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Things You Need for Your Journey

BY THANISSARO BHIKKHU

"Buddhist monk Thanissaro Bhikkhu lists the good qualities you should take with you on the Buddhist path"

Sometimes a path can be blocked by things that are there—like barricades or piles of rubble—and sometimes by things that aren't. Think of a gaping hole cutting across a road: you're missing the ground you need to get across. In the same way, the path of practice has its prerequisites. If they're lacking, that can block your way.

The Buddha lists two principles as most useful in the practice: externally, there's admirable friendship; internally, there's appropriate attention. If you lack either of these, it's as if your path has been blocked by a giant rift.

Admirable friendship means both having a friend—a really wise, good person—and trying to emulate that friend's good qualities.

The first good quality to admire and emulate is conviction in the Buddha's awakening. We're convinced that he really put an end to suffering through his own actions, with the implication that we can, too.

The second good quality—virtue—follows from the first. Because we believe in the power of action, we don't want to harm others. This means no killing, stealing, illicit sex, lying, or taking intoxicants. In any situation. Ever. As the Buddha says, if we hold to these precepts without exception, we're giving universal protection to all beings. If we make exceptions, that protection is only partial—and we're only partially protected as well.

The third good quality is generosity—freely giving not only our material belongings, but also our time, knowledge, energy, and forgiveness.

The fourth good quality to emulate is discernment: insight into how suffering arises and passes away. This connects directly with the internal principle of appropriate attention.

Attention, in the Buddha's vocabulary, is a matter of what questions you focus on trying to answer. Inappropriate attention focuses on questions like, "Is the world eternal? Is it not? Who am I? Do I exist? Do I not?" These questions trap you in what the Buddha calls a "thicket of views." To insist on answering them is like being shot with an arrow and refusing to get it removed until you've found out who shot it and how it was made. You'd die.

Appropriate attention focuses on solving the problem of suffering: what it is, how it's caused, what constitutes its ending, and how that end can be brought about. Because the cause of suffering is something unskillful you're doing, and the path to its end is something skillful you can learn to do, this brings us full circle to the principle of conviction.

Believing in the power of action, you focus on changing the way you act. You don't blame your suffering on others. This doesn't mean that you blame yourself for all your problems. It means you learn how to live in an imperfect world without weighing yourself down. When you don't weigh yourself down, nothing can. You'll have more strength to help others shoulder their burdens, too.

But the work has to begin within. That's why the Buddha added two more requisites to the path, qualities he looked for in a student before taking that student on.

The first is to be observant, both of your teacher's actions and your own. When choosing a teacher, you have to make sure that the teacher really is an admirable friend. You can't turn a blind eye to his or her breaches of virtue, pretending that they don't matter—because then you'll start thinking that your breaches won't matter, either.

Then, once you're convinced that *you've* found the right person, you have to be observant to pick up on that person's good qualities. Not every dharma lesson is in words. As my teacher, Ajaan Fuang, once said, "A good student has to learn to think like a thief." You can't wait to be told where the valuables are. You have to find them yourself.

The second quality of a good student is honesty: you're truthful in admitting your own faults to yourself and in reporting them to the teacher. Only then will you and the teacher be in a position to correct them so that your actions really will accord with your goal.

Of all these requisite qualities—having an admirable friend, paying appropriate attention, being observant, and being honest—the only one that's possible to do without is having an admirable friend. The Buddha said that if you can't find an admirable friend as a teacher, it's better to go alone. After all, you wouldn't really be alone, given that the Buddha's teachings are available as your reference for what an admirable friend would say and do, so you can be a good friend to yourself.

Note, however, that if going it alone is your only option, you have to be especially stringent with yourself in developing appropriate attention and in being honest and observant in gauging your own actions. The lack of an admirable friend may be a hole in the path that you can get across, but a lack in any of the other three qualities is a bottomless pit.

Source: *https://www.lionsroar.com/things-you-need-for-your-journey*

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Women Are Not Second-Class Buddhists

By Ven. Karma Lekshe Tsomo

"Ven. Karma Lekshe Tsomo calls for an end to the inferior status of Buddhist nuns, and of Buddhist women generally"

Gender inequality is difficult to rationalize in a tradition that supposedly proclaims enlightenment for all. When questioned by his faithful attendant Ananda, the Buddha assured him that women have equal potential to achieve the fruits of the path, including liberation, the ultimate realization. This definitive statement should have been sufficient to clear the path for women's equality, but social realities rarely match theoretical ideals.

Even though countless women have reportedly achieved the ultimate goal of liberation—becoming arahants—women's status has consistently been subordinate in Buddhist societies. Being born male automatically elevates a boy to first-class status, while being born female universally relegates a girl to second-class status. Wealth, aristocratic birth, or opportune marriage may mitigate the circumstances, but the general pattern of social status remains in full view. Although Buddhist societies may have overall been more gender egalitarian than many others, stark gender discrimination persists even today.

Nowhere is the subordination of women more evident than in the Buddhist sangha, the monastic community. After some hesitation, possibly based on his concern for women's safety, the Buddha gave women the opportunity to live a renunciant lifestyle. According to the story, however, it was not on equal terms with the monks. It is taught that the Buddha's foster mother Mahapajapati, who became the first Bhikkhuni, or fully ordained nun, was required to observe eight weighty rules that continue to this day to make the nuns dependent upon the monks.

Although the language of the texts shows that these passages were added much later, nuns' subordinate status, and a prediction that the nuns' admission would decrease the lifespan of the Buddha's teachings, have contributed to the perception of women's inferiority. The teachings have far outlived the prediction (which was adjusted over time!), but the misconception has endured.

The situation of nuns today varies by tradition. In the Theravada traditions of South and Southeast Asia, the lineage of full ordination for women came to an end around the eleventh century, and many followers believe that it cannot be revived. Women who renounce household life observe eight, nine, or ten precepts, including celibacy, yet they are not considered part of the monastic sangha. Until recently they received far less education and support than monks.

In the Mahayana traditions of East Asia, the Bhikkhuni lineage of full ordination was brought from Sri Lanka to China in the fifth century and flourishes today in China, Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, and the Chinese diaspora. In these traditions, nuns are well supported by the lay community and have opportunities for education roughly equal to the monks.

The Bhikkhuni lineage was never established in the Vajrayana tradition of Inner Asia, but women may receive novice ordination from monks and are considered part of the monastic sangha. In the last three decades, nuns have worked hard to improve their living conditions and educational opportunities. Many of them hope that the Dalai Lama will find a way to establish a lineage of full ordination for women in the Tibetan tradition.

Ideas about how to redress the gender imbalance, both for monastics and lay women, widely differ depending on the situation. For those Buddhist women in remote areas of Asia, better nutrition, health care, and education are top priority, while for those in urban areas the concerns are about gender parity in juggling work, family, and practice. Women everywhere are oppressed by sexual harassment and unequal representation.

Many Buddhists feel that it is time to take a fresh look at how Buddhist texts and teachings address gender. With the Buddha's declaration of women's equal potential for liberation, things started off very well. After his passing, however, patterns of male domination again became the norm in Buddhist societies.

The plot thickened about five centuries after the Buddha's passing, with the appearance of the Perfection of Wisdom (Prajnaparamita) texts. These texts replace liberation from cyclic existence with the perfect awakening of a Buddha as the goal of the path—a quantum leap in commitment that requires the aspirant (bodhisattva) to accumulate merit and wisdom for three countless eons.

Among the thirty-two "special marks" of a Buddha, the most surprising to many modern Buddhists is a sheathed penis "like a horse." This mark has been taken to mean that a fully awakened buddha is necessarily male. Exactly what the advantage of such an appendage might be is unclear, especially alongside other fantastic marks such as a spiral between the eyebrows that stretches for legions.

Are buddhas shown with male genitalia because men are presumed to be superior to women? Does the mark verify that the buddhas are sexual beings who have sublimated sexual desire? Are men more apt than women to achieve the fully awakened state because they must work harder to overcome sexual desire? Or is the presumption of maleness simply another patriarchal move to maintain superiority?

In addition to taking a fresh look at Buddhist texts and teachings, it is time to reexamine Buddhist institutions, which are almost all completely under male leadership, and reassess Buddhist social realities. Rather than blithely swallowing the meme that everyone is equal in Buddhism, or naively believing that gender is irrelevant to awakening, Buddhists need to reevaluate the way women are treated.

For example, even today in the Tibetan tradition a three-year-old boy can be honored with the title "Lama" (meaning "guru"), whereas a highly educated seventy-year-old nun is typically demeaned with the title "Ani" (meaning "auntie"). Donations—even by women and even in supposedly enlightened Western societies—are routinely channeled primarily to male teachers and monks' monasteries. Discriminatory attitudes have become unconsciously internalized by people in ways that are damaging to both themselves and others.

Buddhists today need to wake up to this fact and transform their habitual tendencies, equally embracing all beings with compassion. In the Buddhist traditions, the ultimate concern for women, especially nuns, is awakening—either the achievement of liberation from cyclic existence or the perfect awakening of Buddha. The fact that women are now working to achieve full representation in the Buddhist traditions and are openly voicing their aspirations reflects their compassionate concern for the well-being of all sentient life.

Source : *https://www.lionsroar.com/women-are-not-second-class-buddhists/*

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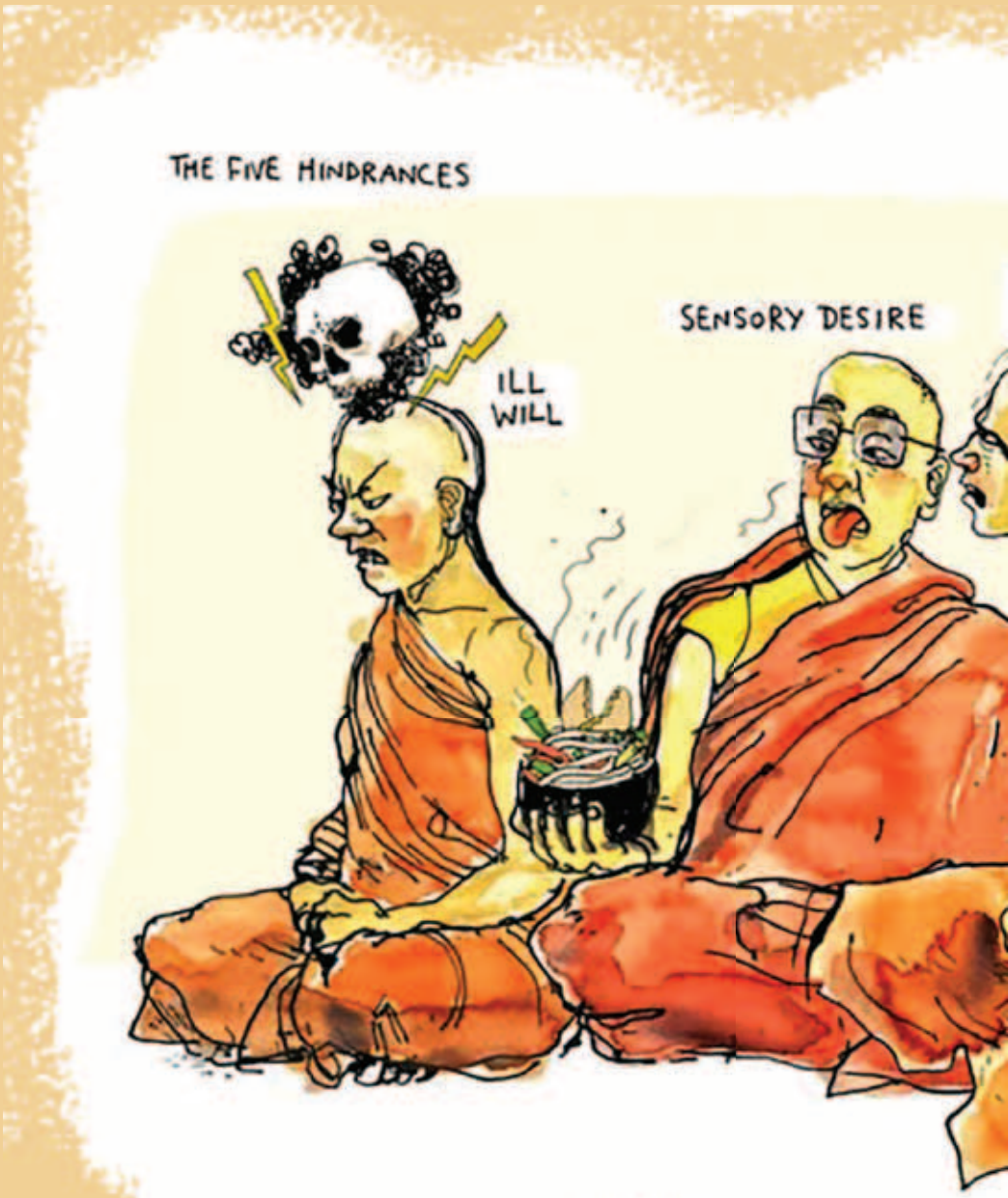
Teaching & Practise

