

FREE

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Awaken

to Compassion and Wisdom on the journey of life



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Ani Choying

"Even one person's actions can have a ripple effect and impact the world."

Understanding ourselves

through Meditation

Our practice

is to see ourselves

Awareness

in Meditation



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Moving Forward by Taking Steps to Forge a Kinder, more Compassionate World

abbot's message

Things are slowly but surely returning to a new normal and a different way of life. Measures are gradually easing and borders are opening up. In fact, some countries overseas have opened up for unvaccinated travel, and dropped mask-wearing and other measures.

People have changed after experiencing the pandemic. They have discovered more about themselves through inward reflection and meditation, understanding themselves and their fears better.

More people are also realising the importance of inward contemplation and meditation about life, and are waking up to the significance that spiritual cultivation holds for a more fulfilling and meaningful life, especially in the face of adversities.

When we encounter health problems or physical pain, we go to the doctor for treatment, or medication.

Doing mindful breathing is best for emotional pain and inner turmoil. Simply set aside five minutes every morning and focus on doing deep inhalation and exhalation. Observe with detachment the ebb and flow of thoughts and emotions, and how these are impermanent and constantly changing. Just like the waxing and waning moon, the fluctuation is simply a part of nature.

Nothing unfavourable or what you deem bad will last forever. Likewise, neither will what you deem favourable or good. Everything is constantly evolving and changing. The duality of good and bad arises from labelling, and how we have been conditioned to see our experiences with coloured filters.

“As the Diamond Sutra says,

“So you should view this fleeting world -

**A star at dawn,
a bubble in a stream,**

**A flash of lightning in
a summer cloud,**

**A flickering
lamp, a phantom,
and a dream.”**

**Practise gratitude daily.
Find little instances in your
life to be grateful for.**

For example, be grateful that you are still alive, are breathing and have nutritious food on your table and a shelter over your head; be grateful that you have a job that brings income, that you and your family members are alive, healthy and living in a peaceful nation, etc. Be grateful that you can see, hear and speak, etc.

Countless people are in far worse suffering and more dire situations than us.

If you are uncomfortable and resentful of the darkness you are in, why not be the light that will inspire others?

Start by taking that first step to forge the kind of world you want to see, a world that exudes more compassion, kindness and love. It is our responsibility: Each one of us must take that first baby step to build the world we want.

For as the Buddha said, drop by drop is the water pot filled. So think not lightly of the good that you can do.

May everyone have an awakening and spiritually fruitful Vesak. 🌸

Sik Kwang Sheng (Ven)

Abbot, Kong Meng San

Phor Kark See Monastery

Since time immemorial, sages, saints and enlightened ones have taught us that “knowledge is power”.

And the most powerful knowledge comes from the wisdom of realising one’s true nature (pages 20, 21 & 24). This is the goal and purpose of all religions and spiritual traditions.

With open curiosity and strong awareness, through studying, contemplation and meditation, we can find all truths in ourselves via experiential realisation, not on a conceptual level but one which arises from a deep self-awareness gained through a personal and direct experience.

We understand how our minds can change our brains (page 4). Understanding how our minds work experientially, we will be better able to free ourselves from conflict and conditioning (pages 5 & 23). The mind of awakening, says the Buddha, is like gold because it is pure (page 16).

Ani Choying gives candid, practical and wise replies on how to deal with all the turmoils that are going on in our world at the moment (page 12).

While on page 8, Oh Puay Fong also shares useful tips with the P.A.U.S.E. process to stop misinformation and algorithmic radicalisation, so that we can regain power over our senses, instead of being blindly led by technology-driven communication and recommendations.

People look outwards for happiness and peace, focusing on the future. Yet, it is in the present and only the present that we live (pages 18 & 34).

The ego-self is a pure illusion, like mist or clouds on a mountain (pages 22 & 33).

When one is able to realise this truth experientially, one will then have access to the true power and wisdom of transcendental knowledge.

May all beings have a spiritually enlightening Vesak in 2022. 🌸

Esther Thien

Yours in the Dharma,
Esther Thien

editor's note

*True power
comes from realising one's
true nature*

Using your **mind** to change the **brain**

Our brains are changing all the time.

When we see, hear, touch or smell something, electrical impulses flow from one neuron (a type of brain cell) to another.

Different parts of the brain communicate when a neuron fires an electrical impulse along a path, called a neural pathway, to another neuron. Each neuron has an average of ten thousand neural pathways linking it to other neurons. The signals sent by neurons create neural pathways in the brain, and that's how a brain changes over time.

When one neuron "fires", it could have an impact on thousands of other neurons located in different parts of the brain.

Imagine walking along a pathway in the grass, the more often you walk along that path, the flatter and wider the pathway gets, and it becomes easier to walk on. This is what happens when neurons fire along a path, again and again.

Similarly, every time you play the guitar, for example, neurons fire along a pathway in your brain, and the more you play, the smoother transmission on this pathway gets. As the neural pathway gets stronger, so does your ability to play the guitar, which is why playing chords and scales gets easier with practice.

“That’s what self-directed neuroplasticity—or using your mind to change your brain—is all about.

That’s how one can practise mindfulness and meditation to develop lifeskills that bring happiness, and better cope with the difficulties of life. ✨

*L*et us explore this question: Why meditate? My response is that what we are trying to do in meditation is to find out how our minds work experientially, to look at the different dimensions of our minds, and to understand our bodies. Then through that understanding, we make an effort to free ourselves from conflict and conditioning.

Realising we are conditioned

“First, we should realise we are conditioned — that we have conflicts, disappointments, frustration and stress. Then, we come to an understanding of these things, we see what these things do to us, and then to examine if it's possible to free ourselves from them. Or, to put it in another way, we check how far we can be free of our selfishness, self-centredness and ego.

feature

Text: Godwin Samararatne

Awareness in Meditation

When we explore our minds, the unconscious is very important: what we carry in our unconscious is our repressions, those things we have pushed away and denied in meditation, we see how far we can be open to these things, if we can allow them to come up, and if we can deal with them.

Another thing when we look at our minds is to see how our perceptions give rise to our conceptions, and how our conceptions can alter our perceptions, too! We also have to look at our bodies and sensations, how we relate to them, and what the connection between the body and the mind is.

Our expectations lead to conflict

Take, for example, the question of physical pain. Normally, what do we do when there is physical pain? If we sit on a bench, after a while, pain arises, and we automatically shift our posture. Why? Because we don't like it. But through that response, do we ever learn anything about pain? We just react in a very conditioned way.

Now, in meditation, we try to learn about pain, we try not to have that immediate, habitual, reaction. We might learn that physical pain gives rise to various

psychological states, such as dislike, fear, anxiety, and so forth. Then, we try to see if it is possible to have this physical pain without having the psychological reaction.

Related to pain, of course, is pleasure. We like pleasurable sensations to continue, and painful ones to stop. In meditation, we realise that what happens is often quite contrary to what we want. By wanting certain sensations to continue, conflict arises, because we have projected how we want the world to be. When the world doesn't live up to our expectations, then there is conflict.

Another area to explore in meditation is our relationships with other people, and with the world. Most of our problems and conflicts, as well as our joys and happiness, derive from our relationships: the way we relate to ourselves and to our environment. In meditation, we learn to understand these relationships, and through that to learn about ourselves.

Our minds construct our world and experiences

Our emotions are also an important area to enquire into. Normally when we are angry, for instance, we are just angry, with no consciousness of how that anger is affecting our bodies, or what psychological complexes it gives rise to. If we ask someone who is not a meditator:

Why are you getting angry? Invariably, the response we get is that the other person is responsible, that so-and-so has provoked the anger.

Now, it is a very important aspect of meditation that we learn to take responsibility for what is happening in our own minds, when we learn to stop blaming others. Blaming others is the easy way out, because since they are to blame, you don't have to do anything about the situation.

“ This brings up the point that we create a world of our own, from our conclusions, prejudices, expectations, and conditionings. Anything that does not correspond to this private world we have constructed gives rise to suffering and conflict. In meditation, we come to understand this process, so we learn that problems arise mainly in relation to our own conclusions about how the world should be.

To put it in another way, we realise that a lot of what we are seeing is subjective, so we try to see how that subjectivity operates. Gradually, we check how far we can become objective, learning to see things as they are, not as they should or must be.

So, there are all these things and also, our motivations that need enquiring into, the games we play with each other, and also the role playing we get involved in. One aspect of this is to see how many masks, or personas, we put on to keep the world at a distance. All of this comes under scrutiny in meditation.

Awareness and an equanimous mind

In meditation, in all the techniques, there is an aspect which is very much emphasised, and that is awareness. All techniques converge on two points: awareness; and having an equanimous mind, a mind that is detached, a mind that is not identifying with things, a mind in a steady state of peace and calm.

Now, why is awareness so important? Because it is the opposite of being like a machine. With awareness, we become conscious of our reactions and responses, we build up self-knowledge and understanding.

If one has total awareness, would it be possible to have things in the unconscious mind? I would suggest that what lies in the unconscious

are in fact those areas that one is not aware of. If one has complete awareness and attention, if someone has cultivated that state, perhaps it would be possible to prevent things from falling into the unconscious. That's an interesting idea, don't you think?

Awareness of what's there with no dualistic grasping

In the first stage of meditation, we are trying to work with what is there, we may have negative emotions, restlessness, anxiety, fear, guilt. Whilst learning to focus on an object, we at least learn how to detach from these emotions, and when they are subdued, then the *jhana* factors arise — there is joy, happiness, one-pointedness, awareness. Positive emotions arise in the place of negative ones.

In the second phase, we learn to be aware of both positive and negative states without distinction, and to reflect them as they arise, just as they are.

