

MIND BRAKES

THE SEASONAL NEWSLETTER FOR BUDDHISTS ON THE INSIDE

JUNE. 2022, ISSUE 5

**SAKA DAWA
BIG EDITION**



**OTHER GREAT READS
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16 GUIDELINES FOR LIFE

THE LIGHT OF GREAT
COMPASSION

BUDDHA'S FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS
FOR BEGINNERS.

PLUS MUCH MUCH MORE!

HAVE YOU STARTED?

BY ANNA CARMODY

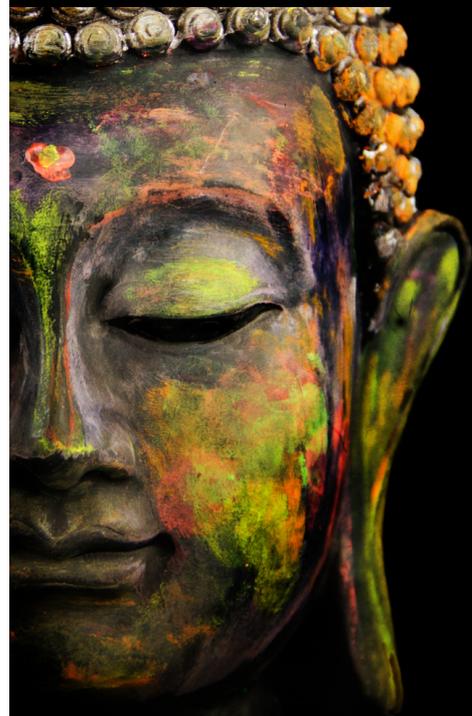
All compounded things must grow old and pass away. The Buddha said this to his disciples when he told them his physical life was nearing its end.

Compounded things: includes everything. Everything has a cause, is made of parts, and is connected to and dependent on a multitude of other factors and things. We come from our parents—at least our bodies do. We've got countless parts— parts of our body, mind, thoughts and feelings — but who am I?

The Buddha's disciples expected him to remain with them in person. He challenged their expectations. *Be an island unto yourself.* He told them to use the teachings to develop and benefit their minds.

We can begin by noticing when we change our view. When we look at something differently. Most of the time we are attached to our thoughts and opinions and we want everyone else to agree. But are we always right, or even reasonable?

Sometimes. Occasionally. Perhaps.





WITHOUT ENTHUSIASM WE CAN'T SUCCEED AT ANYTHING!

A MESSAGE FROM VENERABLE ROBINA COURTIN

Changing our minds, becoming better human beings, helping others – it all takes effort, there's no doubt about that. Which means in order to move forward, to be successful, to struggle through difficult times, we need to be sustained by enthusiasm. Otherwise we'll just give up!

We're all a work in progress. As Lama Zopa Rinpoche says, *We can mould our mind into any shape we like*. Why should we change our minds? Because from the Buddhist perspective, that's the method. What we're trying to do is mould our mind into the mind of a happy, wise, fulfilled, content, self-confident person. And on the basis of that we can then be of benefit to others.

Actually we know how to do this in everyday life: if you want to mould your mind into the mind of a musician, a carpenter, a mathematician, we know it's possible. With perseverance, with effort, we know we can achieve our goal.

But changing our mind into the mind of a happy person – we're not so sure we can do that! And that's because we think happiness comes from the outside world, so we spend our lives trying to change that instead! It's not easy to look inside and see that if I worked on my own mind, my responses to the outside world, which means the attachment and expectations, the anger and annoyance, etc., that's a far more powerful method in the long run. And for this we certainly need effort!

What's the opposite of enthusiasm? What prevents us from making effort?

The opposite is *I can't be bothered*. We all know if you want to achieve something, we first set the goal. And then we have to make effort, because we have to stretch ourselves beyond our comfort zone. That takes effort, for sure!

It's hard to go beyond our comfort zone when it comes to giving up attachment and anger and all the fears and the dramas. Of course, we don't necessarily think we can, but we can. And, just like anything else we're learning, it's gradual. You don't expect to go the gym and come back home after the first day with a marvellous body! You don't turn into a carpenter overnight. You don't turn into a happy, wise, fulfilled, content person overnight, either.

We have to know it's gradual. When you know – and this is the key – when you know the benefits of your goal, when you know the benefits of a healthy body, you'll make effort. When you know the benefits of being a carpenter, you'll make effort. When you know the benefits and have confidence in the benefit of you working on your mind, which is to be more fulfilled, more patient in the face of problems, more courageous, more confident, therefore, more compassionate and empathetic, then you're glad to make the effort, to have enthusiasm.

But it's one step at a time. Not just hit and miss. Not just cross your fingers. We need to make effort. Eventually, it becomes happy effort because you start to taste the result. This is so important, I tell you.

SAKA DAWA

Saka Dawa, one of the great holy days of Tibetan Buddhism, marks the birth, enlightenment and parinivana of the Buddha. For us, it provides a great opportunity to practise.

Before we get to that, Dawa is Tibetan for month or moon – remember the calendar is based upon the moon – and Saka is the name of the star closest to the earth at this time and particularly visible. On the fifteenth day of Tibetan months there is a full moon, and this year it falls on 14 June. Lama Zopa, quoting from the vinaya text *Treasure of Quotations and Logic*, tells us that the result of whatever cause we create on this day is multiplied by 100 million. 100 million! As if that isn't enough, there is a lunar eclipse on 5 June, which will multiply by 700,000.

What does practise mean? If the mind is virtuous, that is we are thinking of others and not only ourselves, and we're aware of this, as absolute beginners this is practice. One way to do this is to be happy for others. Be glad they are doing well, prospering, and enjoying good fortune. Be especially happy when they are doing the right thing – being kind, generous, compassionate, and so on. They are creating merit – lots of merit.

You can also:

- Recite prayers.
- Release animals. If you cannot manage this, at least be mindful of where you sit, place your feet and so on. Even small insects are precious. Think: *May you be happy. May I one day be able to help you.*
- Meditate on love and compassion.
- Help someone.
- You can rejoice in your merit, the merit of other sentient beings and the merit of the buddhas of the *three times*.
- You can do prostrations and/or recite the *Thirty-Five Buddha prayer*.
- Meditate on emptiness or bodhichitta.

Anna Carmody

Ven Robina has been ordained as a nun in the Tibetan tradition for over forty years.

World renowned for her work with prisoners, Ven Robina has also visited Long Bay and Junee many times.



SAKA SAWA 2022

MAKE IT COUNT!





PATIENCE IS POWER

BY DANIEL TROYAK

What I can say with absolute certainty I've been doing this work for many years and it has brought so much transformation. The things that once drove me crazy literally do not anymore.

Not because I've repressed it. I have reconfigured the way I interpret things. The way I relate to the world around me.

When you begin this process it's hard work but the one who reaps the rewards is you!

It might sound surprising. The approach to bring about happiness is changing your mind and the way you think. The way we become happy is to become familiar with our mind. Reconfiguring the very way we see reality and the world we live in.

Patience is a quality of the mind that is in-sync with reality and in-flow with happiness. We need to develop this quality of the mind.

What we believe to be patience is actually passive aggression. Something like: you hold on tight, grit your teeth and wait for something horrible to go away. That's not patience, that's just internalised frustration and negativity.

Patience is a stable mind. It is recognising I just didn't get what I want.

It is not suppressing what is happening by tensing up and waiting for it to pass so you can breathe again.

Bad things happen to us all day long. The response is usually anger and we justify it by living — it's a natural response. We think anger is natural because we never thought there might be an alternative.

Patience means a really powerful state of mind. When things don't go the way we want, we don't freak out. What we should do is to open ourselves to it, welcome it and give ourselves a bit of a pep-talk to calm down, so we don't have a panic attack. So, when we are driving and we hit traffic, we don't go ballistic or start to feel irritated and impatient.

There are advantages to changing your habits. Such as changing the way we react instead of overreacting. So when patience has developed and you are in the midst of chaos you won't lose the plot.

It is difficult. We think it's impossible because we have never been shown another way to live.