Practicing with the Five Hindrances – Q & A

By Ajahn Amaro, Geri Larkin, Lama Palden Drolma, John Grady and Sharon Salzberg



The Five Hindrances are negative mental states that impede our practice and lead us toward unwholesome action. All of us have no doubt experienced how sensual desire, anger, sloth, restlessness, and doubt can overtake our minds—not to mention our meditation practice. These negative mind states have enormous potency, and it is difficult to pry ourselves loose from their grasp. In fact, sometimes we take perverse pleasure in indulging them, which of course makes them doubly difficult to overcome. We nurture desire for an inappropriate person; we brood over an argument with a friend; we content ourselves with an outmoded routine or relationship; we obsessively second-guess even the smallest of decisions; we allow ourselves to be consumed with doubts rather than resolving them.

One of the goals of meditation practice is to realize how we support the hindrances and, through this insight, to dismantle them. In this special practice section, five teachers answer questions about some of the most common ways the Five Hindrances manifest in our everyday lives. Through honest examination, skillful action, and compassion we can transform these hindrances into newfound equanimity.

THE FIRST HINDRANCE: SENSUAL DESIRE

Q & A WITH GERI LARKIN

Question No 1: **I always desire what I don't have: friends, food, lovers, material possessions. It seems like I never have what I want at any moment, that I'm always thinking, "what if…?" How can I learn to satisfy this desire with what I do have?**

Answer: My experience has always been that it's an enormous relief just to admit to myself that I'm obsessed by a desire for something. First, I can stop trying so hard to pretend that I don't want something that, in fact, I do want. Second, most of the time something I think of as an overriding desire is often more a moment of "wishful thinking." Often seeing our desire simply as what it is – a desire – allows it to drop away, or at least loosens our hold on it.

The few times when that hasn't worked, though, gratitude or metta practice has made me sane again. Instead of getting caught up in the desire, I literally start to list all of the things I'm grateful for, starting with the fact that every time I breathe out, my body breathes back in. I suddenly notice all the different colors in my teacup, the sound of the chickens outside. I call a friend, pull out an old journal to remember a former boyfriend. Then I sometimes try a lovingkindness meditation, or chanting, for everyone else caught in the bittersweet cycles of desire.

Question No 2: **I am in a committed romantic relationship, but I still feel desire for other people. How should I handle these feelings?**

Answer:

Four kinds of misfortune come to those who commit adultery:

bad karma, disturbed sleep, and a bad reputation are already known.

There is also the risk of being reborn in hell.

—The Still Point Dhammapada

Desire happens; it doesn't make you a bad person. People are attractive. They flirt. We fantasize. There is no doubt more than one soul mate for each of us. On the other hand, a solid relationship where two people can take refuge in each other as great spiritual friends, helpmates, and lovers is well worth defending. But how, in the face of desire for someone else?

A powerful antidote is focusing our attention on devotion to our mate. During the Buddha's lifetime, one of his best friends was King Pasenadi, whose wife, Mallika, was completely devoted to him. When Pasenadi was thrown into jail, Mallika covered her body with honey to provide him with sustenance. Cherishing our mate is a warrior's weapon against falling into a relationship with the wrong person (yes, that is anyone who is not our mate). It reminds us how much we love this person who shares our bed and how important she or he is to us. Our devotion might take the form of cooking fresh vegetables for dinner instead of microwave stir-fry. Or putting fresh sheets on our bed. Or going for an evening walk together. Taken singly, these actions are little things; writ large, they are a love poem.

If that doesn't work, Buddha reminded the nuns and monks studying with him that everyone gets sick, ages, and dies. In one case, Buddha made this point by conjuring up a vision of a beautiful woman and making the vision visibly age right in front of a group of her admirers. They got his point: Everything is impermanent, even beauty. Even desire.

THE SECOND HINDRANCE: ILL-WILL OR ANGER

Q & A WITH LAMA PALDEN

Question : **I often find myself torn between lashing out at someone and trying to remain equanimous. I know it's ideal not to explode in anger, but sometimes it still seems like the right thing to do—or like it would be "good" for me to express how I feel, directly. Is it ever right to let anger show?**

Answer: When we are angry it may be important for us to communicate what we feel. But how we do this is critical. Simply blasting other people with our anger is not skillful or kind. We may think, "Well, they're so thick-headed, I need to yell in order to get through to them." But it's difficult for people to take in what another is saying if they are being yelled at, because their defenses are instantly mobilized. They're just as distracted by the reactionary thoughts going through their heads as we are by the force of our anger.

If we allow ourselves to calm down before addressing the situation, we can let go of our own defensiveness and anger. As we all have experienced, it is not possible to think objectively when we are in the throes of strong emotion. We need space to think clearly, to see what is really bothering us, and then to decide what it is that we actually want—and need—to communicate. We should take the opportunity to think through what is going on within ourselves, and imagine what the other person might be feeling as well. After we've given ourselves this critical distance from the situation, it's possible to articulate what we want to say much more accurately and effectively. It is also more likely that we will be heard if we can deliver our message without triggering the other person's defenses—or our own.

It's understandable to feel better immediately after an initial catharsis: we've dumped our painful feelings onto another. But it's not long before we feel worse, as our minds and bodies fill with the poison of anger, resentment, and, possibly, guilt or regret. We may try to cope with this miasma of feelings by going over the whole story in our minds again and again, talking about it with our friends, justifying our position and securing their support, planning our next attack, but these defensive strategies ultimately bind us further to suffering. When we feel that someone "deserves" our angry attack, we are indulging in hurting them in order to eradicate our own hurt—and hurting to get rid of hurt never works.

We suffer because we do not understand the openness of our true nature. This is the ignorance that the Buddha taught is the root of all suffering. The radiance of true nature is generated by compassion. The fortresses we construct around ourselves to ratify our position not only separate us from the person we're angry with —but they also separate us from ourselves. The more we are cut off from our true nature, the more we suffer, and the less likely it is that others will listen to us. If we take the time to shift to a place where we can actually rest in openness and lovingkindness, our suffering diminishes. Anything that we feel needs to be communicated will naturally be articulated more effectively from this place.

THE THIRD HINDRANCE: SLOTH, TORPOR, AND BOREDOM

Q & A WITH AJAHN AMARO

Question No 1: **When I find myself with a free evening before me, I frantically try to fill it with activity rather than spending it alone. How can I learn to face an evening with nothing to "do"—and enjoy it?**

Answer: Our sense of self is continually formulated by the things that we do and our interactions with others. When we find ourselves with nothing to do or no one to be with, our ego has nothing familiar by which to define itself.

However, we can transform our fear of this emptiness. Boredom and loneliness depend on investing in the sense of self. And, ironically, the harder we try to solidify our image of me through activity, the more we create the conditions for boredom to arise. If the sense of self is clearly understood as empty, solitude becomes a cherished companion. Try quieting the mind and then dropping the question "Who am I?" into it. A gap opens up after the question and before the thinking/self-creating habit can produce a verbal answer. Explore that gap and how it changes your experience of selfhood.

Question No 2: **Sometimes I keep participating in something just because it's comfortable, even though I'm not getting anything out of it: my relationship, job, even meditation practice. Is there a way to transform these feelings of sloth and apathy into newfound interest, or are they signs that I really am ready for a change?**

Answer: We easily take refuge in the familiar because we enjoy the sense of belonging it brings; however, it is unwise to make a change reflexively every time these feelings arise. If we just sugarcoat our apathy with a new situation, we will never come to any real sense of fulfillment.

The Buddha recommended that in order to benefit from our engagements we need to ask ourselves, "Does this thing still have any genuine benefit for myself and others, here and now, or do I just keep at it out of habit?" Just that simple knowledge of the true effects of our actions is usually enough to guide us as to whether or not to proceed. If a change is needed, we shift our situation, guided by mindfulness and wisdom; if patient endurance is needed instead, that, too, will arise.

THE FOURTH HINDRANCE: RESTLESSNESS AND WORRY

Q & A WITH MICHAEL LIEBENSON GRADY

Question 1: **As soon as I'm in one place, or with one person, I want to be somewhere else, or with someone else. How can I learn to be satisfied with my current situation?**

Answer: We are conditioned to seek happiness outside of ourselves. If only we could be in a different place, or with a different person, then we would be happy—or so we think. This conditioning generates a lot of restless minds interacting with one another, which in turn creates enormous disconnection. We need to be mindful of the state of mind that is driving our restlessness.

As soon we begin to feel even a little bit bored, many of us react by distracting ourselves with activity—any activity, however mindless: we turn on the television, call a friend, do the dishes. We may also feel we're missing out on something better than whatever it is we're doing. Both of these reactions ultimately stem from either aversion or greed. We need to learn to recognize our insatiable craving for new experiences. Being ashamed of our cravings doesn't help, but justifying or denying them doesn't help, either. Instead, we should learn to be with our situation as it is rather than moving away from it.

Acknowledging the feeling of boredom and then paying attention to our discomfort help bring the mind back to what is happening now. No doubt it can be difficult to be content with the present moment. But when we learn to open to the feelings that underlie restlessness, then meaningful connection with ourselves and others becomes possible.

Question 2: **Even though the circumstances of my outer life appear stable, inside I'm always second-guessing my decisions, worrying about what I've done in the past and what I should do in the future. Sitting practice brings me temporarily into the present moment, but as soon as I'm off the cushion, the worries flood back in. What can I do to prevent this?**

Answer: To begin with, we should cultivate a friendlier relationship toward our worrying mind, rather than making an enemy of it. The nonjudgmental quality of mindfulness practice allows us to open to painful mind states such as anxiety without rejecting these energies or rushing in to try and fix them. With this attitude, we can then ask ourselves, "How can I work with this worry energy in a skillful way that will allow me to understand its nature?"

Our awareness that the mind is getting caught up in worrying indicates that we are on the right track. But it's important not to stop at this level of awareness. Do we feel aversion to worry? Do we react by getting caught up in the other hindrances of discouragement, impatience, or self-doubt? With practice—both on and off the cushion—we can begin to taste the inner freedom that comes when we let go of our habitual reactions of clinging to pleasure and avoiding pain.

Sometimes, though, we are so caught up in our reactions to worry that we can't seem to find the mental space to observe it. At these times, we can use skillful means to bring attention to the first foundation of mindfulness: the body. During sitting practice, focus your awareness on the sensations that arise from contact with the seat or floor. This will help bring the mind back into the present, and produce calm and inner balance. This practice sounds so simple—and it is! And yet, bringing awareness to the body at the times when we're experiencing difficult emotions is often the last thing that we would think to do. With practice, working with the touch points becomes a very accessible and reliable resource for allowing us to be more present wherever we are and under any conditions.

THE FIFTH HINDRANCE: DOUBT

Q & A WITH SHARON SALZBURG

Question No 1: **I make a point to keep sitting every day, but lately I've been asking myself what good it's doing me, apart from the value of sticking to my commitment and the supposed benefits of spending time in silence and alone. How can I reinvigorate my faith in the practice?**

Answer: Doubt and faith in our meditation practice often arise and pass away depending on what we are using as criteria for success. The first step is to try to move away from incessantly evaluating what's going on in our practice. We need to be willing to go through ups and downs without getting disheartened. When doubt arises, try to recognize it as doubt, and realize that it is a constantly changing state.