Joy arises and we reflect it just as in a mirror, without the feeling this is 'my' joy, or 'my' restlessness. This is true freedom, that is the model presented in the Dharma.

That is why there is so much emphasis on awareness. Without repressing negative feelings on the one hand, and without giving in to them on the other — these are the two extremes that we avoid.

We do not give energy to whatever is arising. If we start fighting these things, there is a battle going on, and we really end up giving them more energy.

We need to learn this from experience, otherwise whatever I'm saying is just theoretical. Thus, what is crucial is to really experience this for yourself, this is really important.

Then with the insight gained from direct experience, we become really open — no fear, no repression. That will give us a certain lightness, a certain joy, and a lot of confidence.

Now all of this sounds very simple, doesn't it? ❀

Acharya Godwin Samararatne
(6 September 1932 – 22 March 2000) was one of the best known lay meditation teachers in Sri Lanka in recent times. Godwin was an active collaborator with the reincarnation researcher Ian Stevenson, and worked with the latter whenever he visited Sri Lanka from the mid-1960s until his research ended in the country in 1988. During that time, he co-authored a number of articles with Stevenson on the subject of rebirth. He also held teaching tours in Switzerland, Germany, United Kingdom, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana; and later in the 1980s and 1990s, in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore as well.



Oh Puay Fong offers some helpful tips along the Buddhist spirit of critical enquiry to navigate the chaos and confusion of our tech-filled age.

The Context

Technology is ubiquitous in our lives these days, and there is no escape. I once contemplated disconnecting digitally by terminating my mobile line, but a wiser friend cautioned me that this would be a mistake in Singapore, because I need it for Singpass and online banking transactions. Admittedly, being able to perform transactions through mobile apps at the tip of our fingers has made many previously time-consuming and boring chores, like queueing up at the bank waiting to be served, so much more convenient and frictionless. All from the comfort of home, too!

However, this seamless convenience comes with its own risks. The alarming rise of scams mediated by technology in all their various guises in recent years should make people sit up, and become more wary. Yet,

the relentless publicity campaigns by the authorities seem to fall on deaf ears, with the 2021 crime statistics showing that scams increased by 53%, constituting almost half of all cases, while physical crimes decreased¹. More worryingly, a study found that 45% of scam victims reported being scammed more than once². A separate study on individuals' vulnerability to fake news also found "those more susceptible tended to be older, lived in one- to three-room public housing, and had higher trust in local, online-only media."³. Many people are also unaware of the algorithmic biases that are programmed into the popular apps they use, which lead to polarisation towards extreme views. For example, I once accidentally tapped on a click-bait about the conflict in Palestine on YouTube, and soon all the subsequent recommendations I received were on this issue, with increasing shocking and radical videos to keep my eyeballs glued.

Against this backdrop, I would like to share some tips to address this tech-driven phenomenon. Specifically, I shall suggest how we can prevent crime, by not falling victim to crime in the first place because it takes two hands to clap; how to spot misinformation, or propaganda; and how to stem radicalisation by algorithms. I conclude with some simple steps that we can take to nurture a more wholesome virtual world.

Preventing Crime

The police have pointed out that "a discerning public is the best defence

of which originate from overseas." Let me first address the foreign origins of such crime. The fact that the perpetrators are in a different legal jurisdiction means that even if they can be identified, our local police cannot arrest them without permission and assistance from the law enforcement agency of the other country. In short, the criminals will probably get away scot-free, laughing to their crypto vaults with your money, by exploiting legal jurisdiction and bureaucratic hurdles. If you fall victim to an online scam, you should report to the police, but you should also realise that the greatest value of doing so is informational — and yes, you have added to the statistics. The chances of seeing justice served are minimal, especially in cases where the crooks are operating from overseas. Therefore, the strongest defence is not to fall into their trap in the first place.

Start by educating yourself about the common scams, and their *modus operandi*. Such information is freely available in Singapore on the scamalert.sg website. Thereafter, be vigilant whenever you receive a call, message, email, or friend request that is out of the ordinary. The 5W1H framework offers a simple and easy-to-recall method to quickly assess a situation, so you can decide how to respond. I shall illustrate its use by sharing a recent experience.

One day, I received a call out of the blue from someone claiming to be my personal banker. He requested that we meet up so that he could offer me tailored solutions to invest my money for better returns, compared to the dismal interest rate the bank was giving me. The whole setup was odd, as shown by the following 5W1H analysis:

- WHO** : Who is the speaker? I have saved with this same bank since I was eight, and have never had a personal banker. This is a big Red Flag.
- WHY** : Why is he calling me with this offer now? Hmm...He seemed to know that I have savings in my account with this bank.
- WHAT** : What does he want? Well, he wanted to meet up so he could give me financial advice.
- WHICH** : Which number did he call from? The landline number that he called me from was without the "+65" prefix commonly associated with scam calls.
- WHEN** : He suggested we meet up the following day. This urgency should be another red flag, according to the cybersecurity courses I attended. Compelling victims to make hasty decisions is an effective tactic that hackers and scammers use.
- WHERE** : He offered the bank's branch office as the meeting venue, which sounded legitimate. However, scammers often lure victims by first suggesting a legitimate opening, but then quickly lead them away, e.g. "Let's go to the nearby coffeeshop as it's too noisy here."

More importantly, this person on the phone was just a voice that I've never even met. WHY should I trust him?

A separate close encounter I had was when the online seller told me to meet him at a secluded park that I'm unfamiliar with to complete the transaction. Please walk away from all such dubious offers, like I did.

HOW : How can I verify what he's saying? At this point, I decided that I was not keen to invest and told him that I would visit the bank if I changed my mind. I mentally noted that I would ask the bank to inform me in writing of any personal banker assigned to me, because this is the standard practice from the other financial institutions I transact with.

Months later, I read in the news about financial consultants from different banks being sentenced for cheating their clients. Some people may think I'm paranoid, but at least I'm not bawling my eyes out after losing my life savings. Better safe than sorry!

Stopping Misinformation and Algorithmic Radicalisation

Asking the 5W1H questions can also help us to screen out fake experts and other self-proclaimed prophets, gurus or Ponzi schemers. If you were, like me, one of those obedient children who had always dutifully done what was told, I strongly encourage you now to release the defiant inner teenage rebel you have been suppressing all these years and demand emphatically in all tech-facilitated dealings, "Who is this person to tell me this?" The virtual world is full of self-anointed high priests and priestesses who spew all kinds of theories and tales, often with few details on their credentials, or the sources of their authority. Do not cede your personal power to such false authority figures. Taken as entertainment, they are a fun way to pass time, but it would be a grave mistake with dangerous consequences to take them seriously.



Here is another way to fact-check online information: P.A.U.S.E.

P : P is for Ponder. Take time out to think through, verify, or seek alternative, even contrary, explanations or views. We are constantly bombarded by both the high velocity and high volume of information that induce mental fatigue, thereby numbing us to accept unthinkingly whatever is presented to us. But of greater importance should be the other two Vs of any information: Veracity and Value. It is a good idea to declutter our mind from all untrue or useless information, saving our precious time and limited cognitive resources for better uses.

A : A is for Ask Questions. Using the 5W1H, we should proactively question the speaker's claims, credentials, sources of authority and any conflicts of interest. This requires us to probe deeper and investigate beyond the persona or façade carefully crafted by the speaker. Moreover, how this speaker responds to challenges is also telling. If this speaker reacts adversely by belittling the questioners, or simply refuses to engage them further, proceed with caution.

U : U is for Understand the Ulterior Motives. Most content creators upload their work to digital platforms for money. Usually, they are paid based on the number of clicks they get, or for how long they can retain viewers' attention, so they have a financial incentive to sensationalise their work with catchy titles and scintillating graphics. Many influencers are unrecognisable in real life because they look nothing like the photoshopped or filtered images of themselves. It's best to see them as aspiring script writers directing their own blockbuster, starring themselves (of course!) and just let them get on with their own drama.

Another possible but more insidious and dangerous group of influencers aims for mindshare, whether along political, religious, nationalistic or racial lines. These invisible forces usually operate behind channels or fronts that they fund secretly, making them hard to detect. This makes the next step crucial to ferret out such masterminds lurking in the dark.

S : S is for Seek Alternatives or Help. The way to detect the sinister direction that some influencers may be leading us towards is to stay open to alternative explanations, perspectives and opinions, particularly from their detractors. This will quickly expose any unspoken but fixated push to steer us towards certain views or outcomes, especially extremist or dogmatic ones.

Always remember that an expert in astrophysics may be the world authority in his field, but his expertise may not extend to other domains, e.g. giving investment advice. Anyone is free to post anything online, but just because there is a click-bait doesn't mean we should take it. Consult both online and offline sources widely after checking their credibility, then decide what is best for yourself.

Actually, social media is a misnomer because no other technology has succeeded to isolate people socially more than such digital platforms. One consequence of this phenomenon is that we can end up feeling lost and trapped in some online encounters, especially intimate ones. My suggestion is to approach a trusted and neutral person for help when you're in doubt. Talking things over with a dependable friend can shed light on the situation, even or maybe *especially* when both of you disagree. Allowing the possibility that you may have been wrong, or misled by the online content, can set you free.

E : E is for Extricate Yourself. Sometimes, distance and time away will confer the clarity and objectivity needed to see things as they are. A periodic digital detox by shutting off our gadgets is highly recommended. Instead of wasting hours aimlessly surfing online, why not start a 20-minute meditation practice daily instead?

Also, regular housekeeping, such as habitually clearing the searched or watched history on YouTube, or cookies from websites you had visited, will prevent Artificial Intelligence (AI) from recommending what you will view next. Even better would be to turn off the tracking analytics on your devices, although doing so may result in a sub-optimal experience. These are some simple but effective ways to stem radicalisation by algorithms.