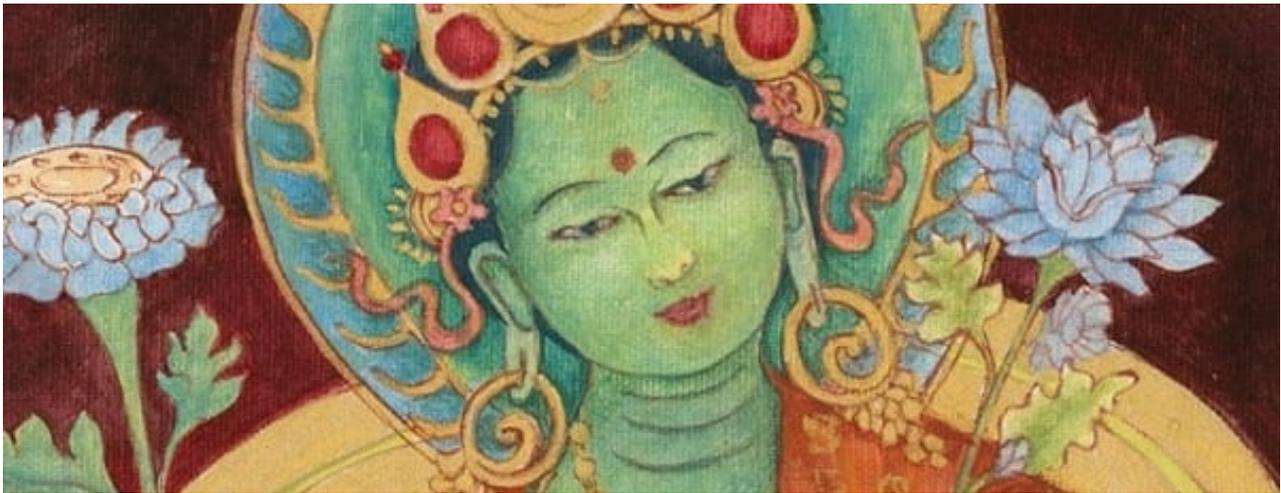
With practice, we become conscious that the mind is what controls the physiological. And in the midst of chaos on the highway you maintain your sanity and your clarity.

In the early stages of awareness and self-control, we often become disappointed when we slip up. That is not the attitude to develop. We can't underestimate the bad habits on the mindstream — so practice makes perfect. Having an expectation you should be better than you are, that's the mistake we make.

Our logical mind knows it's possible to practice something and perfect it. But with emotional stuff we give up immediately and then we become negative, we think we're ridiculous, we put ourselves down. We are our own worst enemy.

If we are learning to ride a bike it takes time and practice. When we fall off, we're told to get back on. Practice makes perfect.

Continue on next page.



Dakini in Sanskrit, *Khandro* in Tibetan, literally means sky dweller or sky dancer, and is the most sacred aspect of the feminine principle in Tibetan Buddhism. She embodies both humanity and divinity in the feminine form.

In Vajrayana, the *dakini* represents the ever-changing flow of energy with which the yogic practitioner must work in order to become realised. Ultimately, all women are seen as some kind of *dakini* manifestation.

Sometimes we hear Tibetan Buddhists refer to strong women or any women they respect or find an inspiration as a *dakini*.

The whole concept of a dakini is not limited to women, or feminine. Anyone who has cut through illusory deception, that's a dakini. It's not restricted to women and should never be used lightly as a compliment made to women.

The male equivalent of a *dakini* is a *daka* in Sanskrit or *Pawa* in Tibetan. Both daka and dakini play an important role in Tantric Vajrayana Buddhism.

PATIENCE IS POWER

So if you are being reasonable and you know it's theoretically possible to change, then with that confidence it should inspire you to keep trying. You need to be patient with yourself.

It is 100% possible to become familiar with your mind and reconfigure the interpretations of your life and the world you live in. Then we literally change the mind and the traffic on the highway as well.

Daniel Troyak is a NSW Prison Chaplain. With the support of your local Buddhist chaplain, you can learn to unpack and unravel the contents of the mind. Learn the tools for emotional processing and healing with BuddhaDharma.

Daniel Troyak





16 Guidelines for Life

Where to start?

We all believe that deep down we are good. And we are, every single one of us. The problem is we forget that we are good. We certainly don't always behave as if we are good, and this gets us into trouble.

However if we have decided we are interested in finding out more about ourselves, we're back to the question: where do we start?

Seventh century King Songtsen Gampo, the first of the three Dharma Kings of Tibet, faced a not dissimilar problem. How was he going to civilize his warrior people and foster harmony in his kingdom? It's a long story involving sending emissaries to India, long arduous journeys, holy men, scholars, brigands, robbers, death, and much much more.

The prototype developed by King Songtsen Gampo became the 16 Guidelines for Life — an excellent and perfect way to begin working on your mind.

16 Guidelines for Life is a helpful introduction, a gateway perhaps, to other paths with their own results. At the very least it will develop your capacity to be compassionate and wise.

16 Guidelines — Four Wisdom Themes

The 16 Guidelines are presented in four wisdom themes. They offer a simple, robust framework to explore and develop emotional resilience and transformative change.

How we think. The way we use our mind determines the way we live

- **Humility:** Be willing and able to learn from others
- **Patience:** To cultivate a calm and spacious mind
- **Contentment:** To enjoy who we are and what we have
- **Delight:** To rejoice in the good fortune of others

How we act. Every skilful action makes a better world

- **Kindness:** To be friendly, caring and considerate
- **Honesty :** To act with transparency and fairness
- **Generosity:** To give without expecting anything in return
- **Right Speech:** To speak with insight and sensitivity



How we relate. To take care of others is to take care of ourselves

- **Respect:** To honour people with a deeper understanding and experience of life
- **Forgiveness:** To let go of resentment and anger towards ourselves and others
- **Gratitude:** To acknowledge and repay the kindness of others
- **Loyalty:** Be good-hearted and dependable in all our relationships

How we find meaning. If everything is changing, anything is possible

- **Aspiration:** To seek a fulfilling way of life that avoids causing harm
- **Principles:** To develop sincere and stable inner values, and avoid harmful influences
- **Service:** To help and benefit others in whatever way we can
- **Courage:** To accept responsibilities and challenges with calm determination

What do you think of these definitions?
What would you like to change or add?
How could you apply one or more of these to yourself?

More next *Mind Brakes*.

Anna Carmody

Shakyamuni Buddha taught more than 84,000 methods to attain enlightenment.

16 GUIDELINES

THERE ARE FOUR WISDOM THEMES:

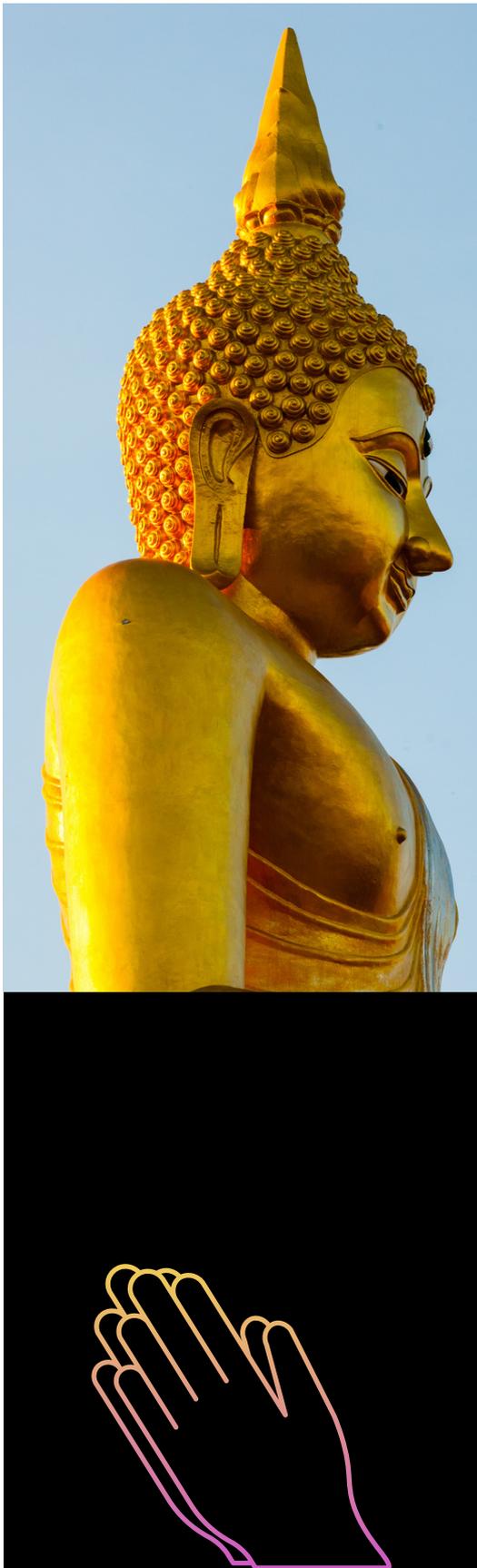
HOW WE THINK

HOW WE ACT

HOW WE RELATE

HOW WE FIND MEANING





BUDDHA'S FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS FOR BEGINNERS.

