



sakyadhita

15th international conference on buddhist women
hong kong | june 22 to 28, 2017

WORKSHOPS

The Buddha is in the Classroom

Andrea Furness

Through meditation, visual imagery, and in-depth discussion, this workshop will explore how the Buddha's philosophical teachings can be incorporated into the educational curriculum of a secular Western classroom. The workshop is based on a case study of a registered primary school in a small country town in Daylesford, Victoria, Australia, that has used a Buddhist philosophical education framework as the foundation for a curriculum designed for both non-Buddhist and Buddhist families .

The intent of the workshop is to provoke thought and discussion about how Buddhist philosophy and views can exist in an educational setting that is open and accessible to all communities. We will identify the educational practices that can benefit from a Buddhist pedagogy. Then we will trace their links to the Buddha's wisdom and compassion teachings in order to provide students with essential life skills for happiness and to build awareness of our universal responsibility.

Each workshop participant will receive a visually inspiring package that encourages participant engagement through meditation, discussion, deep enquiry, questions, and sharing about how the qualities and attitudes in the Buddha's teachings can support children's development and understanding for living a happy life.

Buddhist Fundamentalism?

Asoka Bandarage

There are increasing accounts of aggression against religious minorities in the countries of Asia with a Buddhist majority, such as, Myanmar, Thailand and Sri Lanka. Simplistic depictions of majority aggression and minority victimization aggravate polarization and conflict rather than peace and harmony. To find lasting solutions, these conflicts need to be viewed in a broader global and humanist perspective, rather than simply as isolated "Buddhist" violence or extremism.

Asian Buddhist societies today feel threatened by a confluence of political, economic, and cultural forces beyond their control. Globalization and capitalistic consumer culture drive people away from the simple, ecological, and harmonious way of life associated with the Buddha's teachings. The absence of international financial networks of aid and mutual support, such as those deployed by Christian evangelicals and Wahabi Muslims make many Buddhists feel

relatively powerless against expanding external forces. While aggression or violence by members of any other community should never be condoned, the escalation of communal fears and conflicts needs to be understood in relation to changing local, regional, and global socio-economic realities.

This workshop will engage participants in dialogue and discussion about the complexities of “religious” conflicts in Buddhist-majority countries in Asia. It will explore how the Buddha’s teachings on the Middle Path can be utilized to address “religious” extremism and the underlying human afflictions of greed, hatred, and selfishness. In so doing, the workshop will seek to contribute to a compassionate social justice framework helpful to Buddhist women for promoting harmonious co-existence among ethno-religious communities in Asia and elsewhere.

The Six Paramitas of Learning English

Christie Chang

Are you interested in improving your English? Has it occurred to you that contemplating the six *paramitas* may assist you in learning English? Or that while learning English, you are also practicing the six *paramitas*?

In the first part of this workshop, we will discuss the potential relationship between the six *paramitas* and learning English. For example, the second *paramita* is ethical conduct. Just as a person needs discipline to maintain good ethical conduct, in studying a language, a person needs discipline in practicing new sounds and sentence structures. By applying discipline in practicing new sounds and sentence structures, one strengthens one’s personal discipline overall, which can be applied to the practice of ethical conduct – the second *paramita*. Similarly, we will examine the other five *paramitas* – generosity, patience, diligence or joyful effort, concentration, and wisdom – and how they can be applied to the practice of English.

The second part of the workshop will provide a basic linguistic analysis of the sounds and structures of English, and introduce various methods of practicing them. Depending on the number of participants, their needs, and time constraints, we will practice in pairs and groups. One-on-one pronunciation correction will also be offered.

Buddhist Songs for Relaxation and Sharing Dhamma

Clesia Margarita

Songs are known to be very beneficial for sharing Dhamma. They help people to learn and realize the Dhamma. Also, in relaxation and healing sessions, songs seem to be very effective. People with insomnia relax more easily and even fall asleep while listening to songs, maybe because they listened to lullabies as children. Still, some people cannot relax even while listening to music. In this workshop, we focus on songs as an aid to relaxation.

We begin the workshop by sharing Dhamma accompanied by music. Then we will practice relaxation, both with songs and without, and observe whether participants notice a difference. Further, as a group, we will discuss what kinds of songs are most suitable for relaxation and try to create songs together that will meet our needs for relaxation.

Korean Lotus Lantern

Cynthia Hui

Mindfulness is the energy of being aware and awake to the present moment. It is the continuous practice of touching life deeply in every moment of daily life. To be mindful is to be truly alive, present and at one with those around us and with what we are doing.

This workshop will be an opportunity to practice mindfulness through making traditional Korean lotus lanterns. We will learn to practice attention – the essence of mindfulness – by mindfully counting the sheets of paper, gently twisting them into petals, and creating our own lotus lantern.

We will practice creating the lotus lantern with a relaxed and gentle attitude, an open mind, and a receptive heart. Participants will be able to bring this memory home and continue the practice of mindfulness in daily life. With this practice, we will cultivate peace and joy within and around us, as a gift to all those we love and care for.