Left alone, AI can programmatically eliminate your access to alternatives by tirelessly suggesting what to watch next, based on your past viewing or search history. This self-perpetuating mechanism has led to the observation that technology is no longer characterised by "garbage in, garbage out", but "garbage in, garbage forever".

None of the above suggestions is new. The Buddha gave this advice on the importance of conducting our own critical research to the Kalamas in the Kalama Sutta:

Do not accept things just because they are being repeated, or come from tradition, scriptures, rumour, guesswork, incorrect reasoning, a bias towards the subject, clever oration or mere respect for the teacher or speaker. When you know for yourself that something leads to harm and sorrow and is not welcomed by the wise, then abandon it.

This emphasis to rely on our own inner light to investigate the truth for ourselves is echoed in the Mahaparinibbana Sutta, which recorded the Buddha's last words to his followers: *Be a lamp unto yourself. Seek not external refuges, but be your own refuge. Strive on diligently.*

Another teaching that is relevant and useful these days is the T.H.I.N.K. prescription for right speech. It is helpful to ask ourselves the following questions before we forward any digital content next time. Doing so may

reduce the carbon footprint from the feverish spreading of digital content that has gone viral, too.

T : Is it true? Is it timely?
H : Is it helpful?
I : Is it inspiring?
N : Is it necessary?
K : Is it kind?

Finally, as a tribute to the late Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh who entered parinirvana recently, I offer the following quote from him as a reminder that we should all reclaim sovereignty over our mind territory. Guard all the doors of our sensory perception and be intentional about what we allow into our originally pristine mind, instead of being dragged blindly and frenetically down murky rabbit holes by technology. May the inner light of our wisdom shine forth and penetrate the darkness! 🌟

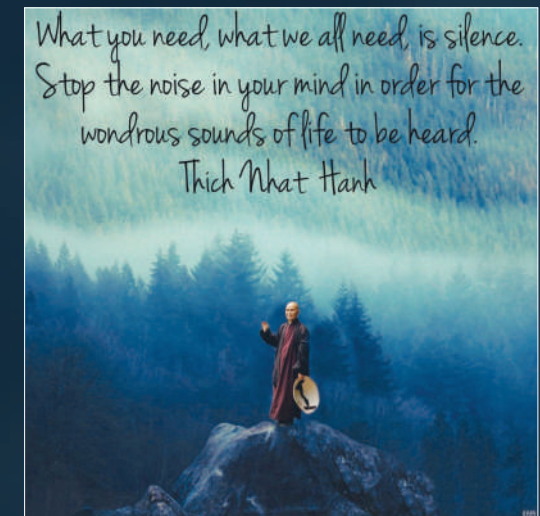


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Oh Puay Fong is currently pursuing her PhD in strategic technology management. She believes in lifelong learning, relearning and unlearning.



Ripples Across Humanity

Ani Choying Drolma speaks with Felicia Nah and with her humble, pragmatic and down-to-earth conduct inspires one to be a better person.



Photo credit: www.choying.com

Ani Choying Drolma was born in Kathmandu, Nepal. She joined the Nagi Gompa nunnery on Shivapuri Mountain in Kathmandu valley when she was 13 years old. She was privileged to be taught and mentored by the renowned meditation master, His Eminence Tulku Ugyen Rinpoche. She became the chanting master at the nunnery and through this, realised she was able to transform her anger and frustrations of life into compassion and understanding.

American guitarist and composer Steve Tibbetts visited the nunnery in the 1990s and heard her singing. Her soothing, heavenly voice has been likened to an echo from the deepest part of one's spirit. Tibbetts asked if he could record her voice. He brought the recording back to the U.S. for reworking and mixing, and sent the recording to music companies who expressed great interest in it. Tibbetts then asked Ani if they could release an album together.

Ani had to ask her teacher for permission to do so. Nuns were not supposed to sing and record songs – many people associate them with chanting of prayers, meditation and quiet introspection. However, her Guru said she should do the album because these would be Dharma songs which would benefit anyone who listened to them.

The album "Cho" was released in 1997 to many good reviews. Radio stations, newspapers, magazines interviewed her and Ani received many invitations to perform 'live'. Tibbetts asked if she was keen to do so.

Ani did not get excited about this. In her mind, she was just going to America to sing, which she enjoyed.

She was 26 and had never been to the U.S. She was more excited about visiting the country, experiencing McDonalds, looking at high-rise buildings and travelling the big wide roads than about the 'live' performances. Tibbetts and Ani did small performance tours, some at Tibetan monasteries in the U.S.

I had the privilege of meeting Ani online and we talked for more than an hour. This humble, pragmatic and down-to-earth nun inspires you to be a better person. I was curious about the money that she received for her recordings and performances. After all, those who have embarked on the monastic life are not supposed to receive monetary rewards for what they do.

"When I started receiving pay cheques, I realised I could make money, which gave me the strength to fulfil my wish. That I could give girls in Nepal access to higher education."

Patriarchy runs strong in her country. Ani explains, "Women are viewed as weak, less capable and less intelligent. Their duty is for household work, to serve the family and community and take care of the children. The culture and mindset are not about girls receiving higher education."

Ani wanted to do something for the girls in her country. She believed girls could create a better place to live for her country. She realised she could help the girls do this by giving them the strength and resources. Money gave her the empowerment to help the girls in her country – it helped Ani to help others.

Ani also realised she could be more vocal, active and clear in her actions to show people that women were equally capable, if not more so

than men. Mindsets in Nepal have changed – slowly but surely. Decades ago, none of the monasteries had academic sections for nuns but now they do. Somewhere down the line, Ani has contributed to that change.

"Ani inspires others through her own actions – she is a living example of strength and capability."

Ani and I also talked about the situation in Ukraine. After Russia attacked Ukraine, thousands of Ukrainians fled and continue to leave the country. Many have died or been injured in the war. Recently, some Romanians visited Ani in Nepal and wanted to make a contribution to the nunnery. Knowing how despondent the Ukrainians are, she told her visitors to take back their donation and give it to the refugees instead. This was Ani's small gesture to say she cares. Everyone and anyone can do his part, no matter how small.

Ani says,

"This is not just the karma of Ukrainians and Russians. It's our collective karma. We should dedicate our good thoughts and words to them. However possible, every good action can benefit the people affected by the war. Every little drop can"

fill a container. We should never forget we live in one world – not just living in different countries with different cultures, languages, religions etc. If we don't behave responsibly, even one person's actions can have a ripple effect and impact the world."

Nepal, like the rest of the world, was deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the population live under poverty and this posed a bigger challenge than the pandemic itself. The already poor people didn't have any income. Children couldn't go to school. As the country went into lockdown, fear affected people's minds. This mental anguish also affected people the world over. Ani says the best medicine for depression or stress is meditation.

"When someone is in pain, they seek painkillers. When someone experiences emotional pain, the best medicine is meditation. Start with good, deep breathing. Then slowly find ways to observe your emotions and analyse the cause of your discomfort and pain."

The pandemic and the Ukrainian crisis also revealed the compassion and empathy of humans. Even in the 2015 Nepal earthquake, in which nearly 9,000 died, people the world over wanted to help. But kindness without courage is like someone who is crippled. The change starts with you, no matter how small. Ani has a favourite saying: "Instead of cursing the darkness, why not light a candle yourself?"

Ani's teacher Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche taught her that Buddha-nature is innate in everyone, so we are all capable of achieving enlightenment. She recalls fondly that he never told her what she should or should not do. He was always kind and compassionate to her and others — and that inspired her. Every time she saw his kindness and compassion, she wished she could do that herself. The transformation did not happen overnight. But over time, instead of just wishing for it, she took action. And then she realised she had become a happier person. She looked at things differently, with the attitude of 'how blessed I am'.

Ani believes good and bad things will happen, but as the Buddha taught — everything is impermanent. "No matter how bad the situation is, it is not going to be there forever. The source of happiness is in your heart. Learn to be patient and maintain your positive attitude towards life. Find the meaning in the experience of pain and challenges."



The perseverance and positive attitude is best captured in this nursery rhyme by Julia Carney I learned as a child:

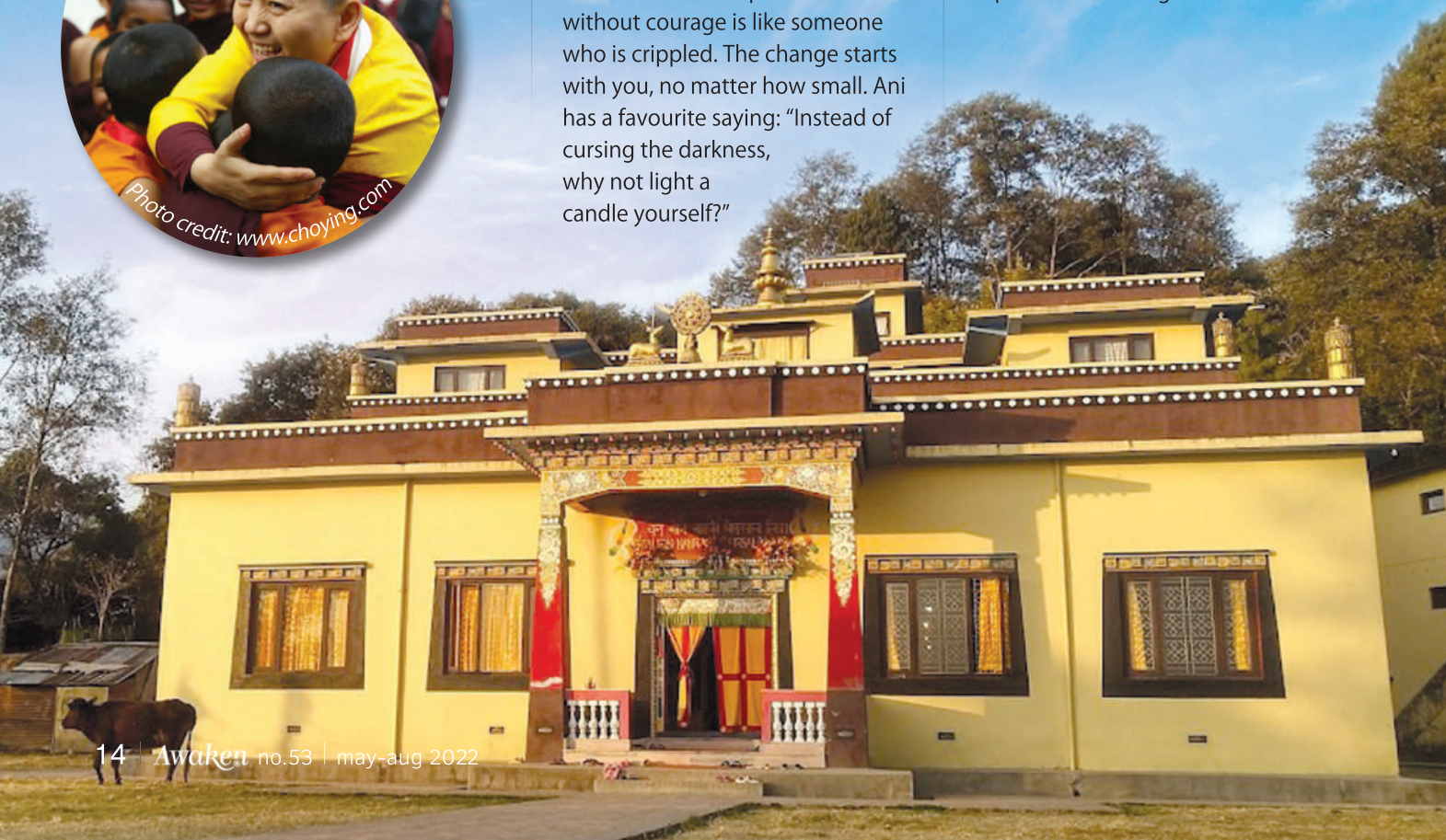
**“ Little drops of water
Little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean,
And the beauteous land.**

**And the little moments,
Humble though they be,
Make the mighty ages
Of eternity.”**

Happy Vesak! ☀

Ani Choying Drolma is a Nepalese Buddhist nun of Tibetan origin from the Nagi Gompa Nunnery in Nepal. She is a student of the renowned meditation master, His Eminence Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche, and well-known for bringing Tibetan Buddhist chants and songs to mainstream audiences. Her music is likened as a beam of light that cut through darkness, filled with compassion, purity and healing power. She is also a nationally and internationally awarded humanitarian and has been recently appointed as the UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador to Nepal.

Felicia Nah has been working full-time in the education industry for 27 years. She also freelances as a radio presenter and news editor for the local media industry.



THE GOLD SŪTRA

In this very brief sutra, Venerable Ānanda asks the Buddha about the nature of the mind of awakening.

The Gold Sūtra presents a very brief but meaningful teaching on the mind of awakening, the aspiration to attain the unsurpassed and perfect awakening of a buddha for the benefit of all beings.

It consists of the Buddha's answer to a single question posed by Venerable Ānanda about how the mind of awakening should be viewed. The Buddha declares that the mind of awakening is like gold because it is pure, and he gives the analogy that just as a smith may shape gold into various forms, yet the nature of the gold itself does not change, so too the mind of awakening appears with various unique attributes, yet the nature of the mind of awakening itself does not change.

The Buddha then proclaims a single four-line verse that succinctly articulates the nature of the mind of awakening and the way to practise it. ❀

Homage to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

" Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was dwelling in the Jetavana, in the Park of Anāthapiṇḍada. At that time the venerable Ānanda asked the Blessed One, "Blessed One, how should the mind of awakening be viewed?"

The Blessed One replied, "Venerable Ānanda, the mind of awakening should be viewed as being in nature like gold. Just as gold is pure by nature, so the mind of awakening is pure by nature. Just as a smith shapes gold into a multiplicity of forms, yet the nature of the gold does not change, although the mind of awakening may appear to have a variety of unique attributes, ultimately these never waver from the mind of awakening. Therefore, its nature does not change."

Then the Blessed One proclaimed the following verse:

“The mind of awakening is pure.
Strive for the benefit of self and other.
Meditate on the insubstantial essence.
Be intent on what causes
the birth of wisdom.”

" The Blessed One spoke thus, and Venerable Ānanda, the entire retinue, and the world together with its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas rejoiced and praised what the Blessed One had said. This completes the noble Great Vehicle sūtra "The Gold Sūtra."

84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha is a global non-profit initiative to translate all the Buddha's words into modern languages, and to make them available to everyone.

Our Future



Siha, will this year be better than the previous year? I worry about the future. I am alone and I am in fear.



Do not be afraid Booboo. You are not alone. First, we have to understand that the future will always be uncertain.

Very often, people look outwards for happiness and peace. But actually, we can only find our happiness within.

When we focus solely on the future, we lose sight of the present moment. What matters most is what we do now and our inner spiritual development.



External world



With spiritual cultivation, we make wise decisions with a balanced mind. It is our spiritual qualities that bring us to safety, peace and happiness.

Without wholesome qualities, we are easily led by defilements that only lead to delusion, danger, destruction and downfall.

Often in difficult times, we can see how people are led by greed, hatred and delusion, bringing only destruction and suffering.



Remember, it is not the external world that makes our future good or bad. It is our inner qualities that determine our future. Our future is in our own hands, our own cultivation.



Dad, how can I have a bright future?

Dad, how can our society be peaceful?



By developing your spiritual qualities.



When every citizen develops their spiritual qualities.

Climate change
Pandemic
Natural Disaster
Illness
Death
Genocide
War
Drought
Earthquake
Tsunami
Financial crisis

Due to impermanence, the world will always be uncertain, unstable and fleeting.

Our spiritual qualities and cultivation are like our boat, our refuge. With it, we can weather any storm. It is our own spiritual qualities that will lead us to the light.



Thus Booboo, make cultivating kindness, compassion, mindfulness, wisdom and wholesome qualities the main priority in life.

When we develop our spiritual qualities, we can face confidently what life throws at us. We will have a mind that is unshaken by the vicissitudes of life.



"Driven only by fear, do men go for refuge to many places — to hills, woods, groves, trees and shrines."

I finally understand now, Siha, it is my own spiritual qualities that determine my present and future. Thus I will focus on the present moment and cultivate my inner qualities gradually as that is what truly matters.

Our practice is not to see the **Buddha**.
Our practice is to see **ourselves**.



SHARING

To see the Buddha during our practice is auspicious. However, the real practice is to see clearly the positive and negative aspects of our mind.

We cannot see our true self in the mirror because of our attachment to "me, myself and I".
From this, we differentiate and discriminate against "others".

We can only see others' faults
but never our own problems. Amitufo!

The Simple Truth

Once, a village woman gave birth to a baby boy. He was so tiny and ugly-looking that the woman decided to abandon the baby at a monastery.

As the monastery had no baby-caring facilities or equipment, the monks strung a net between the branches of a tree in the monastery garden so the infant could sleep.

Despite this dire start in life, the baby grew up into a wise monk who continued to sit and sleep in the net.

One day, a mandarin who was carried by his servants in a beautiful palanquin, passed by the monastery. He saw the monk in the net and called out in alarm, asking the monk why he was sitting in such a dangerous seat.

The monk replied that his seat was much safer than that of the mandarin.

"How can that be? My seat is luxurious and comfortable. How can it be

dangerous?" asked the mandarin. "There are many who would like your seat as well," replied the monk.

"Your subjects may rebel at any time and take your position by force, whereas nobody wants mine. Therefore I consider my seat much safer than yours," elaborated the monk.

The mandarin was impressed by the monk's answer. His curiosity awakened, the mandarin asked, "What is the essence of Buddhism?"

Moral of the Story:

Buddhism is a practice for every day of our lives. Unlike our academic education in the university, we can never graduate.

We meditate to clear our mind and return to our true nature, our Buddha nature which is always with us at all times. Wisdom has to come experientially from our own practice.

"Turn away non-virtue. Do only what is virtuous and good. Purify the mind. This is the whole teaching," answered the monk.

"That's it?" exclaimed the mandarin. "This is so simple and widely-known that even village children sing it as a song."

"Yes, every child knows it. But how many people can truly abide by it and adhere to the teaching their entire lives?" ❄



No Duality

So it is said
Anything sliced
No matter how thin
Has two sides
Always.
One perceives the other better
Purer, less evil, less vile.

Yet this 'thing' sliced to
Oblivion
Leaves nothing.
An absence

Thus, it is heard
And now we know:
Always,
It is Emptiness and
Nothingness
That defines all 'things' ❀

Master Thay

As instructed
I touch the Earth three times
To witness this Truth you bare
Amidst the piling of sandalwood chips
In this casket
To fragrant your physical carrier
I am painfully reminded
You are not there.