VENERABLE AILEEN BARRY

Let me start by saying that delivering the message of these profound teachings is not made less by making it this simple. It is also not made less by regarding ourselves as nowhere more advanced than an adolescent.

We don't grow up much at all really, we just get good at hiding our behaviour, but that does not mean we are getting better. If we are hiding it, often it gets worse – because it is not so obvious to ourselves. We hide it, or we act it out, we ignore it or exaggerate it, all because we don't know the four noble truths. And remember, when we consider them, they come as a single package, each relies on the others.

1. Sometimes people feel sad.

Well we all know this don't we? Yes, but if we really knew it to be true, we would not think that there is something wrong with us if we are sad. Think about it for a moment. Do you notice how we judge and criticize ourselves for being sad? How we imagine that other people are not sad? How we imagine if things were different in my life, I would not be sad.

2. Sometimes the thing that makes people sad is not getting something they want or getting something they don't want.

It's ok to want things, but if we are attached to things, then we suffer in this way. If I queue up for ice-cream and get to the front of the queue to be told there is none left, if I was attached to it, then I will say (maybe not out loud if I am older than 4) but I wanted it. I was in the queue, it's not fair, everyone else got too much, if they had divided it out evenly, there would be enough for me – and so on. Think about a time when you may have suffered for not getting something you wanted or for getting something you didn't want. Think about small things – don't start with something big. Just notice it in small moments of your every day life. Not to judge it, not to criticize it, just to notice it.

BUDDHA'S FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS FOR BEGINNERS.

3. There is a way not to be sad about not getting what you want or getting something that you don't want.

Now this is where it gets interesting and why it is important to remember that the four truths come together. Imagine if we go to a doctor, knowing that we are sick. But not quite sure what the illness is. The first two truths are finding the sickness, identifying it correctly. It is important that we get a proper examination and a proper diagnosis. Why? So that we can be treated correctly. So we can get the appropriate medicine. This is why it is important that we really know our own suffering, not because we want to get ourselves even more miserable about it, but actually, because it is only when we are very accurate about our own suffering, can we become free of it. Now that's actually very good news.

The Buddha was just an ordinary guy – ok, he did have a palace, he was a prince and he had a very easy life but he asked important questions: I have all this luxury in my life but still, I will get sick, I will get old, I will die. No matter how cool my life is, these things will still happen – and often, these make us sad – when we resist them. Sickness will come, fear of sickness, anxiety about sickness, hoping not to be sick and so on, this is the suffering we add on. And the Buddha said, we can be free of this.

Here, let's remember that the name Buddha means fully awake. Has anyone ever suggested to you *wake up to yourself*? Again, it's not a criticism, it's not saying we are bad. Actually, all it is saying is: we can wake up to ourselves. We all can do this. Because we are not bad, we are simply mistaken. It's a very deep mistake and it takes a long time to go against it, but slowly, slowly we can wake up. That's definite.

And the last of the Four Noble Truths tells us how.

4. The way is not to think so much about what you want at all, but instead think about how you can be kind and helpful to people around you, inmates and officers, friends, family, all other people. Animals, insects and everything that lives.

This does not mean to not be kind and helpful to yourself but the way to be kind and helpful to yourself is to include all others. Because we are all the same, we all want to be happy, we all want to be free of suffering. So even if you happen to be at the front of the queue and you get the last of the ice-cream, you have a choice: Share it with someone who got none, or even if you eat it all yourself, take a moment and think, sincerely: I like ice-cream, may all beings have enough ice-cream, just like me, may all others enjoy delicious things too.

There are so many ways we can change our thoughts and likewise our actions. First, we just have to notice the thoughts, not judge them and then, slowly, slowly change them, so we can be free of suffering – for our own sake and for the sake of all others.

Because, even though I may say: I like this person, I don't like that person and I don't care about most others – these are all temporary and not very reliable thoughts. And just because I think it doesn't mean it has to be true. So, if we can free ourselves from believing all our thoughts, then we can start changing them and truly be free – waking up to who we really are. That's very cool, no matter what age we are.

Venerable Aileen is a chaplain at Dillwynia Women's Correctional Centre





THE LIGHT OF GREAT COMPASSION

BY GONGKAR DORJEE DHENPA RINPOCHE

Great compassion is like a pure crystal that has no limitation or partiality in its capacity to channel light that we can see.

There is a significant difference between compassion in the general sense and great compassion. Ordinary compassion is mixed with attachment and therefore has boundaries and limitations. Great compassion has no boundaries, no limitations; it is an empathetic connection that is felt deeply for all sentient beings without exceptions, without preferences, without any notion of self-interest or inhibition.

Ordinary compassion is like the limited edition; not the complete Director's cut! Why? Because regular compassion is only for one's family, friends — or even worse, just for people we use, like wealthy contacts who we want to take advantage of.

Our compassion is like it's blind because we're not really seeing and empathising.

Sometimes, compassion can be blind. When we see someone very sick or undergoing some unexpected hardship — then we feel the notion to try our best to help them — but just as pity, not real compassion because in a similar situation, we see the perpetrator of harm and due to feeling personal loyalty or how it might affect us, we try to cover up and enable the harm that they perpetrate. In such cases, our compassion is like it's blind because we're not really seeing and empathising with the pain people are experiencing, such as poverty, physical pain, sexual abuse and so forth.

Blind, biased compassion is very dangerous because instead of empathizing and giving moral support or solidarity with those who are suffering from abuse, exploitation and so forth, we could end up threatening and ostracising those victims; even committing negative deeds like gossiping and lying to defend the perpetrators. The effects of such negative deeds are so far-reaching because we can plant the seeds of mistrust and doubt and end up, in the case of Buddhist communities, splitting the Sangha and making vajra-siblings enemies too. That is why blind compassion is so dangerous because we can feel emboldened by our initial motivation of compassion to those that we feel partiality or blind loyalty to, and end up justifying all manner of harm to others that are out of reach of our compassion. Blind compassion can never take us to enlightenment because it is tainted by attachment to the eight worldly topics.

Whoever experiences suffering is included in the scope of great compassion.

Now, great compassion — the unlimited, complete Director's Cut — encompasses all sentient beings without a single bias. It doesn't matter if someone is rich or poor, whether they are related to us or not. It doesn't matter that they have been our enemies or our friends, our family, neighbours, a neutral person or whatever. Whoever experiences suffering is included in the scope of great compassion; a compassion that we feel for them and, naturally, leads us to think that we want to save them from their suffering. This thought is called compassion and when you feel it towards all sentient beings, it is called great compassion. Because its scope is all-encompassing, it motivates us without blind-spots to want to save others from suffering, never to collude with actions, habits or systems that cause suffering to them.

All sentient beings are the same. Nobody wants suffering.

I'm not quoting any great masters this time because I'm just reflecting on what I feel in my heart from my own experience. No matter what sense of pain and isolation I have gone through, I never felt I couldn't bear it and never felt alone because my Gurus taught me this great compassion. Feeling conviction in this precious teaching of the Buddha, knowing that negative karma caused by negative intentions out of delusion can only bring suffering, we always come back to compassion, never fear and ill-will.

