survived the camps did so only because they had faith in a greater purpose beyond themselves and for the world.

The practice of taking refuge in the Triple Gem (pages 16 & 18), this alignment of the heart, offers us support as we move through joy, sorrow, gain and loss in life.

As we develop our minds and progress along the spiritual path, we move from taking outer, inner to innermost refuge in the Buddha, recognising the true nature of the mind as the source of all phenomena (pages 5 & 11).

As we deepen our inner cultivation, circumstances change as we shift our minds (pages 13 & 17).

On the relative level, we understand experientially the law of impermanence; that all things are in continuous change (page 9), and that both suffering and happiness are impermanent (pages 24 & 32).

We also understand the law of cause and effect (page 20), our interconnectedness and to always appreciate and never underestimate even the smallest acts of kindness and gentleness that spring from a heart of compassion (page 21).

On the ultimate level, we realise that all phenomena are naturally and innately pure, luminous and are connected with primordial wisdom (page 14). With that realisation, we stay relaxed, calm, peaceful and equanimous, regardless of our life circumstances.

Happy reading. 🌸

*Esther Thien*

Yours in the Dharma,  
Esther Thien

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.cttbusa.org/water\\_mirror/faith.asp.html](http://www.cttbusa.org/water_mirror/faith.asp.html)

梁皇寶懺



*Prayers to gather all roots of goodness and merits for a smoother more auspicious time*

**S**ingapore – You can now register and participate in meritorious prayers to be conducted by the monastery in October and December.

On 3 October 2021, a Grand Offering to the Buddhas and Celestial Beings will be conducted. Venerables will lead devotees to make offerings of food and chant the sutra, expressing gratitude to the celestial beings for protecting the Triple Gem and upholding the Buddha-Dharma.

As Dharma protectors, celestial beings protect and support devotees who do good and cultivate compassion and virtues. At the end of the prayer, Abbot Sik Kwang Sheng will lead participants in dedicating the merits of the grand offering for the safety of the nation and people, world peace, auspiciousness and complete awakening.

In December, there will be an Emperor Liang Jewelled Repentance Puja to gather all roots of virtues, benefit sentient beings in the ten directions, eradicate obstacles and dedicate the merits for the perpetuation of the Buddha-Dharma.

On the last day of December 2021, a ceremony with 108 tolls of the bell

and prayers is also scheduled. The meditative and inspiring resonances of the bell act as reminders for practitioners to disentangle from avarice, hatred and delusion, and to mindfully cultivate bodhicitta.

Offerings to the Buddha and celestial beings, and pujas that bring blessings and good fortune, will also be conducted.

In addition, regular online pledges of reciting the Buddha's name or mantras are also in the pipeline to cultivate mindful remembrance of the Buddha's qualities and accumulate blessings and merits.

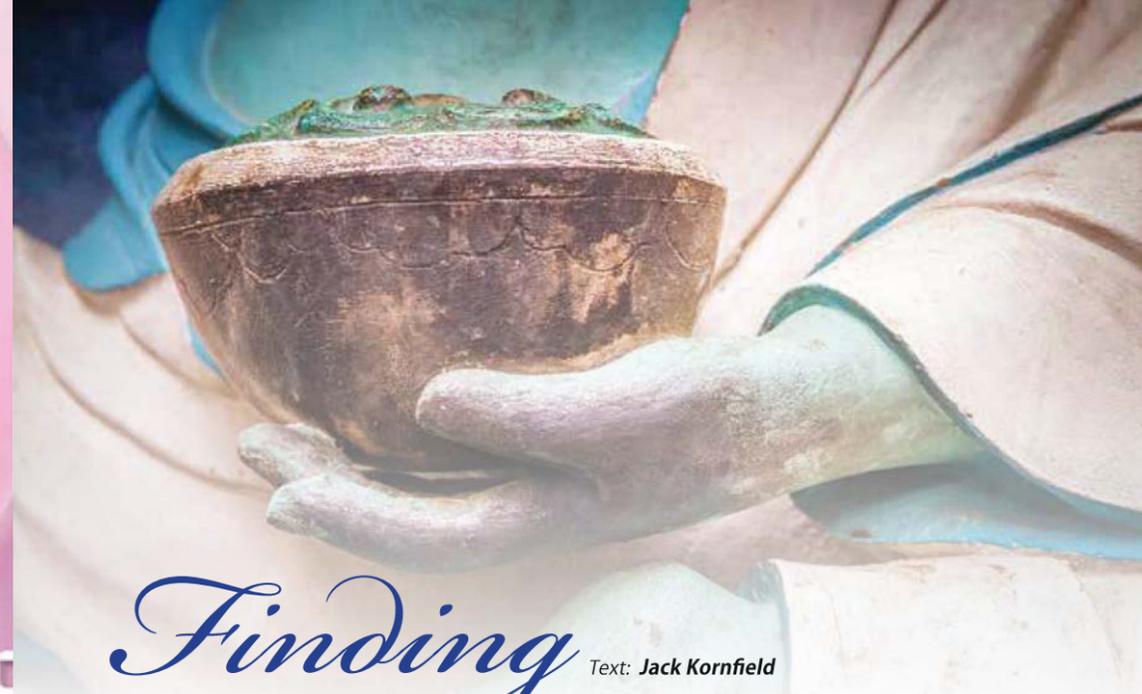
You can also register online to make light offerings for the Great Compassion Repentance ceremonies.

Registration is open two weeks before the 27th of each lunar month.



Visit <https://bit.ly/3aTQtGC> or scan this to register for the light offering

For more information on the monastery's other classes and events, please turn to pages 35 & 36.



*Finding* Text: Jack Kornfield  
**Refuge**

**V**ictor Frankel, the concentration camp survivor, was also the founder of logotherapy. He discovered that most of those who survived the camps did so only because they had faith in a greater purpose for themselves and the world. Like these survivors, we each need to find our sense of purpose, to orient and support ourselves amidst the fragmented pulls of busy, modern life. Buddhist psychology's response to this need is to offer the practice of taking refuge.

Since the first days of the Buddha's teaching, if a person wanted to become a follower of the path, all they had to do was to recite, "I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the Dharma (the teachings), I take refuge in

“*Refuge offers support for our journey as we move through joy and sorrow, gain and loss. In refuge, we reaffirm our sacred connection with the world.*”

the Sangha (the community of practitioners).” There is nothing to join, nothing to become – simply this turning of the heart.

**The meaning of refuge**

Refuge offers support for our journey as we move through joy and sorrow, gain and loss. In refuge, we reaffirm our sacred connection with the world. Refuge is not necessarily religious. Refuge can be as simple as making conscious our trust in a lineage of teachings.

Doctors take the Hippocratic Oath, dating from ancient Greece. Physicists place their faith in a long lineage of scientists starting with Archimedes, Galileo, Newton and Einstein. Professional musicians proudly name their teachers and their teacher's teachers. Followers of Freud or Jung take refuge in the founder's wisdom and in the wisdom of the great psychoanalysts who followed them. In all our universities and psychological training institutes, we find shrines to the lineage of revered and beloved elders, who gaze down from portraits and photos on the wall.

We may take refuge in a higher power, as in Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.). Much of their success rests on faith and in the power of their sangha,



**Jack Kornfield**

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



the conscious community they create. Such faith has proved so transformative, it's astonishing that refuge and faith are so often excluded from western psychological thinking.

We thrive with faith. Our faith may be spiritual or unabashedly non-religious, such as a faith in the natural world, in the unborn generations ahead, in life itself. To live wisely, we need to find a trusting connection to the world. Healthcare studies have shown that caring for a pet, or even a plant, will prolong life and well-being.

**Like setting an intention or dedicating oneself to a goal, taking refuge reorients our life. Our refuge becomes**

**an inspiration, a touchstone, a well-spring to draw from at every challenge we face.**

The Buddhist refuge needs to be taken just once in a lifetime, although in some traditions, the refuge is recited daily. Even more powerfully, in Vajrayana practice, the refuges are repeated 100,000 times, each recitation enhanced by a full body bow to the past generations of awakened beings.

Whichever tradition we follow, when we take refuge we join the stream of awakening.

### **The three levels of refuge**

Traditionally, there are three levels of Buddhist refuge:

outer, inner and innermost.

On the outer level, we take refuge in the historical Buddha, a remarkably wise human being who pointed the way to inner freedom. We take refuge in the Dharma, the teachings of generosity, compassion and wisdom that bring freedom. And we take refuge in the Sangha, in the Buddhist community of awakened beings. This outer refuge connects us to a tradition and millions of followers of the Buddha's path.

Taking the inner refuge in the Buddha, we shift from the historical Buddha to a refuge that sees the Buddha Nature of all beings. We take refuge in the potential for awakening in everyone we meet. The inner refuge in Dharma shifts from the

outer teachings to inner truth, to seeing the way things are. We entrust ourselves to follow the truth and live in accord with it. The inner refuge in Sangha shifts from the Buddhist community to all beings dedicated to awakening. We take refuge in this stream.

Lastly, we come to the innermost refuge. Here we take refuge in timeless consciousness and freedom. **As Ajahn Chah explained, "We take refuge in the Buddha, but what is this Buddha? When we see with the eye of wisdom, we know that the Buddha is timeless, unborn, unrelated to anybody, any history, any place. Buddha is the ground of all**

**beings, the realisation of the truth of the unmoving mind. So the Buddha was not enlightened in India. In fact, he was never enlightened, was never born, and never died. This timeless Buddha is our true home, our abiding place."**

**When we take refuge in the innermost Dharma, we rest in the eternal freedom. Zen master Huang Po's words proclaim, "Your true nature is something never lost to you, even in moments of delusion, nor is it gained at the moment of enlightenment. It is the nature of your own mind, the source of all**

**things, your original luminous brilliance. You, the richest person in the world, have been going around labouring and begging, when all the while the treasure you seek is within you. It is who you are."**

When we take refuge in the innermost Sangha, we acknowledge the inseparable connections of all our lives. The innermost Sangha is the ultimate provenance of trust. It is voiced by poet John Donne, "No man is an island..." and echoed by Martin Luther King, "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny."

Out of this interconnection, we cannot fall or be

separated. When we take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, all things in the world are free for us. They become our teacher, proclaiming the one true nature of life.

The ritual of taking refuge can transform our consciousness. Ted, a long-term prisoner, began to practise from books and tapes provided through one of our Buddhist prison projects. As Victor Frankel found in the concentration camp, Ted needed a meaningful purpose to get him through the horrors of prison.

Taking refuge was a turning point for Ted. "After my lama visited and I took refuge, I took the way I was living my life more seriously. I had taken vows

not to harm, not to abuse, so I had to see the Buddha even in the guards. I kept to myself more and meditated and did my refuge-taking recitations early in the morning. I said them over and over and I felt like I was rock solid. Then I was moved to another block. There was a lot of trouble there and I had to keep reciting my refuge-taking to stay clean. I was tempted to pay back a couple of men who did me some wrong. But then I would look at them in the eye and take refuge in my heart. It helped me a lot. Everybody's got to have refuge in something to get through here."

