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awaken 普觉

to Compassion and Wisdom on the journey of life



Compassion in the Time of COVID-19

*Adapting to a new normal with clear hearts
and minds, resilience and strength*

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Nine months and more have passed since we stepped into 2020, and the world was informed of the existence of the COVID-19. This year has been an unprecedented time in history when emotions of anxiety, uncertainty and loneliness run high and can either intensify divisiveness, or unite us to bring a deeper sense of community and solidarity. It is deeply inspiring to see how people are displaying resilience, compassion and cohesion in this most challenging period.

Even till today, the COVID-19 pandemic persists unrelentingly, disrupting societies and communities throughout the world with detrimental impact on lives and livelihoods. As we are bombarded by news on the crisis daily, it is easy to get stressed and feel helpless about the perceived scale of the pandemic.

It is in such times that the Buddhist values of mindfulness, compassion, interconnectedness, acceptance of the impermanence of life and

equanimity are greatly needed. Through the wisdom of practising the Buddha-Dharma, we ground and re-centre ourselves before unfounded fear and anxiety wash over and overwhelm us.

We have to strike a careful balance, and be deeply aware that the virus is not the only thing that can harm us. Raw, irrational fear that spreads in our society can harm our minds too, paralysing us and hardening our humility and kindness into selfishness.

As we recognise the need to contain and prevent the infectious spread of COVID-19 through measures such as hand washing, social distancing and wearing masks when out, we should also ensure that we take wise actions to prevent our fear of COVID-19 from infecting our minds.

The pandemic offers us an opportunity to be generous and supportive of one another.

Let's be thankful for the countless acts of selflessness and kindness, big and small, that have been shown since the pandemic started. Let us emulate the exemplary compassion of the taxi drivers who offer free rides to patients, or those volunteers who drove all night long to serve frontline doctors and nurses so that the latter could get some rest before continuing their work.

We are all in this together, so let's leave no one behind and support one another on all levels, by manifesting our inner goodness into action which ultimately helps others.

Even the darkest and most desperate of times can contain the seeds of vast wisdom and possibility to foster humanity's indomitable spirit.

May the world and all sentient beings have happiness and well-being in body and mind, and be free from suffering.

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



**Ground
yourself**
in the **compassion & wisdom** of the
Buddha-Dharma during this
unprecedented time

At the time of penning this article, Singapore is still in Phase 2 of the gradual reopening of shops, which must comply with measures stipulated by authorities, such as wearing masks, social distancing, temperature screening and logging of visitors' information to facilitate tracing. The COVID-19 pandemic continues unabated worldwide, with some countries experiencing a resurgence of cases, or a "second wave".

The pandemic has brought about massive disruptions to lives everywhere: death, job loss, financial distress, domestic tension.

More than ever, the world needs compassion. Compassion acknowledges our vulnerability and it brings out our inner strength, so that we can be a lamp, a bridge and a source of healing to the hearts of others and ourselves (pages 41 & 58).

The pandemic has demonstrated once again that unexpected situations which disrupt our plans can and will occur, for this is the very nature of a physical existence (page 53). If we take refuge in the world, in material and monetary wealth (page 50) and expect certain outcomes, we will always face dissatisfaction because the world of phenomena, being impermanent, will always be uncertain (page 54).

Only by developing wholesome mental states such as love, compassion, joy, and equanimity can we gain strength, peace and resilience to adjust to the new normal (page 47).

Learning to accept, embrace, transform and let go will also

allow us to better flow with the ever-changing rhythms of life and be protected by the power of goodness as well as the teachings and blessings of the Buddha, says Venerable Chuan Sheng.

Venerable Thubten Chodron also gives good advice on page 52. To calm your body and mind during this stressful period, you can try listening to cheerful music (page 70), consuming healthful dishes (pages 63 to 65), meditating (pages 41, 47 & 56), or practising mindfulness techniques (page 71).

As the world is fraught with all kinds of anxiety and suffering,

let us radiate loving care and kindness (page 61). Let us be gentle and patient in our words and deeds, especially to those who are fearful or frustrated with what's disrupting our world.

In this way, we become the light and a gift of tranquil energies that the world needs.



Yours in the Dharma,
Esther Thien

Adapting to a new normal





During this period, the monastery implemented safety measures, including entry scan-in, temperature-taking and safe distancing. Members of the public also had to fill in a health declaration form. The response from the public was so overwhelming that 20 persons who walked in on the day of the drive had to be turned away.

The next donation drive will be held on 20 September 2020.

Meanwhile, students from needy families who had enrolled in the Monastery's free

"O" and "N" levels tuition programmes have been

continuing with their tuition online since April.

They were coached in six subjects on a one-to-one basis by dedicated volunteers.



Not Forgetting Those in Need during Circuit Breaker: Blood Donation Drive and Online Tuition *Text: Esther Thien*

Singapore – Even during the Circuit Breaker when only essential services were allowed to operate, needy Singaporeans were not forgotten by the Monastery. A blood donation drive was held on 17 May at the Monastery in a bid to save lives. Donors registered and made appointments through the Singapore Red Cross before coming to the Monastery.



A total of 189 persons registered for the drive. As there were 50 deferred donors, 139 packs of blood were collected that day.

Please call 6849 5359 to enquire about the next blood donation drive or the 2021 enrolment of free tuition for GCE "O" and "N" levels students.





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.

Compassion in the Time of COVID-19

Jack Kornfield teaches us a way to hold ourselves and those around us with a heart of compassion.



With the spreading coronavirus affecting families, friends and communities across the globe, we need inner practices to help keep our minds clear and our hearts open.

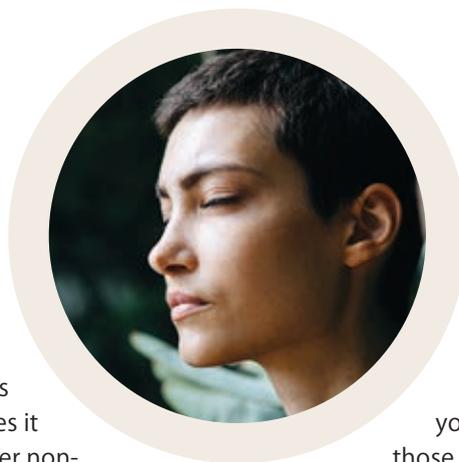
Human beings have always been tested. Generations before us have gone through wars, economic depressions, epidemics and famines. We know how to cope: how to steady our hearts, and care for one another. This is our test again, now.

One of the most helpful practices at such a time is generating compassion, empowering our capacity to willingly hold and care for all, including ourselves. The Sufis say, "Overcome any bitterness because you are not up to the magnitude of the pain that was entrusted to you. Like the Mother of the world who carries the pain of the world in her heart, we are each endowed with a certain measure of that cosmic pain and are called upon to meet in compassion, instead of self-pity.

Compassion acknowledges our vulnerability and it brings out our inner strength, so that we can be a lamp, a bridge and a source of medicine to the hearts of others and

ourselves. There are so many people who are anxious, stuck, or sick, as well as their caregivers to whom we can radiate compassion. To do this, let yourselves sit comfortably. Find a stable and easy posture. Let your mind and body settle. Set an intention to train and open your heart in compassion.

First, start by thinking of a person you care about so there is a natural and easy love between both of you. Picture this beloved one and hold him or her in your mind's eye and heart, evoking either an image or memory of the person, and feel a natural concern and love for the person. Also, as you picture and think of him or her, let yourself sense the struggle, the fears, sorrows and difficulties in the life of this person that he or she may have never told anyone about, but that you can know. As you sense the sorrows and difficulties, notice the natural arising of a tenderness in you. You start to feel compassion and care. This is the natural response of the heart. As you see with the heart of compassion, you become like the Buddha, Kuan Yin, the Bodhisattva of infinite compassion, or Mother Mary, wishing others to be safe and well.



As you visualise the person and think of him or her in a tender and caring way, let yourself recite a prayer inwardly, like a whisper in the mind, these simple phrases and words of compassion and even if sometimes it feels mechanical and brings up other non-compassionate feelings, hold it all with tenderness and compassion, and know that you are planting seeds of compassion and trust. As you see the person in your mind's eye, begin to say inwardly:

*May you be held in compassion
May you be safe and well, healed and protected
May your struggles, sufferings and fears be eased
May you live with a compassionate and peaceful heart*

As you offer these phrases of compassion and well-wishes, sense and imagine that the caring energies of loving-kindness from your heart extending to the person, surrounding and touching him or her.

*May you be held in compassion
May you be safe and well, healed and protected
May your struggles, sufferings and fears be eased
May you live with a compassionate and peaceful heart*

Now let yourself imagine this loved one, gazing back at you and wishing the same for you. Breathe gently and allow your heart to be open and touched. Feel their well-wishes. As you take in their compassionate caring towards yourself, place a hand on your heart and wish this:

*May I hold myself in compassion;
May I be safe and well, healed and protected.
May my struggles, fears and sufferings be eased, and
May I live with a compassionate and peaceful heart.*

Feel how this is possible for you. Let this love in, let it fill you and let your heart be transformed as you are being touched.

Then bring to mind another person you care about, as you visualise him or her:

*May you be held in compassion
May you be safe and well, healed and protected
May your struggles, sufferings and fears be eased
May you live with a compassionate and peaceful heart*

As you breathe and practise with compassion, sense how your heart opens step by step and eventually, you can sense, picture and remember those others around you; those who are frightened and sick; those who are caregivers; and let your heart open like a field of compassion.

*May all of you be held in compassion
May you be safe and well, healed and protected
May your struggles, sufferings and fears be eased
May you live with a compassionate and peaceful heart*

Finally, let the heart open further across the community, and the world around you, to the rest of humanity; to those affected by the virus and illness, those caring for parents and friends, children and old people, caregivers; families everywhere. May all across this globe be interconnected in unanimity.

*May they all be held in compassion.
May all be safe and well, healed and protected
May all your struggles, sufferings and fears be eased
May you all live with a compassionate, tender and peaceful heart
Wherever you go, wherever you are*

Feel the blessings of your heart, as you become the carrier of compassion; sense yourself moving through the world, seeing those around you—those who are well and strong, those who are sick, and those who are caring for others—seeing them all with the eyes of compassion.

And now you know that you have within you the great heart of compassion, which is essential for the healing of the world.

Rest in it, trust in it, embody it, it is your home.

Let yourself repeat this meditation. Create variations such as who you wish to extend your compassion to, or change the phrases and words so that they speak from your heart.

Carry this spirit of loving-kindness as you move through the world. During this time, let yourself be particularly polite, caring and patient with all those who are frightened around you, so that you become the gift and light that the world needs.



Dr Lee Foong Ming

an assistant professor from the Buddhist College of Singapore, graduated from the National University of Singapore and did her postgraduate studies in Buddhist Studies in the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. She specialised in Sarvastivada Abhidharma and received her PhD after seven years of studies. Since her return to Singapore, she has been teaching and has eight years of experience in teaching Buddhism for academic courses.

we could use some blessings now

Text: Dr Lee Foong Ming

Human history has the uncanny knack of repeating itself. I first experienced a similar dire economic state we are in now four decades ago, though due to a different macro cause.