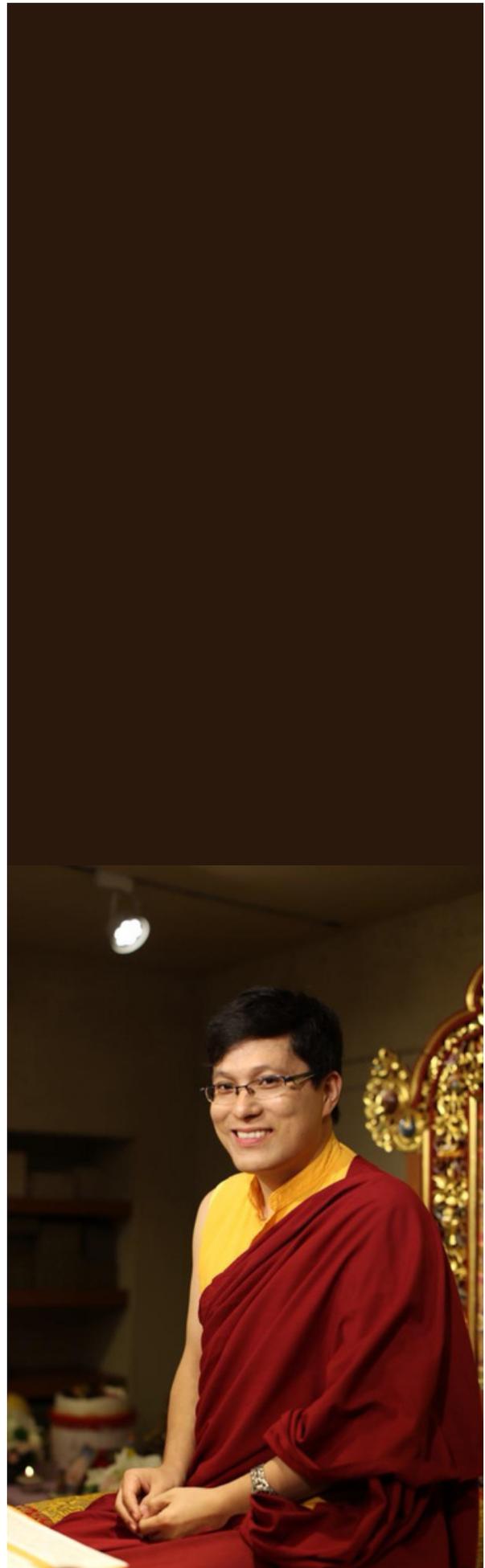
Great compassion has so much benefit. For example, just with ordinary fleeting moments of happiness that we experience personally, we can utilize them to arouse empathetic connection with sentient beings. *I don't want suffering and I want to be happy like this. All sentient beings are the same. Nobody wants suffering.*

Great compassion holds our body upright, gives the conviction to speak the truth and is the key to a heart that is unbounded.

Everyone wants happiness... And real happiness can only be obtained through great compassion because it is the only thing that opens us to authentic connection. Anything less is limited, dissociative and isolating. Great compassion gives us strength, courage, dignity, boldness in our whole body, speech and mind. Great compassion holds our body upright, gives the conviction to speak the truth and is the key to a heart that is unbounded. It is a contagious spirit of confidence to do more to help sentient beings, to do good, to be good. When we have great compassion, whatever wholesome actions we undertake, whatever Dharma teaching we study or contemplate, whatever meditation we do, whatever sadhana we practice and so forth will yield fruit very quickly. Since we will feel an urgency to overcome the causes of suffering for others and ourselves, great compassion itself is the indispensable powerful tool for uprooting the three poisons of attachment, aggression and delusion from the mind.

Whatever happiness is gained from great compassion is pure happiness. Ultimately, it will lead us to enlightenment. For this and many other reasons, this is why the light of great compassion is boundless and unlimited.

His Eminence Dorje Dhenpa Rinpoche, Tenzin Jampel Lungtok Namgyal, is the current throneholder of the Dzongpa tradition of Sakya. In 2003 he was enthroned by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin at the newly-built Gongkar Choede Monastery. His Eminence has taken full responsibility for the both the revival of the lineage and the running of the monastery. Rinpoche has also begun to accept invitations to bring the blessings of the lineage abroad.



HEALING ON THE INSIDE

BY DANIEL TROYAK

Here in Australia within correctional facilities in New South Wales, among prisoners and staff, and much like outside, Buddhism is quite fashionable. People like to quote the Buddha but rarely apply his teachings to their lives.

The teachings of the Buddha, also known as Dharma, is altruistic, loving, compassionate and transformative. However, it also requires an authentic teacher and a serious commitment from the practitioner.

You're the one who has to do the work.

Often when I present the Dharma, inmates are surprised to hear the Buddha is not our saviour.

We often hold the view that someone like a doctor, psychologist or life partner will save us from ourselves and our bad habits. *You're the one who has to do the work*, I explain.

I have been supporting inmates with Dharma, Buddhism and personal growth as a prison chaplain for over 5 years and I honestly think I've heard it all. The work I do is to listen, motivate and encourage inmates to recognise their true potential. In a private and confidential space, inmates can speak freely and share their story.

In this environment it is to a chaplain that one can express their deepest trauma or regret and have it heard with an open heart. No condemnation, no shame and no repercussions.

We suffer because we don't know our ourselves. We don't know our habits, attachments, and desires. We hold the wrong view. We go about our daily lives thinking this is how it's meant to be.

Did you know there's another way to live?

Buddhist chaplains, advocate for inmates and work to reduce recidivism. Inmates learn the key skills needed for emotional processing, healing and growth by hearing, reading and practicing the Dharma.

With deep and positive teachings, inmates learn about ethics and morality and begin to find purpose.



Then by unpacking the contents of the mind with reflection, contemplation and awareness in the here and now it's possible to heal emotional blocks that often described as feelings of heaviness and stuckness.

Bringing about mental stability allows us to think rationally, intelligently and reflect.

Meditation is how we to gain mental stability.

Most of us live our lives stuck in the past and fantasising about the future. Who wants to be in the moment when you're living in prison? Our mind and the quality of our thoughts is the actual prison and not the walls around us..

Bringing about mental stability allows us to think rationally, intelligently and reflect. With a stable mind we can develop a healthy sense of regret and remorse for past negative actions. Only then can we commit to never repeat them again.

Some would argue the Buddha is the world's best cognitive therapist. Witnessing positive change over and over again, I would absolutely agree!



PRAYERS FOR LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE

Every year FPMT* CEO Ven. Roger Kunsang, on behalf of the FPMT organisation, checks with Khandro-la (Khandro Kunga Bhuma) to determine what practices should be done to help create the conditions Lama Zopa Rinpoche, to have a long life and good health for the coming year. In addition to the pujas and practices already advised, Khandro-la's recent observation is that there are still obstacles to Rinpoche's health.