Refuge and ritual become skilful means for all of us. ✨

*Excerpted from the book, The Wise Heart*

# Faith in a Time of Crisis

Text: **Benny Liow Woon Khin**

A Muslim neighbour, who isn't very religious in normal times, told me she spent her time in quarantine praying five times a day and working with members of her mosque to find ways to help the less fortunate during these difficult times.

"This whole ordeal brings us closer together and deepens my faith in Allah," she said. "Spending time praying and being with Him is comforting."

A Pew Research Centre survey conducted in the summer of 2020 in the United States revealed that more Americans are saying the pandemic has bolstered their religious faith and the faith of their compatriots. Nearly three in 10 Americans (28%) reported stronger personal faith because of COVID-19, and the same survey suggested

that the religious faith of Americans overall has strengthened.

Psychologists generally believe that faith can help people transcend stressful times by enabling them to see these as opportunities to grow closer to a higher power, or to improve their lives. Faith in their religion also fosters a sense of connectedness, making them part of something larger than themselves. This can happen through prayer or meditation, or through participation in religious discourses, listening to spiritual music, or even taking a walk outside to admire nature.

So how should Buddhists, in the same predicament, manage their anxieties of adjusting to life in the midst of a global pandemic, and respond with their faith in the Buddha's teachings?

## Faith, contemplation and practice

Dan Harris, the famous *ABC News* anchor who wrote *10% Happier*, asked His Holiness the Dalai Lama the same question on his news programme *Nightline* in May 2020. The Dalai Lama offered the following advice to those who are having a difficult time dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic:

- (a) Practise meditation — be it one minute, five minutes or 10 minutes each day, especially when we wake up. This basically involves training our mind to be positive so that we adopt a positive approach to life. Whatever type of meditation we follow, the main purpose should be to calm the mind so that we can respond to a situation mindfully, rather than reacting

with thoughts of fear, worry, or doubt.

- (b) Practise compassion – this will lessen our attachment to our ego as we look out for those around us who may need help. The Buddha taught us that we live in an interconnected world, so we should not just think of our own well-being but that of others too. It is when we cultivate thoughts of loving kindness and compassion for others, that we too will benefit from such wholesome thoughts. As the Dalai Lama said to Dan Harris, "Taking care of others is actually taking care of yourself."

We can say that the essence of the Buddha's teachings is all about how to develop our mind. When we cultivate a positive attitude, we are able to respond to difficulties in life by being more relaxed, calm,

peaceful, and equanimous. This is the exact opposite of having a negative mind state when we react to difficulties or a crisis with anxieties, worries, fears and frustrations.

In the Buddha's own words, he said that for one who contemplates wisely, anxieties and troubles that have not yet arisen do not arise, and those already arisen will cease. As for those who do not contemplate wisely, anxieties and troubles that have not yet arisen will arise, and those that have already arisen will increase. (*Sabbasava Sutta*, MN 2).

**When we understand the Buddha's teachings, we realise that the pandemic vividly illustrates a core Buddhist principle: That we are all equally subject to birth, ageing, sickness and death. All things —**

**physical and mental — are in continuous change, not remaining the same from one moment to the next. Consequently, although we crave stability and pleasant experiences, there is no real security, and happiness is fleeting. We are just not in control.**

This explains why people around the world are feeling rudderless and adrift. As we go through lockdown after lockdown, many fear that they may be infected, retrenched, lose their loved ones, or be unable to get enough food and other essential supplies. How do we move forward with courage and hope? How can faith in the Dharma support us?

This is when reflecting on the wisdom of great masters like the late Ajahn Chah (1918-1992) helps

us to gain an insight into the nature of existence better. He taught that whatever our states of mind, happy or unhappy, we should constantly remind ourselves, "This is uncertain." This understanding of things is always timely and relevant. This is what the Buddha meant by impermanence, the first of the three characteristics of existence.

Therefore, having the understanding that even COVID-19 is impermanent is Right View. When we have faith in the Buddha's teaching on impermanence, we have hope that the crisis we face will not last forever. This is why the following verses from Thich Nhat Hanh inspires faith and hope among Buddhists:

*Suffering is impermanent,  
and that's why we can transform it.  
And because happiness is  
impermanent,  
that's why we have to nourish it.*

Our worry or fear of the pandemic won't make the virus disappear. We do what's required of us to be safe, accept it and then, we let it go!

Psychologists have revealed that 90% of things which we worry about are out of our control, so it's not helpful to worry about them. However, for the 10% that we can

“

*Suffering is impermanent,  
and that's why we can  
transform it.  
And because happiness is  
impermanent,  
that's why we have to  
nourish it.*

*Our worry or fear of the  
pandemic won't make the virus  
disappear. We do what's required  
of us to be safe, accept it and  
then, we let it go!*

control, we should do something about it, instead of worrying. This is the same advice that the 8th century Indian Buddhist pandit, Shantideva taught: "If a problem can be solved, why worry? If the problem cannot be solved, worrying will do you no good." (Verse 10, Chapter 6, *Bodhicaryāvatāra*).

When facing the COVID-19 crisis, it is not only faith and hope that we should develop but also courage, specifically the courage to change our mindset. For instance, we cannot stop COVID-19 from affecting the world, but it is within our control to prevent it from affecting our well-being. For

instance, we identify our habitual, negative patterns of thinking and behaviour, and replace them with positive alternatives that medical science has taught us, to be safe from COVID-19.

### Conclusion

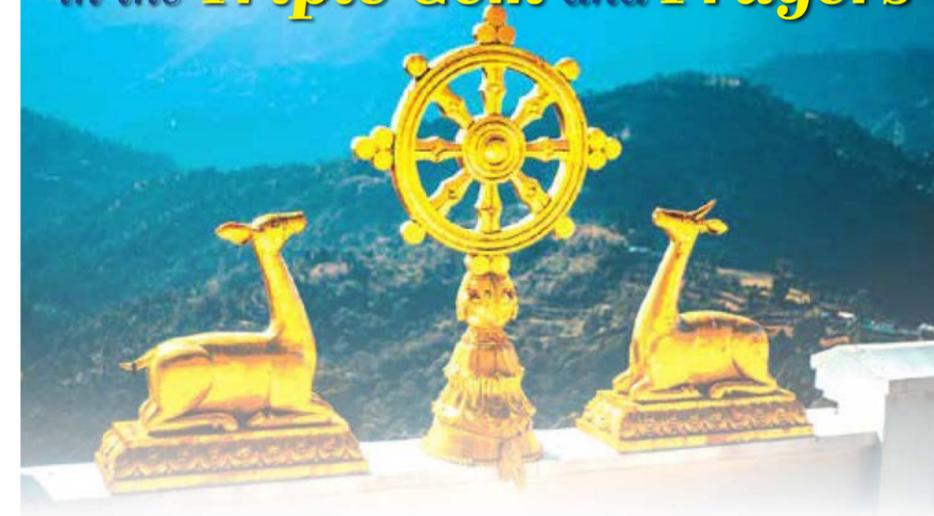
Since I began by quoting from His Holiness the Dalai Lama, let me conclude with what he said to *TIME Magazine* on April 14, 2020 about the nature of the crisis that we are all experiencing now:

"As a Buddhist, I believe in the principle of impermanence. Eventually, this virus will pass, as I have seen wars and other terrible threats pass in my lifetime, and we will have the opportunity to rebuild our global community, as we have done many times before. I sincerely hope that everyone can stay safe and stay calm. At this time of uncertainty, it is important that we do not lose hope and confidence in the constructive efforts so many are making."

May all of you stay well and healthy! 🌸

*Benny Liow is a Dharma worker and the editor of the non-sectarian Buddhist journal, Eastern Horizon.*

## Seeking Enlightenment in the Triple Gem and Prayers



*Susan Griffith-Jones tells Janice Goh how she keeps calm and centred in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic through prayers.*

**M**s Susan Griffith-Jones started practising Vajrayana Buddhism some 20 years ago. Since then, her appreciation of the Triple Gem has evolved with the ebb and flow of life and her increasing self-awareness.

Back in 2001, her teacher, His Eminence Chogyé Trichen Rinpoche, gave her an initiation into the path of Vajrayana Buddhism. According to Ms Griffith-Jones, the focus of refuge in this particular practice was to first dissolve all impure views into the Dharmadhatu (sphere of Absolute Reality — emptiness). Then, from that state, she was to visualise a pure land at the centre, where her teacher sat on a lion throne.

"Bringing all sentient beings along with you to take refuge in the Triple Gem, we would imagine our teacher as an embodiment of the

Buddha's mind (Buddha), the qualities of the Buddha (Dharma) and the nature of the Bodhisattvas (Sangha)," said the 48-year-old British native, who is an artist based at the Kullu-Manali valley of the Indian Himalayas in the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh.

"In this sense, the Teacher is a combination of the Triple Gem," she added.

She held this practice for several years before her teacher introduced her to the Nature of Mind and the Dzogchen path of 'The Great Perfection'. She was taught to become aware of what was going on in her own mind at all times and to see her mind as the Guru.

"Now, having gradually accepted and understood that my own mind is the empty space from which everything arises and dissolves back into, the Triple Gem refuge has

transformed into a kind of trust in my own mind," she said.

She elaborated, "My mind retains clarity of wakefulness even if it is not holding anything in particular within it. The emanation from this state of mind is actually a continuous stream of authentic instructions on how to live my life, or the choices I should make that are ultimately beneficial for all beings."

### Steadfastness in the Triple Gem

In trying times, Ms Griffith-Jones strives to remember enemies and obstacle makers as standing in front of her in the traditional refuge of the Triple Gem, and she would bless them for having such kindness to give her this suffering. She said this helps her to remember the path of the Dharma and repent her past karma.

She would also recall a dream-like state of

**Ms Susan Griffith-Jones**

chanced upon Buddhism at the age of 28 in 2001 when she was invited to work on a documentary about the lives of the women in a nunnery high above the Annapurna mountains in Nepal. During that period, she found herself resonating with the place, culture and Buddhist teachings, so much so that she left the United Kingdom to study the Buddha Dharma more intensively in Nepal from 2001 to 2007 under His Eminence Chogyé Trichen Rinpoche. Then, she moved to Mussoorie, a town at the foothills of the Indian Himalayas, near another one of her teachers, His Holiness Sakya Trizin, till 2010, before settling down at her current residence.

Calling herself a "Creative Innovative Artist", she integrates and interprets the relationship of religion and art seamlessly. She has taken standard art forms such as film-making, photography and sculpting, and manipulated them into methods to hold and express the meanings of the Buddha Dharma.

She currently resides in India, where the number of COVID-19 cases is one of the highest in the world, but shared that the spate of outbreaks has been predominantly concentrated in the overcrowded metropolises of the country. According to her, the situation is well-managed in the state where she lives.

For more information on her works, visit [www.pyramidkey.com](http://www.pyramidkey.com)

profile

existence with translucent images whirling in the space around us, which are but merely emanations of the clear, empty space of mind.