If that doesn't help, you might need to seek clarification about the meditation method you're using, and perhaps make a change in your practice. You shouldn't hesitate to ask a teacher or fellow practitioner about that. But in most cases, the doubt is simply a reflexive sign of our impatience.

This example is sometimes used to describe practice: It's as though you're hitting a piece of wood with an ax to split it. You hit it ninety-nine times, yet nothing happens. Then you hit it the hundredth time, and it breaks open. But when we're hitting the wood for the thirty-sixth time, it doesn't exactly feel glorious.

It's not just the mechanical act of hitting the wood and weakening its fiber that makes for that magical hundredth moment, just like it's not the physical act of sitting on the cushion that leads to realization—though both are certainly necessary. It's also our openness to possibility, our patience, our effort, our humor, our self-knowledge. These are what we are actually practicing, no matter what happens or doesn't happen to our problems, our moods, our sense of "being in the moment."

Question No 2: **Every so often I meet someone who seems perfectly congenial on the surface, but something in me just doesn't trust them. This doubt ends up evidencing itself in my behavior, and sometimes causes hurt. When is it worth noting these feelings of doubt, and when is it best just to let them go?**

Answer: It's important to note a feeling of doubt that arises in a relationship. If we immediately attempt to let it go, we are automatically discounting our intuition. If you allow yourself to acknowledge the doubt and investigate its constituent feelings without judgment, a lot will be revealed.

You may notice that at its root are sadness, envy, competitiveness, or perhaps even echoes of a time in the past when you didn't trust your intuition—with unfortunate consequences. In looking quietly at the doubt, you may decide it is largely a result of your projections onto the other person, or feelings of your own inadequacy, or jealousy.

As a result of this inquiry, you may resolve to behave differently. Or you may decide that there really is a disquieting element to the other person's behavior that you don't want to ignore. If it is the kind of relationship where you can communicate your feelings, it is worth trying to skillfully convey your discomfort to this person, and to listen to their response. If the relationship doesn't allow for that, it is good at least to be aware of how your doubt might be clouding the ways you interact with that person, so that you don't cause unnecessary hurt.

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Source : *https://tricycle.org/magazine/practicing-five-hindrances/*

Out of the Monastery, Into the Living Room

By Perry Garfinkel

"Around the globe today there is a new Buddhism. Its philosophies are being applied to mental and physical health therapies and to political and environmental reforms. From Tokyo to San Francisco, from the prison class to the privileged class, a worldwide community of socially engaged Buddhists assures that the tradition remains a powerful force".

The man who taught me the most about Buddhism wasn't a monk with a shaved head. He didn't speak Sanskrit, and he didn't live in a Himalayan monastery. In fact he wasn't even a Buddhist. He was Carl Taylor, a lifelong San Franciscan who looked to be in his late 40s. At the moment, he appeared cold, sitting upright in a bed rolled into the gardens off the hospice ward at Laguna Honda Hospital. It was a blue-sky summer afternoon, but in this city that often means a bone-penetrating chill. Carl was dying of cancer.

I was spending a week with the Zen Hospice Project, a Buddhist organization whose volunteers assist the staff of the 25-bed hospice unit at the hospital, perhaps the largest public long-term care facility in the United States. The project, now emulated around the world, uses two of Buddhism's central teachings—awareness of the present moment and compassion for others—as tools to help bring a degree of dignity and humanity to those in the last stages of their lives. They're not easy lessons to learn.

I sat beside Carl, helping adjust the well-worn jacket he used as a blanket. He wore his terminal diagnosis with resigned bravado. I tried to make small talk, but it was going terribly. What solace can you offer someone who doesn't have long to live and knows it?

"So what kind of work do, er, did you do?"

Long silence. Slow drag on his cigarette. An eternity passed as we watched a white tuft of cloud break the blue monotony and move across the sky.

"I don't really talk about my past."

OK. Squirming to keep the conversation moving, I mentally scrolled through my list of questions. If I couldn't ask about the past and there was no sense in asking about the future, that left only the present. And in the present, I was learning, there are no questions; there is just being. This made me feel awkward at first: Stripped of his questions, the journalist has no identity.

But Carl seemed content to have me just sit there, my company alone helping ease some of his suffering. Once I accepted that I had nothing to do and nowhere to go, I relaxed. Carl looked sideways at me and smiled. We both understood I had just learned a small lesson. Together we watched another white cloud go by.

That week there were other lessons drawing on Buddhism—lessons about the impermanence of life, about our attachment to the way we want things to be, and our disappointment when those things don't come to pass. About physical and mental suffering and about the value of what Buddhists call sangha, which best translates as "community." But most of all I saw how the lessons one man learned in India 2,500 years ago have been adapted to the modern world.

Around the globe today there is a new Buddhism. Its philosophies are being applied to mental and physical health therapies and to political and environmental reforms. Athletes use it to sharpen their game. It helps corporate executives handle stress better. Police arm themselves with it to defuse volatile situations. Chronic pain sufferers apply it as a coping salve. This contemporary relevance is triggering a renaissance of Buddhism—even in countries like India, where it had nearly vanished, and in China, where it has been suppressed.

Buddhism is no longer just for monks or Westerners with disposable time and income to dabble in things Eastern. Christians and Jews practice it. African Americans meditate alongside Japanese Americans. In the U.S. alone, some experts estimate, there are roughly three million practicing Buddhists. And according to a 2004 study, more than 25 million Americans believe that Buddhist teachings have had an important influence on their spirituality.

The Zen Hospice Project is one example of "socially engaged Buddhism," a term coined by the Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh, who was exiled from Vietnam in the 1960s for his nonviolent anti-war activities.

The Buddha did not intend his ideas to become a religion; in fact, he discouraged following any path or advice without testing it personally. His dying words, as it's told, were: "You must each be a lamp unto yourselves." Nonetheless, within several hundred years of his death, the Buddha's teachings had taken strong hold. Today, with 379 million followers, Buddhism is the world's fifth largest religion, behind Christianity with 2.1 billion followers, Islam with 1.3 billion, Hinduism with 870 million, and traditional Chinese religion with 405 million.

Some people argue that the Buddha was right, that Buddhism should not be categorized as a religion but as a philosophy or form of psychology. After all, unlike other religions, there is no supreme being, and it encourages you to question—even challenge—authority.

There are those in my generation, growing up in the latter half of the 20th century, who were attracted to these traits of Buddhism. It was non-dogmatic (we distrusted authority); it relied on evidence you could test with your own senses (ours was the age when science became the new god); it suggested that you, not some external force,

hold the answers to your own happiness (we were on the front lines of the Me Decade); it saw your mind as both the obstacle and the key to truly understanding yourself (enter Dr. Freud and psychoanalysis).

While many Europeans and Americans are drawn to the ornate and complex rituals of Tibetan and Japanese Zen Buddhisms, others seem to prefer the simplicity of Southeast Asia's Theravada Buddhism. From that tradition, I practice vipassana, "insight" or "mindfulness" meditation. This has not brought me enlightenment—yet—but it has helped bring into sharper focus some of the questions I grapple with: Who am I? Why am I here? How can I achieve lasting happiness?

In a tribute to Buddhism's adaptability, the same meditation technique I use has become the centerpiece of an innovative prison reform program spreading throughout India.

"I'm not doing time, I'm doing vipassana," says prisoner Hyginus Udegbe. Having waited four and a half years for his cocaine possession case to be heard, Hyginus, who is Nigerian, has been kept at Tihar Jail Complex in New Delhi. It's one of Asia's largest prisons, with almost 13,000 inmates, more than twice its capacity. The overcrowded conditions, inadequate sanitation, and a staff that sometimes resorts to oppressing and dehumanizing prisoners make it a living, incarcerated hell.

But for Hyginus and thousands of other inmates in India, practicing vipassana has transformed prison into an oasis for self-reflection and rehabilitation. There are silent ten-day retreats every other week in a section of Jail No. 4, cordoned off as a permanent retreat site. Prisoners can repeat the sessions every three months, and many do.

"I had high blood pressure and couldn't sleep," says Hyginus, a barrel-chested, bald six-footer who looks more like a prizefighter than the meditating type. Behind us, painted on a high wall is a yellow wheel, the traditional symbol of the Buddha's teachings, or dharma. "After my first retreat here," Hyginus says, "my pressure dropped, and I slept ten hours. I used to have quick temper. Now I feel like a dove, very peaceful. I am so much happier."

"We are all prisoners—of our minds," says Satya Narayan Goenka, an 80-year-old Burmese businessman turned meditation teacher who has spearheaded the vipassana resurgence in India. "Where better to recognize this than behind bars?" Indeed, in prisons around the world, meditation groups now meet regularly. Practicing these techniques, studies show, prisoners ease their own suffering and inflict less on others.

"I'm not teaching Buddhism," Goenka tells me emphatically when I meet him at his home in Mumbai. He's a big but graceful man, with a booming bass voice. "I am not interested in converting people from one organized religion to another organized religion. I'm interested in converting people from misery to happiness, from bondage to liberation, from cruelty to compassion.

"There's no mystery to it," he continues with a chuckle, his ample belly shaking. "Vipassana means 'to see things as they really are.' After watching your breath for a few days, you begin to pay close attention to your sensations. You realize very quickly that you are obsessed with cravings—food, warmth, all sorts of desires—and aversion to unpleasant things. Then you realize the impermanence of it all. Everything changes. From these simple understandings, discovered by each person starting with Buddha himself, an entire doctrine eventually unfolds."

As Buddhism migrated out of India, it took three routes. To the south, monks and nuns brought it by land and sea to Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. To the north, they spread the word across Central Asia and along the Silk Road into China, from where it eventually made its way to Korea and Japan. A later wave took Buddhism over the Himalaya to Tibet. In all the countries, local customs and cosmologies were integrated with the Buddhist basics: the magic and masks of demon-fighting lamas in Tibet, the austerity of a Zen monk sitting still as a rock in a perfectly raked Japanese garden. Over centuries Buddhism developed an inclusive style, one reason it has endured so long and in such different cultures. People sometimes compare Buddhism to water: It is still, clear, transparent, and it takes the form and color of the vase into which it's poured.

And yet from the start, the spread of Buddhism —a peaceful process in itself—has periodically met with hostility. In China, in a.d. 842, the Tang Emperor Wuzong began to persecute foreign religions. Some 4,600 Buddhist monasteries were annihilated, priceless works of art were destroyed, and about 260,000 monks and nuns were forced to return to lay life.

History repeated itself with the Chinese Communist Party's attempt to suppress Buddhism—most visibly in Tibet. According to the International Campaign for Tibet, since 1949 more than 6,000 Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, nunneries, and temples have been destroyed and at least 500,000 Tibetans have died from imprisonment, torture, famine, and war. But today Buddhism in China, like the lotus flower that emerges from mud, is resurfacing. With more than 100 million practitioners, it's one of the country's fastest growing religions.

While Buddhism comes back in China, it's been losing appeal in Japan, long considered the wellspring by Westerners.

"If it doesn't meet the changing needs of modern society, Japanese Buddhism will die," says Rev. Yoshiharu Tomatsu of the Jodo Shu Research Institute of Buddhism in Tokyo.

A third-generation priest in the 800-year-old Jodo Shu Pure Land sect—which emphasizes faith in the saving grace of Amida, another enlightened being, rather than through meditation—the boyish 50-year-old is the head of the Shinko-in Temple. We sip green tea in the small 16th-century wooden temple, situated at the base of Tokyo Tower, Japan's iconic image of technological modernity.

Most Japanese are "funeral Buddhists," he says, meaning they partake in Buddhist rituals only when someone dies. With the fast pace and competitiveness of Japanese society, young people in particular find little emotional support or sense of community in the ancient rituals of traditional Buddhism.