Singapore's economy was badly affected in the late 1970s to the early 1980s. At the layman's level, the inflation due to the 1979 oil crisis hit us hard and affected our family income.

My father worked in a photo-developing firm as a photo lab assistant. Due to the difficult times, he got a part-time job in a small photo shop through a friend. He would continue to work after he knocked off from the day job, and reached home past nine every night. He would have his dinner, bathe, then go to bed. Day in day out, this routine was repeated except on Sundays, when he could rest.

My mother was a homemaker. To supplement the family income, she found a home-based sewing job probably outsourced by some factories manufacturing sports bags. I remember the brand "Yonex" printed on the synthetic leather sports bags. A heavy industrial grade

sewing machine was brought to my home one day, and my mother started her race with time to meet deadlines. That industrial sewing machine was big, bulky, and very intimidating compared with the dainty sewing machine my mother was used to. When you stepped on the pedal, the motor roared and hammered the thick needle into the synthetic leather with gusto. I remember being frightened about my mum's finger getting in the way of the needle... My mum bit her lips, and tamed this beast in a matter of a few days.

I guess my mum and dad did not think about much else other than just getting more jobs and earning some extra money so the family could get by. Any job. The roaring of the industrial grade sewing machine became the background music when my siblings and I did our homework around my mum. When we finished our homework, we would help to cut the loose strands of thread from the completed bags my mum had sewn from tailored parts. Every night just before nine, my little brother would boil a kettle of water for my father's bath, and I would warm up the food kept for his dinner. When we heard



“ Their courage came from their determination just to feed the family. ”



his footsteps approaching and entering the house, I felt the family was complete again.

“Have rice eat rice, have porridge eat porridge.”

The family was united in poverty. We subsisted on S\$3 a meal for a family of five. Sometimes, we'd just share a dish supplemented with soy sauce.

Yet I never felt I was deprived because my parents nourished us with love although they struggled on their own. Mum never failed to get Dad to buy an oval-shaped tin of Vanhouten almond chocolates for our birthdays, a luxury in those days. Dad saved up and bought me a “Papermate” ballpoint pen with a chrome-coated body as encouragement when I topped the class in Primary Three.

Looking back, my mum must have been terrified by the speed of the industrial sewing machine and stressed by the pressure to meet deadlines. My father would have been so hungry and tired when he went for his part-time job after he knocked off from his main job. There were no governmental handouts to tide over the few years of hardship, there were no governmental agencies to help people upgrade their skills or find jobs. Somehow, my parents just found ways to get extra jobs, then bit the bullet for the toil.

“ You must smile ... You can tide through it with a smile. ”

And even that has passed.

I think it was not that my parents never worried, or feared that my dad would lose his job and we would be left hungry. I think their courage came from their determination just to feed the family. Full-stop. In exchange for that, they were willing to put up with fatigue, inconvenience, and even learning something new (even dangerous, like working on the industrial sewing machine). So it's determination; and with determination, the willingness to take up challenges will follow.

Fast forward to 2020.

Some might say that the situation our parents faced was very different from what we are facing now. Maybe. But what could our parents do about oil prices then? Just like what can we do about COVID-19 now? There are things beyond our control, and there are things we can do.

Perhaps the biggest difference then and now is that we have grown used to living in our own comfort zones. The COVID-19 pandemic suddenly threw a lot of things off the usual track. It is one big, sudden DISRUPTION. So we have not recovered from the shock and anger of having our comfort zones shattered. Shock and anger bring about worry and fear that we will not be able to live the same life again.



Recently, we celebrated Singapore's 55th National Day, as united, patriotic, proud Singaporeans. As I watched the National Day Parade (NDP) evening show, I couldn't shake off the image of an *Ah Mah* (grandmother in dialect) calmly giving us her mundane but wise advice. It reminded me of a similar adage my own grandma often repeated. *Ah Mah* said in Hokkien: “You must smile ... You can tide through it with a smile.” Her quiet stoicism strangely gave me a sense of security and warmth, especially during this time of great uncertainty.

After the euphoria, the kitchen sink

Two days after National Day celebrations, we were told:

“We are not returning to a pre-COVID-19 world ... We must chart a new direction now,” said Trade and Industry Minister Chan Chun Sing on Tuesday (11 August 2020), after Singapore announced what he described as its “worst quarterly performance on record”. (CNA report, 11 Aug 2020)

The future seems bleak. I remember the rallying call the government has been making, "Together we will emerge stronger." But how?

Together. Stronger. These are the two elements highlighted in the rally call. How do we nurture these to make the rally call a reality?

Many experts have given their views and advice on how we can use this crisis to emerge better and stronger: through self-care and social activism, through skills upgrade and re-inventing our jobs. I hear talk on radio boosting positivity amid the gloom on a daily basis. If we venture out of our self-imposed mental quarantine and try even one of the tips these kind people have offered, we should see some change for the better within ourselves. All we need is that one moment to flip our mind and turn things around. Perhaps we can start by first looking at the blessings we already possess, and the blessings we can create.

**“ Together.
Stronger. ”**



Mangala sutta – the Discourse on Blessings

The Mangala Sutta records the dialogue between the Buddha and a heavenly being who came visiting one fine night. The text below is translated by Venerable Narada.¹

“Thus have I heard.[1] On one occasion the Exalted One was dwelling at Anathapindika's monastery, in Jeta's Grove,[2] near Savatthi.[3] Now when the night was far spent, a certain deity whose surpassing splendor illuminated the entire Jeta Grove, came to the presence of the Exalted One and, drawing near, respectfully saluted him and stood at one side. Standing thus, he addressed the Exalted One in verse:

"Many deities and men, yearning after good, have pondered on blessings.[4] Pray, tell me the greatest blessing!"

[The Buddha:]

"Not to associate with the foolish,[5] but to associate with the wise; and to honor those who are worthy of honor — this is the greatest blessing.

To reside in a suitable locality,[6] to have done meritorious actions in the past and to set oneself in the right course[7] — this is the greatest blessing.

To have much learning, to be skillful in handicraft,[8] well-trained in discipline,[9] and to be of good speech[10] — this is the greatest blessing.

To support mother and father, to cherish wife and children, and to be engaged in peaceful occupation — this is the greatest blessing.

To be generous in giving, to be righteous in conduct,[11] to help one's relatives, and to be blameless in action — this is the greatest blessing.

To loathe more evil and abstain from it, to refrain from intoxicants,[12] and to be steadfast in virtue — this is the greatest blessing.

To be respectful,[13] humble, contented and grateful; and to listen to the Dhamma on due occasions[14] — this is the greatest blessing.

To be patient and obedient, to associate with monks and to have religious discussions on due occasions — this is the greatest blessing.

Self-restraint,[15] a holy and chaste life, the perception of the Noble Truths and the realisation of Nibbana — this is the greatest blessing.

A mind unruffled by the vagaries of fortune,[16] from sorrow freed, from defilements cleansed, from fear liberated[17] — this is the greatest blessing.

Those who thus abide, ever remain invincible, in happiness established. These are the greatest blessings."[18]"

¹ For notes within the translation itself denoted by numbers, please visit <http://www.accesstosight.org/tipitaka/kn/khp/khp.5.nara.html#fnt-2.4>

“ When the going gets tough, we need to strengthen our mental cultivation through spiritual practice. ”



Three areas of blessings

We can group the 38 blessings listed in this beautiful teaching into three areas:

1. Professional aspect 2. Interpersonal aspect 3. Spiritual aspect

Reflecting on the professional aspect

Do we have much learning and knowledge? Do we have skills?
Are we engaged in peaceful work?

If yes, how do we value-add to the blessings we already enjoyed for the benefit of more people?

If not, have we tried the many new courses under SkillsFuture? If we haven't, what is stopping us? Resistance? Self-doubt? I hope we can be encouraged by my mum and her intimidating industrial sewing machine.

By reflecting on our existing repertoire of knowledge and skills, and making necessary improvements to them, we will emerge more confident and strengthen our financial security.

Interpersonal aspect

We start with our closest family. In this crisis, have we sat down and had a heart-to-heart talk about what worries each family member? Have we shown all the cards on the table so that each family member understands the constraints (financial and otherwise) that the family faces together? Have we agreed on how we can plan our family finances? Do we share our joys and worries, and offer a listening ear or shoulder to cry on? When we are able to do these, it shows the unity of the family. This togetherness is one solid pillar that can support us and gives us courage to face new challenges.

Then we move on to other interpersonal relationships like co-workers, friends, neighbours, and all the way to other Singaporeans at large. We have begun to learn to share NDP fun packs, share free masks, share meals, share government subsidies... we have learnt to share our wealth. The recognition that we are in this together—our togetherness— encourages the less privileged among us to not feel belittled when they have to receive, to have the courage to ask for help; and for the rest of us, it adds to our blessings to be able to give. This togetherness is the strong social net we build.

Spiritual aspect

These rosy pictures will be shattered if we do not have a strong mental foundation. When the going gets tough, all the confidence from professional training, all the goodwill shown and received can be shattered by our frustration and anger when things don't go our way. That is why we need to strengthen our mental cultivation through spiritual practice. Listening to Dharma talks regularly will inspire us and re-invigorate our resolve to practise. Cultivating gratitude and reflecting on the blessings we have can be a good foundation for all the positive mental habits we seek to reinforce. Due to the strength of all the virtues we have cultivated, our minds become stronger.

In this way, all three aspects feed one another in a virtuous loop to build and reinforce sustainable positive outlook and actions. The three aspects culminate in one huge cycle of virtuous actions in body, speech and mind. Merits accumulate. Singapore will thrive on these collective merits.

This is how we can emerge stronger together—the crisis is a precious opportunity for us to grow in these three aspects. Yes, we will not return to life pre-COVID, things will change for the better.

And this is the blessing we can truly offer to our home, our beloved Singapore.



Venerable Dr Chuan Sheng

is Associate Professor and Vice-Rector (Academic Affairs and Adviser) of the Buddhist College of Singapore. He obtained his BA (Honours) in History from the National University of Singapore (NUS) and PhD in History and East Asian Languages from Harvard University. Specialising in Asian history and East Asian international relations, he was an academic at NUS for 26 years, before receiving his higher ordination in Taiwan in 2013. Currently training under his ordination master, Most Venerable Kwang Sheng, at Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery, his interests in Buddhist Studies include Pure Land Buddhism and mindfulness meditation.

Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic

Job loss. Financial distress. Domestic tension. Like a tornado that wreaks havoc and leaves irreversible destruction in its trail, the COVID-19 pandemic has upended the lives of all Singaporeans in one way or another.