Just simply recognising this is a key to letting things pass, she said.

"Sometimes, even if you recognise that it is a dream-like situation, you may find yourself unable to let go of the situation, unable to neither accept nor reject a so-called 'negative' situation that causes your 'suffering,'" she added.

"However, since it is coming from a clear, natural state of mind, there is nothing to do but see it as that throughout its duration. As long as you stay in that recognition and remain conscious of it, it will resolve when the energy runs out."

She continued, "I think that once we can recognise our natural state of mind when times are bad, we must make an effort to recognise it when times are normal, too. Gradually, we can increasingly try to remain in that awareness, so that the gaps between forgetting who you truly are and getting carried away in life's dream-like state lessen, until the natural state is a seamless stream of awareness shining into our lives."

"That is the kind of refuge I am praying for now," she said, adding that prayers can help one to connect to one's inherent Teacher, or natural state of mind.

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*I think that once we can recognise our natural state of mind when times are bad, we must make an effort to recognise it when times are normal, too. Gradually, we can increasingly try to remain in that awareness, so that the gaps between forgetting who you truly are and getting carried away in life's dream-like state lessen, until the natural state is a seamless stream of awareness shining into our lives.*

#### Power of prayers

Time has shaped not only her appreciation of the Triple Gem, but also how she prays these days.

While she previously used the standard prayers of the Vajrayana tradition, nowadays, she tends to make up her own, depending on the situation at hand.

For example, if someone tries to attack her verbally and in doing so, is harming him or herself, she would say a quiet prayer to help the person to recognise his or her own truth, now or some time in the future.

"And when I feel afraid, threatened or confused, I ask for guidance to remember who and what I really am, which often takes the edge off the situation at hand," she added.

Additionally, she used to perform many sadhanas of the Vajrayana tradition every day — up to three hours at a time and four times throughout the day — and recite tens of millions of mantras!

As her practice matured, she started performing shorter sadhanas, which she said have transformed to become more like punctuated reminders to help her put her mind in a certain state at the beginning and end of a day.

She said, "It then becomes my job to remember

the key points of how to remain aware of what is happening throughout the day and to apply the tools that I have learned to everyday situations, to maximise the benefit to anyone I come into contact with."

With the world still reeling from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with no end in sight, the devout Buddhist felt that this was the most important time for fellow Buddhists to really put our Dharma understanding into actual practice.

"When our knowledge of Dharma stays at an intellectual level, it is not useful," she said.

"The energy of fear is only going to perpetuate and even worsen the situation, so now we need to embrace who and what we really are in truth and ask for help to keep the channel to our source open and bring the maximum amount of enlightened qualities into the world to help transcend this crisis." ❄️



In this meditation with a cube of ice, we put the object in our hand, and we notice the difference between the experience of feeling the icy sensation and the thoughts and emotions we have around that experience.



## The Ice Cube Meditation



- ❄️ Hold a cube of ice and notice what that feels like.
- ❄️ The ice doesn't hurt much at first, but the longer it sits there, the less pleasant the experience.
- ❄️ Also notice that instead of tensing up your hand, if you relax your arm and hand around the ice cube, the discomfort is reduced and becomes more bearable.

Can you imagine how this exercise can help you in your life?

When facing an unpleasant experience, have you noticed that the experience is easier depending on how you relate to it?

Depending on how you think about it, that experience becomes more manageable with less suffering, even when it isn't very pleasant.



Visit <https://vimeo.com/441709281> or scan this to watch the meditation video

**W**hile the Buddha was residing in the Akaniṣṭha realm, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kāśagarbha asked him how to consider the mind of a bodhisattva who is about to die. The Buddha replied that when death comes a bodhisattva should develop the wisdom of the hour of death. The Buddha pointed out that all phenomena are pure, subsumed within the mind of enlightenment, and naturally luminous. He explained that a bodhisattva should cultivate a clear understanding of the non-existence of entities, great compassion, non-apprehension, non-attachment, and a clear understanding that, since wisdom is the realisation of one's own mind, the Buddha should not be sought elsewhere. Although he referred to these instructions as the wisdom of the hour of death, the implication is that these teachings can be cultivated and realised throughout a bodhisattva's lifetime in order to prepare for death and attain liberation.

Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas!

Thus did I hear at one time. While the Blessed One was residing in the palace of the king of the gods in the Akaniṣṭha realm, he taught the Dharma to the entire assembly.

The bodhisattva mahāsattva Kāśagarbha then paid homage to the Blessed One and asked, "Blessed One, how should we think about the mind of a bodhisattva who is about to die?"

**The Blessed One replied, "Kāśagarbha, when a bodhisattva is about to die, he should cultivate the wisdom of the hour of death. The wisdom of the hour of death is as follows:**

**"All phenomena are naturally pure. So, one should cultivate the clear understanding that there are no entities.**

**"All phenomena are subsumed within the mind of enlightenment. So, one should cultivate the clear understanding of great compassion.**

**"All phenomena are naturally luminous. So, one should cultivate the clear understanding of non-apprehension.**

**"All entities are impermanent. So, one should cultivate the clear understanding of non-attachment to anything whatsoever.**

**"When one realises mind, this is wisdom. So, one should cultivate the clear understanding of not seeking the Buddha elsewhere."**

The Blessed One then spoke the following verses:

*"Since all phenomena are naturally pure,*

*One should cultivate the clear understanding that there are no entities.*

*"Since all phenomena are connected with the enlightened mind,*

*One should cultivate the clear understanding of great compassion.*

*"Since all phenomena are naturally luminous,*

*One should cultivate the clear understanding of non-apprehension.*

*"Since all entities are impermanent,*

*One should cultivate the clear understanding of non-attachment.*

*"Since the mind is the cause for the arising of wisdom,*

*Do not look for the Buddha elsewhere."*

After the Blessed One had spoken, the whole assembly, including the bodhisattva mahāsattva Kāśagarbha and others, were overjoyed and full of praise for the Buddha's words.

This concludes the Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra on Wisdom at the Hour of Death. ❀

## The Sutra on **WISDOM** At The Hour Of **DEATH**

Translated by **Tom Tillemans' class in the University of Vienna's programme of Buddhist Translation Studies** under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.

did you **KNOW?**

# Guidelines for the practice of Refuge

Q

What are the guidelines I can follow to practise refuge in order to make progress along the path to awakening? – T.Y

**A:** It is advantageous to follow these guidelines for practice in order to make progress along the path to awakening.

- 1 In analogy to taking refuge in the Buddha, commit yourself wholeheartedly to a qualified spiritual mentor.
- 2 In analogy to taking refuge in the Dharma, listen to and study the teachings as well as put them into practice in your daily life.
- 3 In analogy to taking refuge in the Sangha, respect the Sangha as your spiritual companions and follow the good examples they set.
- 4 Avoid being rough and arrogant, running after any desirable object you see and criticising anything that meets with your disapproval.
- 5 Be friendly and kind to others and be concerned more with correcting your own faults than with pointing out those of others.
- 6 As much as possible avoid the ten non-virtuous actions and observe precepts.
- 7 Have a compassionate and sympathetic heart towards all other sentient beings.
- 8 Make special offerings to the Three Jewels on Buddhist festival days.

## Guidelines in terms of each of the Three Jewels

- 1 Having taken refuge in the Buddha, who has purified all

defilements and developed all excellent qualities, do not turn for refuge to worldly deities, who lack the capacity to guide you from all problems.

Respect all images of the Buddha: do not put them in low or dirty places, step over them, point your feet towards them, sell them to earn a living or use them as collateral. When looking at various images, do not discriminate, "This Buddha is beautiful, but this one is not." Do not treat with respect expensive and impressive statues while neglecting those that are damaged or less costly.

- 2 Having taken refuge in the Dharma, avoid harming any living being.

Also, respect the written words which describe the path to awakening by keeping the texts clean and in a high place. Avoid stepping over them, putting them on the floor, or throwing them in the rubbish bin when they are old. It is best to burn or recycle old Dharma materials.

- 3 Having taken refuge in the Sangha, do not cultivate friendship with people who criticise the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha or who have unruly behaviour or do many harmful actions. By becoming friendly with such people, you may be influenced by them in a wrong way. However, that does not mean you should criticise them or not have compassion for them.

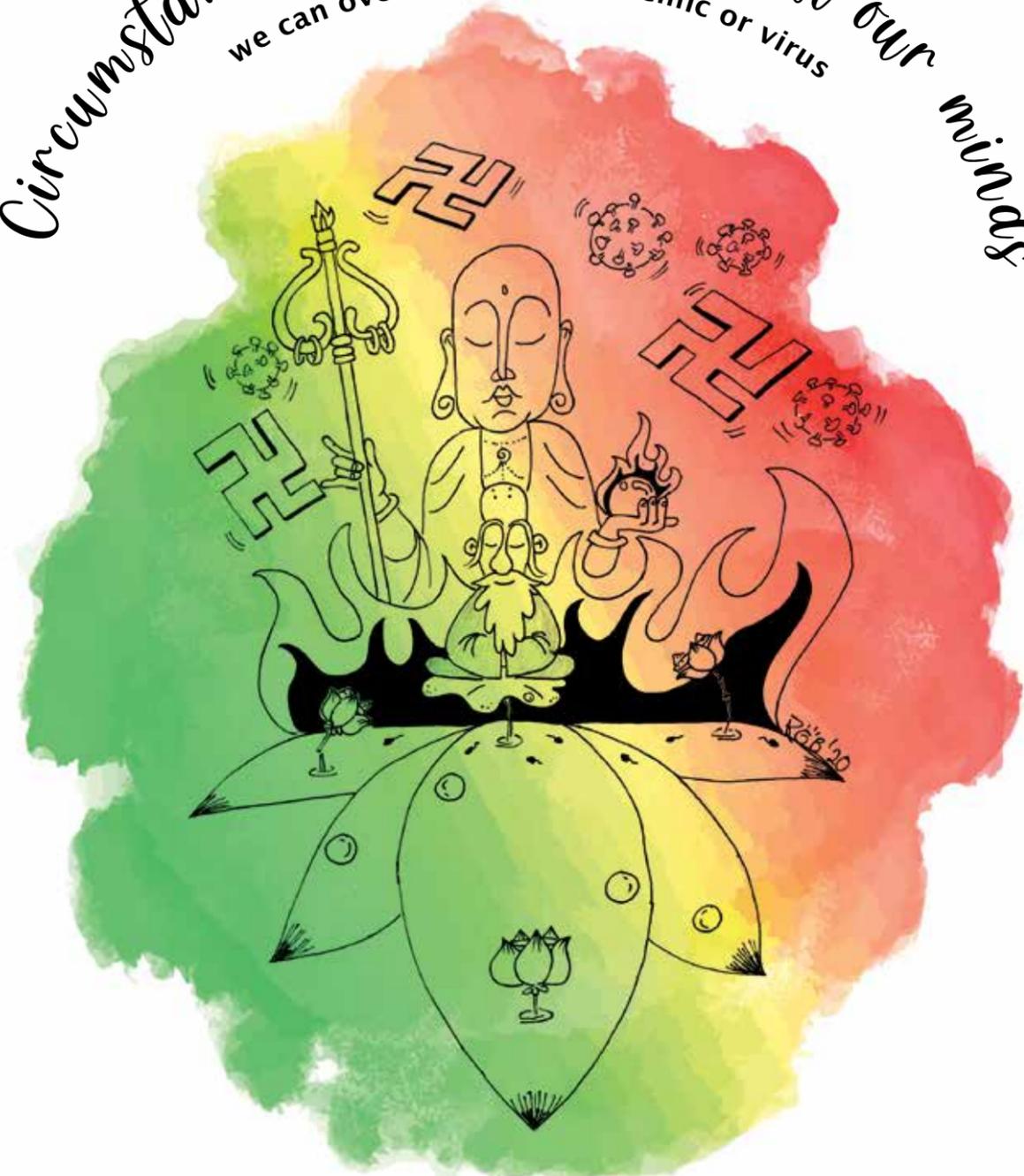
Also, respect monks and nuns as they are people who are making earnest efforts to actualise the teachings. Respecting them helps your mind, for you appreciate their qualities and are open to learn from their example. By respecting even the robes of ordained beings, you will be happy and inspired when seeing them.