Ven. Roger shares: *Khandro-la is therefore strongly advising students to continue to offer practices dedicated for Rinpoche's good health, and now specifically to recite refuge and bodhichitta prayers. We sincerely request students to start this now or as soon as possible, and to continue over the coming two months. Individual students can offer this practice themselves, and we encourage centres to organise group practice sessions for this.*

Recite prayers and mantras, with strong dedications for Rinpoche's health and long life
Taking Refuge and Generating Bodhichitta. (3x)

Refuge prayer:

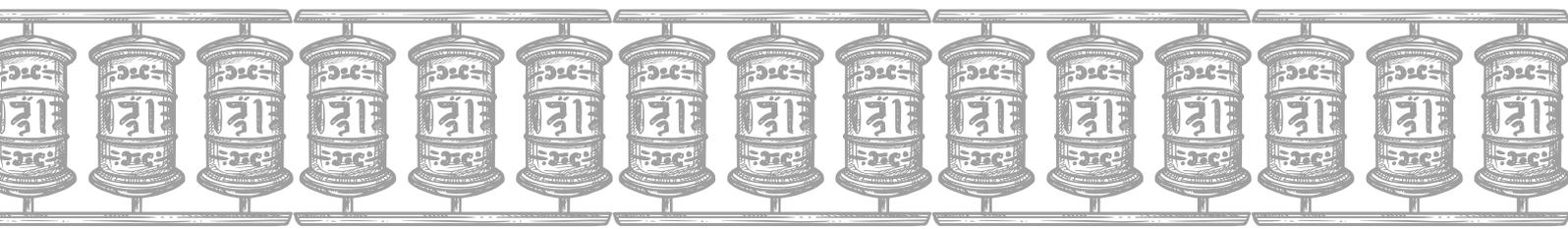
Sang gyä chhö dang tshog kyi chhog nam la
Jang chhub bar du dag ni kyab su chhi
Dag gi jin sog gyi päi tshog nam kyi
Dro la phän chhir sang gyä drub par shog

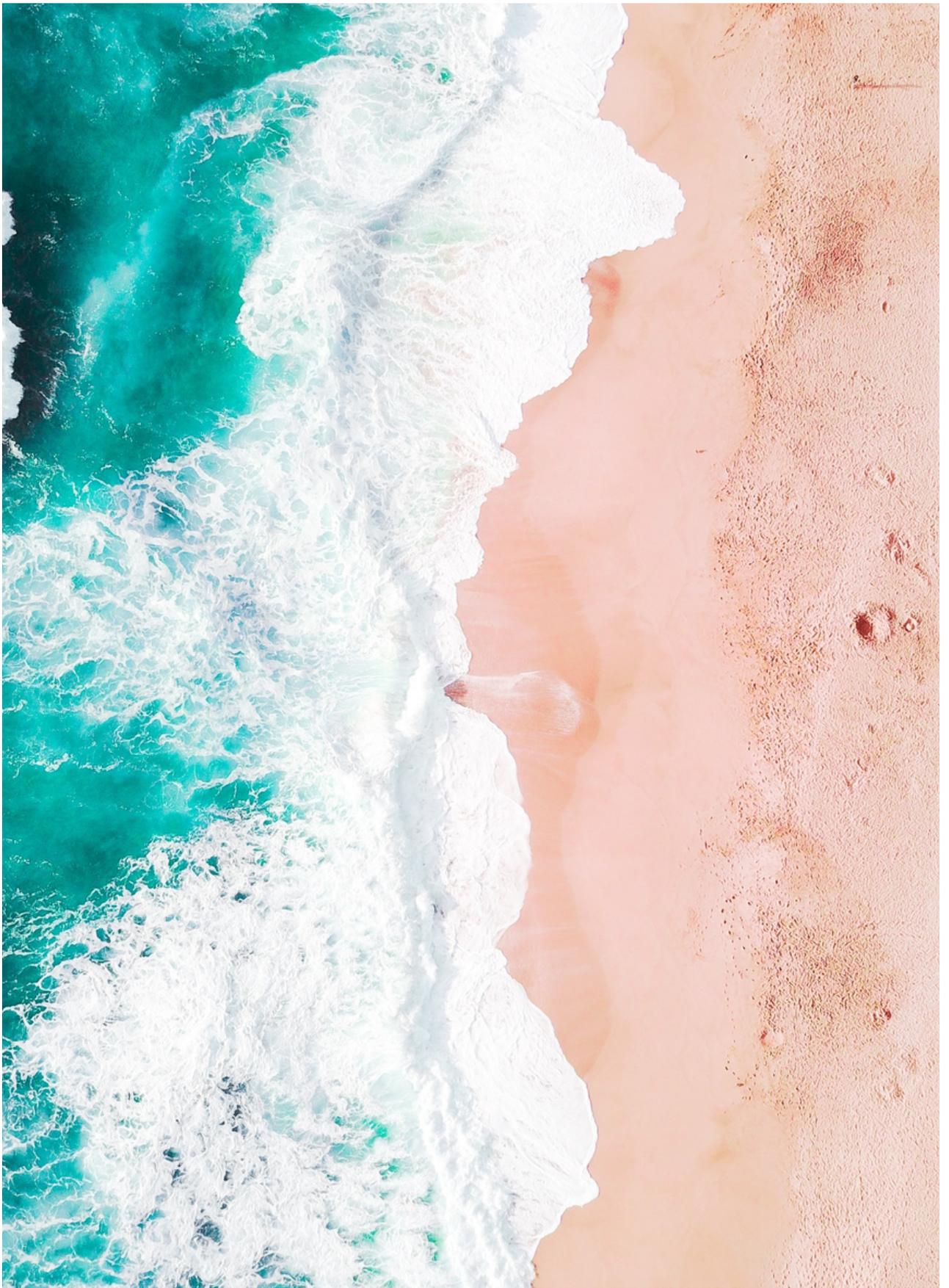
I take refuge until I am enlightened
In the Buddha, the Dharma and the Supreme Assembly.
By my merits of generosity and so forth,
May I become a buddha to benefit transmigratory beings.

The Four Immeasurables:

May all sentient beings have happiness and the cause of happiness.
May all sentient beings be free from suffering and the cause of suffering.
May all sentient beings be inseparable from the happiness that is free from suffering.
May all sentient beings abide in equanimity, free from desire for friends and hatred for enemies.

*Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition







INNER STRENGTH

*Purity and impurity depend on oneself;
no one can purify another.*

Buddha Shakyamuni



SAKA DAWA COMMEMORATES THE BUDDHA'S PARINIVANA.

WHAT IS PARINIVANA AND WHAT IS THE STORY HERE?

Parinirvana, nirvana-after-death, occurs upon the death of someone who has reached nirvana during his or her lifetime. Reaching nirvana means you have removed all afflictions and delusions and no longer create karma. Of course there is more to it than that, which doesn't mean this isn't amazing. Someone in this situation has so developed their mind that everything they do, say or think is in accord with reality. This is not the case for us. They are also blissful. What does that mean?

It means that even though the Buddha was eighty years old with many of the pains and difficulties of old age and illness – he likened himself to a worn-out old cart that could only move if it was pulled along – his mind was peaceful and clear. We need consider these two went together: a mind that is compassionate, clear, wise, and peaceful and the pains and conditions of a worn-out body. Only when he was deep in meditation was the Buddha's body at ease.

He had some time earlier told his close attendant he could use his mind to overcome these physical ailments and extend his life, however he chose not to do this. When Ananda realised the Buddha was going to die, he begged the Buddha to reconsider.

How will we manage? What will we do without you?



You have the teachings, the Dharma. I have taught you all you need to know.

Whatever truths have been expounded to you by me, study them well, practise, cultivate and develop them.

What are those truths? They are:

The Four Foundations of Mindfulness

The Four Kinds of Right Endeavour

The Four Means of Accomplishment

The Five Faculties

The Five Powers

The Seven Factors of Enlightenment

The Noble Eightfold Path.

We may not know what these are, but our teachers do. These are the tools, and we can, gradually, gradually, learn them. We can change our minds and become just like the Buddha. We have that potential. You could say we are already a Buddha, but not quite.

Anna Carmody

NUTRITION OF DHARMA

Gongkar Dorje Dhenpa Rinpoche

For our Chinese readers, H.E. Gongkar Dorje Dhenpa Rinpoche writes about rich and authentic Dharma.

For the English version see *Mind Brakes 4*.