Truly,
But it matters not
Listening to your Dharma
This flow of wisdom
Water transforming as clouds
Waves as cascading water
Water as encompassing mist
You defy the Scythe of death
You re-Mind us
To own this no-Form of *Now*
In every Step,
every Breath Is Life. ❀

Wong Yunn Chii is an associate professor at the Department of Architecture in the National University of Singapore. In his spare time, he enjoys birding, and sensing the world through images and text.

in the last final exams, there was an essay question, "The author said that many obstacles do not exist externally, but internally within ourselves. Do you agree? Give practical examples to support your answer." Admittedly, this question is rather difficult for teenagers to analyse, and even I could not help but ponder over the phrase that many obstacles exist internally within ourselves. Humans have a common tendency to blame external circumstances when things do not go well, as if our life experiences arise completely from external factors beyond our control. Perhaps thinking this way allows us to feel better, because assigning blame externally allows us to detach from the situation, absolving us from taking personal responsibility.

I once heard this saying: When you point at others with a finger, remember four fingers are pointing at yourself. Do you still believe that you are utterly blameless? When the exam results were released, many students were dissatisfied with their grades. They gloomily complained that they could have done better, that they were disappointed with their performance. Listening closely, I detected that they were disappointed with their results, not with themselves. I gave them some days to calm down before approaching them. "You are disappointed with the results, so how do you intend to improve in the future? Have you reflected on why you got this grade? If you don't pinpoint the reason, it'll be difficult to take the next steps. It is easy for us to blame external factors, like the questions were too difficult, the weather that day of the exam was bad, the teacher did not give us enough practice tests and so on but have you looked within yourself for the root causes?"

My fellow teachers said that I was too indirect. I should have simply told them that they were lazy, had not done their homework, had spent too much time online, were inattentive in class etc. Actually, the students have to realise these faults themselves: The biggest obstacles in

their learning journey are themselves. However, to tell them plainly will only arouse their defensive resistance. They have to self-reflect and come to the conclusion themselves.

I know a government employee who is always blaming others. Whatever work assignments his boss gave him, he invariably responded that they were either unworkable or too difficult. He would list all the reasons why they could not be done and grumble endlessly. Every year, during the annual performance appraisal, he would be unfavourably assessed because of his negative attitude. As a result, he became despondent and felt unappreciated by his supervisors. Yet, what is in fact holding him back is his own unwillingness to try and refusal to challenge himself, not what others think of him. We live in a high-stress society, and it is easy for people to slip into depression. However, even if someone reaches out a helping hand, the outcome may still differ for each individual. Those who know how to adjust their thinking, motivate themselves, and accept the helping hand, would be able to move on from their depression. In contrast, those who stubbornly hold on to their view that everything is hopeless and that nothing would make any difference will continue to swirl in the currents of depression. They are unwilling to open their mind and heart, so no light can shine in. Are the chains of their depression unbreakable? Or have they tripped themselves up before even taking that crucial first step forward?

Thus, I agree with the observation that "many obstacles do not exist externally, but internally within ourselves."

“The prison that we erect in our heart and mind is formidable, requiring tremendous will power and determination to break free from. Aren't we often our biggest enemy? ❀



Our Biggest Enemy

Original Chinese article, 《心的障碍》
written by Xinqi (心憩) was published in issue 52

Understanding Ourselves through Meditation

Meditation allows us to understand the meaning of the word 'defilement' and to experience the wonder of its absence. It reveals how pervasive and deep-rooted defilement is. It shows us irrefutably that only by abandoning defilements altogether can we hope to realise true inner freedom.

“In meditation, we learn how defilements arise and pass away, what triggers them, what feeds them, what weakens them, what removes them. We cannot just bypass defilements or blast them out of our minds. We have to understand our enemies and outwit them.”

Liberation is only possible when meditation is grounded in the Four Noble Truths. Lacking such a framework, we end up merely trading in our coarser defilements for subtler ones. ✨

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



if we are not mindful or attentive, our living environment and daily habits risk gradual degeneration over time, resulting in detrimental consequences. The saying that a woman's wardrobe is always short of a suitable dress leads to endless shopping sprees to buy new clothes, so that eventually, even the biggest wardrobe runs out of space. The kitchen cabinets are designed to maximise storage space, and should be able to hold many items, but so many things have accumulated over the years that they become filled to the brim with things that are hardly used. Other situations commonly encountered include: The office desk that is infrequently tidied will soon pile up with all kinds of junk. The toilet bowl that is not cleaned daily is soon stained with indelible marks. A small bag of trash that is not cleared for a few days will cause that space to become a massive dumping ground!

Or, you mindlessly took a smoke, and if you're not disciplined, you soon find yourself a heavy smoker. Similarly, you casually sipped some alcohol, or placed a small gambling bet, but if

you lack self-control, you "suddenly" find yourself addicted. The danger of this gradual decline into disorder over time (also known as "entropy") lies precisely in its inevitable direction towards negative outcomes. A small wound left untreated soon becomes infected and spreads, necessitating prolonged treatment and expenses. A small stalk of weed left alone soon spreads to overtake the whole field. A little spark, unextinguished, soon turns into a raging forest fire!

The metaphor of the boiling frog has long been used to describe this potential risk. It is said that a frog placed into a heated pot will immediately jump out. However, if the frog is placed into a cool pot that is slowly heated up, it will adapt to the gradually climbing temperature, and eventually be boiled alive. The boiling frog syndrome warns us that entropy, starting with seemingly small or minor lapses, will eventually wear down our vigilance and resilience.

In this increasingly stressful world we live in, exhaustion from work leads to apathy, or a failure to communicate with our family when we get home from work. This, in turn, erodes our sense of family cohesion and warmth.

Over time, we lose the drive we derive from making our family happy, ultimately corroding our zest for life and our dreams of building a happy future together with our loved ones. This is a vicious circle with very devastating consequences.

“Thus, we have to guard against the destructive nature of entropy in our own lives by maintaining mindful vigilance. Do not let this gradual insidious decay over time gain the upper hand and ruin our lives.” ✨

Mindfulness Over Time

Original Chinese article, 《漸漸》
written by Lingzi (靈子) was
published in issue 52



the
plant food

I choose you, Poké!

Text & Photos: Chloe Huang

Are you a poké fan? Nope, not Pokémon. I meant poké bowl, pronounced “poh-kay” bowl. I bet you have seen various types of poké bowls on social media, poké shops are gaining popularity around the world, popping up in every city that you can possibly name. Poké bowl actually originates from Hawaiian cuisine. Poké means “to slice or cut” raw fish and toss them over rice with vegetables and *umami* sauce.

My initial notion of a poké bowl was a customisable cold salad bowl, not very palatable for Asian taste buds. However, the new vegan cafe, *The Plant Food* formerly known as *Soul A Life*, offers a range of creative poké bowls that has totally changed my sentiments. The young lady owner and the chef of this cosy cafe has combined the traditional Japanese rice dish - *donburi* - with the Hawaiian’s poké bowl. There are dishes like **Teriyaki Tofu Bowl at S\$9.90**; **Japanese Monkey Head Mushroom Curry Bowl at S\$13.90**, which is served with healthy brown rice; and dry *udon* dishes, in addition to the standard poké bowls on the menu. The sides include vegan *Inari sushi* and the favourite of many Singaporeans, *Siew Mai* in Mala sauce.

I saw something unique on the menu: **Vegan Soboro Don at S\$11.90**, which is only available on weekends, so I ordered it to satisfy my curiosity. “Soboro” in Japanese

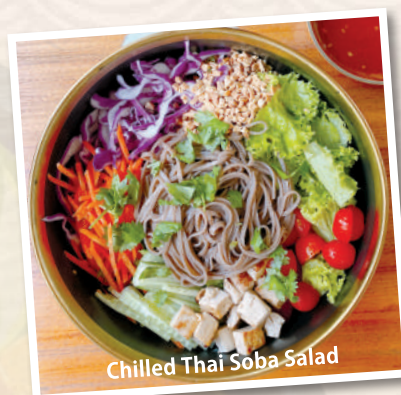
refers to ground meat, and I was served a minced plant-based meat rice bowl with scrambled tofu and nutritious edamame beans. The taste of the minced plant-based meat reminded me of *Lu Rou Fan*, the famous Taiwanese stewed meat rice. The scrambled beancurd was cooked with bits of ginger, making me wonder if the colour of the tofu came from the ginger. Overall, it was a filling and super healthy meal.

There are many interesting dishes on the menu that I really want to try, like the TPF **Teriyaki Soy Wing Rice Bowl at S\$11.90**, and **Tofu Cheesecake at S\$4.90**. I shall try them during my future visits.

Due to the limited space of the cafe, the indoor seats are all bar style suitable for solo diners. Outdoor seats are more spacious with greenery along the pavement. If you are looking for a peaceful and relaxing place to have a meal around Upper Thomson Road, I strongly recommend you to try The Plant Food! 🌱



Mala Siew Mai



Chilled Thai Soba Salad



Soboro Don

Overall Ratings:

Food	7.5/10
Ambience	6/10
Service	6/10

Address and Contact Details:

11 Sin Ming Road, Thomson V Two, #01-14, Singapore 575629 (Nearest MRT Upper Thomson Exit 3)

Operating Hours:

Mon - Thurs, 11.30am – 8pm
Fri – Sun, 11.30am – 9pm



LUCKY CAT A Luscious Café

Text & Photos: Jos Tan

Tucked in a hidden corner inside Hougang Community Club is a relatively new vegetarian café, **Lucky Cat**. From their wealth-inviting cat mascot (招财猫), it is quite obvious that this is a Japanese-themed café. Apart from meatless Japanese fusion cuisine, there are also dishes inspired from other cuisine-types such as Korean, Chinese and Western.

The café owner shared that the concept was birthed by a family of food and beverage enthusiasts who wanted to share their love and passion for food and beverages with their customers, extended family and friends. As vegetarians themselves, their aim is to create a space which brings people together to enjoy specialty coffee, tea and meatless cuisine in the residential housing area.