## Common guidelines

- 1 Mindful of the qualities, skills and differences between the Three Jewels and other possible refuges; repeatedly take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.
- 2 Remembering their kindness, make offerings to the Three Jewels, especially offering your food before eating.
- 3 Mindful of their compassion, encourage others to take refuge in the Three Jewels.
- 4 Remembering the benefits of taking refuge, do so three times in the morning and three times in the evening, by reciting and reflecting upon any refuge prayers.
- 5 Do all actions by entrusting yourself to the Three Jewels.
- 6 Do not forsake your refuge at the cost of your life, even as a joke. ❄

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

"Circumstances change as we shift our minds"  
 we can overcome any pandemic or virus



SHARING

Whether a situation is good or bad depends on how we view it, our perspective of it. As long as we maintain a pure and compassionate heart, we can overcome the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reminder

Stop killing living things and eating wild animals. Amitufo! ❄

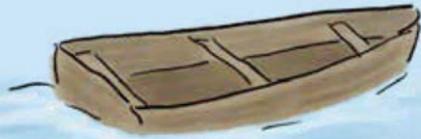
Siha, I understand that the world outside is unstable and will always be so. I feel lost about life. What can I truly depend on in life?



This sensual world is impermanent, and if we seek refuge in them, we will always be disappointed and unsatisfied. Thus, we take refuge in the Triple Gem. Going for refuge means taking the Buddha's teachings as one's guide in life. By taking refuge, we commit ourselves to develop spiritually and gradually end suffering.

What is this Triple Gem?

The triple jewels or gems are the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. Like a boat, the Triple Gem helps us to cross this river of suffering.



Illustrations & text: Law Wen Hui

# True Refuge

## Taking refuge in the Buddha

Taking refuge in Buddha should not be misunderstood as worship. Buddha is not a God. The Buddha was an enlightened person worthy of the highest respect because he attained the highest qualities as a man, eradicating all defilements. And he proved and showed to us that all beings have the capacity to end suffering and achieve true happiness. His unconditional compassion, loving-kindness, patience, wisdom etc., gives us immense confidence and inspiration.



## Taking refuge in the Dharma

The Dharma primarily means the teachings of the Buddha or the truth he understood. By taking refuge, we commit ourselves to develop spiritually in accordance with the Dharma because we have confidence in it. The essence of Dharma is very simple: it is finding ways to transform oneself. It can be summed up as 'learning to do good; ceasing to do non-virtue; purifying the mind.'



## Taking refuge in the Sangha

Sangha here refers to the Buddhist community of monks and nuns. We owe our teachings to the monastics who spent thousands of years preserving the teachings of the Buddha and teaching us. It gives us great inspiration that there are indeed practitioners in this world who are committed and determined to follow the exact footsteps of the Buddha. Thus they provide us with confidence, motivation and guidance in this spiritual journey; therefore, we take refuge in them.



Just as light illuminates the path in darkness, the Triple Gem elucidates the way. In "taking refuge", one seeks guidance and turns to the Triple Gem for liberation from suffering. But remember, there will not be much spiritual progress by purely taking refuge without understanding and developing oneself. We have been shown the path, but we need to walk it, no one can do that for us.

"When threatened with danger, men go to refuge in many things: to mountains and forests, to parks and gardens, and to sacred trees. But such a refuge is not a safe refuge, not the best refuge. One is not liberated from suffering for having gone to such a refuge."

One who has gone for refuge in the Buddha, the Teaching and his Order, penetrates with transcendental wisdom of the Four Noble Truths, and the Noble Eightfold Path leading to the cessation of suffering. This indeed is the supreme safe refuge. Having gone to such a refuge, one is liberated from all suffering."



I understand now! I do have confidence in the Buddha, Dharma and the Sangha and I will take refuge in them and will try my best to gradually cultivate the teachings. May we never be separated from the Triple Gem.

I take refuge in the Buddha  
I take refuge in the Dharma  
I take refuge in the Sangha

do good  avoid doing non-virtue  purify the mind

# The Fox



Long ago, there lived a Zen master who regularly gave teachings at a temple. An old man began to attend the talks. One day, the old man approached the master in private.

"I may appear to you as a man now," he said. "But when I am alone, I sometimes turn into a fox. I have been experiencing this repeatedly for more than 500 years, such is the karma of my rebirths."

He continued his story, "In a previous life when I was a monk, I thought myself well-advanced on the path. One day, a student asked me this question: 'Is an enlightened being subject to cause and effect?' 'No,' I answered confidently, and this has been my plight ever since."

The Zen master then asked the old man to pose the

very same question back to him, which the old man did.

"Is an enlightened being subject to cause and effect?" To which the Zen master replied, "He does not ignore cause and effect."

The old man left after this conversation.

The next day, a dead fox was found in the temple and the Zen master performed a funeral service fit for a fully ordained monk, in memory of the old man. ❀

**Moral of the Story: The enlightened one does not ignore cause and effect because the law applies to the enlightened being, as it does for all sentient beings. We are all subjected to the law of cause and effect, which the enlightened one understands thoroughly. He accepts it with neither aversion nor fear or desire, and with no thought of dualistic grasping.**

# Don't Underestimate Small Acts of Kindness

Text: Ajahn Jayasaro



It was February 1976. I was a teenager travelling alone through southern India. I remember climbing down from a crowded bus after a long dusty journey at the edge of a large town. It was already dark and I walked through the town looking for a cheap place to spend the night. As I rounded a corner, I heard a voice shouting out to me, I looked over to see a woman sitting at the side of the road by an old cooking pot, dishing out lentil soup to her many

children. She insisted that I sat down with them and take a plate of soup and some bread. I was very hungry and the simple food tasted delicious.

**“Please do not underestimate small acts of kindness. They have a power and an influence and a beauty that lasts for a very long time.”**

When I looked up, I saw the woman was watching my enjoyment with a look of genuine affection and satisfaction on her face. It was as if she had just fed her own grown-up son rather than a stranger.

Over 40 years have passed by. There must have been times on my travels when I was treated unkindly, but I can't remember them now. The kindness of people like this poor woman, however, living in rags on the street with

her children, has never left me. Please do not underestimate small acts of kindness. They have a power and an influence and a beauty that lasts for a very long time. ❀

**Ajahn Jayasaro** is a Theravada bhikkhu in the Thai Forest tradition. He received full ordination by Ajahn Chah in 1980, and was abbot of Wat Pah Nanachat from 1997 to 2002. In 2019, Ajahn Jayasaro was honoured with a royal title from Thailand's King Vajiralongkorn (Rama X).

# Failure Should Be Experienced Early When Young

In the past, the trophies for the school's Sports Day races were swept clean by one Secondary Five student in my class. From Secondary One till Secondary Four, whether in the sprints or long-distance runs, individual or relay events, the gold medals went to her. Lamentably, in her swan song performance this year, she competed despite nursing some injuries, and lost in both the 100-metre and 400-metre races, her strongest forte. She was devastated and sobbed for a long time after the races.

Subsequently, I deliberately set an essay assignment for students on "Reflections after the Sports Day". As expected, she poured out her disappointment and frustration in her composition. I marked and commented on her paper: "The most fragile people are those who have never failed". She did not understand this and came to me for clarification. So I told her the story of the Overlord of Western Chu, Xiang Yu.

Xiang Yu was the descendent of a famous general, Xiang Yan. Since he was 23, he had followed his uncle, Xiang Liang to overthrow the Qin dynasty, and never lost a battle. The battle of Julu was particularly memorable because he led a smaller troop to vanquish the massive Qin army, achieving such resounding success that it was said officials who witnessed the battle scene from a cliff kneeled down in awe of Xiang Yu's majestic prowess. Later, he repeated this incredible feat again at

the Battle of Pengcheng, overcoming the 50,000-strong Han army with only 30,000 men. Both battles are famous in Chinese history, especially for demonstrating how a weaker force could defeat a stronger one. At that time, Xiang Yu was barely 30 years old, and grew arrogant as a result of his string of successes.

Unfortunately, this noble of Chu state who was seemingly invincible could not maintain his peak position for long, and toppled down after a few years. He was played out by Liu Bang, and his troops fell like dominoes thereafter. He actually had a chance to escape from harm by crossing a river. However, he felt too ashamed to face his ancestors after his failure, and chose to kill himself instead. Perhaps we could ask ourselves: Why was a larger-than-life hero like Xiang Yu not able to recover from failure?

I believe the answer is because he had never experienced any failure, prior to the one that led to his suicide. He was a supremely confident person, which helped to steel his resolve and act determinedly, even in the face of a stronger enemy. But this same level of confidence made him unable to accept failure. We can actually catch glimpses of our young people in Xiang Yu. Observing our own modern world, how many young people, who used to top their class in school, took their own lives after receiving only one unsatisfactory grade? How many youngsters are there, used to their life of smooth sailing, who could not bounce back from a single storm?

**I often feel that it is better to allow young people to fail early. If we experience major failure only after we have reached the pinnacle of life, it is hard to tell if we can recover from such an adversity.** Moreover, had Xiang Yu been lucky enough to taste bitter failure before reaching the heights of his military career, would he have chosen differently by crossing the river, eventually making a comeback? Might history have taken a different turn as a result of him making a different decision? Obviously, these are hypothetical questions, but yet who can deny the possibilities inherent in them?

Returning to this teenager's experience, life is similar to the different kinds of races. Some people are making a dash in the 100-metre sprint. Others are running marathons, putting their stamina and determination to the test. What is most important is that regardless of whether we are running 100 metres or a marathon, whether we are leading or lagging in the race, our focus should not be on winning or losing it, but on giving our utmost to complete the journey.

Thus, I also commented after marking her composition: "I'm very glad that you experienced failure once before you graduate, because you have now become stronger." ❀

Without travelling, would you still have anything to write about? A close friend asked me this question before I started chemotherapy.