正法功德的滋養

我們也許可以日夜精進不斷地修持佛法，但如果我們對於自我的執取也因此越修越重，那很可能這個修持缺乏了真正長養功德的養份。

為什麼呢？因為這代表我們的修持沒有成功拔除三毒煩惱對於我們自己的控制。如果貪愛，嗔恨，和愚痴等三毒持續支配著我們，我們所修的法也就和正法越離越遠了。

所以什麼是正法？佛陀的教法就是拔除、摧毀三毒，並且引領我們徹底證悟的能力。

而什麼是增長正法功德的養份呢？

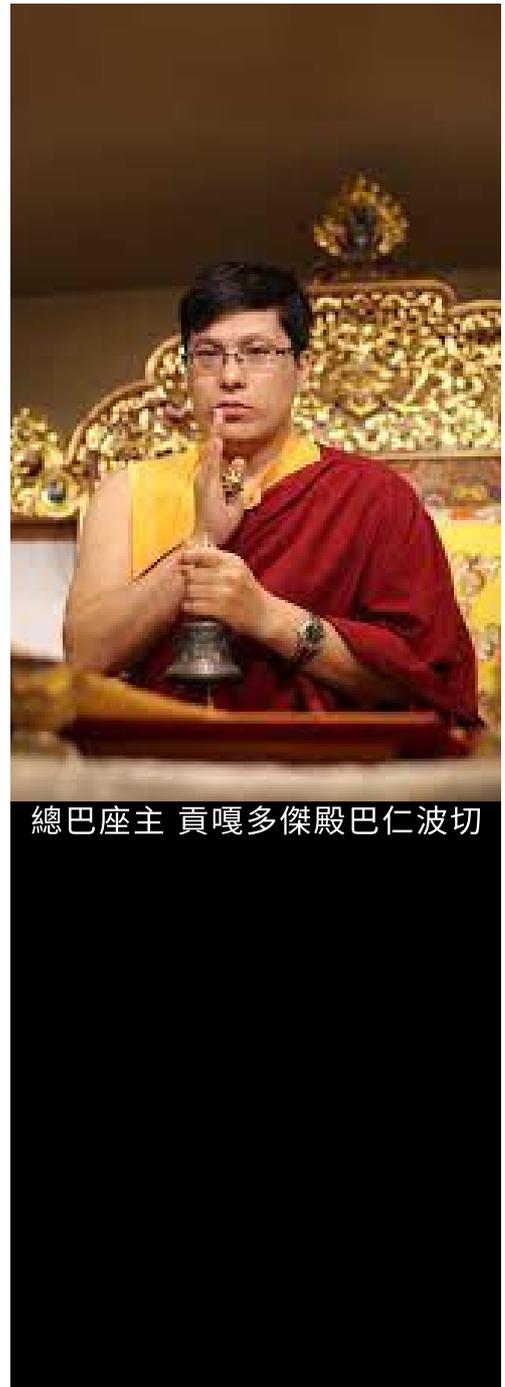
真正滋養正法功德的養份，乃是我們稱為「菩提心」的廣大悲心。一旦我們將菩提心真實融入一切行持——特別是日常生活中，我們將會因此發展出我們未曾想像過，不可思議的力量和安定。

這樣的力量，將能夠直接掃除三毒煩惱對於我等眾生的控制與傷害，並且迅疾帶領我們走向成就與證悟。

菩提心於我們心中增長的同時，我們會很自然地對於一切受三毒煩惱奴役的眾生產生同理心，並且自然而然，毫無分別地對每一個眾生產生同等強而有力的慈悲與關懷，這也就是證悟的根本。

也是因此，菩提心是我們一切行持中，增長一切功德的必要養份。缺少了菩提心，我們所做的一切修法都可能徒勞。但如果我們試著去發展自己的菩提心，哪怕再渺小的功德都將日漸增長。

願各位都能夠在菩提心之中，找到真正的力量，與潤澤。



總巴座主 貢嘎多傑殿巴仁波切

You are responsible for your own happiness. If you expect others to make you happy, you will be disappointed.

—H.H. Dalai Lama



WISDOM AND COMPASSION

I think two things have to go together for us to keep it real, like two wings for takeoff: wing number one is compassion, and wing number two is wisdom. When we've got both, then-liftoff!

Avikrita Vajra Rinpoche

WISDOM



Ultimate Truth
Liberation
Four Noble Truths
Vipassana
Reflection
Contemplation
Emptiness
Realisation
Purity
Awakening
Blissfulness
Happiness



COMPASSION



Empathy
Sincerity
Altruism
Equanimity
Generosity
Forgiveness
Joy
Healing
Lovingkindness
Open heartedness
Tonglen
Meditation



GREEN TARA

RECITE THE MANTRA 3, 7, 21
OR 108 TIMES:

OM TARE TUTTARE TURE
SVAHA

WHICH IS PRONOUNCED AS:
OHM TAR-RAY TOO-TAR-RAY
TOO-RAY SWA-HA

FINALLY, DEDICATE ALL THE
MERIT YOU HAVE CREATED
FOR THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF
ALL BEINGS.

MANTRA FOR THE PANDEMIC GREEN TARA MANTRA

In Tibet, Tara is the mother of all Buddhas, especially her manifestation as Green Tara.

Tara, who Tibetans also call Dolma, is the deity of compassion and skillful action, a protector who comes to our aid to relieve us of physical, emotional and spiritual suffering.

Tara has 21 major forms, each of whom has a different colour and spiritual attribute.

Of these 21 forms, two are especially popular among Tibetan people – White Tara, which is associated with compassion and long life, and Green Tara, which is associated with enlightened activity and abundance.

The mantra of Green Tara is sometimes used as the main mantra for all the Taras.

During these uncertain, troubling days, His Holiness the Dalai Lama – when asked for spiritual advice on the pandemic – suggested that chanting the Green Tara mantra could be helpful.

Om Tare Tuttare Ture Svaha

The mantra means: I prostrate to the Liberator, Mother of all the Victorious Ones.

By calling on Tara's protection from danger and our fears with a sincere motivation to be relieved of our suffering for the benefit of all beings, we can gain the multiple benefits of selfish altruism, and compassionate action, becoming happier ourselves as we help others.

Tibetan temple thangka's frequently shown 21 different Taras, coloured white, red, and yellow, grouped around a central Green Tara. The figure of Amitabha Buddha is often shown in her headdress, as she, like Avalokiteshvara, is considered to be an emanation of the Buddha Amitabha.

Daniel Troyak



BEACON OF HOPE

In Buddhist teachings suffering arises when we want things to be other than how they are. When we feel uneasy, we get restless, we want to change something about ourselves or others, and we hope things could be another way.

The Buddha said: *The hope of enlightenment amid despair is a response to the true heart and mind of the Buddha.* That is a powerful expression and a powerful statement.

With that in mind, we must have an acceptance of things as they are. It's like when you genuinely accept, you don't hope for things to be different. We can develop our mind to see everything in life including problems as the path to enlightenment. We can transform our mind to see the obstacles in life as self-development. We become skillful at dealing with issues in a way that allows for spiritual growth.

If you can't change the world around you, you then change yourself.

Daniel Troyak



OPENING TO OURSELVES, OPENING TO LIFE

I can't overestimate the importance of accepting ourselves exactly as we are right now, not as we wish we were or think we ought to be.

By cultivating nonjudgmental openness to ourselves and to whatever arises, to our surprise and delight we will find ourselves genuinely welcoming the never-pin-downable quality of life, experiencing it as a friend, a teacher, and a support, and no longer as an enemy.

Pema Chödrön is an American Buddhist nun in the Tibetan tradition in the lineage of Chögyam Trungpa. She is a leading figure in teachings on meditation and how they apply to everyday life.

WORDS ON VIOLENCE

By H.H. Sayka Trichen

Compassion is the foundations of all Buddhist teachings. So, violence against others, especially towards the poor and weak, is wrong. It contradicts the basic principles of Buddhism.

Practicing compassion means adopting a caring and tender attitude towards the weak and those who suffer.

We should seek to help and not inflict violence. It is imperative that we feel compassion even for those who commit violence, teaching them to understand the consequences of their actions.