"It's ironic," Tomatsu says. "As much as Japan has looked to the West for its cultural cues, it has not embraced the engaged Buddhism that has become so important among Buddhists in the West."

Ironic indeed: Many Westerners first heard of Buddhism through Zen, the Japanese derivative of China's Chan Buddhism. Zen was popularized by the American Beat Generation of the 1950s: novelist Jack Kerouac, author and radio host Alan Watts, and poets Allen Ginsberg and Gary Snyder, among others. Soon you could take adult education classes in Zen art forms like calligraphy and ikebana (flower arranging) or rituals such as tea ceremony or archery. Once Madison Avenue discovered Buddhism's selling power, Zen became synonymous with cool, giving birth to dozens of products named Zen, from a skin-care line to an MP3 player.

Tomatsu offers to show me signs that the heart of Japanese Buddhism is at least still beating. One is an organization he helped establish in 1993. Called Ayus, meaning "life," it channels about $300,000 a year to national and international groups working for peace and human rights. Two-thirds of the 300 contributing members are Buddhist priests.

There's also the sect called Rissho Kosei-kai, founded in 1938 and now boasting 1.8 million households. While firmly planted in the Buddha's teachings, this organization is different. It's a lay group—and it emphasizes service to others. Members forgo two meals a month, donating the money to the sect's peace fund. Rissho Kosei-kai has given about 60 million dollars to UNICEF in the past 25 years.

Indeed, from Tokyo to San Francisco, from the prison class to the privileged class, a worldwide community of socially engaged Buddhists assures that the tradition remains a powerful force. Back in San Francisco, someone else now occupies the hospice bed that was once Carl Taylor's. And beside that person is another Buddhist volunteer, just sitting.

Source : https://buddhistpage.com/buddhism-in-america/

About the Writer : Perry Garfinkel, journalist, author, speaker and writing instructor, reports on travel, health and spirituality trends for major newspapers and magazines. His 2006 bestseller, "Buddha or Bust: In Search of Truth, Meaning, Happiness and the Man Who Found Them All (Harmony Books), expands on his December 2005 National Geographic Magazine story that was published in 25 countries.

BMV News & Events

1. Upcoming Events for March and April 2020

A. Dhamma Sharing for March

i) Bhante Kovida
Sun, 1st March @ 10am

Topic – The Future is Uncertain. A Personal Journey

ii) Bhante Jutipanno

Dhamma Talk in Mandarin

Sat, 28th March @ 8pm,

1st Floor Puja Hall, Wisma Dharma Cakra

iii) Bhante P Wineeta

1) Fri, 6th March @ 8pm

Topic - Aditta Sutta (The House of Fire) SN 1.41

2) Sun 13th March @ 8am

Topic - Kindada Sutta (A Giver of What?) SN1.42

iv) Bhante Prof. Dr. Moragollagama Uparathana Thero

Bhante Dr M Uparathana Thero was ordained as a novice at the age of 12 at the Sri Bodhirukkharama Maha Vihara, Sri Lanka. He received his Higher Ordination at the age of 20 and has since devoted himself to the expansion and intellectual development of the Sangha community globally. He understood that to be a global Dhamma teacher he had to be fluent in a few languages. He took it upon himself to study English and Mandarin and is now fluent in Sinhala, Pali, English and Mandarin.

Bhante is currently the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka and had served in many other capacities at Universities in Sri Lanka and University of Wuhan, Peoples republic of China. He has also been sought to present many research papers, full papers and abstracts at many local and international symposiums and conferences.

Dhamma Talks

Fri, 20th March @ 8pm
Psychiatric Aspects of Paritta Chanting

Sun, 22nd March @ 10am
Sekhiya in Household Life

Fri, 27th March @ 8pm
Buddhism and Aesthetics (An appreciation of Beauty)

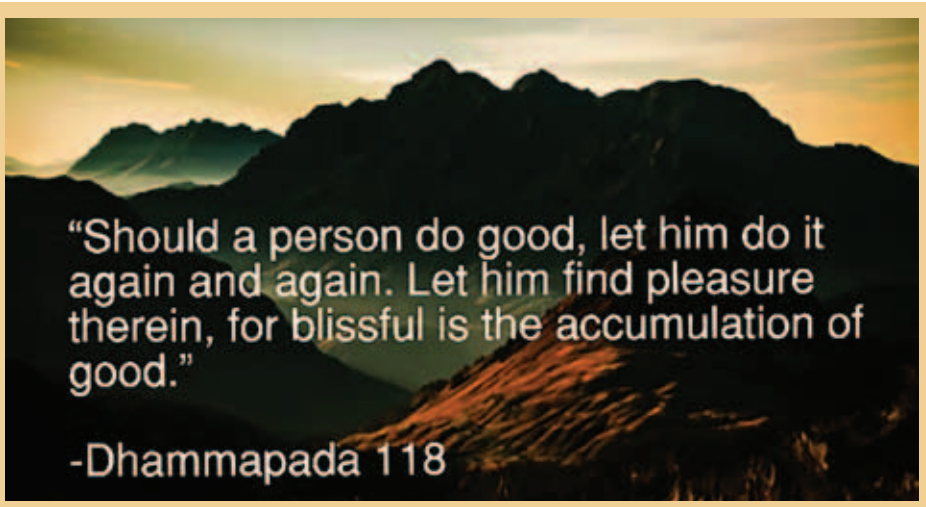
Sun, 29th March @ 10am
The Lay Life Philosophy (Based on Mangala Sutta)

Fri, 3rd April @ 8pm
Needs and Wants – A Buddhist Perspective

Sutta Study

Monday, 23rd March @ 8pm
A Healthy Life (Based on Girimananda Sutta)

Monday, 30th March @ 8pm
Tirokuda Sutta (Discourse on Transference of Merits to Departed Ones)



B. Dhamma Sharing for April

Meditation Retreat in Mandarin

i) Ven Dhammapala Thero – 1 Day Retreat

Saturday, 11th April – 8.30am to 6.00pm

1st Floor Puja Hall, Wisma Dharma Cakra

ii) Sayalay Susila – 2 Day Retreat

Saturday 25th April to Sunday 26th April – 8.15am to 5.00pm

Puja Hall (Sat) and Asoka Hall (Sun), Wisma Dharma Cakra

C. Other BMV Events for April

i) Maha Sanghika Dana – Sunday, 5th April at 11.30am

In memory of departed loved ones.

ii) Merit Offering Ceremony – 5th April at 5.00pm

At Sinhala Cemetery, Jalan Loke Yew

iii) Full Moon Puja In Memory of the Departed

– Tuesday, 7th April at 7.30pm

A special puja to dedicate merits in memory of all departed relatives and loved ones.

Sponsorship of puja trays, flower bouquets and oil lamps will be available.

iv) Sinhala New Year Puja and Blessing Service

– Tuesday, 14th April at 7.30am

Chanting of suttas followed by breakfast dana for the Maha Sangha

v) Sinhala New Year Show

– Saturday, 25th April at 7.00pm

Cultural dance performances, songs, sketches and dinner to celebrate the Sinhala New Year.

2. Past Events in January and February 2020

A. Dhamma Sharing

i) Bhante Minuwangoda Gnanawasa from Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka

Dhamma Talks and Sutta Study class

from 3rd January to 17th January

ii) Dr Vijitha Kumara from University of Colombo

Dhamma Talks and Sutta Study class

from 2nd February to 14th February

iii) 1-Day Meditation Retreat

by Ven Dr Dhammapala on 15th February

B. Other BMV Events

i) Chinese New Year (New Moon Puja and Blessings)

– 25th & 26th January

New Moon Puja

CNY Eve Blessings

ii) Chap Goh Meh (Full Moon Puja and Blessings)

– 8th February

iii) Dhamma for the Deaf

The Dhamma for the Deaf class has been held in the Vihara since 1999. Classes on Dhamma are taught every fortnight on a Sunday by Bro K. Don Premasiri with the Support of sign language interpreter, Sis Tan Lee Bee. The group comprises of working adults from the hearing impaired community who organize periodic social gathering as well for Chinese New Year, Deepavali, etc. This group photo was taken at the Vihara fter a Chinese New Year get-together function on 9th February.

iv) Sasana Ladies Section Visits Sasana members

- 16th February

With Mrs Rupa Peyadasa

With Madam Arnolis Basaravathy

Pen Portraits

Portraits of 93 Eminents Disciples of Buddha

The theme is to pay tribute to the 80 Maha Arahants and the 13 Maha Theri Arahants who had by their efforts won emancipation of a rare distinction. They belonged to the innermost circles in the life of the Gautama Buddha. The Buddha and the Maha Arahants were together at all times. Their lives portray heroic endeavor.

No 37. Nanda Thera – A pupil the Buddha alone could train

Nanda was the son of King Suddhodana and Queen Mahāpajāpatī, and therefore half brother of the Buddha. He was only a few days younger than the Buddha, and when the Buddha's mother died, Pajapati gave her own child to nurses and suckled the Buddha herself. He was named Nanda as he was pleasing to the relatives.

On the third day of the Buddha's visit to Kapilavatthu, after the Enlightenment, the Buddha went to Prince Nanda's house, where festivities were in progress in honour of Nanda's coronation and marriage to Janapada Kalyānī. The Buddha attended the function to wish Nanda good fortune and recited the Maha Mangala Sutta. This may account for this sutta to be recited now on festive occasions.

As the Buddha was leaving, He handed Nanda his bowl to be taken to the vihāra. Nanda, thereupon, accompanied the Buddha out of the palace. Janapada Kalyānī, seeing him go, asked him to return quickly. Once inside the vihāra, however, the Buddha asked Nanda to become a monk, and he, unable to refuse the request, agreed with reluctance. But as the days passed he was tormented with thoughts of his beloved, and became very downcast and despondent, and his health suffered. The Buddha suggested that they should visit the Himālaya. On the way there, he showed Nanda the charred remains of a female monkey and asked him whether Janapada Kalyānī was more beautiful than that. The answer was in the affirmative.

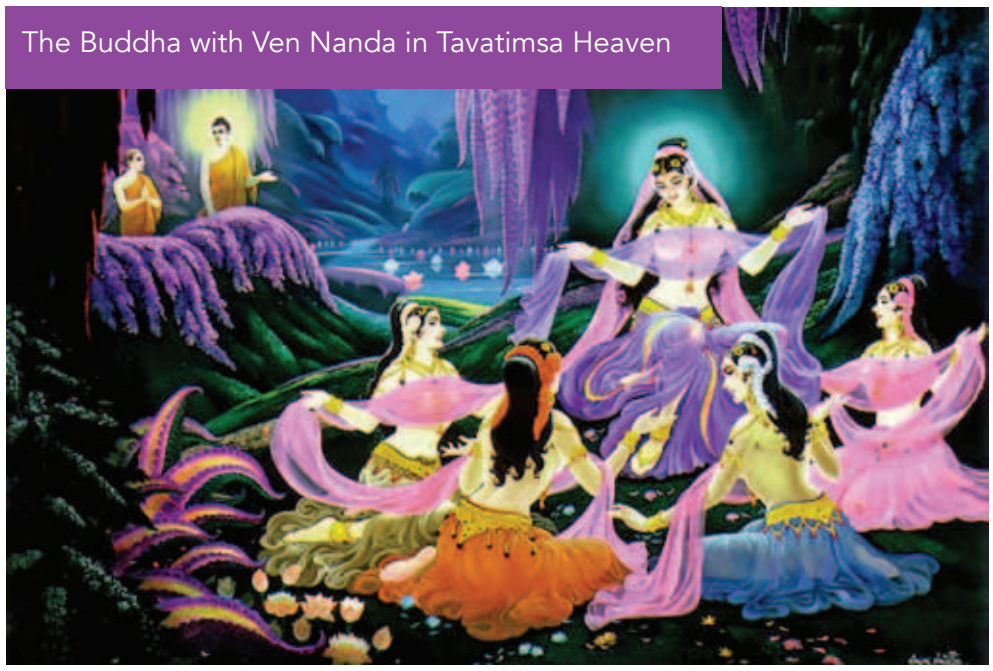
The Buddha arranged a visit to Tavatimsa Heaven so called because of the thirty three gods living there. He took Nanda with Him by means of psychic power. On arrival, Nanda could not believe his eyes when he beheld the nymphs that waited on Sakka, the King of the Gods. When the Buddha questioned whether there is a similarity between his sweetheart and any of the nymphs who are noted for their pink feet, Nanda uncharitably compared his sweetheart to the burnt monkey they saw on the way. Nanda was now smitten by overpowering desire for the nymphs. The Buddha saw His opportunity.