I had never imagined that I could get cancer since I do not drink or smoke. Moreover, I exercise regularly. As a result of never entertaining such a thought, I was scared, and therefore, befuddled as to what I should do.

Those years of travelling had taught me to live every day as my last, but now that the clock had started counting down, I found myself asking: What else do I want to do? What else can I do?

When the doctor conveyed the results to me over the phone, I listened but my mind went blank. A torrent of questions soon arose in my mind, but I could not utter a single word.

When night fell, I tidied up my room, while tidying up my feelings.

What should I ask? What should I know? I needed clarity. I was not going to hand over the right to decide my life to a stranger, albeit a doctor. So I went online and searched for answers, while jotting down my questions:

"Will I die? How long do I have? Is this curable? What is the treatment like? What stage is this?" I did this until it was time for my medical

appointment, yet when I sat down in front of the doctor, all my questions were forgotten. All I asked was, "What else can I do next?"

This complete stranger in front of me patiently explained things to me, and I finally understood I had lymphatic cancer.

The doctor reminded me that after the chemotherapy, my immunity would be low so I had to avoid raw food, such as salads, half-cooked eggs, sushi, kimchi etc.

My bone density would decrease, though that should not stop me from doing simple exercises. He also reminded me to avoid injury to prevent profuse bleeding, and that I should avoid crowds in case there were sick people among them who could infect me.

He repeatedly emphasised, "Cancer is not a death sentence."

Besides hearing about a series of medical tests I had to undergo, and what the treatment entailed, I did not seem to hear the answer I sought.

Therefore, I asked him again, "Doctor, these are things that I should take note of, but in the future, what else can I do? Or, let me put it another way, what are the things that I cannot do in the future?"

He finally seemed to understand my question, and sat up erect to answer

me with a faint smile, "You can do whatever you wish. The only thing you cannot do is...refuse treatment."

I laughed. The doctor and the nurse smiled too.

The doctor could not contain his curiosity and asked me before I left his clinic, "Actually, what do you want to do?"

Just gardening, painting, reading and...writing. In short, all those things that I had assumed I would do after retirement.

All these activities that I kept saying I had no time for before were successfully done during my period of recuperation.

This reminds me of a little Zen poem:

*I walk with the baggage,  
I sat with the baggage.  
Put down the baggage,  
What freedom there is.*

I saw in my mind's eye a silhouette of me lugging a big and heavy backpack, crossing oceans and lands with it. Then, at some unknown point in time, I had stuffed myself into the backpack, too. Had it not been for this illness requiring me to slow down for a break, I would have forgotten to crawl out of this backpack to take a good, hard look at myself. ❀

## What Else?



## Overcoming Life Challenges

Life is often unpredictable. We could have a steady job, a happy family, a beautiful home, and everything seems to be going so smoothly. "Life is good to me." We observe our good fortune with much joy.

Then, out of the blue, we may lose a loved one through a life-threatening illness or we suffer a pay cut; or worse still, get retrenched when the company is losing money. Now the things that we have felt so secure about suddenly become terribly shaky and uncertain. This is what is happening now during the COVID-19 pandemic.

When the winds of change come unexpectedly, we must seize the chance to progress in our awakening and spiritual journey.

Joy, to me, is staying connected to the divine – in good and bad times. Prayer has always given me the strength and tenacity to overcome adversities in life's journey. All religions teach us to do good and to care for one another.

Discipline of the mind is important for us to stay pure at heart, to be calm and not to harm anyone. Being

disciplined means that we abide by the precepts, be faithful to our spouse, give unconditional love to our children and also our parents who gave us life. The Buddha taught that nothing is more harmful than an undisciplined mind. When we are disciplined, we can think positively to ride out life's raging storms.

**Spiritual growth helps us to lead a better and more harmonious life which will set us free from experiencing fear, tension, anxiety and even prevent us from falling into depression. Spiritual growth involves tossing away our ego to realise who we actually are.**

When my wife passed away unexpectedly at the age of 61, seven years ago, my whole world came crashing down. It happened on the same fateful day that I lost my left arm. Thankfully, my faith pulled me through the crisis. We should never view suffering as a punishment, or feel bitterness when things do not go our way. Instead, we should see such painful moments as golden opportunities to strengthen our faith.

Trust is important in relationships, be it at work or in our dealings with family and friends. If you trust a close friend, you confide all your problems to him or her. You would also share your happiness with this person. In the same way, we entrust the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas by confiding our happy and sad moments to them.

Moreover, science has proven that when we give to others, it is beneficial to our health. Therefore, instead of focusing on our own misfortune, we can move on by giving and helping others. Doing so evokes gratitude and reminds us of the blessings we already have.

Researchers found in a 2012 study that when people were asked to recall how they had helped others, their reflections motivated them to want to help even more people. Thus, helping others is positively reinforcing.

In short, with a disciplined mind, positive thinking and faith, we can use our energies to reach out and help those in greater need. Doing so, we can transcend our own suffering and transform our lives. ✿

I always tell people not to carry too many things with them. Each of us has a head and four limbs, and need only three meals a day and enough sleep at night. Carrying excess baggage is not only physically cumbersome, but also psychologically draining.

My listeners usually nod their heads when I say this. However, invariably, we still end up with too many clothes, extra pairs of shoes for contingency, all kinds of accessories, hairdryer, skin care products, whole bags of snacks, a kettle... Seriously, are we going on a vacation with all this luggage? We look like we're fleeing to the planet Mars to escape an Earthly disaster!

Actually, travelling is very good training for people to realise what they truly need. It teaches them to realise that in fact, they need only the bare necessities to live on.

To live on—I mean, physically—is really not difficult. As for psychological well-being, well, you need to survive first in a physical body, to seek more or deeper experiences.

Some people protest that they feel lost and insecure if they cannot get what they want. However, how many people in this world can truly get all that they want? Such a demand is incessant, insatiable and unrealistic. Moreover, if a person can only feel a sense of security through the quantity and weight of physical objects, isn't such a sense of security rather fragile?

The computer keyboard has 86 keys. Would having 86 fingers free you to do whatever you wish?

When travelling, we should aim for relaxation so that our mind can be freed. This requires us to free up more psychological space. Travelling is not an activity just for the physical body. The journey of life is full of inner scenic landscapes awaiting us to discover and explore. Why do we obsess repeatedly over organising, packing and inventorying our possessions?

Moreover, life (and death) is unpredictable. You think of bringing everything with you, just in case you meet with a life-threatening emergency. When that inevitable finality happens, can you prevent death from happening?

Not only do some people bring crammed suitcases splitting at the seams when they travel; the moment they enter their hotel room, they waste no time in scattering their things all over the room, in order to re-create the look of home. Then why travel? Just admire the tourist spots from different countries on travel shows from the comfort of your living room.

You cannot reshape the external world to look exactly like your house. If the two were the same, there would be no way to discriminate between them. Please understand that the human mind and heart is not a permanent freezer. Clear out some inner space, so that you can look at the world with a more accepting, open heart.

¶ Travel light — this does not only refer to your physical baggage.

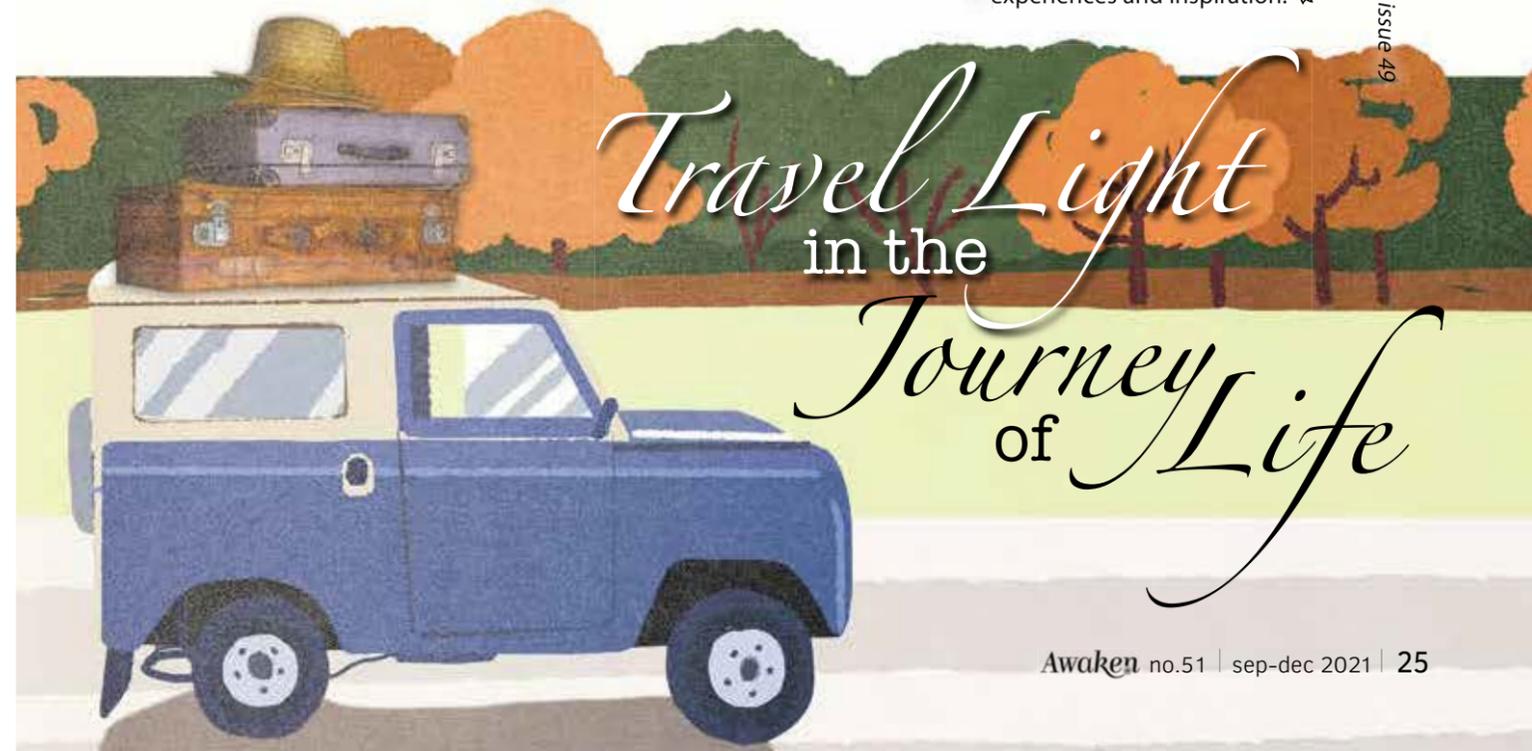
Free and Easy — this means that you should untie the inner shackles, so that you feel freer psychologically.