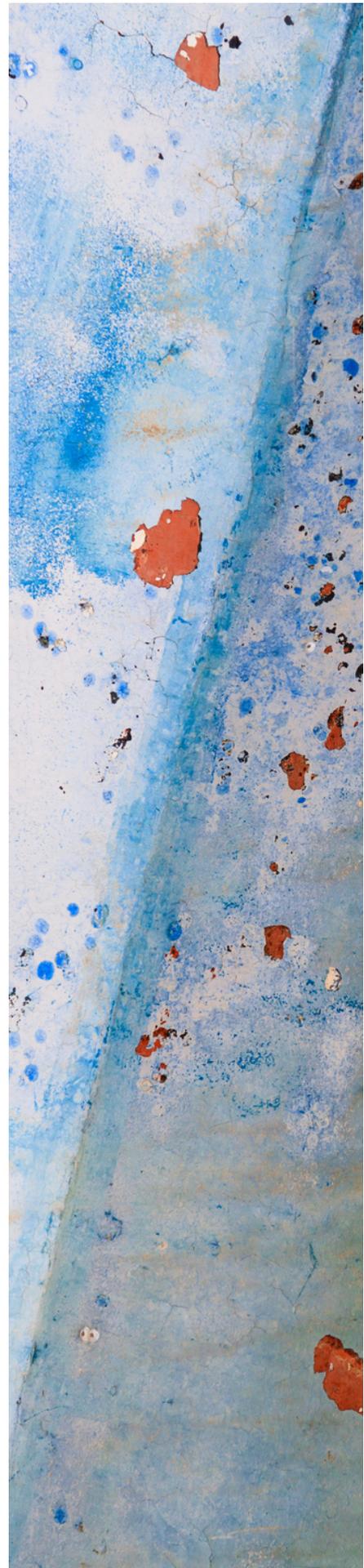
In Vajrayana Buddhism, women are considered the symbol of wisdom. Harming and mistreating women is similar to violating your Buddhist commitments.

Buddhism teaches us that all sentient beings, including humans, are the same. We believe in rebirth. We've been through countless lifetimes in the past. We will have many more lifetimes in the future until we attain enlightenment.

So there is not a single sentient being who has not been our mother, father or other loved ones. Therefore, we must help other sentient beings and regard them as our loved ones. This includes our enemies; we may not recognise them in this lifetime, but they may have been our beloved parents.

It is entirely wrong to insult and abuse one's spouse in any way. We should regard all sentient with love and compassion, and be especially kind and helpful to our family members and our parents.

The teachings of Buddhism prohibit violence and advocates for trying to alleviate the suffering of all sentient beings. Therefore, as followers of Buddhism, our primary duty is to avoid causing harm and to help others.



SAKA DAWA IN LADAHK, INDIA

Saka Dawa in Ladakh, India.

Due to a shared cultural and religious heritage, Ladakh is also known as Little Tibet. Previously part of the larger Kashmir region, it is currently administered by India as a union territory divided into two districts: the main city of Leh which is predominantly Buddhist, and Muslim-majority Kagil.

Saka Dawa is the principle festival of Ladakh and especially significant to Mahayana Buddhists as it commemorates the birth, enlightenment and parinivana of the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni Buddha.

The festival begins with monks, nuns and laypeople gathering in the courtyards of the monasteries to pray, prostrate, make offerings, and generally do whatever they can to commemorate this holiest of days as auspiciously as possible. They may renew their vows, for example not to kill, or they may even take the Mahayana Precepts.

Saka Dawa is a time to reflect on what the Buddha taught and how this relates to what is happening now and the future ahead.

SAKA DAWA LIFE RELEASE

It is said that in India there lived a non-Buddhist king named Trichen, who enjoyed eating meat so much that he killed tens of thousand of animals. Through the karma of his actions, he was reborn in Vajra Hell, one of the eighteen hell realms, where the extent of his suffering was such that he died a hundred times over. Every time he fell back into hell he was renewed and had to go through it all again. The Venerable Ānanda saw this and asked the Buddha why the king had to experience this kind of suffering. The Buddha replied, *This is the karmic ripening of a man who enjoyed eating meat so fresh that the blood was still warm, and who enjoyed killing sentient beings.*

Then Ānanda asked the Buddha Śākyamuni, *Is there any way to liberate him?* and he answered, *If you want to liberate this man from hell, save the lives of animals in the worldly realms and he will be freed.* So Ananda saved lives for the man's benefit, and King Trichen, having had the karma to be liberated, was freed from Vajra Hell.



FACTS

LADAHK HAS THE LARGEST
TELESCOPE IN ASIA

IT HAS THE HIGHEST BRIDGE IN
THE WORLD

IT IS THE LAND OF THE
FASCINATING KUNG FU NUNS

IT IS A LAND OF THE RARE
TWIN-HUMPED BACTRIAN
CAMELS

IT IS A LAND OF THOUSAND
FESTIVITIES





DEEP BREATHING

SLOW
YOUR
BREATHING

SIT OR LIE DOWN

somewhere comfortable



**BREATHE IN THROUGH
YOUR NOSE**

for **4** counts

HOLD YOUR BREATH

for **2** counts

**BREATHE OUT THROUGH
YOUR NOSE**

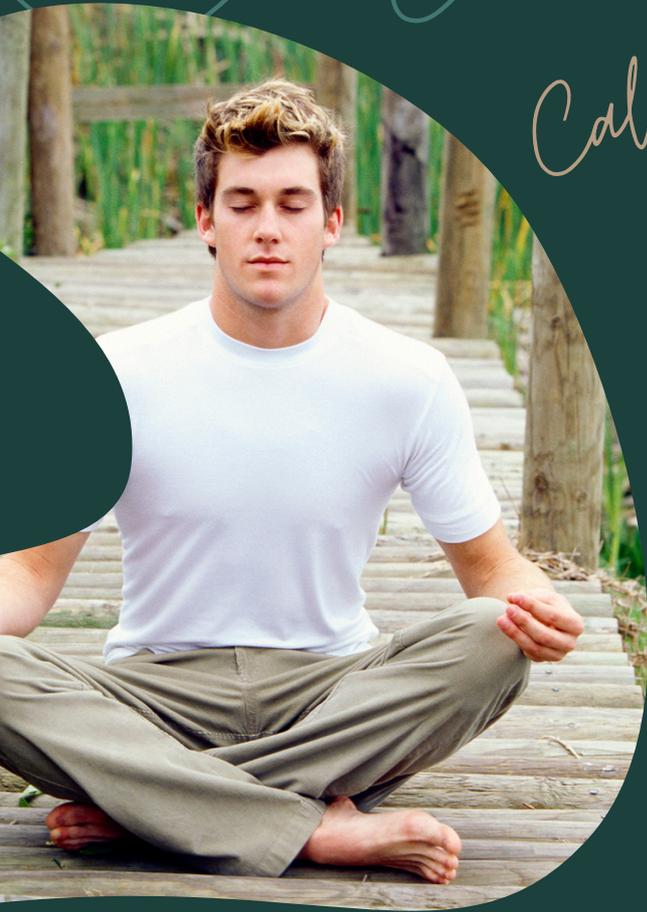
for **6** counts



REPEAT

practice once or twice a day

Calm the mind



SIMPLE MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

Improve focus

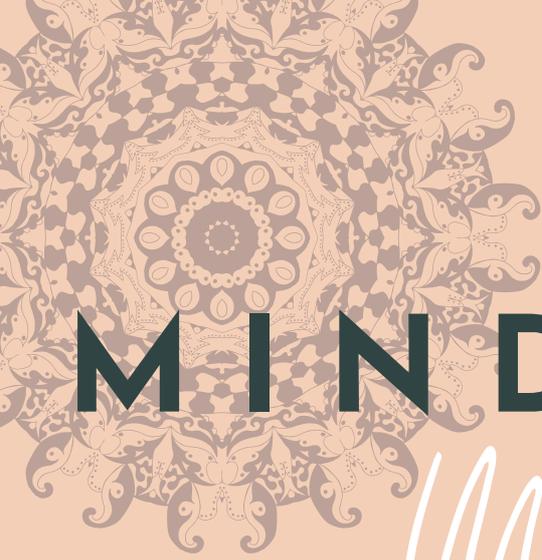
REASONS TO MEDITATE

- To understand your suffering
- Lower your stress
- Connect better with others
- Improve focus
- Promote emotional health
- Reduce brain chatter
- Control anxiety
- Enhance self-awareness



A DAILY PRACTICE





MINDFULNESS

Meditation

START HERE:

1. Take a seat

Find a place to sit that feels calm and quiet to you.

2. Set a time limit

If you're just beginning, it can help to choose a short time, such as five or ten minutes.