After almost nine months now, the dust is just beginning to settle. Restrictions are being eased and the economy attempts to sputter to life. The number of cases is relatively stable. However, many are still reeling from the social, health and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, uncertainty over the future continues to surround us like a pall of grey smoke.

One thing is for sure, however. Even as we start to see some semblance of stability, no one can resume the pre-COVID-19 way of life. Similar to the victims of the tornado, we are all picking up the pieces and adjusting to a new normal.

Whether you are a student, a senior, a worker or a parent, you are likely navigating this new phase with some degree of disquiet and anxiety. To support you in this journey, Awaken asked Venerable Dr Chuan Sheng, Vice-Rector of the Buddhist College of Singapore, for broad strategies on how we can reframe our thoughts and emerge from this calamity with more resilience and strength.

Awaken: The current COVID-19 pandemic is shaking the world up. What are the positive aspects and opportunities that we can glean from it?

Venerable: There is much we can learn in facing the myriad challenges brought about by the pandemic. At the individual level, we can recognise better our strengths and weaknesses, and do what we can to grow our strengths and overcome our weaknesses. At the family level, we can more fully appreciate the importance of family ties, and do what we can to nurture a loving home. At the level of friends and colleagues, we can see more clearly the value of friendship and collegiality, and do what we can to foster them. At the level of community, society and nation, we can more acutely realise that unity is strength, and do what we can to help and support one another. At the global level, we can more deeply understand the interdependence of all phenomena—people, animals

and all living beings, the workings of nature, the activities of people—and do what we can to ensure sustainable development, ecological balance and harmonious living with all phenomena (living and non-living).

Awaken: What Buddhist teachings and values can we draw on for strength and resilience as we adjust to the new normal?

Venerable: We should learn and practise the Buddhist teaching: “Avoid evil, do good and purify the mind.” When we move away from unwholesome thoughts, speech and deeds and engage in wholesome thoughts, speech and deeds, we build a strong moral foundation. This will free us from guilt and protect us from danger. We will experience a “blameless happiness”, peace, ease, security and strength, which will fortify us and help us to cultivate good relationships with others. We will feel “like a king, duly crowned and with

his enemies subdued." All these will give us strength and resilience to adjust to the new normal.

Together with building a strong moral foundation by avoiding evil and doing good, we should also purify our mind through the practice of meditation. **In the Buddhist context, to meditate means to develop wholesome mental states such as generosity, love, compassion, joy, equanimity and wisdom because what we put into our mind, we become. The more wholesome and purified our mind is, the greater is our strength and resilience to adjust to the new normal, because we will be able to more deeply understand and appreciate that all phenomena in life, nature and our universe are constantly changing, that there is nothing permanent, and that craving for and clinging on to the notion of permanence will bring us unhappiness and suffering.** Such ever-changing and impermanent aspects of all phenomena are so vividly presented in the endless disruptions brought about by the pandemic.

To purify our mind, we can practise meditation in two ways: by calming our mind through tranquillity meditation and by understanding the nature of our mind and all phenomena through mindfulness practice. We can practise tranquillity meditation by gently placing our mind's attention on an object of meditation, which can be our breath, a Buddha image, or a sound (for instance, chanting the name of Amitufo/Amitabha Buddha). When we find our mind wandering,

we bring our attention back to the object of meditation. We can also practise tranquillity meditation while we are standing, lying down, or walking (by focusing on our steps). With practice, our mind learns to subdue distractions, restlessness, worries and fear, it becomes calm, collected and stable, allowing us to function more efficiently and effectively in the various aspects of our life.

To be mindful means:

- (1) to be aware (remember/keep in mind) and attentive; and
- (2) to watch our body and mind and know what we are doing at all time.

No matter what we are doing, we can practise mindfulness—by focusing our mind precisely on that very moment, whether we are going to school, cleaning the house, or chatting with a friend. Mindfulness practice can train us to be less impulsive in reacting to our rollercoaster train of thoughts, feelings and emotions throughout the day, and prevent our unwholesome states of mind such as greed, anger, anxiety, paranoia, jealousy and delusion from upsetting our lives. In this process of learning to experience the power of *now*, we enhance our physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

Awaken: Different people are experiencing different challenges brought about by the pandemic. Some have lost their jobs and are facing stress to sustain their families; others feel strained from having to juggle working from home, parenting and family commitments. There are reports of rising family violence worldwide since countries were put under lockdown. Some have to deal with the grief from a loved one's death due to the pandemic; others are worried and nervous about a second wave of the virus outbreak. Some adult children of elderly parents are anxious about their parents' health, they may also feel fearful about allowing their parents to resume their normal activities. On the other hand, some seniors underestimate the impact of the pandemic and go about their everyday activities with minimal attention to adhering to the safety measures meant for their own safety as well as that of others. What principles should those who are affected in these ways bear in mind?

Venerable: We should learn to *accept, embrace* (investigate the causes and nature of changes), *transform* (problems to solutions, unwholesomeness to wholesomeness, self-centredness to selflessness), and *let go*.

We begin by learning to *accept* all the changes or developments, pleasant and unpleasant, that come into our life. We learn to be *grateful* to all the people and happenings that we encounter, for it is only through them,





through such a diversity of people and circumstances, that we can grow and blossom to our fullest potential. If we accept only pleasant events and deny unpleasant truths, we will not be able to mature in our life journey or address the issues effectively.

After acceptance, we should find out the causes and nature of the developments in order to have a good understanding, just like a mother *embracing* her baby to more intimately understand and satisfy the baby's needs. When we have a good understanding, we are more able to think of solutions to the problems we face. If we can resolve the issues on our own, we proceed to do so. If we cannot and need the advice, guidance and help of others, we seek out those whose advice we trust.

For problems that can be resolved immediately, we go ahead. For problems that require more time, effort and resources, we should learn to be patient and work on them step-by-step. In the process of resolution, we should be guided by the principles of *transforming* unwholesomeness to wholesomeness, and self-centredness to selflessness for it is often our ego that constitutes the biggest obstacle in our attempt

to successfully meet challenges. For every issue that has been addressed, we should learn to *let go* and not let it fester and perturb us further.

If we can think and act in these ways—accept, embrace, transform and let go—we will be able to flow with the everchanging rhythms of life and be protected by the power of good, as well as the teachings and blessings of the Buddha.

Awaken: Some people have become acutely aware of mortality in this climate. Consequently, they experience bouts of distress over the thought of dying, and losing their families, realising they have become too attached to this world for their own good. What should they do or what principle should they embrace more than ever to overcome their distress?

Venerable: Besides massive global disruptions, the pandemic has resulted in over 23 million infections and 800,000 deaths so far. The dreadful pictures of coffins and burials, sprawling across continents, offer a grim reminder of how death can be so sudden and fearsome. This spectre can easily give rise to distress and worries over questions of mortality—our own and those whom we love.

A good way to overcome such suffering is to remind ourselves of the Buddhist teaching of impermanence. Since everything is changing ceaselessly every moment, we can never know for sure when death will befall us. Life, every breath that we have, therefore becomes even more precious

and we should live every moment as fully as possible, guided by the Buddhist teachings on morality, compassion and wisdom. We should be clear about our purpose and meaning in life and set out to fulfil them. We should wholeheartedly do the things we care about, cherish every moment we have with our loved ones, and do what we can to also benefit the larger community and society. When we face setbacks and difficulties like we do in this pandemic, we should see them as part of the everchanging ups and downs of life and muster our courage to overcome them and adapt to new ways of doing things.

When we can learn from impermanence to live every moment fully and meaningfully for ourselves, for our loved ones, and for our community and society, we will have no regrets. We will no longer fear death when it comes to us or our loved ones because we will have done all we can to treasure and nourish ourselves and them. We will be able to have peace and calm in our or the last days of a loved one, cherishing the final moments with gratitude, love, compassion and wisdom.

Awaken: Can Buddhists look to talismans, rituals and prayers for added protection?

Venerable: When we follow the teachings of the Buddha, we will be protected by the power of pure goodness and the blessings of the Buddha. If talismans, rituals and prayers can strengthen our faith and remind us to follow the Buddha's teachings, they can provide added protection. With the right understanding, they can also offer us solace and structured ways of dealing with the stress, worries, fears and uncertainties of daily life.



The Buddha's Advice for Wealth Management

The Buddha not only gave many teachings about spiritual growth and enlightenment, he also gave advice on how lay practitioners can live wisely in a balanced manner.

The Buddha taught that our suffering comes from our ignorance, desires and attachment. Ignorant of the fleeting nature of physical reality, we constantly seek to satisfy our desires and are thus always caught in the cycle of never-ending wanting. Yet, once we obtain our desires, we become afraid of losing the objects of our desires and become attached to the point of obsession.

Buddhism does not teach us to shun money and stay away from it. Rather it guides us on how to use it properly.

Contrary to what most people think or feel about money, money is no more evil than any other resources or tools. By itself, it is neither good nor evil. It becomes negative only if it starts to control your thoughts and actions due to greed. It all depends on how a person uses this resource and with what intention—to harm or benefit others.

If a person uses money selfishly and covets money excessively, it causes suffering to himself and others, especially if the greed leads to unethical behaviours to acquire more and more money.

On the other hand, if money is used for empowering and enriching the lives of others, then it is not evil but beneficial.

The Buddha not only gave many teachings for attaining enlightenment but also practical advice for lay people, including money management. Balance is the key, and the Buddha taught that there are four kinds of happiness related to wealth:

1. **Happiness through ownership;**
2. **Happiness that comes from practising right livelihood (not dealing with illegal or harmful items, slavery, selling intoxicants and slaughtering animals);**
3. **Happiness from being debt-free; and**
4. **Happiness that comes from sharing one's money and wealth with others.**

There is nothing wrong with owning a house, or other properties, because through our ownership, we can provide for our family and parents and help others. We should take pride in the work we do and our work should help the community. Most importantly, we should be able to help others, especially the poor, needy and destitute, including animals. In this way, our wealth becomes a tool that brings immense goodness to this world.



The Sigalovada Sutta

In the Sigalovada Sutta, the Buddha taught four steps to lay people on how to balance their money:

1. Set aside one portion for your daily needs and wants
2. Then use one part to grow your business
3. Another part to develop or learn new skills
4. And the last portion should be set aside for rainy days and times of need.

In this text, the Buddha also taught lay people to avoid squandering one's wealth through vices like gambling, greed and idleness. He also emphasised the importance of having good friends and avoiding bad ones. Moreover, he explained how children should honour their parents, how spouses should treat each other, how students should respect their teachers, how friends and co-workers should behave towards one another and how bosses and workers should relate to each other.