¶ Travel without a care, then you'll be able to embrace even fuller experiences and inspiration. ✿

ponder

Text loosely translated by: Oh Puay Fong  
Original Chinese article, —生轻便 written by Wu Wei Cai (吴伟才)

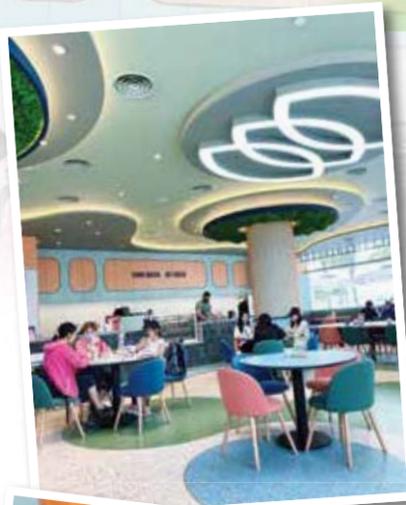
was published in issue 49



## Travel Light in the Journey of Life

# An Uncommon Plant-Based Venture

Text & Photos: Chloe Huang



#### Overall Ratings:

Food	7/10
Ambience	5/10
Service	6/10

#### Address and Contact Details:

Vivo City  
1 Harbourfront Walk  
#01-169/170, Singapore 098585  
☎ 6513 5808  
🌐 www.greencommon.com

#### Operating Hours:

Mon-Sun 11am to 10pm

Long gone are the days when the only eating out option for vegetarians was fried *bee hoon* with mock *char siew* and mock goose (*zhai er*). New forms of plant-based alternatives are taking over the world by storm. Most of my friends who are on this green journey shared with me that including plant-based “meat” in their diet has really made their quest less painful.

Whether you are a meat-lover turned *flexitarian* or converting to the green side of diet for good, Green Common may be a wonderful way to ease into your plan of becoming a vegan or vegetarian. Green Common is the world’s first plant-based eatery and grocery concept store launched at Vivo City early this year by the Green Monday Group from Hong Kong.

Their menu is a makeover of familiar dishes from Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean and Western cuisines.

One main dish that sparked my curiosity is their Banh Mi Bowl. Traditionally, Banh Mi is a submarine sandwich, a staple food in Vietnam, so Green Common’s Banh Mi Bowl is an innovative interpretation of the Vietnamese Baguette in a rice bowl.

The plant-based meat is skewered on rice accompanied by sweet and sour fried tofu salad, which gives this savoury dish a refreshing taste.



Another dish that both adults and children will fall in love with are the fishless “fish and chips”. The dish is crispy and tastes almost like the real thing. The eatery has a grocery section, where diners can get the packaged plant-based alternatives and replicate the dishes back home.

Although I find plant-based alternatives tasty, I believe that we should eat everything in moderation. If, like me, you have a weak stomach, you may find such ingredients difficult to digest. Nonetheless, I highly recommend that you give Green Common a go with your friends and family members who find vegetarian food boring or tasteless. This eatery will definitely change their minds! 🌱



I came to know about Zhenyi Veggie Place about six years ago and the vegetarian café has grown in popularity over the years. The café is about 10 minutes’ walk away from Ang Mo Kio Town Centre and is located on the ground level of an HDB block. Not only is the café relaxing and comfortable, it has also kept its pricing affordable while maintaining high food standards.

The café aims to meet customers’ varying preferences by offering a wide variety of options, including *zichar* (dialect for “stir-fried”) dishes, local delights, western food, pizza, and snacks. My personal favourites are from the *zichar* menu and local delights:

1 **Claypot Noodles** (S\$5) Firm and chewy thin yee-fu noodles served with lots of fresh vegetables

2 **Crispy Cereal Abalone Mushroom** (S\$10) This is a very addictive dish if you love dishes prepared with cereal. This can easily qualify as an appetiser or an afternoon snack.

3 **5 sticks of Satay** (S\$4) Who says satays are only meant for non-vegetarians? Made using textured soy protein, I like the texture of the vegetarian satay and the satay sauce, of course!



# Zestful Zhenyi Veggie Place

Text & Photos: Jos Tan

4 **Mala Maggi** (S\$6.90) Mala lovers should give this peppercorn-filled noodles dish a try. It’s spicy even at the mildest level. This dish is not published on the menu and is available only on certain days!

5 **Roast Chicken Rice** (S\$4.80) Fragrant rice and crispy “roast chicken”, complete with dark soy sauce and garlic chilli.

Regardless of whether I was dining by myself or in a group, their service has been warm and welcoming. On days when I feel like dining in at home, pick-up and delivery services are available from their website or Foodpanda\*. As expected, the waiting time can stretch especially on weekends, public holidays or on the 1st or 15th day of the lunar month.

Before the pandemic, it was not uncommon to see customers waiting outside the café for seats on these popular days. Looking back, that was a happy problem. Don’t we all look forward to the day when life will return to normalcy soon? 🌱



#### Overall Ratings:

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

#### Address and Contact Details:

Blk 128 Ang Mo Kio Ave. 3  
#01-1853 Singapore 560128  
☎ 6456 3307  
@www.zhenyi.zzv.com.sg

#### Daily Operating Hours:

Opens daily from 10am to 10pm

\*info correct as of June 2021.

Try

Sweet potatoes are nutrient-dense root vegetables. High in fibre and antioxidants that protect us from free radical damage, they promote healthy gut, brain, eyes and immune system. Pumpkin is another highly nutritious food that boosts immunity and improves heart health. As for sesame seeds, studies show that they may lower blood pressure, cholesterol and triglycerides, as well as support healthy bones.

1



Pumpkin Stew

- Ingredients (Serves one to two)**
- 400g Pumpkin (chunked)
  - 1-2 tbsp Shoyu
  - 4pcs Mushroom (sliced)
  - 1pc Medjool date (seeded)
  - ¼ tsp Rock salt
  - 1 tbsp Grapeseed oil
  - 200ml Filtered water

**Method**

1. Pour enough water into hot pot to cover the base.
2. Bring to boil, add mushroom and stir for 2 to 3 minutes.
3. Add diced pumpkin, shoyu, date, oil, salt and stir quickly.
4. Add in filtered water to cover the ingredients and bring to boil, before simmering for 30 minutes until the water reduces to a gravy consistency.

*Pumpkin is a low-calorie food that is great for slimming. It is also high in beta-carotene that supports our body for better eyesight and liver function.*  
— Wong Kee Yew

Sweet Potato Mochi

- Ingredients (Serves two to three)**
- 300g Sweet potato
  - ½ bowl Roasted sesame seeds

**Method**

1. Steam sweet potato; pat dry and peel off skin.
2. Blend sweet potato for 20 seconds to become a dough.
3. Shape dough into round balls and coat with sesame seeds.

*Sweet potato is high in fibre. It helps peristalsis to improve constipation. It is also rich in antioxidants, preventing cancers.*  
— Wong Kee Yew

2



Recipes & photos courtesy of Wong Kee Yew, a vegetarian nutrition teacher who conducts classes at Awareness Hub.

Call **Awareness Hub** at **6336 5067**, or turn to page 35 for more details.

Scan this to find out more about Kee Yew:



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Compassion & Wisdom on the journey of life...

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

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

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

Send your entries to publication@kmspks.org or:

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

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



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Issue 51 / September 2021

YOUR Feedback Matters

We value your comments and welcome your suggestions for improvements to AWAKEN. Tell us how we can improve our magazine to better cater to your spiritual and holistic needs. What new column would you like to see; which articles would you like to read? Send us your praises and flames. E-mail your feedback to publication@kmspks.org or send them to:

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

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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 OR drop by our HR Office @ 88 Bright Hill Road, Singapore 574117 between 9am to 4.30pm (Mon-Fri), except public holidays.

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



What's new

Text: Esther Thien

Drinking healing water blessed with the

大悲咒 Great Compassion Mantra

If you would like to continually drink blessed healing water, get this glass water bottle featuring the Great Compassion Mantra. It allows the mantra's energies to be constantly imprinted in your drinking water.

Japanese researcher and healer, Dr Masaru Emoto, conducted experiments on water molecules and discovered that our words, thoughts and intentions can physically alter the molecular structure of water. Positive words and prayers form brilliant, complex and colourful snowflake patterns, while negative thoughts and words give rise to incomplete, asymmetrical patterns with dull colours. His experiments showed the influence our thoughts, words and feelings can have on water molecules, extending to impact the earth and our personal health.



The bottle, which makes a great gift for a devout Buddhist, is available in two sizes: a small 250ml bottle, or a larger 750ml bottle with a pine-coloured wooden cap. It is elegantly made with fine details using quality material.

The water bottle also comes with a neoprene fabric casing in various colours to protect the glass bottle and give it a timeless stylish look.



Purchase it online at www.awarenessplace.com and have it delivered to your residence.

**K**arma, a spirited young nun, who enjoys playing around and making jokes with her companions and elders, lives in a monastery high up in the Himalayas of Nepal. Her life at the nunnery comprises a steady routine of daily mundane tasks and she comes across as happy. But we soon learn that she's also secretly dreaming of aspects of life that are outside of her reach as an acolyte of the monastic order.

After the death of the old abbess of the nunnery, there is a sudden and urgent need to procure funds so that they may perform the necessary rituals to encourage her to quickly return to this material world in a new incarnation.

Looking through the ledgers, they find that the abbess had lent money to several people outside of the monastery. One in particular was a large sum to a dubious guy with a tainted reputation. No one can quite understand why she would have lent any money to him at all, but since the abbess was a generous and wise woman, they trust that she had her reasons, perhaps foreseeing the 'karmic effect' that this would create for all those who would get involved in recovering it. Eventually we discover that there were some personal issues involved in this earlier decision as well.

Karma is chosen as one of two nuns to go and search for the intrepid debtor, which also creates the necessary path for her to resolve any doubt she may have about her present situation. Providing her



## KARMA

a journey to consciousness

Directed by: Tsering Rhitar Sherpa  
Starring: Mithila Sharma, Tsering Dolkar, Jampa Kalsang

with a good excuse to leave the monastery for a short while to investigate the outside world, out in the ordinary world, she's able to gain some of the most important lessons of her life in a way that will ultimately bring her back to become a dedicated spiritual practitioner.

Taking an overnight journey by foot to Jomsom, the town where the nuns are hoping to find the debtor at his home, they learn on their arrival that he has already left for Pokhara, a larger town a few days' walk from where they are now.

Seeing that getting the money back is so important, they make the decision to go and search for him there, but once again at that destination find that he has now left for Kathmandu, which is an overnight bus ride away!

Karma now has to continue

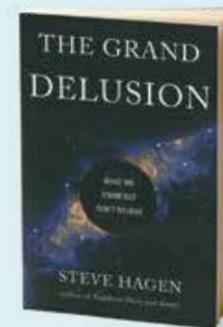
the wild goose chase alone as her companion sprains an ankle. Although she is both dedicated and relentless, and will not give up until she gets the money, in an uncanny twist of fate, she finally has to make an on-the-spot, intuitive decision about whether or not to accept it.