One of the house specialties under the *Donburi* (Japanese rice bowl) category is the **Lucky Tendon (S\$11)**. This is an assortment of vegetable tempura including enoki mushroom, shitake mushroom, broccoli, cherry tomato and others. The tempura is drizzled with teriyaki sauce and it comes with rice. Another interesting dish is the **Yangnyeom Monkey Head Mushroom (S\$11)**, which is a Korean-inspired dish

resembling the Korean sweet and spicy fried chicken. The shape and size of each piece can easily pass off as popcorn chicken. Although this isn’t a main dish, the portion is quite filling on its own. For a real small bite, I prefer the **Onigiri (S\$3.50)**, which are triangular-shaped rice balls, or you can opt for a full vegan dish such as the **Avocado Salad with Yuzu Ponzu Dressing (S\$8)**. I highly recommend this to avocado lovers due to the generous serving of avocado.

Apart from serving coffee, *Lucky Cat* also serves single-origin Chinese teas and handcrafted tea blends on their hot drinks menu. For those who are more adventurous, their ice-shaken tea mocktails (such as **Yuzu Rose Black Tea (S\$5)**), and milk-based tea drinks (such as the **Osmanthus Latte (S\$5.50)** or **Matcha Latte (S\$6)**) provide another level of tea-drinking experience. The drinks are carefully prepared by the barista and what better way to appreciate the efforts than to drink the tea mindfully and appreciate its fragrance.

Light bites, snacks and **ice cream with seasonal flavours (S\$5)** are good pairings for coffee and tea too. They also have a display of house-baked cookies and brownies. The **matcha cookie (S\$2)** is rich in matcha and not too crumbly.

While some dishes contain egg or milk, vegan options are available for certain dishes. Their dishes are generally rich in flavour and this might be why the café is attracting more people. As a result, there may be a slight waiting time, especially during peak hours. Due to its limited seating, they do not take reservations. 🌱



Lucky Tendon



Yangnyeom Monkey Head Mushroom



Avocado Salad with Yuzu Ponzu



Matcha Latte

Overall Ratings:

Food	8/10
Ambience	7.5/10
Service	8/10

Address and Contact Details:

Hougang Community Club
35 Hougang Ave 3, #01-02
Singapore 538840

Operating Hours:

Daily (except Wed) from 11am to 9pm

Details of the café can be found on:

Facebook: Luckycatcafesg
Instagram: Luckycatsg

Tempeh is a soy-based food which contains vitamin B12 and is a complete source of protein. It has all nine of the essential amino acids we need for healthy bones and muscles. It also contains phytoestrogens that have cancer-fighting and antioxidant properties. It is said to lower cholesterol and improve bone health, protect the heart, lower inflammation and help to relieve hot flushes.

Walnuts, according to research, support good brain function, lower bad cholesterol and inflammation, and help to manage diabetes. They are also a good source of Omega-3, antioxidants and can promote good gut health.



1. Baked Shoyu Black Pepper Tempeh

Ingredients (Serves three)

150g	Tempeh (sliced)
1.5 tbsp	Shoyu
1 tsp	Black pepper
1.5 tbsp	Cold pressed olive oil

Method

1. Marinate tempeh in a mixture of shoyu, black pepper and olive oil for 10 minutes.
2. Flip the tempeh after 5 minutes to ensure that it is evenly marinated.
3. Bake the marinated tempeh in an oven at 120°C for 1.5 hour.
4. Flip the tempeh after 45 minutes to ensure it is evenly baked on both sides.
5. Serve hot.

Scan this to find out more about Kee Yew:



2. Walnut Milk

Ingredients (Serves three)

200g	Walnuts
4pcs	Medjool dates
¼ tsp	Sea salt
800ml	Filtered water

Method

1. Soak walnuts overnight for 10 hours.
2. Mix all the ingredients together in a blender and blend at the highest speed for 2 minutes.
3. Serve warm*.

* Optional to sieve for a smoother texture.



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

Call **Awareness Hub at 6336 5067**, or turn to page 35 & 36 for more details.



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Little Monks Online Pastel Nagomi Art

When the mind is turbulent, any gesture to cleanse the mind and body can bring about a moment of peace; painting quietly is one of the ways to do so.

In this workshop, Sarana continues the Buddhist-themed Inner Peace series by guiding you on painting a series of artworks based on the little monks. Learn how to capture the innocence of the little monks in a variety of poses and expressions. At the same time, enjoy the process of painting with your fingers.

Immerse in peaceful creativity and fuel yourself through the Dharma. Sarana invites you to join her in our universal search for inner tranquillity and simplicity through art.

Date:	29 May (Sun)
Time:	10am-6pm (including 1-hour lunch break on your own)
Venue:	Online Zoom Class
Registration fee:	\$155 per pax / \$139.50 per pax for returning Awareness Hub students
Material fee payable to the instructor:	\$45 starter kit for new students
Instructor:	Ms Sarana Khoo, Advanced Instructor of Japan Pastel Hope and Art Association (JPHAA)

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88 Bright Hill Road Singapore 574117

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Please glue here and do not staple

Please glue here and do not staple

what's new

Text : Esther Thien

Blessed plant-based hand wash for the family

If you are looking for a wholesome hand wash for your family, you may want to consider the new range brought in by Awareness place.

Available in four choices, each 300ml bottle has a different scent made from assorted plant essences, formulated with chemical-free and toxic-free ingredients.

This range is different from the typical store-bought hand wash as all bottles of hand wash are blessed by Buddhist monastics who were invited to chant specific mantras over them, planting prayers for good health, and creating the cause for wisdom and virtue for their users.

The specific Buddhist mantra recited is also printed on the packaging of each bottle.

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





Interactive Online Nutrition Class (Bilingual)
Digestive Health and Meal Planning

Poor digestive health is the root cause of malnutrition, poor immunity, gastrointestinal problems, chronic diseases as well as degenerative diseases.

To prevent illnesses and maintain good health, we must first manage our digestive system well by taking good care of our daily diet.

Not sure of what nutritious food to eat for your breakfast, lunch and dinner? Attend this class to learn more about nutrition and meal planning.

Note: Participants are advised to have a copy of Vinitha's Cookbook with Nutrition Guide during the class for basic whole food nutrition

Date	12 June 2022 (Sun)
Time	2pm to 5pm
Venue	ZOOM
Fee	\$40 per person
Registration deadline	29 May 2022
Instructor	Ms Vinitha Ang

biological psychological social spiritual
安樂 well-being



Seeking Fulfilling Careers?

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

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

You may send your resume to: hrdept@kmspks.org OR drop by our HR Office @ 88 Bright Hill Road, Singapore 574117 between 9am to 4.30pm (Mon-Fri), except public holidays.

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

Finding our true nature through kindness

KINDNESS MATTERS

Kindness is an attribute that pervades all religions and one that precedes wisdom and clarity, as it is through generating a mind of wishing others well that we find the means to open the path to our own inherent qualities.

In this remarkably simple yet powerfully insightful movie, we follow several characters weaving together a common theme of having clear intentions to help others through their own suffering by being genuinely kind-hearted.

When someone is suffering, the majority of us will feel something and even garner an intention to help, but not necessarily act on it. However, when Hudson finds a puppy in a box along with the garbage, he immediately adopts it. When the small creature destroys some of his household items, even though it crosses his mind that the responsibility may be too great for him, he tunes into the pain that the dog may feel at being potentially abandoned once again, and decides to find a way to keep it. He too has been lost in his life and he therefore quells his own selfishness to throw the dog away.

A young boy, Lincoln is struggling at school. Moreover, due to his stuttering and lack of social skills, he gets picked on by the other kids. Since his mother has abandoned them, his father

is doing his best to look after his son while keeping a full-time job. Even though his father has the best intentions, both he and Lincoln are struggling to keep things afloat.

Miss Davies, unsure of which direction to take in life, is searching for a job. Not having any clear idea about which way to go, she asks for guidance from higher intelligence to give her the insightful wisdom to know what to do.

She receives a clear message in the form of the man who works at the job agency, and enters the life of Lincoln. As she too has personally experienced being picked on for having certain physical traits, she empathises with his suffering and gives him the necessary advice to get through his troubles.

In the meantime, the dog helps Hudson get out of the house and to start doing some healthy activities. Eventually, in a twist of intervening events, he meets someone who brings him the greatest joy of all, someone who can see beyond his pain and prod him further in his healing process.

The most beautiful theme running throughout every scene of this story is that we need to really trust the events that are occurring in our lives, and the people we meet along the way and to know that everything is taking place for our own well-being, no matter how difficult it may seem at the time.



Kindness Matters

Directed by: Craig McMahon
Starring: Bill Wetherill, Aron Ginn-Forsberg, Raine Hartman Forsberg

We can meet everything that's happening in our present difficulty with clarity of understanding, instead of only thinking of ourselves when life produces these wellsprings of possibilities, hastily rejecting these chances for healing and happiness. We should accept and understand that circumstances that appear in our life are in fact designed to help us to return to a state of union with our own inherent wisdom.

Consciously allowing things to unfold without standing in their way with our own egos, and asking for guidance from whichever higher state of intelligence we believe in, will naturally give us the chance to connect with the events and people, or even animals, to guide us towards our own clarity and wisdom, resulting in a joyful, happy, considerate and caring existence. ✨

Scan this to watch the film:



Or visit <https://youtu.be/IHrFXTYPofc>

Q: I heard that the Buddha's teaching speaks of two principal types of wisdom. Can you please explain more? – K.

A: The first understands karma and its effects and knows the functioning of phenomena in the relative world.

The second realises the deeper mode of existence, that all phenomena and persons lack independent or inherent existence.