*Editor: you can read the sutta from
<https://bit.ly/39xjh5a>*

5 Tips to Live Well for A Greater Peace of Mind



1

Eat simply and healthily

2

Do not spend on things you do not need

3

Work not for money but joy and love for your work, and the service you give to others

4

Do not have vices like smoking, gambling, drinking, and unhealthy unwholesome lifestyle

5

Help others, especially those in need, and share what you have

“ We should take pride in the work we do and our work should help the community. Most importantly, we should be able to help others, especially the poor, needy and destitute, including animals. ”





Fear & Anxiety since the Advent of COVID-19

Q

Since COVID-19 hit the world, I have been more fearful and anxious than usual, especially during the Circuit Breaker period and beyond, for my family and friends. How do I deal with my trepidation and help myself? – UE

A: Regarding the pandemic, ask yourself: What *specifically* am I afraid of? If you are afraid for a loved one, or a close friend, what are you *specifically* afraid of happening to that person? That he or she will fall ill?

Well, falling ill is part of samsara and that person has been ill many times before. If you are afraid he or she will die, that will happen one day eventually. We cannot control death, it's part of samsara.

Or, are you afraid for yourself? If so, what *specifically* are you afraid of happening to you?

Are you afraid you are going to get sick, or going to be in pain? That too is part and parcel of samsara,

of having a physical existence. Haven't you thought about this in meditation? Haven't you reflected and meditated upon death? Are you afraid that the world is going to fall apart? What other things do you fear will happen? What are the specific things that you fear?

If you are afraid that there will be chaos, we have all heard of mind-training teachings and how to transform adversity onto the path. Have you practised these techniques? Are they firm in your mind? If yes, there is no reason to be fearful. If no, then now is the time to become familiar with these teachings.

Think about your life, how fortunate you are to have encountered the

Dharma. You have done purification practice. You have accumulated merit, heard a lot of teachings and planted seeds of Dharma in your mindstream. Such good fortune should bring you a certain sense of satisfaction and joy, as you live a life filled with meaning and purpose.

You are closer to awakening now than at the beginning of this lifetime. Take stock and rejoice in whatever good you have done in this life. Rest in that feeling you have done something really useful in this life, then aspire to carry on that virtue and goodness into future lives. Aspire especially to overcome self-grasping and the self-cherishing ego to attain full awakening so that we can be of great benefit to sentient beings, however long it takes us to do so.

Ven Thubten Chodron
www.thubtenchodron.org
www.sravasti.org



The Story of the Honey Bees

Retold by Esther Thien
Illustration by Robert Yeo

We should renounce Samsara and practise the precious Dharma teaching. This is the only way to really bring lasting peace and happiness.



Once, there were thousands of honey bees, whose queen bee was a bodhisattva. Day in, day out, all the honey bees diligently gathered nectar from flower to flower and made a huge amount of honey. After some time a honey-hunter came to their hive and took the honey away. The bees suffered so much!

They lamented, "We worked so hard for many years, but can't enjoy the fruits of our labour. What should we do?"

They decided to move to another place. Once they settled down, they began to produce honey for several more years, enduring the heat and rain. Again, after some time, their honey was all taken away.

Finally the queen bee said, "Listen to me. Repeatedly, you work very hard to collect nectar and pollen from the flowers on different plants, bushes and trees. Yet, the honey is always taken away. **This is the very nature of samsara. Even now, no matter how much effort we put into collecting nectar and producing honey, the same thing will happen. There is not a single day in this life when we will have only happiness and peace.** What we should do from now on is to take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, renounce samsara and practise the precious Dharma teachings. This is the only way to really bring lasting peace and happiness."

All the honey bees followed the queen bee's advice and released their attachment to the production of honey. They sincerely practised the Dharma, and that was the beginning of peace and joy in their lives.

This story demonstrates that no matter how hard we chase after wealth, material things or financial stability in life, unexpected situations which disrupt our plans can and will occur, for this is the very nature of samsara, and the very nature of having a physical existence.

This doesn't mean that we shouldn't have any wealth. It means we should eliminate our attachment to wealth, develop contentment and make use of our wealth in a way that will benefit ourselves and others. This way, when disruptions happen they won't become a source of suffering.

Siha! I need help!
Due to this pandemic,
everything changed!

What happened,
Lin?



LIVING IN THE PRESENT

BHADDEKARATTA SUTTA (MN 131)

Illustrations & text
Law Wen Hui



In the past, I used to have a house,
friends, a lovely family, a job,
business, investments, savings,
excellent food, and even freedom,
but now everything is gone!
I have nothing now, truly nothing.



And what does the future hold for us?!
Will there be a job? Will I still have a house? Will there be
an economic crisis? Will my country collapse? Will there
be war? Will there be freedom and rights? Will my family
and friends die? Will I die?

Listen well, Lin, worrying about the past, and constant
thinking of the future does no one any good.

One should **live in the present moment** instead.
Every mindful moment is an auspicious moment.



**Thus instead of fear or worrying, we should be mindful of our actions,
our feelings, our thoughts, and our mental states.**



What matters is the present moment, as it is now
that **determines the future. Worrying does
not change the past.**

We also cannot control the whole world.



So what should I do now Siha?
What should I focus on?

Remember Lin, when we take refuge in the world, we expect certain outcomes, and think we are in control. But we will always face dissatisfaction because the world will always be uncertain.

Everything is impermanent. Even when this pandemic ends, we will be dissatisfied with new situations and other issues.

Gradually we will find that happiness is actually in our own mind. By having gratitude, contentment, mindfulness, compassion, wholesome mental states, etc., we can be happy.



Finally, not everything is purely about me, mine, myself and my ego. By helping people as much as we can, and **with mindfulness and a mind of contentment, compassion, and equanimity, we gain peace and tranquility.**

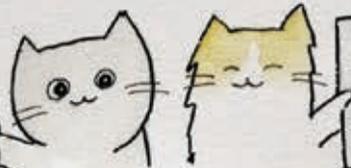
Thus one should **take refuge in oneself instead. By understanding these teachings and practising them, we can overcome all uncertainties and challenges in the world.**

“You shouldn’t chase after the past or place expectations on the future. What is past is left behind. The future is as yet unreached. Whatever quality is present you clearly see, right there.

Not taken in, unshaken, that’s how you develop the heart. Ardently doing what should be done today, for—who knows? Tomorrow—death. There is no bargaining with Mortality & his might.

Whoever lives thus ardently, relentlessly both day & night, has truly had an auspicious day: so says the Peaceful Sage.”

Present



Moment

Friendly Wishes in a Pandemic

By Susan Kaiser Greenland
www.susankaisergreenland.com



here's a practice you can guide your little ones to do during the pandemic. We start with wishes for ourselves, then for other people, and lastly for everyone and everything.

FRIENDLY WISHES TO ME.

"I wish that COVID would end and that we could play with our friends."
"I hope that I can do better with my anger because I have trouble controlling my anger and get really angry."

FRIENDLY WISHES TO OTHER PEOPLE.

"My wish is that all my friends and family do not get COVID."
"I wish that everybody stays safe and at least wears a mask if they go out of their house or buildings that they are staying in."
"I wish that at least people wear a mask properly if they go out of the house because I'm worried about people wearing the mask around the neck or just on the mouth. Yeah."

FRIENDLY WISHES TO EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING.

"I wish that COVID would end right now. COVID would surrender to all the doctors."
"My wish is the same, that everybody at least wears a mask if they go out of the house."
"My wish for the planet is that everybody gets healthier and that people are nicer to forests because people keep cutting down trees and don't plant more of them."
"I wish the wildlife stay safe."

The practice in the next column is transcribed from a class of elementary-aged boys. Let's dedicate it to them along with the many other children who are navigating the COVID-19 pandemic.

“

Let's all close our eyes and imagine a world where absolutely everybody, when they're outside of their house, is wearing a mask and they're wearing it properly. They have it on just the way that it's supposed to be so that they're protecting themselves and protecting other people and everyone on the planet. Let's take another moment and wish that everybody who needs a mask has one, because there may be some people who want to wear masks but don't have them. Let's hope that everybody who has a mask, knows how to wear it. Let's hope that everyone on the planet wears their masks.

time...

Text: Ajahn Jayasaro

We human beings have agreed that there is something called 'time' which can be measured by clocks and calendars. But what exactly is time in the real world of our direct experience? Can we know time in the way that we can know a visible form, a sound or an odour? I would say no.

What we can observe is a perception of 'time passing' such as when we glance at a clock or look at the position of the sun or moon. But time itself is more elusive. And the question arises: is it really a thing at all? This is not merely philosophical musing.

With so many people around the world confined to their homes, it is important to recognise how our understanding of time conditions our feelings. If we think of time as an entity composed of days, weeks and months that we have to somehow fill up with activities, suffering will surely follow. On the other hand, we can look at time in a different way: as a succession of present moments. We don't have to try to be in the present moment; we already are and always have been in it.

The challenge is simply to awaken to what is already the case.

Having been forced to slow down and simplify one's life, now is the opportunity to find a way back to the present moment—free of obsessive thoughts, memories and imagination.

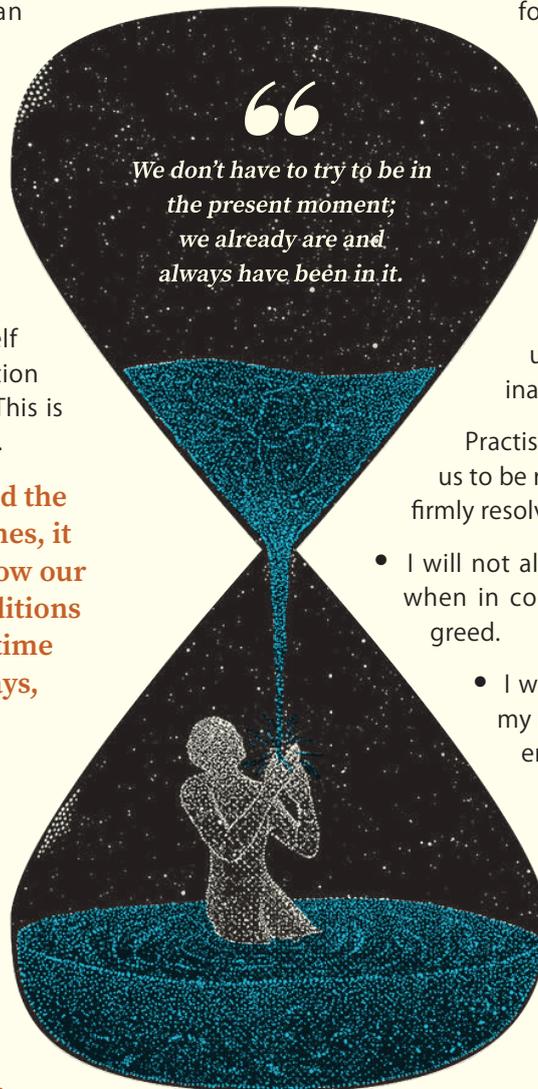
No matter how pleasant and comfortable our surroundings may be, there will always be occasions

when a form, sound, odour, taste, or physical sensation encourages aversion in the mind. No matter how unpleasant and uncomfortable our surroundings may be, there will always be occasions when a form, sound, odour, taste, or physical sensation encourages greed in the mind. No matter what our surroundings may be—pleasant or unpleasant—there will always be occasions when a form, sound, odour, taste or physical sensation encourages us to forget our sense of right and wrong, wholesome and unwholesome, appropriate and inappropriate.