The Buddha promised him one as his wife if he would live the monastic life. Nanda was all eagerness and readily agreed. On their return to Jetavana the Buddha related this story to the eighty chief disciples, and when they questioned Nanda, he felt greatly ashamed of his lustfulness. He became the butt of ridicule as the news spread. This made him all the more anxious to succeed in Bhikkhu life. He had an incomparable teacher in the Buddha. With practice perfected, he strove hard and, in no long time, attained arahantship.

Nanda's attainment was told to the Buddha by a deva one night, flooding Jetavanarama with light. The Buddha had already understood the change in the pupil. On the following day, Venerable Nanda came to the Buddha and absolved the Buddha from keeping the promise of giving him a celestial bride. (Thag.157f.; J.i.91; ii.92ff.; Ud.iii.2; DhA.i.96 105; UdA.168ff.; SNA.273f.) The Buddha said "….who ever has got rid of ignorance would not wallow in the mud of defilements or would not give reign to the senses". The fellow Bhikkhus refused to believe that the love struck elder Nanda had so soon arrived at the goal of Arahantship. The Buddha likened Nanda's mind to a badly-thatched roof that now was completely re-thatched and rain-proof.

This occurrence was freely discussed by the Bhikkhus in the hall when the Buddha arrived. The Buddha related the Sangāmāvacara Jātaka to show how, in the past, too, Nanda had been quick to follow advice. He also related the story of the merchant Kappata and his donkey to show that it was not the first time that Nanda had been won to obedience by the lure of the female sex. In this story too, the male donkey absolved the merchant from implementing his promise. The male donkey in the story was Nanda and the female donkey Janapada Kalyānī and the merchant was none other than the Blessed One(DhA.i.103f.)

The Buddha with Ven Nanda in Tavatimsa Heaven



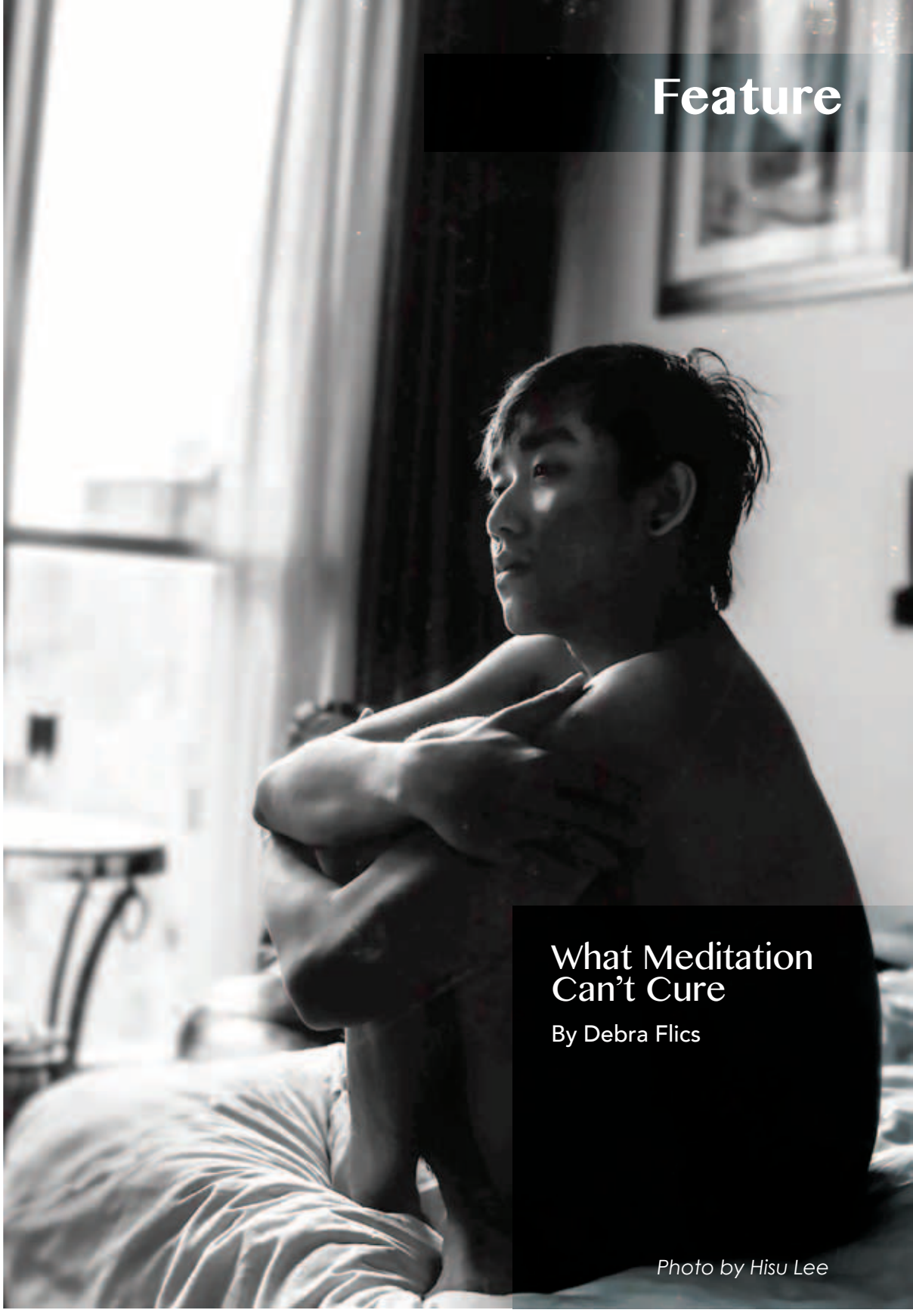
Nanda had aspired to this eminence in the time of Padumuttara Buddha. In the time of Atthadassi Buddha he was a tortoise in the river Vinatā, and, seeing the Buddha on the bank waiting to cross, he took him over to the other side on his back. (A.i.25; AA.i.174f.; ThagA.i.276ff.)

He is said to have been called Nanda because his birth brought joy to his kinsmen. The Apadāna (i.57) says he was of golden hue, as reward for a gift of a costly robe given by him to Padumuttara. Nanda was very beautiful, and was only four inches shorter than the Buddha.

Later, on seeing how eminently Nanda was trained in self control, the Buddha declared him chief among his disciples in that respect (indriyesu guttadvārānam).

Between two loves he was one,
When Lord came to brother's aid,
Sage was free from promise made,
Subduing the senses he won.

Prince Nanda taking the Buddha's alms bowl back to the Vihara



What Meditation Can't Cure

By Debra Flics

Photo by Hisu Lee

"Meditation wasn't designed to heal early psychological wounds. The writer cautions not to look to it as a replacement for psychotherapy"

Many Westerners, when they come to dharma practice, come looking for psychological healing—but this is not what meditation was designed to do. As meditation has become mainstream, it has been marketed as a way to address physical and emotional ailments as well as a way to improve performance at work, reduce stress, and rewire the brain. I've been a psychotherapist for nearly twenty-five years, working with meditators and non-meditators alike; I have also taught meditation in the Theravada tradition to students who could clearly benefit from therapy. I've seen firsthand the benefit of combining the two. I've also seen the pitfalls of thinking that meditation can resolve early psychological wounds—as powerful as meditation is, that kind of healing is not its purview. For that, we have psychotherapy. And when psychotherapy is undertaken in tandem with a meditation practice, it can be a powerful mix.

When I practice psychotherapy, I encounter people who have been exposed to suffering very early in life—before their minds can comprehend what is happening, when their bodies are still growing and vulnerable, and at a time when, for their optimal physical, emotional, and psychological development, they should be shielded from suffering. They may have experienced challenging family dynamics that include abuse, emotional neglect, and lack of nurturance. They may have parents who themselves were not parented and turn to their children to meet their emotional needs. Beyond the family, the culture itself presents us with violence, trauma, and systemic racism. Many people are far outside the palace walls.

Children raised in this way may be unable to hear, let alone follow, their inner guidance, and be unable to act from love and wisdom. This can develop further into addictions, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other ailments. So many of us in Western culture wonder who we are, how we fit in, and what our purpose is; we struggle with a negative sense of self as we try to manage the impact of difficult early experiences. In short, we arrive at the doorway of spiritual practice with a very different emotional and psychological landscape than that of the Buddha-to-be. When we begin practice, we are struggling to overcome personal suffering that prevents us from fully living within the relative, not yet at the point of grappling with existential suffering in order to realize the absolute.

Is meditation helpful for us, then? If it can't fully heal psychological suffering, does it offer us anything positive? Does it have any healing aspects? The answer is a definite yes. Even if the Buddha did not come to meditation to heal, meditation does offer some respite from psychological afflictions.

When we meditate and develop our concentration through awareness of the breath, it frees us, even if only temporarily, from the thoughts and feelings that have been bombarding us. For some of us, it may be the first time we see that we are not what our thoughts say about us. We see that thoughts arise unbidden, are conditioned by family, teachers, and culture, and do not require us to identify with them. We come to see that we don't have to be taken away by every thought form and state of mind; we learn that we can make choices in the service of our well-being. We see the mental ride that we are about to take, and we ask ourselves if it is a ride worth taking. As we begin to act from awareness rather than from identification with thought, we behave more skillfully toward ourselves and others. We learn ways to take care of ourselves, develop compassion, and practice with love.

During longer periods of retreat and silence, the difficult psychological states that have been buried in our psyches may rise to the surface in order to be felt, witnessed, and released. As the practice deepens, meditation allows us to move beyond discursive thought and to feel these experiences directly. In these instances, we are freed from old paradigms and ways of feeling about ourselves. This directly overlaps with what can happen in a good therapeutic relationship.

However, we may leave the silence and stillness of retreat and once again find it difficult to concentrate and access deeper levels of patterning. There are clear reasons for this. Traditionally, difficulty concentrating has been attributed to the five hindrances—greed, aversion, sloth and torpor, restlessness, and doubt—all states of mind that prohibit deeper states of concentration. For some people, these mind states may be composed of those early psychological wounds that we are carrying with us. For example, what a meditation teacher may call aversion, a psychotherapist may see as self-hatred. What a meditation teacher may see as sloth, a psychotherapist may recognize as depression. What a meditation teacher may see as restlessness, a psychotherapist may see as anxiety or PTSD. Because these mind states may be composed of very difficult, even traumatic, experiences that occurred before we were developmentally able to contend with them, just naming them as hindrances and feeling their energetic components is often not enough.

A psychotherapist would see the problem of not being able to access deeper patterning not as a problem in establishing concentration but instead as psychological defenses. Defenses are just what they sound like—they defend the self from experiencing painful and often overwhelming feelings and memories. Defenses are unconscious; they happen automatically and without our consent. We may experience a sour mood, a feeling of emptiness, difficult behavioral patterns, a lack of clarity, anxiety, depression, phobias, and more—all without knowing the experiences, beliefs, and feelings that lie at the root of these mind states. Conversely, if the defenses break down, we can find ourselves flooded by painful emotions and sometimes unable to function.

Rather than seeing these mind states as hindrances to deeper concentration, a psychotherapist would see them as experiences that are crying out to be healed; in the safe, confidential space of the relationship between therapist and client, then, the approach would be to explore these experiences. The defenses are seen as a starting point. In a shared exploration, the therapist points out and interprets the defenses so they gradually lose their hold. As trust is built, the material that lies beyond the defenses can emerge and be processed. In optimal circumstances, the difficult emotions and experiences that have previously been unconscious emerge slowly and safely so the client can integrate them without becoming overwhelmed. As these patterns unravel, the psychotherapist not only lends emotional support and encouragement but also serves as a new model of how to respond to difficulty.