The many characters she meets on the way teach her about various aspects of life, each one providing a further nail in the coffin of any desire she may have ever had to lead a life outside the monastery; a disgruntled wife, who doesn't know where her husband disappears to all the time; a despondent young girl, whose mother wants to marry her off; prostitutes, who left home in search of better lives only to fall into the oldest profession in order to survive, as well as other women who have compromised their lives just to stay alive.

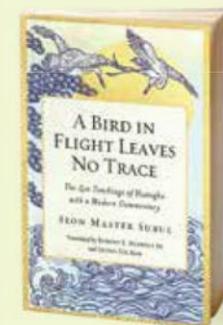
**This is a touching and heartfelt story of Karma's journey of how she comes to understand that by surrendering to the flow of life, she will gain ultimate happiness and satisfaction rather than seeking the proverbial greener pastures beyond the fence.**



Visit [https://youtu.be/7\\_ISjugQr2Y](https://youtu.be/7_ISjugQr2Y) or scan this to watch the movie



**The Grand Delusion**  
What we know but don't believe  
By **Steve Hagen**  
S\$25



**A Bird in Flight leaves No Trace**  
The Zen Teachings of Huangbo with a Modern Commentary  
By **Seon Master Subul**  
S\$32.90



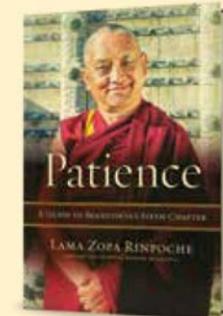
**Buddhist Suttas for Recitation**  
A companion for walking the Buddha's path  
By **Bhante Henepola Gunaratana**  
S\$29.80

**B**est-selling author Steve Hagen once again writes a book about the most abstruse truths in a sensible, direct yet thought-provoking manner. Written in the form of a dialogue with the reader, he delivers Buddhist wisdom in a brilliant way that is chockful of scientific and everyday examples on mind and matter.

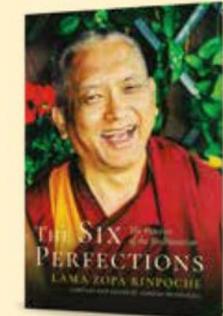
**T**hose inclined towards Zen teachings will appreciate this book, which is a most meticulous and beautiful translation of a contemporary Korean Zen master's commentary on a Chinese Buddhist classic from the Tang dynasty. *A Bird in Flight Leaves No Trace* is a bracing call for the practitioner to let go of thinking and liberate the Buddha within. An enlightening read that will benefit countless readers on their journey to spiritual awakening.

**I**f you are looking for an all-in-one Theravada prayer text, get this book. It covers the Three Refuges and Eight Precepts, daily devotional prayers, various additional discourses given by the Buddha such as the Ten Dhammas, Eight Great Noble Thoughts, Fire Sermon etc, and also prayers for funerals and ceremonies like meditation on death and sharing of merits.

■ All books are available at Awareness Place stores.

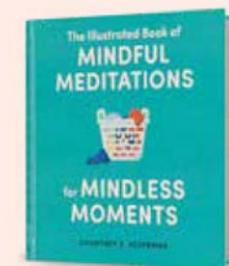


**Patience**  
A Guide to Shantideva's Sixth Chapter  
By **Lama Zopa Rinpoche**  
S\$29.90



**The Six Perfections**  
The Practice of the Bodhisattvas  
By **Lama Zopa Rinpoche**  
S\$32.90

**F**or those following the Bodhisattva path for their spiritual journey, these two books are helpful, especially in such difficult times, to obtain a deeper understanding and clarity on how you may better practise patience or the six perfections. In *Patience*, Lama Zopa Rinpoche elucidates on how anger destroys all peace and virtue, and how, by practising patience, we can overcome anger, accept suffering to respect others and find happiness in their happiness. In *The Six Perfections*, Lama Zopa Rinpoche explains each of the six perfections: charity, morality, patience, perseverance, concentration and wisdom, including the teachings on emptiness and bodhicitta.



**The Illustrated Book of Mindful Meditations for Mindless Moments**  
Simple activities for parents and children to create greater focus, resilience and joy  
By **Courtney E. Ackerman**  
S\$16.90

**T**he *Illustrated Book of Mindful Meditations for Mindless Moments* is an adorable book that is easy-to-read. Featuring a lovely sea foam green cover, this is a brightly coloured book containing appealing childlike illustrations, big fonts for comfortable reading and 85 concise meditative practices that cover all aspects of our lives — from taking a shower, folding laundry, checking your phone, greeting a friend, shopping, people watching to writing an email. Through these mindful practices, you'll discover more joy and delight in the little mundane activities of life, turning everyday run-of-the-mill tasks into moments of calmness, openness and gratitude, much needed now in today's climate of fear.

树精灵的智慧  
The Tree  
Sprite's Wisdom

dharma apps  
Text: Esther Thien



**The Tree Sprite's Wisdom  
The Elephant that can Fly and  
other Short Stories**  
Awaken Publishing  
Esther Thien and Agnes Gabriel | Free

If you are looking for some children's e-books to teach your little ones Buddhist values, check out *The Tree Sprite's Wisdom* and *The Elephant that can Fly and Other Short Stories*.

The first book is a bilingual easy-to-read book that tells the story of a rare, white elephant named Snow and her encounter with a tree sprite. This is a book that guides our children on the wise way to face our fear and negative experiences in life.

*The Elephant that can Fly and Other Short Stories*, by Agnes Gabriel is a collection of five simple stories about the qualities of genuine friendship. These stories demonstrate to children how one can be a true and good friend.

The book also includes fun activities that steer children to develop these noble qualities in themselves.

■ Get it from Google Play.



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**Dharma**

• CEREMONY | PRAYERS

**Lunar 27th Great Compassion Repentance Puja**  
3 Sep, Fri | 3 Oct, Sun | 1 Nov, Mon | 1 Dec, Wed  
10.00am – 11.30am  
Venue: Hall of Great Compassion  
Enquiry: 6849 5333

**Lunar 27th Great Compassion Repentance Puja - Online Light Offering**  
3 Sep, Fri | 3 Oct, Sun | 1 Nov, Mon | 1 Dec, Wed  
10.00am – 11.30am  
Venue: Hall of Great Compassion  
Fee: \$8 (1 candle with 1 sponsor's name)  
Registration: Online | [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
Enquiry: 6849 5326 | [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)



**Offering to Buddha and Celestial Beings Puja (TBC) - Online Puja Sponsorship**  
3 Oct | Sun | 6.00am – 8.00am  
Venue: Hall of No Form  
Registration: Online | [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
Front Office @ 9.00am – 4.00pm  
Enquiry: 6849 5333 | [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)

**Offering to Buddha and Celestial Beings Puja (TBC) - Online Items Sponsorship**  
3 Oct | Sun | 6.00am – 8.00am  
Venue: Hall of No Form  
Registration: Online [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
Front Office @ 9.00am – 4.00pm  
Enquiry: 6849 5333 | [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)

**Online Pledge of Bhaisajyaguru (Medicine Buddha's) Name Chant**  
Recite the sacred chant of "Namo Xiaozai Yanshou Yao Shi Fo", and submit your count on our website.  
Online Pledge: 6 Oct – 4 Nov | Wed – Thur  
Registration: Online | [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
Enquiry: [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)

**Medicine Buddha Prayer (TBC)**  
11 – 16 Oct | Mon – Sat | 8.00pm – 9.30pm  
Venue: Hall of No Form  
Registration: Online | [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)

**Medicine Buddha Prayer Completion Puja (TBC) - Online Light Offering**  
17 Oct | Sun | 9.00am – 4.30pm  
Venue: Hall of No Form  
Fee: \$8 (1 candle with 1 sponsor's name)  
Registration: Online | [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
Enquiry: 6849 5326 | [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)

**Medicine Buddha Prayer Completion Puja (TBC)**  
17 Oct | Sun | 9.00am – 4.30pm  
Venue: Hall of No Form  
Registration: Online | [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)

**Online Pledge of Amitabha Buddha's Name Chant (TBC)**  
Recite the sacred chant of "Namo Amitufo", and submit your count on our website.  
Online Pledge: 4 – 25 Dec | Sat  
Registration: Online | [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
Enquiry: [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)

**Emperor Liang Repentance Puja**  
12 – 16 Dec | Sun – Thur | 7.50am  
Venue: Hall of No Form  
Fee: \$20, \$200, \$600  
Registration: Online | [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)

**Online Pledge of Maitreya Buddha's Name Chant**

Recite the sacred chant of "Namo Dang Lai Xia Sheng Mi Le Fo", and submit your count on our website.  
Online Pledge: 31 Dec – 1 Feb 2022 | Fri – Tue  
Registration: Online | [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
Enquiry: [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)

**Renunciation of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva Puja**  
24 Oct | Sun | 10.00am – 11.30am  
Venue: Hall of Great Compassion  
Registration: Online | [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)

• TALKS | WORKSHOPS | COURSES

**Buddhist Etiquette & Introduction to Cultivation (Conducted in Mandarin) (TBC)**  
9 Oct | Sat | 9.00am – 11.30am  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom  
Free Admission

**Threefold Refuge & Five Precepts Preparatory Class (Conducted in Mandarin) (TBC)**  
10 Oct | Sun | 9.00am – 10.30am  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom  
Free Admission

**Threefold Refuge & Five Precepts Ceremony (Conducted in Mandarin) (TBC)**  
10 Oct | Sun | 11.45am – 2.30pm  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form  
Free Admission

**Registration:**

1. Online | [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)
2. Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9.00am – 4.00pm (Closed for lunch | 11.30am – 12.30pm)  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)

**Meditation**

**Relaxation and Mindfulness Meditation (Bilingual) (TBC)**

Meditation which involves body scanning and relaxation.

- Oct | Wed course | 7.45pm – 9.15pm
- Oct | Fri course | 7.45pm – 9.15pm
- Oct | Sun course | 4.00pm – 5.30pm

Fee: \$30 per course

Venue: KMSPKS Meditation Hall



**Registration:**

1. Online | [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)
2. Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9.00am – 4.00pm (Closed for lunch | 11.30am – 12.30pm)  
Enquiry: 6849 5346 | 6849 5300 | [meditationhall@kmspks.org](mailto:meditationhall@kmspks.org)

**Lifestyle**

• CHILDREN

**Children's Art - Colours of Life**

Free expression, reflection and exploration in arts for children to appreciate the beauty of things and their surrounding environment. This programme is specifically designed for children between 4 and 12 years old.

2 Oct – 4 Dec | Sat | 1.00pm – 2.30pm Or 2.30pm – 4.00pm

11 Dec – 5 Mar 2022 (except 25 Dec, 1 and 29 Jan 2022) | Sat | 1.00pm – 2.30pm Or 2.30pm – 4.00pm  
Venue: Awareness Hub

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

**Mindfulness for Kids Paws B [ages 7 - 10]**

Through the course, the kids will learn:

- Different areas and functions of the brain and how it affects the ability to focus, make good choices, and balance our mind.

- Ways mindfulness can support day-to-day activities including concentration, memory, behavioural and relationship management.