Both of these wisdoms aid in the cessation of unhappiness that produces anger, but the latter especially relaxes our mind by cutting all false projections.

For that reason, the latter can counteract and eventually eliminate anger and other painful, disturbing emotions. This is because anger and other destructive emotions are based on false projections of the mind. While the inappropriate attention that nourishes anger projects or exaggerates negativity, our ignorance projects an even deeper distortion: independent existence.

While at one level we know that things exist dependently—sprouts grow from seeds, a table depends on its parts—things appear to our mind in the opposite way, as if they had their own essence and exist under their own power, independent from everything else.

When we are upset, our “self” or “I” similarly appears to be solid and to exist inherently.

In The Wheel of Sharp Weapons, Dharmaraksita states:

*All things are like images found in a mirror,
And yet we imagine they are real, very real.
All things are like mist or like clouds on a mountain,
And yet we imagine they are stable and firm.
Our foe—our insistence on ego-identities
Truly our own, which we wish were secure—
And our butcher—the selfish concern for ourselves—
Like all things these appear to be inherently existent
Though they never have been inherently existent at all.*

*Although they appear to be concrete and real,
They have never been real, any time, anywhere.
They are not things we should burden with ultimate value,
Nor should we deny them their relative truth. ✨*

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

The Two Principal Types of Wisdom

The Wisdom of insecurity

This is an excellent, deep and profound book in which Zen Buddhist teachings suffuse and pervade throughout. With refreshing lucidity, Watts explains with incredible clarity the experience of the universe in its totality: the *here and now*.

For most developed nations and societies, everything is about success, progress and the lure of tomorrow. Actually, progress is a sham, says Watts. It is pure escapism from the pain we fear today.

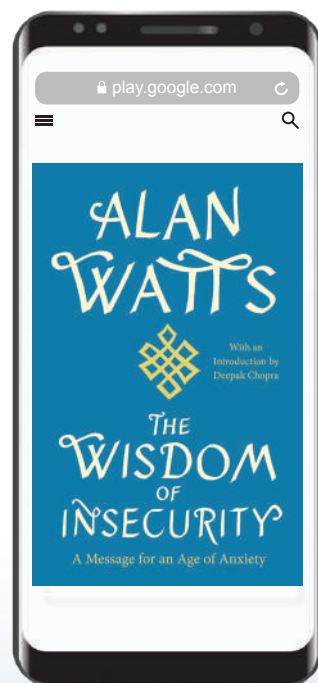
"If happiness always depends on something expected in the future, we are chasing a will-o'-the-wisp that ever eludes our grasp, until the future, and ourselves, vanish into the abyss of death."

It is in the present, and only the present that we live.

The ego-self is a pure illusion, which constructs reality out of empty expectations and memories.

We have fragmented the world into inner and outer experiences, embracing separateness without realising that there is only one reality. The universe is a single process occurring in consciousness, a great stream, and only by merging into that process can we discover who we really are at our core.

Also available as an audio book. 🎧



■ Get it from Google Play.



Visit shorturl.at/vzEIWor
Scan this to download e-book:

The Wisdom of insecurity

Vintage

Alan Watts | US\$3.51

Dharma

• CEREMONY | PRAYERS

Online Pledge of Namo Shakyamuni Buddha's Name Chant

Recite the sacred chant of "Na Mo Ben Shi Shi Jia Mo Ni Fo", submit your count on our website.
1 May - 29 May
Registration: <https://tinyurl.com/kmspledges>
Enquiry: 6849 5326 | sed@kmspk.org

Light Transference & Auspicious - Making Ceremony

7 May | Sat | 7.30pm - 10.30pm
Venue: Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery
Registration: <https://tinyurl.com/kmsevents>

Virtual Bathing of Prince Siddhartha (Online)

From 8 May onwards
Registration: <https://bath.kmspk.org/>

3 Steps 1 Bow

14-15 May | Sat-Sun | 6.00pm - 6.00am
Venue: Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery
Registration: <https://tinyurl.com/kmsevents>
Enquiry: 6849 5326 | sed@kmspk.org

Thousand Buddhas Repentance Puja

15 May | Sun | 8.30am - 4.00pm
Venue: VHCMMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form
Registration: <https://tinyurl.com/kmsevents>
Enquiry: 6849 5326 | sed@kmspk.org
Online Light Offering
Fee: \$8 (1 candle with 1 sponsor name)

Bathing of Prince Siddhartha

8 May | Sun | 9.00am - 3.00pm
Venue: HOUB
15 May | Sun | 8.00am - 6.00pm
Venue: HOGS & HOAP



Vesak Auspicious Lanterns

7 May - 16 May
Venue: VHCMMH | Level 4 | HONF & HOUB
Fee: Company/Family: \$338 per lamp | Individual/Family: \$50 per lamp
Registration: <http://bit.do/kmslantern>
Front Office 9.00am - 4.00pm
Enquiry: 6849 5333

Vesak Carnival

15 May | Sun | 8.00am - 4.00pm
Venue: HOUB & Long Corridor

Lunar 27th Great Compassion Repentance Puja

27 May, 25 Jun, 25 Jul, 24 Aug | Fri, Sat, Mon, Wed | 10.00am - 11.30am
Venue: VHCMMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form
Registration: www.kmspk.org (online)
Enquiry: 6849 5333
Online Light Offering
Fee: \$8 (1 candle with 1 sponsor name)
Enquiry: 6849 5326 | sed@kmspk.org

Online Pledge of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva's Name Chant

Recite the sacred chant of "Na Mo Guan Shi Yin Pu Sa", submit your count on our website
29 Jun - 25 Jul
Registration: www.kmspk.org (online)
Enquiry: 6849 5326 | sed@kmspk.org

Enlightenment Day of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva Puja

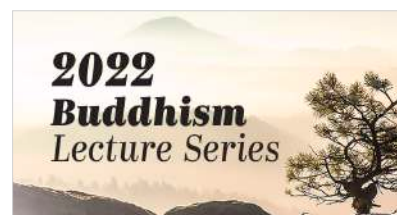
17 Jul | Sun | 10.00am - 11.00am
Venue: VHCMMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form
Registration: www.kmspk.org (online)
Enquiry: 6849 5326 | sed@kmspk.org

Online Pledge of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva's Name Chant

Recite the sacred chant of "Na Mo Di Zang Wang Pu Sa", submit your count on our website.
29 Jul - 26 Aug
Registration: www.kmspk.org (online)
Enquiry: 6849 5326 | sed@kmspk.org

Ullambana Festival Prayer Ceremony (YTBC)

12 Aug | Fri | 8.20am - 9.15pm
Venue: Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery
Fee: \$50, \$100, \$280
Registration: www.kmspk.org (online)
Front Office 9.00am - 4.00pm
Enquiry: 6849 5333 | sed@kmspk.org



• TALKS | WORKSHOPS | COURSES

2022 BUDDHISM LECTURE STUDIES

Happiness Through Blessings - Mangala Sutta

24 May - 26 Jul | Tue | 7.30pm - 9.00pm
Venue: VHCMMH | Level 1 | Classroom
Registration: 25 Feb 2022 - 23 May 2022

Sutra on the Eight Realisations of Great Beings Essential teachings for mindful contemplation and Buddhist practice

29 Aug - 14 Nov | Mon | 7.30pm - 9.00pm
Venue: VHCMMH | Level 1 | Classroom
Registration: 30 May 2022 - 28 Aug 2022

Ultimate Happiness Satipatthana Sutta

30 Aug - 8 Nov | Tue | 7.30pm - 9.00pm
Venue: VHCMMH | Level 1 | Classroom
Registration: 31 May 2022 - 29 Aug 2022

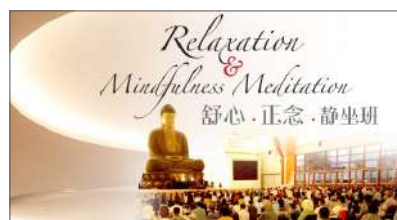
Fee: \$35 (10 lessons)

Registration:

1. Online: www.kmspk.org
(For the latest update details of the classes, please log on to our website)

2. Reception Office @KMSPKS 9.00am - 4.00pm
(Lunch Break: 11.30am - 12.30pm)

Enquiry: 6849 5300 / 6849 5345 | ded@kmspk.org



Meditation

Relaxation and Mindfulness Meditation (Bilingual)

Basic meditation which involves body scanning and relaxation.

• 23 Mar - 11 May | Wed | 7.30pm - 9.00pm
• 25 Mar - 20 May | Fri | 7.30pm - 9.00pm
• 20 Mar - 29 May | Sun | 4.00pm - 5.30pm

New Run in (June) Tentative Schedule

• June | Wed | 7.30pm - 9.00pm (TBC)
• June | Fri | 7.30pm - 9.00pm (TBC)
• June | Sun | 4.00pm - 5.30pm (TBC)

calendar

Venue: Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery |
Prajna Meditation Hall
Fee: \$30 per class

Registration:

1. Online: www.kmspk.org
2. Reception Office @KMSPKS 9.00am - 4.00pm
(Lunch Break: 11.30am - 12.30pm)
Enquiry: 6849 5346 | meditationhall@kmspk.org

Lifestyle

• CHILDREN

Children's Art - Colours of Life

Colours of Life uses free expression, reflection and exploration in arts for children to appreciate the beauty of things and their surroundings. This programme is specially designed for children between 4 and 12 years old.

21 May - 23 Jul | Sat | 2.00pm - 3.30pm

30 Jul - 1 Oct | Sat | 2.00pm - 3.30pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

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



Online School Holidays - Discover the Animal World through Pastel Nagomi Art

These workshops teach students how to create vivid animal illustrations through Pastel Nagomi Art painting. At the same time, they will also learn important values by loving and respecting animals.