Here's an example of how a psychotherapist might help transform psychological patterning. When a client begins to feel vulnerable, she may hear a harsh voice inside calling herself stupid or weak. With exploration, we may discover that that voice is exactly how the parent treated the client when she was a vulnerable child. That voice maintains the status quo; it keeps the vulnerable feelings at bay. The client calls herself weak or needy and tries to beat back these feelings with harshness and self-blame. But the harsh voice is serving a protective function, as the vulnerable feelings would have overwhelmed the child without a soothing parent to help her with them. The psychotherapist interprets the defensive nature of this harsh voice and points out that it no longer serves the client to suppress her vulnerable feelings. The vulnerable child can be invited to express herself, and the psychotherapist can respond with care and compassion. Instead of the model of harshness that was taken in from the parent, a new accepting stance is taken in, and the client learns how to treat herself with kindness.

In this way, a secure attachment is formed to the therapist. This is what Siddhartha already possessed when he began his quest for freedom; it is essential for the development of a healthy sense of self. When this does not occur in childhood, it leaves us lacking. Where do adults go to meet unmet dependency needs, needs for mirroring of their authentic selves, encouragement of their true strivings, safety, and empathy? Where can adults go to finally grow up?

Psychotherapy conducted from a developmental perspective—meaning therapy that takes into account the need for a secure attachment composed of safety, empathy, mirroring, nurturance of the client's authentic strivings and the deleterious effects of this not being offered in an optimal way during childhood—offers a developmental re-do. Clinicians will encourage and support the development of clients' deepest yearnings, their true interests, and the expression of their gifts. As they are expressed and find an outlet in the world, these aspects of self that were frozen in childhood begin to grow again. Developmentally attuned psychotherapy, therefore, is not just a working through of old patterns and belief systems but also a second chance at becoming the true and authentic person that we were meant to be. The inner child that we've all heard so much about does not have to remain a child, frozen in time forever. With commitment and resolve, the client can become an emotionally mature adult. For all of its power, this is something that a solitary meditation practice cannot provide.

Meditation can, however, support the therapeutic process. As painful thoughts and feelings emerge in treatment, a meditator will initially be more likely than a non-meditator to understand that thoughts and feelings are internal phenomena that do not have to be acted on. This is a crucial step in ending problematic behavior and growing in consciousness. This skill, in combination with the internalization of the psychotherapist's caring presence, can deeply change the way that a person responds to thoughts and relationships. Also, understanding and deeply seeing the impermanence of mental phenomena can allow a meditator in therapy to experience distressing thoughts and emotions with less fear and a growing trust that they will pass. Awareness is strengthened in meditation to the point where we have watched mind states come and go; we are less likely to resist their arising as we know that this will delay their passing. Not only that, but when we understand the selfless and conditioned nature of phenomena, it fosters the awareness that thoughts can be emotionally true without being concretely true—a crucial distinction for inner work. There is a great deal of difference between believing that I am a terrible person and understanding that I feel like a terrible person because of how I was treated in the past.

As meditators, we understand in a deep way that the discursive mind is conditioned and not who we are in our essence. We become more sensitive and can feel the energetic difference between the chattering mind and the internal voice of wisdom. We know that we have buddhanature—a powerful internal guidance system, beyond the thinking mind, that points us toward wisdom and love.

Having opened to and healed many of our wounds in psychotherapy, we no longer use our defenses to shield us from our pain; without this armor against suffering, we become more responsive to the world around us. Now when we meditate, we see more clearly. We go deeper. We have internalized the psychotherapist's compassionate presence in the face of our own suffering, and as a result, we can better express compassion toward ourselves and others. We have matured. We are less caught in our own fear and pain and able to turn toward the suffering of others with an open heart. We are more of a clear channel for our inner guidance; like the Buddha, we can follow the inner promptings of our life journey and potential.

With our karmic patterns modified and transformed, our spiritual practice deepens. Having studied the self, we forget the self and can see the world through a less personal lens. We can move deeper in our meditation practice and, like the Buddha on his outings from the palace, experience the truths of old age, sickness, and death. We experience insight into the three characteristics: suffering, impermanence, and selflessness. We recognize the folly of relying on the conditioned realm to bring lasting happiness and satisfaction. At the same time, we deepen our commitment to develop the heart, to refrain from bringing any more suffering to our self and others, and to cultivate compassion for all beings.

Like the Buddha, we may then be inspired to move even further, to leave our preoccupation with the familiar self and find what lasts beyond the conditioned realm. We may ask what is true beyond the sufferings and desires of the personal self, beyond our history and circumstance, beyond life and death. Less saddled with the baggage of personal suffering, we go forth.

Source : *https://www.lionsroar.com/what-meditation-cant-cure/*

About the Writer : Debra Flics is a psychotherapist in private practice in New York City. She teaches at Downtown New York Meditation Community and has served on the Teachers Council at New York Insight Meditation Center.

BISDS – Welcome back Workshop 4th of Jan 2020

School started on January 4th for teachers and staff, a day earlier than BISDS school re-open day. About 70 BISDS staff force attended the Welcome Back Workshop for 2020. It was held in the Puja Hall from 9am to 12.30pm on January 4th.

The staff were motivated to start fresh for 2020 and aspire to accomplish their aspirations before the year ends in December 2020. They were reminded to create beautiful pictures and colorful memories to touch lives and instill values with the students and the people they meet. They were urged to change in the way of doing things and move on to carry out the good work in educating and guiding the children of BISDS and the Buddhist community at large.

The workshop was structured for the staff to discuss & plan on ways to do things better for the school in 2020. The Academic staff were tasked to plan and prepare their respective classes lesson plans and activities whilst the Non - Academic staff were tasked to discuss and plan for their respective depts SOP & guidelines to improve the quality of services provided in the school.

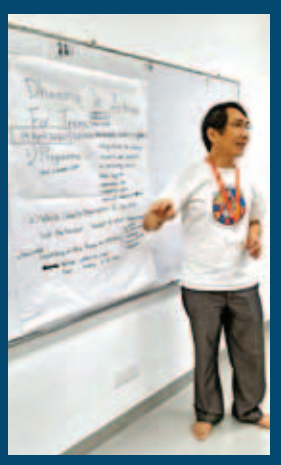
Prior to the respective group discussion & workshops to complete their task for the day, the staff enjoyed the Ice Breaking games where they introduced themselves to their new found friends in the group. Apart from the task at hand, the staff also had some time on a Video show.

Before the workshop ended, there were presentations from respective classes for Academic team & selected departments from Non – Academic team to present their work prepared during the workshop. Prizes were given to the Teen Camps team from the Academic Group and the F&B team from the Non – Academic Group for their work on the improved ways of doing things presented in the workshop.

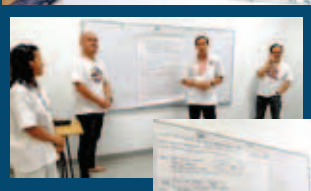
From Training Dept

January 2020






Friends of the Vihara (FOV)

Welfare Visit to Tong Sim Senior Centre – 5th January 2020

40 volunteers from the Buddhist Maha Vihara arrived at the Centre and proceeded to remove the bed-bugs infested mattresses and pillows, cleaned and wiped all beds and then replaced with new mattresses and pillows for 65 senior folks. We thank all volunteers who came to accomplish and complete this project. We wish to thank all sponsors and donors who have contributed to the success of this project.







Feature Article

Practicing in Hell – the recent Australian wildfires

An Australian chaplain warns fellow Buddhists not to give up their meditation practice in the face of devastating wildfires.

By Pema Düddul

Night sky ablaze by the great big fires of the bush and forest

Every morning I step outside my home in New South Wales, Australia, to check if it's safe to open the doors and windows. What I find is burnt orange dawns, blood red sunsets, searing wind, and palls of smoke that blot out the sky. For weeks the smoke from nearby fires has been so bad that the air quality in my small town is worse than in the world's most polluted cities. Often I wake with a dry, sore throat from breathing in the smoke as I slept. On the worst of days, the air smells of ash and death.

Two months back, when a fire got within a mile and a half of our home, authorities told my partner and me to prepare to evacuate. But my partner said he wasn't going anywhere. He has a serious medical condition and wasn't well enough to travel. Besides, he explained calmly, he was in retreat and wasn't about to break it. The fire would just have to burn him up, he said without a hint of melodrama. Luckily, the fires did not get any closer—but they're still burning.

Elsewhere in Australia, tornadoes of fire still careen across a bone-dry landscape, cities choke on smoke and wither under record-breaking heat, soot blackens the white sand beaches, and birds fall from the sky dead. Half a billion animals have been burned alive, and nearly as many are starving due to drought. Hundreds of homes have turned to ash, and at least 23 people are dead and more are missing. There have always been periods in history, and in our lives, when the ups and downs of samsara take a steep spiral downwards, when we feel more stressed, sad, or anxious than normal. But this devastation is not business as usual. It's not even samsara as usual. This is something else altogether; our darkest nightmares have become real. We are living in a kind of hell.

For many Buddhists here, the calm and stillness that come from meditation have been tested by the immense suffering of people, animals, and nature. Even those with significant meditation experience are finding this moment deeply challenging. Those who are new to meditation practice are understandably finding it impossible to sit and find ease. They may think it impossible to respond as my partner did, whose deep renunciation cannot be shaken, not even by wildfires. Along with the acrid smoke, we breathe in daily distress. Our tolerance for those whose decades of inaction on climate change have led to this catastrophe has burnt to cinders. What is left is mere ash and yet another fire, the fire of anger. Many are asking: What can Buddhists do in the face of this? How can I meditate while the world literally burns around me?

With such desperate need in the world around them, many of my Buddhist peers' practice hangs on by a thread. A number of them have stopped meditating altogether. For some this is just temporary, while they step up and do what they can in this time of crisis. Yet I fear that some of them will never regain their confidence in the many personal and social benefits of meditation. The intense suffering of the external world is turning their attention outward, overshadowing the importance of looking inward, of inner transformation. Their practice is cut; they have mistaken ordinary kindness with ultimate bodhicitta, the awakened compassionate mind.

Every Australian—Buddhist or not—has asked: "What can we do to help?" Many have dug deep. They are all helping how they can—by actively fighting fires, by donating to firefighting services, by volunteering with wildlife rescue organizations, or by giving to those who've lost homes and livelihoods. I am moved by how brave, kind, and generous Australians can be, but I also find myself worried for their long term well-being. Without the very practice that equips them to deal with the suffering of the world, how will they cope, not only with this terrible moment but in the long term?

This is why when my fellow Buddhists ask "What can we do to help?" I respond: We should do whatever we can to alleviate the suffering of others while maintaining our meditation practice. It should not be either/or—yet another dualistic choice that is characteristic of samsara, a result of not understanding our interconnected reality. It makes no sense to abandon the one thing that provides resilience in the face of pain and suffering at the very time we need that resilience most. Even if we were willing to abandon our own chance for resilience, it is unkind if not cruel to rob others of any useful example we might have set, any inspiration we might have been to those around us to take up meditation themselves.

Meditation better equips us to help others in times of crisis by making us less prone to negative or harmful emotions like anger and hatred. I believe that, with its emphasis on emptiness and impermanence, meditation severs anti-social behaviors like greed, selfishness, and bigotry at the root. By transforming ourselves through meditation practice we affect a broader social change by ensuring that all our actions are helpful. By transforming ourselves, we transform the world, making it a saner, more compassionate place. Without meditation there is only fleeting, partial "compassion" prone to bias, which is not really compassion at all. Meditation is true compassion, lasting and unbiased.

This is what we as Buddhists can do in times of crisis: we can meditate. It is our responsibility and obligation.