Practising the Dharma in daily life requires us to be ready to deal with all challenges. We firmly resolve that today:

- I will not allow greed to overwhelm my mind when in contact with an object encouraging greed.
- I will not allow aversion to overwhelm my mind when in contact with an object encouraging aversion.
- I will not allow delusion to overwhelm my mind when in contact with an object encouraging delusion.

This determination is a supporting condition for mindfulness. We live in a world full of experiences that invite us to respond with defilement. We cannot change that. What we can do is to cultivate the ability to calmly and politely refuse the invitation.



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).



The *Bodhisattva's* Response to COVID-19 Text: Jack Kornfield

Dear Friends,

We have a choice. Epidemics, like earthquakes, tornadoes and floods, are part of the cycle of life on planet Earth. How will we respond? With greed, hatred, fear and ignorance? This only brings more suffering. Or with generosity, clarity, steadiness and love?

This is the time for love.

This is the time for Bodhisattvas.

In Buddhist teachings, the Bodhisattva is someone who vows to alleviate suffering and brings blessings in every circumstance. Bodhisattvas choose to live with dignity and courage and radiate compassion for all, no matter where they find themselves.

It is not a metaphor. As Bodhisattvas we are now asked to hold a certain measure of the tragedy in the world and respond with love.

The Bodhisattva's path is in front of us. The beautiful thing is, we can see Bodhisattvas all around us.

We see them singing from their balconies to those shut inside. We see them in the young neighbours caring for the elders nearby, in our

brave healthcare workers and the unheralded ones who stock the shelves of our grocery stores.

As a father, I would fly to the ends of the earth to help and protect my daughter, if she called out to me. Now she and her firefighter/paramedic husband and my toddler grandson await the virus. His urban fire department, like many hospitals and first responders, does not have masks. Eighty percent of their work is emergency medical calls and they all expect to get the virus. They will not be tested, because the department can't afford to lose too many of their firefighters at work.

What can I do? What can we do?

In this moment we can sit quietly, take a breath, and acknowledge our fear and apprehension, our uncertainty and helplessness... and hold all these feelings with a compassionate heart.

We can say to our feelings and uncertainty, "Thank you for trying to protect me," and "I am okay for now." We can put our fears in the lap of Buddha, Mother Mary, Kuan Yin, or whoever we place our faith in.

We can also turn our attention to the generations of brave physicians and scientists who tended the world in previous epidemics. When we do, we connect ourselves to become part of something greater, of generations of survivors in the vast web of history and life, "being carried" as the Ojibwa elders say, "by great winds across the sky."

This is a time of mystery and uncertainty. Take a deep breath.

The veils of separation are parting and the reality of interconnection is apparent to everyone on earth. We have needed this pause, perhaps even needed our isolation, to see how much we need one another.

Now it is time to do our part.

The Bodhisattvas deliberately turn *towards* suffering to serve and help others in whatever way they can. This is the test we have been waiting for. We know how to do this. This is the time to renew your vow.

Sit quietly again and ask your heart: what is my best intention, my most noble aspiration for this difficult time? Your heart will answer.

Let this vow become your guiding star. Whenever you feel lost, remember your vow and it will remind you of what matters.

It is time to be the medicine, the uplifting music, the lamp in the darkness.

Burst out with love.

Be a carrier of hope.

If there is a funeral, send the departed off with a song.

Trust your dignity and goodness.

Where others hoard...help.

Where others deceive...stand up for truth.

Where others are overwhelmed or uncaring...be kind and respectful.

When you worry about your parents, your children, your loved ones, open your heart to share in others' concern for their parents, their children and their loved ones. This is the great heart of compassion. The Bodhisattva directs compassion towards

everyone—those who are suffering and vulnerable and those who are causing suffering. We are in this together.

It is time to re-imagine a new world, to envision sharing our common humanity, to envision how we can live in the deepest, most beautiful way possible. Coming through this difficulty, what we intend and nurture, we can accomplish.

In the end, remember that the consciousness that was born into your body is timeless awareness. That is who you really are. You were born a child of the spirit, and even now, you can turn towards the awareness, and become the loving awareness that witnesses yourself reading, feeling and reflecting.

When a baby is born our first response is love.

When a dear one dies, the hand we hold is a gesture of love.

Timeless love and awareness are who you are.

Trust it.

Dear Bodhisattva,

The world awaits your compassionate heart.

Let's join in this great task together.

With metta,

Jack

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.

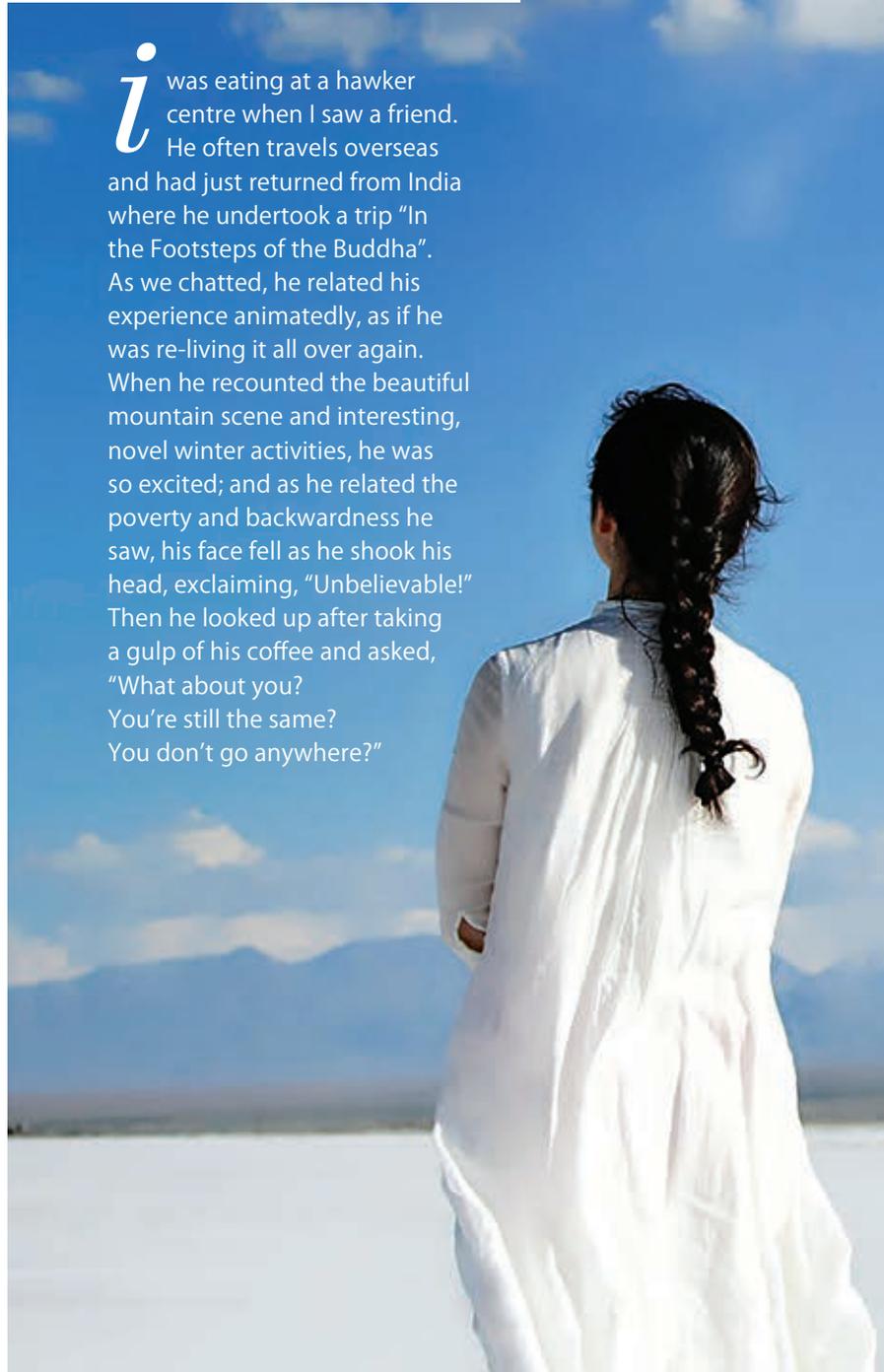
All by Myself

Text loosely translated by: Oh Puay Fong

Original Chinese article, 你寂寞吗?你孤独吗?

written by Ding Dian (丁点) is published in issue 45

i was eating at a hawker centre when I saw a friend. He often travels overseas and had just returned from India where he undertook a trip “In the Footsteps of the Buddha”. As we chatted, he related his experience animatedly, as if he was re-living it all over again. When he recounted the beautiful mountain scene and interesting, novel winter activities, he was so excited; and as he related the poverty and backwardness he saw, his face fell as he shook his head, exclaiming, “Unbelievable!” Then he looked up after taking a gulp of his coffee and asked, “What about you? You’re still the same? You don’t go anywhere?”



I did not respond immediately. He went on to counsel me, "Don't stay at home all the time, go out and move about when you still can. Explore this scenic world, embrace the diversity on earth!" He is right. Losing our mobility will be a handicap and a burden, and as we age, our body inevitably starts to deteriorate. This is a necessary biological process. As for travelling to take in the sights of different places, different seasons, or to understand different cultures so as to broaden one's horizons, these are probably why most people go overseas. Who knows? Taking this chance to shake up routine and cleanse a jaded mind may do wonders to shift one's long-cherished ideas and opinions.

I had planned to travel to Tibet with a friend 11 years ago, but the trip was aborted due to internal turmoil there. Since then, I have not had any desire to venture abroad again. I haven't even renewed my passport.

"Don't you feel bored like this, without any hobbies? Don't you feel lonely and alone?" He was perplexed. Hobbies are activities one does to make living easier. After satisfying the basic physical needs, one turns one's attention to leisure or spiritual pursuits, such as singing, dancing, mountaineering, walking, travelling...but when you do not share these interests that some people think most people should have, you bear the brunt of their sarcasm.

"Don't you feel lonely? Don't you feel alone?" When my friends question me, I inevitably pose the same



questions back to them. They would retort, "Of course not, we often engage in different activities and travel overseas frequently, so we have no time to feel lonely or alone!"

Really? It's not true. Actually, they are fearful of being lonely, or alone. That's why they find all kinds of ways to push loneliness away, that's why they seek external stimulation to fill up their inner void. If you ask them to slow down and rest, they immediately feel agitated and restless, especially in the quiet of the night when they have only themselves as company. That feeling of being lonely and alone catches one unexpectedly...looking back, didn't I too have the same experience before?

Travelling is a chore for me, not only troublesome but also tiring. I have no great interest in it. Moreover, since

I don't like the activities my friends planned on the trip, I naturally opted out. However, I do not feel any sense of isolation or dejection, but rather inner quiet and peace.