- How to respond in different situations.

29 Nov – 20 Dec | Mon | 2.00pm – 3.30pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$120 (4 sessions)

**Dot B [ages 11 - 16]**

This course aims to help the younger teens to:

- Cultivate emotional intelligence by managing of compulsive reactions.

- Improve their concentration and focus in classes, exams, and listening skills.

- Experience greater well-being (to feel happier, calmer, more fulfilled).

- Cope with difficult mental states such as anxious thoughts, low moods and stress in exams, relationships, sleep problems, and family issues.

29 Nov – 20 Dec | Mon | 3.30pm – 5.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$120 (4 sessions)



**Online School Holidays - Nagomi Art Workshops**

Allow your child to discover the vibrant and colourful world of Pastel Nagomi Art through engaging storytelling and illustrations by Sarana Khoo, an experienced Pastel Nagomi Art Teacher.

"Colours heal. The process of painting carries the therapeutic qualities of the colours that will nurture the inner world."

**[For ages 6 - 9]**

8 Dec | Wed | 10.00am – 12.00pm  
(*The Seed of Life*)

15 Dec | Wed | 10.00am – 12.00pm  
(*May I Be Well, May You Be Happy*)

Venue: Online Zoom

Fee: \$40 per session

Material: \$15 per art set (payable to the instructor)

**[For ages 10 - 12]**

8 Dec | Wed | 1.00pm – 3.00pm  
(*Rainbow Heart*)

15 Dec | Wed | 1.00pm – 3.00pm  
(*The Songs of Nature*)

Venue: Online Zoom

Fee: \$40 per session

Material: \$15 per art set (payable to the instructor)

Due to the current COVID-19 situation, programmes and dates are subject to changes. Please visit [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org) for up-to-date information.

• ART

**Seniors Amazing Craft**

Stay active and keep dementia at bay with arts and crafts! A beneficial course brought together by qualified and passionate instructors.

1 – 22 Sep | Wed | 1.00pm – 2.30pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Free | Registration required (*Donations are welcomed*)

**Zentangle Inspired Art - Gemstones and Colour**

3 Oct | Sun | 2.00pm – 5.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$60

Material Fee: \$12 (*payable to instructor*)

**Zentangle Intermediate - Zendala Mandala**

10 Oct | Sun | 2.00pm – 5.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$65

Material Fee: \$10 (*payable to instructor*)

**Zentangle Intermediate - Shine on Black**

17 Oct | Sun | 2.00pm – 5.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$65

Material Fee: \$12 (*payable to instructor*)



**Online Pastel Nagomi Art - Searching For Totoro In My Heart**

Sarana Khoo invites you to spend a day with her in the spirited world of Miyazaki Hayao for healing and comfort. Allow the innocence and child-like kindness in our hearts to awaken this inner healing. Let us spend a moment together dusting away the hustle of daily life to reconnect with our innate purity and vision that have so often been buried.

31 Oct | Sun | 10.00am – 6.00pm [*1hr lunch break*]

Venue: Online Zoom

Fee: \$155 (*New Students*) / \$139.50 (*for returning Awareness Hub students*)

Material: \$45 Nagomi Art Kit (*New Students*), payable to the instructor.

**Western Floral Arrangement and Hand Bouquet**

Use your new-found skills to make a stunning hand bouquet for your loved ones, and beautify your place with lovely table arrangements.

5 – 26 Nov | Fri | 7.00pm – 9.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$80 (*4 Sessions*)

Material Fee: \$35 Per Session (*payable to instructor*)

• WELLNESS

**CULINARY**



**Interactive Online Nutrition Class - Managing Menopause through Diet and Natural Remedy**

Are you experiencing pre-menopausal or menopausal symptoms such as fatigue, hot flushes, night sweats, dry skin, depression, and mood swings? Join us in this online nutrition class and learn to prevent or overcome these symptoms through diet and natural remedy. This will reduce menopause health risks such as osteoporosis, heart diseases, cancer and weight gain.

14 Nov | Sun | 2.00pm – 5.00pm

Venue: Online Zoom

Fee: \$38

*Participants are advised to have a copy of Vinitha's Cookbook with Nutrition Guide during the class (Participants' special price of \$18).*

**Online Wellness Series - G. R. O. W. Life Force Diet**

This short course provides guidance on not only eating right, but also eating your way towards optimal nourishment and vitality. You will gain insights into G.R.O.W. Principles of a nourishing and life-giving diet, as well as proper food preparation methods. This course will also analyse the common pitfalls and shortcomings of the modern diet - and provide recommendations on resolving them with the G.R.O.W. Life Force Diet.

17 Oct | Sun | 10.00am – 4.00pm [*break 12.00pm – 2.00pm*]

Venue: Online Zoom

Fee: \$80

**Rhythm Rejuvenation**

Our fun and relaxing music sessions offer you the perfect opportunity to slow down and rejuvenate yourself through reducing stress, enhancing self-awareness, and creating empowerment.

*(No prior musical experience is needed! Instruments will be provided).*

**Communication and Expression of Feeling**

21 Nov | Sun | 3.00pm – 5.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$30

**Restorative Sound Immersion**

12 Dec | Sun | 3.00pm – 5.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$30

**Chair Yoga**

• 3 Sep – 5 Nov | Fri | 12.30pm – 1.30pm

• 12 Nov – 14 Jan 2022 | Fri | 12.30pm – 1.30pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$160 (*10 sessions*) / Walk-in \$22 per lesson

**Hatha Yoga**

• 6 Sep – 8 Nov | Mon | 6.45pm – 8.15pm

• 7 Sep – 9 Nov | Tue | 10.30am – 12.00pm

• 8 Sep – 10 Nov | Wed | 6.30pm – 8.00pm

• 30 Oct – 15 Jan 2022 (*except 25 Dec and 1 Jan 2022*) | Sat | 8.30am – 9.45am Or 10.00am – 11.15am

• 3 Nov – 5 Jan 2022 | Wed | 8.00pm – 9.30pm

• 15 Nov – 17 Jan 2022 | Mon | 6.45pm – 8.15pm

• 16 Nov – 18 Jan 2022 | Tue | 10.30am – 12.00pm

• 17 Nov – 19 Jan 2022 | Wed | 6.30pm – 8.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$180 (*10 sessions*) / Walk-in \$25 per lesson

**Yin Yoga**

Feeling anxious and stressed out? Try our Yin Yoga classes for the perfect opportunity to relax your body, calm your mind, and find the balance in your life again.

• 2 Nov – 4 Jan 2022 | Tue | 6.30pm – 7.45pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$170 (*10 sessions*) / Walk-in \$23 per lesson

**Lunch-time Hatha Yoga**

• 21 Sep – 23 Nov | Tue | 12.20pm – 1.10pm

• 30 Nov – 8 Feb 2022 (*except 1 Feb*) | Tue | 12.20pm – 1.10pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$140 (*10 sessions*) / Walk-in \$18 per lesson

**Hatha Yoga for Beginners**

• 2 Oct – 4 Dec | Sat | 6.30pm – 8.00pm

• 22 Oct – 24 Dec | Fri | 10.30am – 12.00pm

• 11 Dec – 5 Mar (*except 25 Dec, 1 and 29 Jan 2022*) | Sat | 6.30pm – 8.00pm

• 31 Dec – 18 Mar 2022 (*except 28 Jan and 4 Feb 2022*) | Fri | 10.30am – 12.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$180 (*10 sessions*) / Walk-in \$25 per lesson

**Gentle Hatha Yoga**

• 5 Oct – 7 Dec | Tue | 2.30pm – 4.00pm

• 29 Oct – 31 Dec | Fri | 2.30pm – 4.00pm

• 14 Dec – 22 Feb 2022 (*except 1 Feb*) | Tue | 2.30pm – 4.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$160 (*10 sessions*) / Walk-in \$22 per lesson

**Yoga for Diabetes**

Learn yoga postures that stimulate insulin production to help manage diabetes.

For non-diabetics, this gentle yoga boosts immunity.

• 14 Oct – 23 Dec (*except 4 Nov*) | Thur | 10.30am – 11.30am

• 30 Dec – 10 Mar (*except 3 Feb*) | Thur | 10.30am – 11.30am

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$120 (*10 sessions*) / Walk-in \$15 per lesson

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

**Registration:**

1. Online | [www.kmspks.org/lifestyle/](http://www.kmspks.org/lifestyle/)
  2. Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9.00am - 4.00pm (*Closes for lunch | 11.30am - 12.30pm*)
  3. Awareness Hub | 11.30am - 6.00pm
- Enquiry: 6336 5067 | [awarenesshub@kmspks.org](mailto:awarenesshub@kmspks.org)

• ENVIRONMENTALISM

**Sorting of Recyclables @ Gratitude Corner**

Assist us in sorting out items that can be recycled and reused for sale at the Gratitude shop.

Every Tue, Thur, Sat | 9.00am – 2.00pm

Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Outside South Wing Office

**Gratitude Shop**

Check out our thrift shop for cheap and good deals. Garden Compost is also up for sale! (2L pack @ \$5)

Sat - Sun | 10.00am - 3.00pm

Venue: Outside Dining Hall (South Wing)

Enquiry: 6849 5300 | [gratitude@kmspks.org](mailto:gratitude@kmspks.org)

*\*Please check our website for further updates @ [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)*

• COMMUNITY

**Food Ration**

Monthly distribution of food ration to low-income families.

19 Sep | 17 Oct | 21 Nov | 19 Dec | Sun | 9.00am – 11.30am

Venue: KMSPKS / Sin Ming

Enquiry: 6849 5300 | [community@kmspks.org](mailto:community@kmspks.org)

**Blood Donation Drive**

Join us at our blood donation drive. All it takes is just 60 minutes of your time today, to save lives tomorrow.

19 Dec | Sun | 9.00am – 3.00pm

Venue: KMSPKS

Enquiry: Singapore Red Cross

Tel: 6220 0183 | Website: [www.redcross.sg](http://www.redcross.sg)

*To check for your eligibility, please visit:*

[hsa.gov.sg/blood-donation/can-i-donate](http://hsa.gov.sg/blood-donation/can-i-donate)

*Online registration: <https://bit.ly/2UGkT9F> (open one month before the drive or look out for KMSPKS website nearer to date).*



**Dementia Prevention Programme - Age Well Everyday (AWE) - conducted in Mandarin**

AWE is a structured community programme encompassing Health Education, Exercise, Mindfulness Practice, Art & Music Reminiscence, and Horticultural Therapy, to reduce anxiety and depression, thereby delaying the onset of dementia and improving the quality of life of seniors.

March 2022 | Wed | 9.00am – 11.30am

Free (*12 sessions*)

Venue: KMSPKS

Registration: Nov onwards | [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)

Enquiry: 6849 5359 | 6849 5317 |

[community@kmspks.org](mailto:community@kmspks.org)

KMSPKS = Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery VHCMH = Venerable Hong Choon Memorial Hall  
TBC = To Be Confirmed

*Programmes & venues are subject to change. Details are correct at the time of printing*



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