Even while the world literally burns around us we must sit. We must find the calm and stillness that leads to the flowering of unbridled compassion; only then will we actually know how to help in meaningful, lasting ways. This is the true revolution we need. Fight fires, yes, but we must also sit. Rescue animals, yes, but we must also sit. Give support to those who are suffering, yes, but we must also sit. Help and then sit. Sit and then help. These two should always be together.

Main Hall of Wat Buddha Dhamma, Australia's oldest Theravada Monasteries spared from the raging fires while the rest of the buildings were damaged

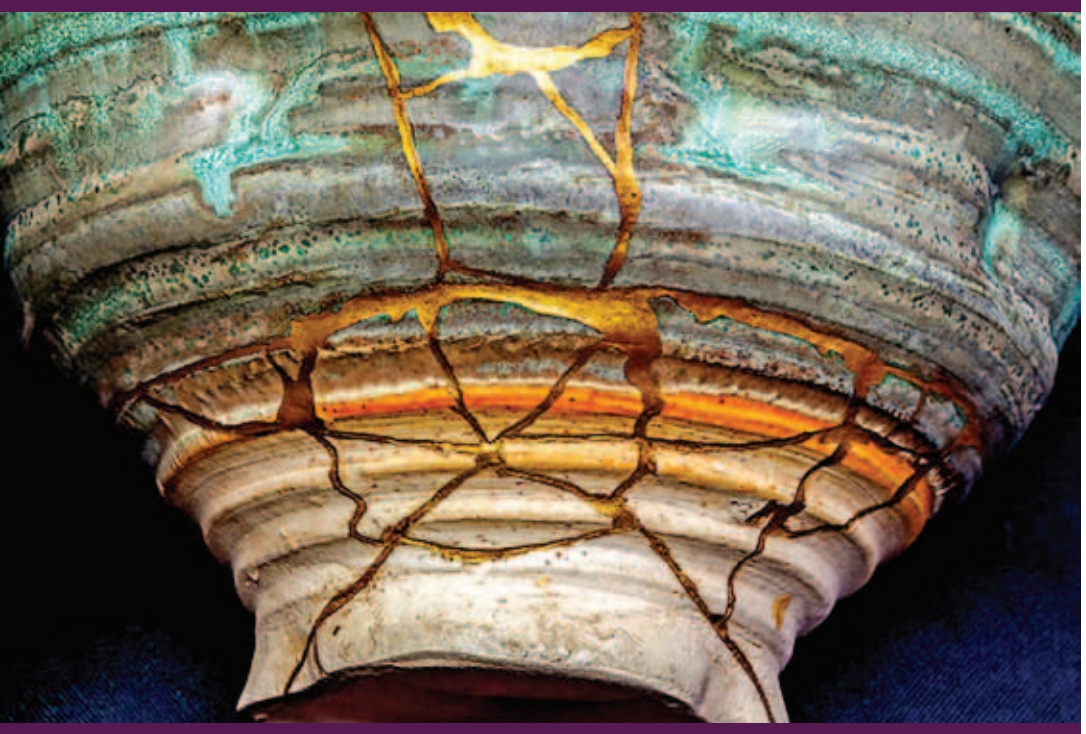
To drop meditation in times of crisis is like watering a plant in a basement. The plant will survive for a while, but in the end it will die from lack of light. The plant is our chance for enlightenment in this lifetime, the sun is meditation, and the water is ordinary acts of kindness. Helping others in practical ways will keep us going for a while, but eventually we'll burn out; our kindness will wither, as will the likelihood of realization.

Kindness and meditation together lead to the flowering of bodhicitta and enlightenment. We need that enlightenment to save the world. This is why my partner refuses to break retreat, fires or not. The wish to awaken for the sake of others is his primary concern.

Sit and help. Help and sit. This is what it is to be a Buddhist, especially a Buddhist in hell.

Source : *https://tricycle.org/trikedaily/australia-fires/*

About the Writer : Pema Duddul is the Buddhist chaplain in the University of Southern Queensland's Multi-Faith Service and the director of Jalü Buddhist Meditation Centre. He has been teaching mindfulness and meditation since 2007.



How to Make a Spectacular Mistake

BY Anita Feng

Mistakes are easy. As soon as we're born, they begin. And without fail, they mark our inevitable rite of passage in the long, drawn out business of growing up. Hot stoves hurt. Hitting your brother is not nice. What we make up in our own minds is mistaken, over and over again, for reality.

It reminds me of ***some of the challenges of being a parent—a job that provides endless opportunities for error.*** In particular, I remember an incident when my son was a sophomore in high school, close to flunking yet another class. We both knew he was smart enough to do well, if he could just remember to do his homework and turn it in. One day I had reached such a point of frustration that I turned to him and said, "Look, do you want to continue on like this and end up working as a truck driver for the rest of your life, or do you want to get with the program and make something out of yourself?"

This was not my shining moment as a parent. There I was, with already twenty years of meditation practice under my belt, and I was throwing a completely dualistic fabrication of a story at him that was more a reflection of my lack of composure than anything else. For one thing, what's wrong with driving a truck? And surely, there would be a great many opportunities beyond that, regardless of his scholastic achievements or lack thereof.

The saving grace was that I saw what I was doing right away. This is what meditation offers us. The fruit of our practice is not miraculously never making mistakes again. It is, rather, seeing clearly what's actually going on, so that we can then find our fitting course of action.

A few days after that incident with my son, I was driving him to school. He was unprepared, as usual. But this time I simply asked him, "Are you really suffering?"

He said, "Yes."

"Then why don't you quit school? We'll figure out something else, okay?"

We were both stunned. I hadn't planned on saying that. We had never discussed the possibility before, even though my son had suffered difficulties and indignities in school since kindergarten. Now, suddenly, our world opened up to change.

To make a long story short, over the course of the next few years we cobbled together an unconventional learning experience for him. He ended up graduating from the University of Washington with honors and went on to establish himself in a rich and stimulating career and life.

While this may seem to be an over-tidy account of failure and redemption, it provides an example of ordinary human life. Many of us were raised by imperfect parents and schooled as apprentice human beings in a sometimes dysfunctional world. Whether the upbringing was overbearing or lax, painful or coddled, at a certain point we were let loose. Mayhem ensued. Which way to go? Here and there, gross and minor errors appeared.

Mistakes are inevitable and in order to live a meaningful life, we have to, first of all, resist buying into a narrative of failure. Instead, we pick up the pieces and transmute them into a fitting, beautiful change.

In other words, it's all about the repair.

In Japan, in a practice dating back to the fifteenth century, highly skilled craftspeople developed the craft of pottery repair into a fine art, called *kintsugi*. The process basically consists of repairing broken pottery with lacquer that's dusted and burnished with powdered gold. Rather than trying to hide the flaws, the pieces of bowls or pots or plates are lovingly reassembled and the lines where they were broken become highlighted with gold, marking them as precious objects honored and even prized for their imperfections.

In kintsugi, the reality of brokenness represents an opportunity for the transformation of consciousness. What a wonderful metaphor for our lives. During the years while my son was in school, I was continually called upon to let go of my idea of what his and our reality should be. And on the other hand, we also had to be careful not to give up or deny the truth of our challenges. It was not an option to say that we were in a hopeless mess and leave it at that.

What to do? This kintsugi art of golden repair requires, first of all, a clear-eyed seeing of what is. All the fabricated stories about how impossible the situation is, or how our devastations might be assigned, categorized, or clung to—all are brushed away. A space is made clear for repair.

From that place, we can find the pieces through inquiry, as I did when I managed to finally ask my son, "Are you suffering?" Once found, the pieces can be assembled. Present moment reality, along with the love and compassion we bear for it, provides the glue. The gold dust is, I suspect, the wonder of being so unmistakably alive.

Recently I met up with my son for lunch and we were talking over some old times. I asked if he remembered that incident from high school, twenty years ago, when I told him that he was going to end up as a truck driver if he didn't start doing his homework. He didn't remember it, and laughed when I described how ashamed I was of my reactive, dualistic behavior then.

But then, somewhat sheepishly, my son smiled and said that he and his partner were now struggling with their son, my beloved ten-year-old grandson, who had begun to develop a stubborn aversion to doing his homework, just like his equally beloved father.

And so it goes, the fragile, spectacular process of taking up what is broken and making repairs begins all over again. Just imagine the fine art of kintsugi extended so thoroughly throughout time and space, tenderly addressing every conceivable broken place until all of it is sheer gold. May it be so.

Source : *https://www.lionsroar.com/how-to-make-a-spectacular-mistake*

About the Writer : Anita Feng is the guiding teacher for the Blue Heron Zen Community in Seattle. She's also the author of Sid and a sculptor of clay buddhas.

Quranic verses inscribed on the bowl

The Fate of the Buddha's Begging Bowl

By Bhante S. Dhammika

One of the most revered relics in the ancient Buddhist world was the Buddha's begging bowl.

A rough outline of its long convoluted history is this – it was supposedly given to the people of Vesali by the Buddha when he passed through the city on his way to Kusinara. In the 1st/2nd century, King Kanishka took it to Pushapura, now Peshawar, where a string of Chinese pilgrims reported seeing it between the 3rd and the 9th centuries. The importance of the bowl is attested by numerous depictions of it in Gandhara art, usually shown on the pedestal of Buddha statues. During the Islamic period it was taken from one palace or mosque to another until at a date unknown it ended up in Sultan Way's Baba's shrine on the outskirts of Kandahar Afghanistan. Several British officers report seeing it there in the 19th century, one attempting to translate the inscription on it, and another, Alexander Cunningham, trying to trace its history, a fact I mentioned in my 'Middle Land Middle Way' (1992, p.136).

As the wheel of time kept turning over, Islam replaced Buddhism on the land and somehow Quranic verses came to be inscribed on the bowl, perhaps around the time of Mahmud Ghazni in 11th century. The verses saved the artefact from any further damage in all future religious wars. All through the rule of Muslim rulers on the land, the Quranic verses saved the bowl and it was treated by the people with respect. Until a few decades ago, it was kept at the Jamia Mosque in Kandahar and used for storing water and wazu (washing one's hands and feet before offering namaz).

In the late 1980s, during Afghanistan's civil war, President Najibullah had the bowl taken to Kabul's National Museum. When the Taliban came to power, their Minister of Culture ordered all Buddhist artefacts in the museum smashed although the bowl remained undamaged, no doubt because of the Quranic verses inscribed on its outer surface. Today it can still be seen in the museum.

The bowl is not small. It is a stone hemispherical vessel of greenish-grey granite with a diameter of about 1.75 meters, a height of about three ¾ of a meter, and a thickness of about 18 cm at its rim, rather thicker elsewhere particularly at its middle and the base. It has no cracks or abrasions, except for a portion about the size of the palm of one's hand that has flaked away from near the rim. There is a delicate lotus petal design chiselled around its base, attesting to its Buddhist past, and inscribed in beautiful large calligraphic script horizontally along the rim of the bowl, are six rows of verses from the Quran, reflecting its Islamic continuum and its status through the ages as an object of special religious interest. Traces of similar calligraphic script are visible on the surface on the inner side of the bowl. The bowl is about 350 to 400 kg in weigh, far too heavy to lift.

This bowl was probably an early larger copy of the Buddha's actual bowl placed in a monastery in Vesali for people to offer their first fruits in, a custom common in ancient India and which survived even in Sri Lanka and elsewhere up to the 19th century. The bowl's great size may well have encouraged the acceptance of the widespread belief amongst ancient Buddhists that the Buddha was 18 feet tall. Only someone that big could have used or even lifted a bowl this size.

It is interesting to keep in mind that Sri Lanka claimed to have the Buddha's begging bowl, although any legend of how it got to the island has not been preserved. This Sri Lankan relic is mentioned several times in the Culavamsa as being as precious and holy as the Tooth Relic. The chronical tells us for instance, that when King Manabharana moved from Rohana to Polonnaruva, he brought the Tooth Relic and the Bowl Relic with him. It also gives us a description of an elaborate ceremony during the reign of Parakramabahu I in which the two relics were drawn through the streets of the capital in a wheeled pavilion made of gold. Sometime after the fall of Polonnaruva the Bowl Relic disappeared and was forgotten.