3. Notice your body

You can sit in a chair with your feet on the floor; you can sit loosely cross-legged. Just make sure you are stable and in a position you can stay in for a while.

4. Feel your breath

Follow the sensation of your breath as it goes in and as it goes out.

5. Notice when your mind has wandered

Inevitably, your attention will leave the breath and wander to other places. When you get around to noticing that your mind has wandered—in a few seconds, a minute, five minutes—simply return your attention to the breath.

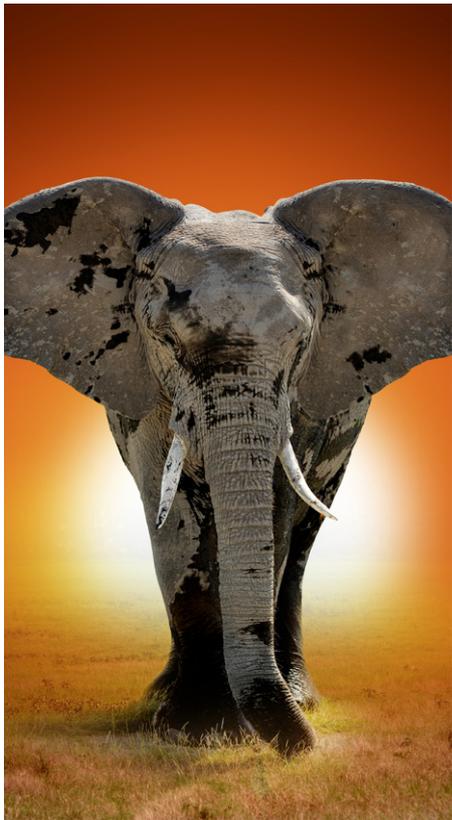
6. Be kind to your wandering mind

Don't judge yourself or obsess over the content of the thoughts you find yourself lost in. Just come back.

7. Close with kindness

When you're ready, gently lift your gaze. (If your eyes are closed, open them.) Take a moment and notice any sounds in the environment. Notice how your body feels right now. Notice your thoughts and emotions.

That's it! That's the practice. You go away, you come back, and you try to do it as kindly as possible.



IN THE BUDDHA'S WORDS

FROM THE PALI CANON

The Four Noble Truths.

And what is the way to the cessation of suffering? It is remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving, the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from it, nonattachment.

And what is the way leading to the cessation of suffering? It is just this Noble Eightfold Path; that is, right view ... right concentration.

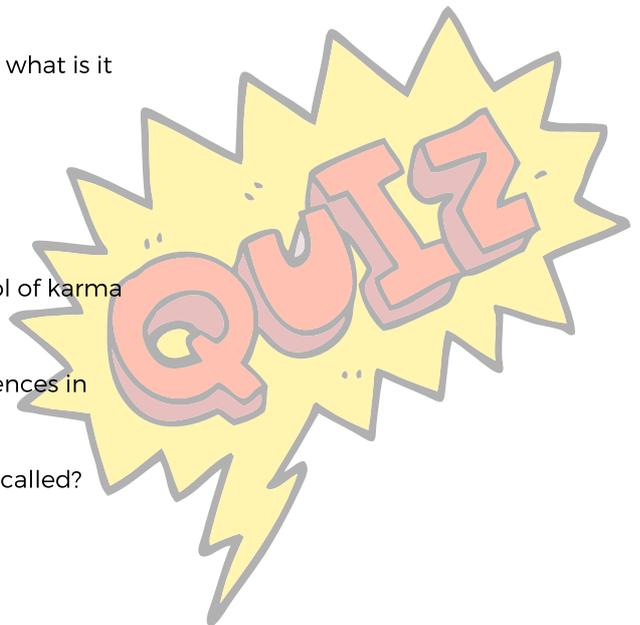
Ageing and Death.

When a noble disciple has thus understood ageing and death, the origin of ageing and death, the cessation of ageing and death, and the way leading to ageing and death ... he here and now makes an end to suffering. In that way too a noble disciple is one of right view ... and has arrived at this true Dhamma.

DHARMA QUIZ

Answers on the last page

- Q1. When meditation is performed to understand an object, what is it called?
- Q2. What is the state between one life and the next called?
- Q3. What is the entry to the Mahayana Path?
- Q4. What is the cycle of rebirth that occurs under the control of karma and affliction?
- Q5. What term is used to describe the unsatisfactory experiences in cyclic existence?
- Q6. What are the potencies from previously created actions called?
- Q7. What are the two truths?
- Q8. What language is the Diamond Sutra written in?
- Q9. What happened under the tree known as the Bodhi Tree?
- Q10. What is samsara?





DEAR AUNTIE MEEYU

LETTERS FROM THE INSIDE

Dear Auntie Meeyu,

With Covid and all the lock-ins, lockdowns, no visits, and no visits from anyone, not even the chaplains, I'm worse than ever. I was happier before. When I knew nothing. Now I know I'm pissed. My mind is shit. What can I do?

Abandoned.



Dear Abandoned,

This is what our teachers tell us. You think, I'll have a go at meditating. *Everyone says it's good. I've got to do something. My life is a mess!*

You sit down. Start watching your breath. At some point, this will be difficult. You can't stop the thoughts. You are, however, noticing them. It may not be possible to take responsibility for something you are not aware of. That's one thing.

And then when you are not meditating (this by-the-way is called Between Sessions) the thoughts continue. *I'm no good. I'm stuck here in this...* (Insert curses.) *There's nothing (more swearing) to do!*

This is your mind telling you it's there: unhappy, angry, cheated, depressed, defeated... and all the others.

So whether you are meditating formally or just living your life, your thoughts are with you.

Can you look at it this way? It's raining. You were planning to exercise. To walk about the yard. Catch up with a friend. The old thinking starts. *Why is it raining? I need fresh air. Even fresh air is denied in here. I can never do what I want. Never never. On and on.*

However if you can look at it differently: I haven't finished my book, I've got to write that letter some day, that show I want to watch is on the telly – your thoughts, your mood, changes. Even for a moment. The unhappiness was not locked in. You can study your dharma books. Think about what you read. How does this relate to me? Meditate!

Looking at something differently doesn't fix what's happening or even make it right. But try it. Try it more than once. Why be unhappy about something you cannot do anything about? It's raining!

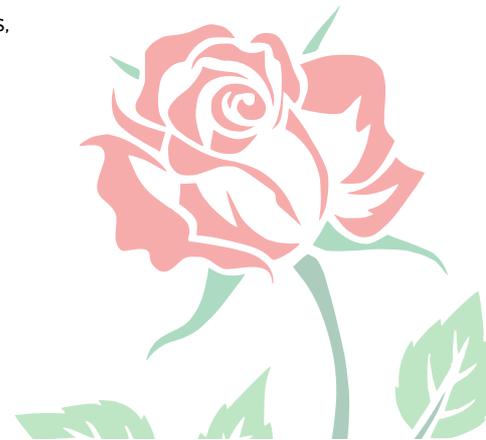
And please don't feel abandoned. I have this on my desk.

You are not alone because all the time there are numberless Buddhas and Bodhisattvas surrounding you, everywhere loving you, guiding you, that is what they do. Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

And they are. They just don't wear name tags.

Love and prayers,

Auntie Meeyu.





THIS IS DHARMA

THE BUDDHA DHARMA. ANYTHING TO DO WITH DHARMA SHOULD BE TREATED WITH CARE AND RESPECT.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. ANALYTICAL MEDITATION
2. BARDO
3. BODHICITTA
4. CYCLIC EXISTENCE OR SAMSAARA
5. DUHKHA
6. KARMIC SEEDS
7. CONVENTIONAL TRUTH AND ULTIMATE TRUTH
8. SANSKRIT
9. THE BUDDHA REACHED FULL ENLIGHTENMENT
10. THE CYCLE OF LIFE, DEATH, AND REBIRTH.



My religion is very simple. My religion is kindness.

H.H. DALAI LAMA



If you want to contribute short articles about your Buddhist journey, send your submissions to:

Internal Mail
Buddhist Chaplaincy
Long Bay Correction Centre

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We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of BCNSW