8 Jun | Wed | 10.00am - 12.00pm [ages 6 - 12]

15 Jun | Wed | 10.00am - 12.00pm [ages 6 - 12]

Venue: Online Zoom

Fee: \$40 per person per session / \$70 per person for 2 sessions

Material: \$15 per art set. Payable to the instructor

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

Through the course, they will learn:

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

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

• How to react to difficult situations.

30 May - 20 Jun | Mon | 1.00pm - 2.30pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$120 per person for 4 sessions

Mindfulness for Kids: Dot B [ages 11-16]

The course aims to help young people:

• Cultivate emotional intelligence by managing compulsive reactions.

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

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

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

30 May - 20 Jun | Mon | 2.30pm - 4.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$120 per person for 4 sessions

Due to the current COVID-19 situation, programmes and dates are subject to change.

• ART

Zentangle

Zentangle Introduction

No prior drawing experience is required, come only with an interest to learn. Attendees will learn the philosophy behind this new art form and the steps to create a piece of artwork.

Jun 19 | Sun | 10.30am – 12.30pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$30 per person

Material Fee: \$8 per person (payable to instructor)

Zentangle (Round Tile)

Attendees will learn the techniques to tangle on a round tile and bring home a personal piece of artwork. The pre-requisite to attend this course is the completion of Zentangle Intro or other Zentangle class taught by a certified Zentangle Instructor.

Jun 26 | Sun | 10.30am – 12.30pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$30 per person

Material Fee: \$5 per person (payable to instructor)

Online Zoom - Pastel Nagomi Art - Little Monks

Sarana continues the Buddhist-themed Inner Peace series by guiding you on painting a series of artworks based on the little monks. Learn how to capture the innocence of the little monks in a variety of poses and expressions. At the same time, enjoy the process of painting with your fingers.

Sarana invites you to join her in our universal search for inner tranquility and simplicity through art.

29 May | Sun | 10.00am – 6.00pm [1hr lunch break]

Venue: Online Zoom

Fee: \$155 per person or \$139.50 per person for returning Awareness Hub students

Material: \$45 Nagomi Art Kit for new students.

Payable to the instructor

• WELLNESS

Rhythm Rejuvenation

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

No prior musical experience needed! Instruments will be provided.

Self-Love for Recovery

22 May | Sun | 3.00pm – 5.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$30 per person

Mindfulness through Rhythm

14 Aug | Sun | 3.00pm – 5.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$30 per person

Hatha Yoga

5 Jul – 13 Sep (no class 9/8) | Tue | 10.30am – 12.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$180 per person for 10 sessions – Walk-in \$25 per lesson

Hatha Yoga for Beginners

• 17 Jun – 19 Aug | Fri | 10.30am – 12.00pm

• 26 Aug – 28 Oct | Fri | 10.30am – 12.00pm

• 28 May – 30 Jul | Sat | 6.30pm – 8.00pm

• 6 Aug – 8 Oct | Sat | 6.30pm – 8.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$180 per person for 10 sessions

– Walk-in \$25 per lesson

Hatha Yoga

4 Jul – 5 Sep | Mon | 6.45pm – 8.15pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$180 per person for 10 sessions – Walk-in \$25 per lesson

Hatha Yoga

• 22 Jun – 24 Aug | Wed | 6.30pm – 8.00pm

• 31 Aug – 2 Nov | Wed | 6.30pm – 8.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$180 per person for 10 sessions – Walk-in \$25 per lesson

Hatha Yoga

• 8 Jun – 10 Aug | Wed | 8.00pm – 9.30pm

• 17 Aug – 19 Oct | Wed | 8.00pm – 9.30pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$180 per person for 10 sessions – Walk-in \$25 per lesson

Lunch-time Hatha Yoga

28 Jun – 6 Sep (no class 9/8) | Tues | 12.30pm – 1.30pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$160 per person for 10 sessions – Walk-in \$22 per lesson

Hatha Yoga

• 18 Jun – 20 Aug | Sat | 9.30am – 11am

• 27 Aug – 29 Oct | Sat | 9.30am – 11am

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$180 per person for 10 sessions – Walk-in \$25 per lesson

Yin Yoga

Feeling anxious and stressed out? Try our relaxing Yin Yoga classes and find the balance in your life again.

7 Jun – 16 Aug (no class 9/8) | Tues | 6.30pm – 7.45pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$170 per person for 10 sessions – Walk-in \$23 per lesson

Gentle Hatha Yoga

• 5 Jul – 13 Sep (no class 9/8) | Tues | 2.30pm – 4.00pm

• 20 May – 22 Jul | Fri | 2.30pm – 4pm

• 29 Jul – 30 Sep | Fri | 2.30pm – 4pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$160 per person for 10 sessions – Walk-in \$22 per lesson

Chair Yoga

8 Jul – 9 Sep | Fri | 12.30pm – 1.30pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$160 per person for 10 sessions – Walk-in \$22 per lesson

Yoga for Diabetes

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

For non-diabetics this gentle yoga boosts immunity.

16 Jun – 18 Aug | Thurs | 10.30am – 11.30am

25 Aug – 27 Oct | Thurs | 10.30am – 11.30am

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$120 per person for 10 sessions – Walk-in \$15 per lesson

• CULINARY

Online Wellness Series – G.R.O.W Life Force Diet

This short course analyses the common shortcomings of the modern diet and provides solutions on resolving them with the G.R.O.W Life Force Diet.

7 Aug | Sun | 10.00am – 4.00pm [break 12pm – 2pm]

Venue: Online Zoom

Fee: \$80 per person



“Food can be medicine”, An Online Plant-based Home Cooking and Nutrition Course

“Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.”
– Hippocrates, The Father of Medicine

Our body can heal naturally if we know how to make use of the different types of plant-based whole food in our daily meals, and apply the principles of whole food nutrition for optimal wellness.

• Jul 17 | Sun | 2.00pm – 5.00pm

1. Whole Food Nutrition Part I – Food Can Be Medicine (Lecture)

2. Mix and Match Energy Food for Lunch (Cooking demo)

• Jul 24 | Sun | 2.00pm – 5.00pm

1. Whole Food Nutrition Part II – Healthy Living Healthy Kitchen (Lecture)

2. Mix and Match Nutri-Food for Dinner (Cooking demo)

Venue: Online Zoom

Fee: \$98 per person (2 sessions)

Participants are advised to have a copy of Vinitha’s

Cookbook with Nutrition Guide during the class

(Participants’ special price of \$18)

Digestive Health and Meal Planning

Poor digestive health is the root cause of malnutrition, poor immunity, gastrointestinal problems, chronic diseases as well as degenerative diseases. To prevent illnesses and maintain good health, we must first manage our digestive system well by taking good care of our daily diet. Not sure of what nutritious food to eat for your breakfast, lunch and dinner?

Come and attend this class to learn more about

nutrition and meal planning.

Jun 12 | Sun | 2.00pm – 5.00pm

Venue: Online Zoom

Fee: \$40 per person

Participants are advised to have a copy of Vinitha’s

Cookbook with Nutrition Guide during the class

(Participants’ special price of \$18)

Registration:

1. Online: www.kmspks.org/lifestyle/

2. Reception Office @KMSPKS | 9.00am – 4.00pm
(Lunch Break : 11.30am – 12.30pm)

3. Awareness Hub | 11.30am – 6.00pm

(Bras Basah Complex #03-39)

Enquiry: 6336 5067 | awarenesshub@kmspks.org

**** Programmes are subject to changes**

• ENVIROMENTALISM

Sorting of Recyclables @ Gratitude Corner

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

Every Tues, Thurs, Sat | 9.00am – 2.00pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Outside South Wing Office

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | gratitude@kmspks.org



Gratitude Shop

Check out our thrift shop for cheap and good deals. Garden Compost is also up for sale!

(2 litre compost for \$5)

Mon-Sun | 10.00am – 3.00pm

Venue : Outside Dining Hall (South Wing)

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | gratitude@kmspks.org

**Due to COVID-19 restrictions, please check our website for further updates @ <https://www.kmspks.org/services/gratitude-corner/>*

• COMMUNITY

Food Ration

Monthly Distribution of food ration to low-income families.

22 May, 12 Jun, 17 Jul, 14 Aug | Sun | 9.00am – 11.30am

Venue: KMSPKS

Enquiry: 6849 5300 | community@kmspks.org

Hair For Hope 2022

With virtues of compassion and loving-kindness, KMSPKS is proud to work with Children’s Cancer Foundation (CCF) to bring back Hair For Hope 2022! Join us at KMSPKS to raise funds for and awareness of childhood cancer.

1 May | Sun | 1.00pm – 3.00pm

Venue: KMSPKS

Enquiry: 6849 5524 | 68495317 |

community@kmspks.org

Blood Donation Drive 2022

It’s in your blood to save lives.

8 May | Sun | 9.00am – 3.00pm

Venue: KMSPKS | Hall of No Form

Enquiry: Singapore Red Cross at 6220 0183 or

visit www.redcross.sg



Age Well Everyday (AWE) - conducted in Mandarin

The Age Well Everyday programme, is a holistic and evidence-based dementia and depression prevention programme to improve seniors’ quality of life.

3 Aug – 2 Nov (12 sessions) | Wed | 9.00am – 11.30am

Venue: KMSPKS

Fee : Free

Enquiry: 6849 5359 | 6849 5317 |

community@kmspks.org

Ven Hong Choon Museum

Venue: VHCMH | Level 3

Free Admission

KMSPKS = Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery

VHCMH = Venerable Hong Choon Memorial Hall

YTBC = To Be Confirmed

Programmes & venues are subject to change.

Details are correct at the time of printing



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