I am writing about the Buddha's begging bowl because after being in obscurity for so long, it recently hit the headlines in India when it was mentioned in the Lok Sabha, India's parliament. I reproduce below from the Ministry of External Affairs website. "MP Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh asked; 'Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state: (a) whether the Government has recently got the information that the begging bowl of Buddha, given to the people of Vesali by him, has been found in the Kabul museum; (b) if so, the details thereof; (c) whether the Indian Embassy in Afghanistan has sent a photo of the said bowl to the Government; (d) if so, the details thereof; (e) whether the Government has initiated the process to recover the said bowl; (f) if so, the details thereof; (g) whether the travelogues of the Chinese pilgrim Faxian and the writings of Dr. Cunningham and Shri S.V. Sahni mention the said bowl; and (h) if so, the details thereof?'."

A depiction of devotees worshipping the bowl (Gandhara 4th century C.E.)

The Minister Prenteet Kaur in reply answered; "The Embassy of India, Kabul has made enquiries in the matter. It is learnt that the item purported to be Lord Buddha's begging bowl was apparently in Kandahar until the regime of former President Najibullah. It was later brought to Kabul and is currently in the Kabul Museum. It has been pointed out that the begging bowl, a photo of which our Embassy has obtained, is rather large, besides having inscription in Arabic and Persian, thus calling into question its provenance. The Archaeological Survey of India has been requested to convey any information or advice it may have regarding the provenance of the bowl currently in Kabul Museum."

Source : *https://www.nationthailand.com/opinion/30331957*

About the Writer : Bhante Shravasti Dhammika was born in Australia in 1951 and converted to Buddhism at the age of eighteen. He ordained as a monk under Venerable Matiwella Sangharatna, the last disciple of Anagarika Dharmapala in 1976. He went to Sri Lanka where he studied Pali at Sri Lanka Vidyalaya, and later became a co-founder and teacher of Nilambe Meditation Centre in Kandy. Since then, he has spent most of his time in Sri Lanka and Singapore. Bhante Dhammika had written over 25 books and scores of articles on Buddhism and related subjects and his most popular book Good Question Good Answer has been translated into 36 languages. Currently, Bhante Dhammika is the spiritual advisor to The Buddha Dhamma Mandala Society in Singapore.

Projects

LEND A HAND

The Buddhist Maha Vihara **"Lend A Hand"** programme is to support the undertaking of a number of crucial projects that are needed for continuous maintenance and upgrading for the benefit of all devotees. We appeal to your kind generosity to help us realize the following:

- Shrine Hall External Painting
  (Heritage Refurbishment)
  - **Balance amount of : RM112,750**
    (from initial amount of RM150,000)
- Shrine Hall Lights
  - Outside - **Est amount to spend is RM40,000**

- Vehicle for Transport
  Balance amount of : RM77,500
  (from initial amount of RM80,000)

- Replacing the 56 Buddha Statues' Huts with stainless steel panels/ tampered glass.
  - **Balance amount of: RM22,080**
    (from initial amount of RM24,800)

BUDDHA FRIEZE
for Sponsorship at Meditation Pavilion

- **Seated Buddha Frieze**
  - **RM18,000** each
  - 37 statues left to be sponsored

- **Standing Buddha Frieze**
  - **RM38,000** each
  - 5 statues left to be sponsored

Partial Sponsorship

Shrine Hall Lights (inside)

Mdm. Lim Kim Eng and Family
Amount RM3,000

Vehicle for Transport

Ace De Strategy Sdn Bhd
Amount RM2,500

With the merits accrued by your generous donations, May you and your family be blessed and protected by the Noble Triple Gem

Sadhu…..Sadhu…..Sadhu

- **25 Lotus Pillars**
  A total of 25 Lotus Pillars named after the Buddha's core teachings are available for sponsorship at the Wisma Dharma Cakra building at RM25,000 each. Names of the Sponsors will be placed on the pillar.
  - ***Mezzanine Floor – 18 pillars**
  - ***First Floor – 4 pillars**

- **Supply and Install Visual System at 1st Floor, Puja Hall**
  Estimate Cost:- RM 25,850.00

- **Meditation Cushion with Cushion**
  Big 2ft x 2ft @ RM65 x 66 nos = RM4290
  Small 10 x 14 x 46mm @ RM55 x 106 nos = RM5830
  Total Estimate Cost :- RM10,120

- **Wireless Head Set Microphone**
  Estimate Cost :- RM 3,300

- **Tabletop Gooseneck Microphone system**
  Estimate Cost :- RM4,800.00

- **Mobile Stage with Skirting and staircase**
  Estimate Cost :- RM7,700

- **10-seater Round Tables**
  Quantity – 50
  Estimate Cost :- RM9,000

- **Skirting for Banquet table**
  Quantity – 100 tables (6ft x 2ft)
  Estimate Cost :- RM9,500

- **Dharmacakra Wheel at Wisma Dharma Cakra Building**
  Balance amount : RM200,000
  (from initial amount of :RM300,000)

A brief history of the 126 year old Buddhist Maha Vihara, Brickfields

The Buddhist Maha Vihara was founded in 1894 by the Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society (SAWS), the oldest registered Buddhist Society in the Klang Valley.

From its very inception, the Vihara has been managed by the Sinhala Buddhist community but was financially supported by the Chinese and Indian communities as well. The first structure of the Vihara was the Main Shrine Room, with its ceremonial laying of the foundation-stone taking place on 25th August 1894 and the simple rectangular shaped building completed sometime during the first decade of the 20th century. The donors for the Shrine room, as recorded in the Selangor Government Gazette 1896, pg 408 were clearly Chinese and Indian communities and among the main donors were:

Kapitan Yeap Quang Seng, Towkay Loke Yew, K. Tambusamy Pillay, R. Doraisamy Pillay, Loke Chow Kit, San Peng and Son, Lim Tua Taw, etc…

The Vihara was always the focal point to mobilise the Buddhist community. The large gathering to protest and stop the screening of the then controversial film "Light of Asia" in 1927 in Malaysia was also held at the Vihara, and so was the mass gathering and signature campaign in the 1950s to lobby the government to declare Wesak as a national holiday.

During the Emergency period of 1948-1960, monks from the Vihara made a massive impact reaching out to calm and educate the psychologically disoriented Chinese New Villagers who were evicted from their traditional lands and placed in new settlements by the Governments which was fighting a communist insurgency.

Since the 1940s, the Vihara commenced a free Dhamma publications programme as a Dhammadutta outreach to the masses which by the year 2012 was made available in 28 languages, with millions of copies of books and CDs produced. The Vihara's Buddhist Institute Sunday Dhamma School(BISDS), founded in 1929, is the oldest Sunday School in the country with an enrolment of more than 1200 students and continues to produce systematic books on Buddhist studies for children.

The Wesak procession organised by the Vihara since the 1890s is the oldest and largest religious procession in the country. The 3-day Wesak celebrations at the Vihara attracts about 100,000 people.

Many students or devotees who have studied and benefited from the BISDS, the Vihara's Free Publications, Dhamma programmes, classes, talks, etc have gone on to set up new Buddhist societies an centers which help to spread Buddhism in the country far and wide.

The SAWS is also one of the founding members of the Malaysian Consultative Council for Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism (MCCBCHST) formed in 1983, a Council which constructively engages the Government on matters effecting non-muslims in the country. The MCCBCHST Administrative office is based at the Vihara.

In 2004, the Vihara was a major focal point in the country to collect relief aid to assist the South Asian Tsunami that killed almost 280,000 people. Several forty foot containers equivalent of relief aid were dispatched by the Vihara to Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India, Myanmar and Thailand by air, sea and land.

Buddhists remain the country's largest organ donors, thanks to Cornea and Organ Donation Campaigns carried out by the Vihara. The Vihara continues to operate to deliver its obligation to the Buddhist community till this day and is governed and directed by its Vision, 4 Missions, 6 Strategic Objectives and 4 Ennoblers in tribute and gratitude to all our past and current Sangha, volunteers, donors, friends, etc. We would be failing in our duty if we fail to mention the name of the foremost amongst them, our late Venerable Chief, that is Venerable. Dr. Kirinde Sri Dhammananda Nayaka Maha Thero.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

Mon - Sun	- 6.30am - 7.30am	**Daily Morning Buddha Puja**
	- 11.30am - 12.00noon	**Daily Noon Buddha Puja**
	- 7.30pm - 8.30pm	**Daily Evening Buddha Puja**

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Mon, Wed, Thurs	- 8.00pm - 10.00pm	**Meditation Class**
Tues	- 10.30am - 12.00noon	**Senior Club Yoga for Beginners**
	- 8.30pm - 10.00pm	**Qigong Practise**
Thurs	- 7.30pm - 9.00pm	**Senior Club Yoga for Intermediate**
Fri	- 1.00pm - 2.00pm	**Afternoon Puja & Talk**
	- 8.00pm - 9.30pm	**Dhamma Talk**
Sat	- 8.30am - 10.30am	**Qigong Practise**
	- 10.30am - 11.30am	**Tai Chi Practise**
	- 2.00pm - 7.00pm	**Degree & Master's in Buddhism Classes**
	- 7.30pm - 8.30pm	**Bojjhanga Puja**
Sun	- 8.30am - 9.30am	**Morning Puja**
	- 9.30am - 11.00am	**Abhidamma Class**
	- 9.30am - 12.00noon	**Sunday Dhamma School for Children & for Adults**
	- 10.00am - 11.30am	**Dhamma Talk**
	- 10.00am - 2.00pm	**Traditional Chinese Medicine** *(Every Sunday except Public Holiday)*
	- 11.00am - 12.30pm	**Pali / Sutta Class**
	- 1.30pm - 5.00pm	**Sinhala Language Classes**
		Sinhala Cultural Dance Classes
	- 2.00pm - 7.00pm	**Diploma & Degree in Buddhism Classes**
	- 3.00pm - 4.30pm	**Dhamma for the Deaf** *(fortnightly)*
	- 5.00pm	**Feeding the Needy and Homeless**

You can donate towards our many projects :

- Dhammadutta
- Free Buddhist Publications
- Welfare Activities
- Monks Dana
- Sunday Dhamma School
- Maintenance of Shrine Hall
- K Sri Dhammananda Library
- Temple Lighting
- BISDS Building Fund

DONATIONS CAN BE MADE BY :

- **Cash** *(at the BMV Counter)*
- **Cheque** *(made payable to "BISDS Building Fund")*
- **ATM Transfer / Direct Bank-in** *(Bank Acct : BISDS Building Fund, A/C No : CIMB 86-0011008-6. Please send the bank-in slip to info@buddhistmahavihara.org)*

Payments can be made via :

BMV Office Counter	: Cash, cheques & credit cards
Postage	: Make cheques payable to **"Buddhist Maha Vihara"** & write your name & contact telephone at back of the cheque.
Direct Debit	: **Hong Leong Bank Brickfields** *Acct :* **292-00-01161-8**

BMV Statement of Accounts :

Buddhist Maha Vihara's Monthly Statement of Accounts is displayed on the Notice Board at the Reception area for public viewing. Please address all queries to the Hon. Secretary in writing.

We accept* VISA *and* MASTERCARD *for donations. Thank You.

Donations to Buddhist Maha Vihara operations are tax exempt.
Any donor who wants a tax exemption for computation of personal or corporate tax can request for a tax exempt receipt.

PLEASE BEWARE OF UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS SOLICITING DONATIONS.
KINDLY ENSURE THAT ALL DONATIONS ARE ISSUED WITH A NUMBERED BUDDHIST MAHA VIHARA OFFICIAL RECEIPT.

BMV OFFICE HOURS | *MON – SAT : 9.00 am - 9.00 pm* | *SUN & PUBLIC HOLIDAYS : 9.00 am - 5.00 pm*

BUDDHIST MAHA VIHARA
123 Jalan Berhala, Brickfields 50470 Kuala Lumpur.
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Email: info@buddhistmahavihara.org
Website: www.buddhistmahavihara.org