"Stop kidding me." My friend refused to believe me. I too know that unless one has personally experienced it, one would never believe so. Such a response is normal and it reminded me of a teaching.

Once, when expounding on the three stages in using wisdom to discern phenomena astutely, my teacher introduced the teaching by explaining thus: All ideologies, thoughts, beliefs, good or evil, views... abandon all such dualistic conceptions; instead observe, discern and interact with them with gentleness, equanimity and acceptance.

He then used the following *koan* to illustrate:

- 1) **Seeing a mountain as a mountain, seeing water as water (fixated on worldly phenomena);**
- 2) **Seeing a mountain as not a mountain, seeing water as not water (abandoning the former but latching onto Buddhist concepts);**
- 3) **Seeing a mountain as a mountain, seeing water as water (abandoning the former, and ostensibly going back to square one, but this is not so because one's understanding has transcended to a higher plane).**

I used to wonder how monastics could guard their celibacy vows? How could they stand the loneliness and solitude? Then I heard a wise one say with full confidence and resolve, "What I see is not what the rest of you see, it's beyond what humans see." I constantly ruminated on his words, and over time, as I regurgitated and chewed on them, I tasted some remnant sweetness that became stronger and stronger, until it diffused and pervaded my being. At that point, I suddenly understood how one could stay celibate and consummate an intimate relationship with Lord Buddha, even experience the fulfilment, richness and joy of a spiritual connectedness. "Not seeing loneliness as loneliness, not seeing solitude as solitude." Might this be the wisdom of monastics?

Is COVID-19 a **WAKE-UP CALL** to Humans to Value the Planet?

Text: Raymond Anthony Fernando

From nowhere, the whole world has been shaken by a pandemic that many citizens and governments are struggling to cope with. It is vital for governments to be proactive, take feedback seriously, invest in healthcare and build the necessary facilities. Fortunately, the Singapore government has done that and has built up the reserves to weather the downpour.

Contamination, pollution and blatant disregard for Mother Earth had resulted in virus outbreaks that cause irreparable damage to lives, lifestyles and livelihoods. Most certainly, a dire new assessment is calling for "urgent action" to reverse global damage to our shared air, water and climate.

When the milk of human kindness flows

Despite the gloom, we witness people from all walks of life coming together to support one another in this crisis, spreading the milk of human kindness. We may not be in the same boat, but right now we are in the same storm.

For instance, a taxi driver in Spain took patients to the hospital, free of charge.

Michelle Rubio, a teacher at Calao Elementary School in the Philippines, visits the homes of her students whom "she really misses" to distribute food packs and other forms of aid, despite the enhanced community quarantine. She said she did not mind walking 2.5 kilometres, crossing rivers, climbing mountains, or crossing over scattered bamboos, just to reach the remote areas of Calao and see her students' faces.



Elsewhere in the Philippines, even though badly affected by the pandemic, San Miguel Corporation donated and distributed 1.1 million kilogrammes of rice to poor families, converted their gin factories to produce ethyl alcohol for free distribution to hospitals, and donated \$10 million worth of personal protective equipment to the brave frontliners. They also started making nutribuns and distributed them free to communities in need of food.

Mr Ramon Ang, the President of San Miguel Corporation also gave his full salary to all the employees affected by this pandemic.

When asked if he was concerned that he was giving away too much of the company's money, he said:

**“
We can
make
money
again but
life,
once you
lose it,
it's gone
forever.
So,
between
money
and life...
I'd choose
life.**

– Mr Ramon Ang

Closer to home, kindness is also apparent. Banks in Singapore have pledged generous financial assistance to help fight COVID-19. One of them is Standard Chartered donating S\$1 million to help the Singapore community respond to COVID-19. An Indonesian tycoon and philanthropist, Dr Tahir, has donated \$500,000 to help needy individuals and families who are affected in Singapore, while YMCA provided free meals for the vulnerable in our society. The programme, 'Wok the Talk' delivers a free lunch packet five times a week from Mondays to Fridays, except on public holidays.

I personally have also experienced such kindness. Dr Suren Baskaran, the resident doctor in the Ang Mo Kio



Thye Hua Kwan Community Hospital, knows only too well how the lonely, sick elderly are struggling to cope with health issues and feel all alone. He displays much empathy to the vulnerable groups in Singapore. He knows I need cooking oil to prepare my meals and that I love Basmati rice, which is more suited to diabetics. So when he ordered his groceries for his own household, he readily purchased Basmati rice, plus a big bottle of cooking oil for me.

Thousands of healthcare workers—both in Singapore and in many other cities in the world—are making big sacrifices in the fight against the highly contagious COVID-19 virus. Their stories can greatly inspire all of us to be the best we can be. In the same vein, we must also applaud patients who have recovered from deadly infectious diseases through the unflinching support of their dedicated caregivers. Such invaluable journeys can help promote resilience in big and small ways.

Not to be discouraged

We must also not be discouraged by naysayers who will attempt to put down our ideas. Those who have dreams that can improve lives should be on guard against naysayers or armchair critics. Bear in mind that on occasions when you step out from the norm, and declare that you believe you have a special purpose in life, and that you are going to do whatever it takes to achieve it, you will attract naysayers. Some of them may even be people who are close to you, but you can't let them stop you from going after what you value.

As the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 surges, countries around the world have enforced lockdowns of varying degrees. Mostly, only essential businesses are allowed to remain open. This led to people developing psychological stress and disorders, with a wide range of symptoms, including low mood, insomnia, stress, anxiety, anger, irritability, emotional exhaustion, depression and post-traumatic stress symptoms. Low mood and irritability specifically stand out as being very common, a study has revealed.

Many psychiatrists and other healthcare workers, particularly those working in emergency or acute care settings, have reported direct experiences with aggressive and violent behaviours among those trying to cope with overwhelming stress, such as yelling, hitting, kicking, biting and pushing, to name a few. In a time like this, look on the bright side of things. No matter what your unique situation is, there are many things you can do to improve your experience while being socially isolated.

Patience and compassion

Staying at home during a pandemic gives us the opportunity to not only pursue neglected matters and make adjustments to our lives, but also subtly trains us to be patient with ourselves, as well as others. For one, professionals recommend exercise as a mood booster. For myself, I seize the opportunity to write books, or chat on social media with friends in Singapore and abroad.

However, not everyone can cope with stress and isolation. Not everyone who is out of work or facing intense financial distress can manage his or her troubled mind. So we should show compassion and empathy to those struggling to cope with underlying mental health issues and special needs during COVID-19.

Excerpted from Raymond Anthony Fernando's new book, *Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak: Rising to the Challenges* (www.raybeacon.com/books)



Cosy Korean Vegetarian Foods

it has been an exceptional year, no doubt. I have never spent so much time at home on weekdays in my entire working life. I count my blessings that I can continue to work, albeit from home. Many, unfortunately, may be unable to do so. Livelihoods have been affected and everyone is learning to embrace the changes and the “new normal”.

Daehwa Vegetarian is a modern and cosy Korean restaurant located in Galaxis Building in Fusionopolis. The restaurant is special in two ways. Firstly, the restaurant serves meatless meals without using the five alliums and secondly, 40% of their crew are persons with special needs. I applaud them for being inclusive and choosing to focus on people’s abilities despite their special needs.

Daehwa’s menu is broadly categorised into: *Jeongol* (Korean hot-pot for sharing at S\$42); main dishes (stew, soup, noodle and rice with prices ranging from S\$13 to S\$16); and interesting side dishes which you may not find at regular Korean restaurants. Some examples include zucchini pancake (*hobak jeon*), fried broccoli tossed in sticky spicy red sauce (*yangmyeon broccoli*), Korean noodles and rice cakes in sweet and spicy sauce (*rabboki*); as well as sweet and sour crispy mushroom (*tangsuyuk*). Prices for the side dishes range from S\$6 to S\$15.

These are my recommendations from Daehwa:



1. Rabboki

A combination of fragrant fried sticky rice cake with springy noodles, chewy “fish cake” plus freshly-roasted seaweed and sesame seeds.

The taste for each of the ingredient is very distinct yet when they are fried together, it makes an almost perfect dish.

2. Tangsuyuk

Originally, this refers to sweet and sour pork. The vegetarian version replaces pork with several types of deep-fried mushrooms with sweet and sour sauce drizzled over it. This is known as a Korean-Chinese dish in Korea.



Daehwa does not charge GST for dine-in customers. However, all drinks are chargeable including iced and warm water and green tea. You can bring your own water if you wish to.

The restaurant's opening days and hours may change from time to time. In light of the current social distancing measures, the number of seats in the restaurant have been reduced. It is best to make a reservation before heading down. If One-North is totally out of the way for you, island-wide delivery is available on the Grabfood app*.

* info correct as of July 2020.

3. Jjamppong

This is a single-portion stew consisting of vegetables and mushroom with thick noodles cooked in a spicy and savoury red sauce.



4. Mandu Jeongol

This is a non-spicy dumpling hotpot loaded with *tofu*, mushroom, vegetables and handmade dumplings. The portion can be shared among three to four persons.



Overall Ratings:

Food : 8/10

Ambience: 8/10

Service: 8/10

Address:

1 Fusionopolis Place, Galaxis Building
#01-35 Singapore 138522
[One-North MRT Station, Exit D]

Opening Hours:

Tuesday to Friday: 11 am to 9 pm

Saturday & Sunday: 12 pm to 9 pm

Telephone: 62548446

Email: daehwavegetarian@gmail.com

Website: www.daehwavegetarian.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/DaehwaVegetarian

DaehwaVegetarian

Text & Photos: Jos Tan

Wholesome and Hearty Vegan Meals



Have you ever tried vegan food? Some people may be confused over veganism and vegetarianism. Basically, both vegetarians and vegans choose not to eat meat and fish. However, veganism is a stricter form of vegetarianism that prohibits the consumption or use of any products that come from animals, including dairy, eggs, honey, leather, wool and silk.

Frequented by the professionals working in the Central Business District (CBD), The Vegan Bowl runs a successful business. *Mala* (from Chinese, meaning “hot and spicy taste”) lovers, are in for a treat as this small restaurant serves *mala* bento or *mala* soup with either udon, ramen or rice, depending on your preference. Besides the trendy *mala* set meals, The Vegan Bowl also offers Thai and Japanese-inspired bentos, ramen and udon meals.

I have a sensitive stomach so I skipped the *mala* dishes. Instead, I had the traditional olive fried rice (\$\$7.90) as I saw on the menu that it was one of their popular dishes. To my surprise, the meal came with a bowl of miso soup. I had ordered two side dishes too, not knowing that the serving of the fried rice was bigger than expected. So imagine how full I was after the meal! I particularly like the sugar prawn (\$\$5.90) made from mock prawn paste wrapped around sugar cane. Another side dish I tried was the Thai-styled *tofu* (\$\$6.90), which I thought was enough as a main dish for dinner.

Its meal sets are reasonably priced for a restaurant located in the CBD. After all the fried snacks, I topped off my meal with a healthy flower tea (\$\$5.90). Other than main meals, this small restaurant also offers Acai and Smoothie Bowl (\$\$9.90) and non-dairy ice cream.

Due to the small size of the eatery, the dining area is really close to the kitchen, so be warned that you may smell like the meal you just had. If like me, you prefer to smell good after eating, there are tables outside for *al fresco* dining.



Overall Ratings:

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

Address:

3 Pickering Street #01-39
Singapore 048660

Opening Hours:

Mon to Sat, 11 am to 8 pm
Closes on Sunday

Text & Photos: *Chloe Huang*

if dealing with the reality and the many changes that the COVID-19 pandemic brought has caused nervousness and anxiety to yourself and your loved ones, try these recipes to calm your frayed nerves and the butterflies in your stomach.



Happy Gut Congee

Ingredients (Serves two to three)

- 2 tbsp Chia seeds
- 450g Warm water
- 50g Rolled oats
- 2pcs Medjool dates (pitted)
- 1 tsp Maca powder
- ½ tsp Rock salt
- 4 tbsp Goji berries, raisins or any other dried fruits

Method

1. Soak chia seeds in a cup of filtered water overnight, then strain off excess water.
2. Combine warm water, oats, dates, maca powder and salt. Blend to make oat milk.
3. Combine chia seeds, oat milk and goji berries.
4. Serve warm.

Daikon Detox Soup

Ingredients (Serves two to three)

- 250g Daikon (white radish; chunked)
- 50g Radish leaves (diced)
- 3pcs Dried Shitake Mushroom
- 25g Raw Cashew
- 650g Filtered water
- 1 tsp Bamboo salt

Method

1. Combine ingredients, bring to boil and simmer on low fire for 1.5 hours.
2. Serve hot.



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

Call **Awareness Hub** at **6336 5067**, or turn to page 72 for more details.

Scan this to find out more about Kew Yew:



What's new

Text: Esther Thien



Insect Repellent & Hand Sanitiser

with Essential Oils

The insect repellent is a herbal formulation created specially to keep the mozzies away.

It contains wild mugwort and the essential oils of peppermint, citronella and patchouli. It doesn't leave any sticky or greasy feeling and is really easy to use. Just spritz and rub it on your clothes or skin anytime, anywhere.

The hand sanitiser, on the other hand, is an antiseptic made with naturally-distilled alcohol from sugarcane sources and is safe for children. It contains the essential oils of peppermint, lemongrass and patchouli. Use it on your palms and even on surfaces such as baby chair, door knobs and toilet seats. Simply spray and spread it all over your hands or on surfaces.

Both are packaged in brown tinted bottles in Ah Yuan signature packaging. They are selling at S\$19.90 and S\$15.90 respectively.

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



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your kind service to all

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AWAKEN to...

Compassion & Wisdom
on the journey of life...

Published three times a year by Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery, AWAKEN is a FREE bilingual Buddhist magazine that aims to help readers gain insights into their life's journey using the Dharma.

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Want Your story to be heard too?

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

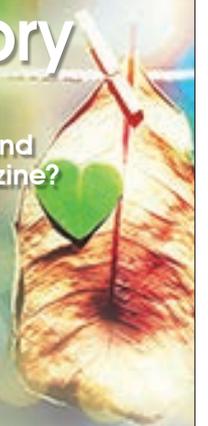
Perhaps you too have a story to tell, a story of how the Buddha and His Teachings so inspired you to walk the Buddhist path, or maybe a simple account of the little treasures and blessings in life? Or perhaps you are a budding poet who would like to share a prose and a verse or two about how the Dharma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

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

Send your entries to
awaken@kmspks.org or:

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

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





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Issue 47 / May 2020

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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 awaken@kmspks.org or send them to:

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

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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.

World War II was tearing Europe apart and the plight of the Jews had come to the attention of the American Government. A quota to grant 1000 Jewish people safe haven in the USA came to the attention of Ruth Gruber, a young Jewish American woman working in the federal government. As she could also speak Yiddish, Polish and German, the most common languages of the refugees, Ruth asked for permission to go to Europe despite the raging war, in order to escort the refugees back to the USA, as they would need guidance and a helping hand to adjust to their new surroundings.

This beautiful tale weaves the individual strands of people's lives into one tapestry of poignant experience, through the language of the human heart and mind. **We also see the agony and ecstasy of perceived segments of reality ultimately blending into one truth, which is our common need to be accepted for who we are, just as we are, as the underlying goal of human relationships.**

This is exemplified by the depth of Ruth's empathetic character that is revealed more and more the further we go into this three-hour movie. Intermingled with the flow of the narrative regarding the plight of the refugees were flashes of her own story of love, fight for justice and ultimate betrayal. Rather than embittering her, this experience left her compassionate and ready to help those suffering much more than herself.

Arriving at the Port of Naples where thousands of war



(2001)
HAVEN

Directed by: John Gray

*Starring: Natasha Richardson,
Colm Feore, Martin Landau,
Hal Holbrook*

victims had congregated, Ruth was shocked at the horrific demeanour of the multitudes of people begging for asylum. As there were strict rules to follow, Ruth was helpless to extend the quota beyond what the government had dictated and had to toe the line. She accepted the fact that only few of the many needy, who were actually offered asylum, would be the ones she must give all her support to, as they boarded the Navy ship that formed part of a flotilla of vessels returning to the USA from the war in Europe.

During the crossing, Ruth photographed the refugees and delved deep into their individual stories. She reported these to Washington via cable on the boat, requesting press attention in order to muster support from American citizens on the other end. The tales were gruesome. Everyone had lost many of their loved ones in tragic ways and been through torturous times, escaping death again and again. Many were still in deep trauma and unable to react appropriately, while others adjusted more easily to their good fortune.

One section of the ship was carrying injured American soldiers. Initially tension between the two sides ran high. The Jewish refugees were not welcomed and were blamed for the war atrocities that these young lads had been exposed to. Also aboard the ship was a representative from the State Department, who mirrored these sentiments by constantly putting spokes in the wheel of Ruth's goodwill.

The truth hit them all when they docked in New York. They were met with fear by the local people, who were selfishly guarding their individual rights to the town and taxpayers' money. Despite the stubbornness and cold-heartedness of the bureaucrats, Ruth calmly made every effort she could to make the lives of each and every one of the refugees as comfortable as possible.

In this story, we see birth, death and marriage, the pillar events of human existence, which are going to happen regardless of whether one has a home or is a refugee. People who had lost so much seemingly had nothing more to lose. Yet through the simple acts of living, such as eating, dancing, playing music, establishing connectivity and support for one another and their new community, the refugees managed to start the long path towards healing from their enormous grief and suffering.

Transcending their own superimposed beliefs, they holistically fought for well-being itself and through this, they overcame both the mental scars of suffering inflicted upon them and won the fight for freedom that they sought.

Being connected to others from the heart and compassion lead one to the path of healing

Text: Susan Griffith-Jones

Seen

heard

Let the serene and carefree energies of instrumental music caress your worrisome heart Text: Esther Thien

無限飛行 Limitless Flight

Ocarina 1st



Limitless Flight

By Wind Music
S\$29.90

無限飛行 Limitless Flight



Revel in the joyful tunes of the ocarina melody. Upbeat, carefree and delightful. *Limitless Flight* consists of 13 uniquely flavourful musical pieces. Listening to the cheerful music of this album will surely raise your spirits in no time. I particularly enjoy track 1. Humming along and immersing myself in the rhythm bring little joys to my heart in the present moment.

Both CDs are available at all Awareness Place stores.



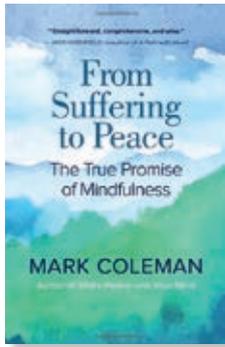
Songs of Birdland: Lullabies for Babies

By Wind Music
S\$29.90

If the current situation with Covid-19 is giving you sleepless nights, try listening to the songs from this album. *Songs of Birdland*, a YouTube music channel for babies with over 1 million views, contains famous jazz pieces and music by Mozart. These gentle lullabies have been re-arranged specifically for your baby's sleep, nurturing music sensitivity and exploration at a young age, while providing soothing comfort. If it is good for baby, it is good for you. Soothing and calming to the heart and mind like a mug of warm broth. Some tracks display a charming and charismatic Old World appeal. My personal favourite is track 1 in the first CD.

read

Transform suffering to peace with mindfulness Text: Esther Thien



From Suffering to Peace:

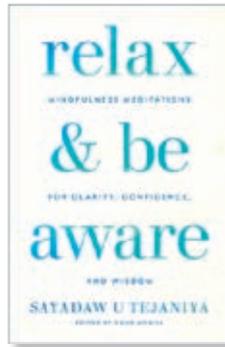
The True Promise of Mindfulness

By **Mark Coleman**
S\$28.50

In turbulent times, developing inner peace from inside out is crucial and Mark Coleman shows us how. He is the founder of the Mindfulness Training Institute and has taught mindfulness meditation worldwide for 20 years in various retreats.

Mark Coleman condenses the penetrating insights from decades of meditation experiences into this invaluable book offering practical tools to meditators for lasting well-being. Spanning 36 chapters, he gives guidance on how to do walking meditation, body scan and mindfulness to reflecting on causality, recognising the judging mind to meditating on impermanence, pain, ageing, loss and death. Finally, he provides techniques on how we can bring peace to the heart by cultivating self-compassion, kindness, generosity, interconnectedness, love and joy for others.

All books are available at Awareness Place stores.



Relax & Be Aware:

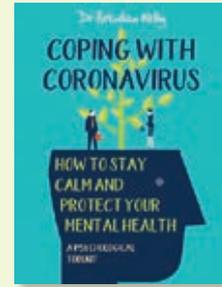
Mindfulness Meditations for Clarity, Confidence and Wisdom

By **Sayadaw U Tejaniya**
S\$26.50

This is an enormously helpful book to mindfulness training.

It leads you to a world of freedom and well-being beyond the meditation cushion or retreat hut. The key, however, is to put in consistent effort to persistently cultivate an observing mind that enables us to see things as they are instead of through coloured lenses. Organised into 31 short chapters—one for each day of the month—the book gives guidance on how one can practise being wholly present, in a gentle and peaceful manner, every moment of daily life.

“Meditation is so important, we need to do it all the time,” says Sayadaw U Tejaniya. It calms and settles the mind, awakens the joyful heart, and develops wisdom deep enough to dissolve mental stress and suffering at its roots. However, to do that, we need to meditate all the time to build up the momentum of awareness and wisdom necessary to evade the habitual pull of our stress-making mental activities. The aim of practice, as Sayadaw so aptly puts it, is to develop wisdom through direct experience.



Coping with Coronavirus:

A Psychological Toolkit

W.F. Howes Ltd.

Dr Brendan Kelly

\$10.99 (audiobook)

Pre-eminent psychiatrist, Dr Brendan Kelly helps us to understand and cope with the unique stresses of today, as we grapple with the threat of COVID-19 within our homes, communities and throughout the world.

The anxiety associated with the coronavirus crisis is different from the anxiety seen in traditional disorders, because apparently there is something to fear, and that's what makes this worry so pervasive, persistent and challenging to manage. The upside? Just as the human mind is efficient in finding complicated ways to make ourselves more anxious, we are equally good at finding sophisticated ways to manage our mental health, once we put our hearts and minds to it.

Anxiety-management techniques help tremendously once they are modified to suit the new situation that we face, and in *Coronavirus: A Psychological Toolkit*, Dr Brendan Kelly offers you all the practical tools you and your family need to steer these dark, uncertain days.

Available on Google Play.



Scan this to download audiobook

Connecting you to the wisdom of the Dharma 24/7 Text: Esther Thien

dharma apps



Calendar of Events 2020

09
sep

12
dec



DHARMA

• CEREMONY | PRAYERS



Usher in 2021 with prayers and 108 "Bell Resonance"

(Programme is subject to changes)

Join us to make wholesome aspirations in our prayers and offerings.

31 Dec | Thu | 10.00pm - 2.00am

Venue : Hall of Great Compassion

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sed@kmpsks.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.

Term 2

26 Sep - 5 Dec (except 14 Nov) | Sat
1.00pm - 2.30pm or 2.30pm - 4.00pm

Term 3

12 Dec - 20 Feb (except 13 Feb) | Sat
1.00pm - 2.30pm or 2.30pm - 4.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

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

• ART



Zentangle Series – Zenbutton (Fragments and Reticula)

Be amazed by how different meta-patterns created from simple patterns in a simple artwork can have many perspectives!

Suitable for both beginner and advanced level Tangles.

4 Oct | Sun | 1.00pm - 4.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$65

Material Fee: \$15 for beginners (payable to instructor)/ past students are to bring their basic kit

Pastel Nagomi Art – The Little Prince's Star Treks

Let us follow the Little Prince in his star treks and discover the gems he collects along the way. Through this workshop, learn Pastel Nagomi Art's unique painting style and paint the unique star treks journey of your own life.

8 Nov | Sun | 10.00am - 5.00pm
(1hr lunch break on own)

Venue: To be advised

Fee: \$155

Material Fee: \$45 starter-kit for new students (payable to instructor)



• WELLNESS

Hatha Yoga

- 8 Sep - 10 Nov | Tue | 10.30am - 12.00pm
- 14 Oct - 16 Dec | Wed | 6.45pm - 8.15pm
- 24 Oct - 2 Jan (except 14 Nov) | Sat
9.15am - 10.30am or 10.45am - 12.00pm
- 17 Nov - 19 Jan | Tue | 10.30am - 12.00pm
- 23 Dec - 3 Mar (except 17 Feb) | Wed
6.45pm - 8.15pm

Venue : Awareness Hub

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

Hatha Yoga for Beginners

- 19 Sep - 28 Nov (except 14 Nov) | Sat
6.30pm - 8.00pm
- 5 Dec - 6 Feb | Sat | 6.30pm - 8.00pm
- 9 Oct - 11 Dec | Fri | 10.30am - 12.00pm
- 18 Dec - 12 Mar | Fri | 10.30am - 12.00pm
(except 25 Dec, 1 Jan, 12 Feb)

Venue : Awareness Hub

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

Hatha Yoga

- 21 Sep - 23 Nov | Mon | 6.45pm - 7.45pm or
8.00pm - 9.00pm
- 30 Nov - 1 Feb | Mon | 6.45pm - 7.45pm or
8.00pm - 9.00pm

Venue : Awareness Hub

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

Lunch-time Hatha Yoga

- 22 Sep - 24 Nov | Tue | 12.20pm - 1.10pm
- 1 Dec - 2 Feb | Tue | 12.20pm - 1.10pm

Venue : Awareness Hub

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

Gentle Hatha Yoga

- Phase 3 | Tue | 2.30pm - 4.00pm
- Phase 3 | Fri | 2.30pm - 4.00pm

Venue : Awareness Hub

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



Yin Yoga

Learn to improve flexibility and mental focus while relieving stress and anxiety.

27 Oct - 29 Dec | Tue | 6.30pm - 7.45pm

Venue : Awareness Hub

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

Yoga for Diabetes

Learn yoga postures that stimulate insulin production to help manage diabetes. For non-diabetics, this gentle yoga boosts immunity.

Phase 3 | Thu | 10.30am - 11.30am

Venue : Awareness Hub

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

Chair Yoga

Phase 3 | Fri | 12.30pm - 1.30pm

Venue : Awareness Hub

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



Mindfulness Foundation

The course brings you through mindfulness techniques to help you focus better and worry less.

4 - 25 Sep | Fri | 7.30pm - 9.30pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$160 (4 sessions)

Rhythm Rejuvenation

HealthRHYTHMS® is a fun, evidence-based whole person strategy promoting holistic well-being. It is not just about drumming, the drum is used as a tool for communication, stress reduction, self-expression and empowerment. (No prior musical experience needed! Instruments will be provided).

* Mindfulness through Rhythm

20 Sep | Sun | 3.00pm - 5.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$30

* Restorative Sound Spa

13 Dec | Sun | 3.00pm - 5.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$30





Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

Learn how to cope with stress in daily life through the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programme.

- 2 Oct - 27 Nov | Fri | 7.30pm - 9.45pm (except 13 Nov Fri)
- 14 Nov | Sat | 9.30am - 4.30pm (full day)

Venue : Awareness Hub

Fee: \$300 - subsidised rate (9 sessions including 1 full-day session)

4hr Online Training

Food Allergies – Causes and Remedies

18 Nov | Wed | 10.00am - 4.00pm (Interval 12.00pm - 2.00pm)

Venue: Online Zoom

Fee: \$95

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

Registration:

1. Online: 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

• ENVIRONMENTALISM

Sorting of Recyclables @ Gratitude Corner

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

Every Tue, Thu, Sat | 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!

(1L pack : \$3 / 2L pack : \$5)

Every Sat | 10.00am - 3.00pm

Venue: Outside Dining Hall (South Wing)

[Subject to govt guidelines for further easing in religious organisations, all visitors to the monastery must go through our online booking system]



Mobile Kiosk

9.00am - 1.30pm (please refer to our website for more details : www.kmspks.org).

Venue: Corridor between Dining Hall & Front Office

Enquiry: 6849 5300 | gratitude@kmspks.org

[Subject to govt guidelines for further easing in religious organisations, all visitors to the monastery must go through our online booking system]

• COMMUNITY

Food Rations

Monthly food rations for low-income families.

13 Sep | Sun | 9.00am - 11.30am

Venue: KMSPKS / Sin Ming

Enquiry: 6849 5300 | community@kmspks.org

Blood Donation Drive 2020

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

20 Sep | Sun | 9.00am - 3.00pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form

Enquiry: Please call Singapore Red Cross | 6220 0183

<https://www.redcross.sg/>

Note:

- 1) Please bring along your NRIC / Work Permit / EP / Student Pass
- 2) To check for availability and overseas travel criteria, please visit : hsa.gov.sg/donor_criteria and hsa.gov.sg/travel_deferral

Ven Hong Choon Museum

10.00am - 3.00pm

Venue: VHCMH | Level 3

Free Admission

On:

27th of each lunar month

Qing Ming (4 Apr)

Vesak Day (7 May)

Ullambana Festival (2 Sep)

Birth anniversary of Ven Hong Choon (1 Oct)

Death anniversary of Ven Hong Choon (4 Dec)

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

Like us on [facebook.com/kmspks](https://www.facebook.com/kmspks)



Due to the current COVID-19 situation, programmes and dates are subject to changes.
Please visit www.kmspks.org for up-to-date information.

Learn how to cope with stress with Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR).

A well-researched and evidence-based programme developed by Dr Jon Kabot Zinn from the University of Massachusetts (UMASS) Medical School, Centre for Mindfulness. MBSR will improve your focus, well-being, and quality of life.

Prerequisites:

- Participants must be 18 years old and above.
- Participants must attend at least 6 weekly sessions and the full-day session.
- Participants must commit a minimum of 45 minutes of daily practice over the duration of the programme.

Date and time

▶ Oct 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 & Nov 6, 20, 27
2020 / every Fri
7.30pm to 9.45pm

▶ Nov 14
2020 / Sat PH
9.30am to 4.30pm

Venue Awareness Hub

Registration fee \$300 per person for 9 sessions including 1 full-day session (subsidised rate)

To register

- 1) Online registration at <https://www.kmspks.org/lifestyle/>
- 2) Awareness Hub | 11.30am - 6pm
- 3) Reception Office @ KMSPKS | 9am - 4pm

Registration deadline One week before commencement or when fully registered

Instructor Mr Ong Pee Eng, Qualified Teacher of MBSR

Enquiry awarenesshub@kmspks.org | 6336 5067

Mindfulness-Based

Stress Reduction

awareness hub 覺察坊

Blk 231 Bain Street #03-39 Bras Basah Complex

6336 5067 | kmspks.org

biological • psychological • social • spiritual

安康 well-being

[facebook.com/kmspks](https://www.facebook.com/kmspks)

A healing touch of heart through the Japanese way of painting using finger touches and pastel powder.

Pastel Nagomi Art:

The Little Prince's

Imaginative World



28 June 2020 (Sun)

The Little Prince: Wish Upon The Star

Re-discover a world of imagination and creativity through this online class inspired by French literature, Le Petit Prince, instructor Saranga integrated pastel art painting and activities to stimulate your creativity and imagination.

8 November 2020 (Sun)

The Little Prince Star Treks

Let us follow the Little Prince in his star treks and discover the gems he collected along the way. Through this workshop, learn Pastel Nagomi Art's unique painting style and paint the unique stars that journey of your own life.



Time 10am to 5pm (including 1-hour lunch break on your own)

Venue **Class will be conducted online** (link will be provided to participants before class begins)

Registration fee \$155 per person

Starter kit fee \$45 per person (payable to instructor)

To register 1. Online registration at <https://www.kmspks.org/lifestyle/>

2. Awareness Hub | 11.30am - 6.00pm 3. Reception Office @ KMSPKS | 9.00am - 4.00pm

Registration deadline One week before commencement or when fully registered

Instructor Ms Sarana Khoo, Advanced Instructor of Japan Pastel Hope and Art Association (JPHAA)

Enquiry 6336 5067 / awarenesshub@kmspks.org

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biological psychological social spiritual

安康 well-being



awareness hub 覺察
Unit 201, Bain Street #02-09 Bayside, Singapore
6336 5067 kmspks.org

awarenesshub@AH