Lightening Mind and Body: Practicing Javanese Classical Dance

Dewi Cahya Ambarwati

In Javanese society, the arts are believed to be a way to reach enlightenment, along with prayer and meditation. The aim of this workshop is to illustrate meditation in motion through Javanese classical dance movements. Javanese dance incorporates philosophical ways of life that not only include symbols and meaning, but also an understanding of the space human beings live in. Multiple relationships – human-and-sacred, human-and-environment, and human-to-human are demonstrated in the dance, leading the dancers to spiritual awareness. Thus, dance can be acknowledged as a meditative practice in which one blends with the sacred, letting go of the ego. As a spiritual exercise, dance enables us to develop conscious awareness and let go of the sense of self by releasing our inner energies to control the mind and body. Being aware of emotions, patient, and compassionate, reflects an embodied awareness beyond ourselves, similar to meditation practices in Buddhist traditions.

In this workshop, we focus on understanding the three concepts of *wiraga*, *wirama*, and *wirasa* through dance. *Wiraga* extends the idea of generating movement, for example, moving like the flow of a river. *Wirama* allows one to listen to the music or other sounds, such as from nature or our heartbeat, and unify the movement with the sound. *Wirasa* is our personal participation in the dance, revealing our inner spiritual capacity to be fully present, generating immanence and transcendence.

First, I will introduce some basic Javanese dance movements, including several *mudras* (hand positions). Second, participants will demonstrate these movements themselves, accompanied by traditional Javanese music. Last, we will focus on spiritual enhancement while moving.

Buddhist Social Action for Animals in Sikkim

Diki Palmu

Sikkim is a small Himalayan state in India. Even though Buddhists now only comprise 28 percent of the population, the traditional state religion is Buddhism. This has a profound effect on Sikkimese culture and society, including the laws, relationships with, and social action regarding animals. Mahāyāna Buddhist teachings emphasise compassion for all sentient beings in the six realms of *samsāra*. Humans interact with beings in the animal realm on a daily basis and so animals are often the subjects of Buddhist teachings and practice. Sikkimese people are taught that, due to karma and rebirth, human beings may be born as animals and animals may be reborn as human beings. We must have compassion for animals, because they have probably been our mothers or close relatives in a past life and may be again in future lives. Just like us, all animals cherish their lives and are afraid of dying. It is even said that if you kill a cat, the negative karma is equivalent to destroying seven monasteries. Sikkimese children are taught to respect all life, from a mosquito to an elephant.

Buddhism helps human beings see animals from a different, more compassionate perspective. We believe all beings can live together in harmony and peace in this world. This Buddhist heritage has shaped the laws and practices in Sikkim, especially on Buddhist holy days, when the effects of karma are multiplied. For example, the Sikkim Government Gazette published a statewide, legally punishable ban on animal slaughter during the whole month of the Tibetan New Year and prohibited animal slaughter and the sale of meat and meat products during the 14 days of Vaiśākha (the fourth lunar month). In most villages, animal slaughter and the sale of meat are banned on Buddhist holy days each month: the eighth day, full moon, and new moon. Offenders, if caught, have to pay a fine and offer 100,000 butter lamps. Herders in northern Sikkim slaughter yaks only once a year, during November. In addition, Sikkimese practice animal liberation (*tshethar*) to protect animals from slaughter. On a day-to-day basis, the Sikkimese care for animals and engage in social activities for their welfare.

I am a veterinarian and do my duty honestly and passionately. I believe that, in some future life, I may be born as an animal. I also believe that the animals I treat are family members, whom I loved dearly in a previous lifetime, so I make sure that they get good veterinary care, are comfortable, and suffer as little as possible. The community supports our veterinary work for animals on many levels. The stray animals in Sikkim are in much better health than most anywhere in the world. The veterinary department in our state government stopped culling stray dogs ten years ago, in order to avoid killing and to practice compassion. We now surgically sterilize dogs to humanely control the population. Stray dogs now live freely and are valued as community members in towns and villages.

Mindful Chinese Calligraphy

Esther Liu

Chinese calligraphy is the simplest artistic endeavor, being composed of black dots and strokes. The strokes, composition, and integration create various kinds of beauty in their implicit and symbolic artistic expression. This workshop on mindful Chinese calligraphy offers participants insight into Chinese characters and a chance to experience the skills of writing. It will create an ambience for writing and prepare the “treasures of the study” – brushes, paper, and ink – for each participant. The workshop includes meditation and a hand and body warm-up to prepare for writing calligraphy. No prior calligraphy experience is needed.

The Chinese character for mindfulness symbolizes “the now” – calm, alert, open, curious, and steady – with flexible, choiceless awareness and bare attention to the present moment. This includes awareness of one’s body, bodily movements, and sensations, as well as the contents of one’s consciousness and consciousness itself. It can be interpreted as “being full-hearted right now,” in that one’s attention is fully grounded in and focused upon the action of the present moment.

Mindfully writing Chinese calligraphy is an action in the present moment – a controlled expression of emotions, aware of the relationship between the emotions of the calligrapher and objects in the surrounding environment. It is a harmonious integration of subject and object that reflects the material world while expressing the emotions of the calligrapher. The two essential elements of Chinese calligraphy are Chinese characters and writing. If the characters are the body or contents of calligraphy, writing is the spiritual practice. Calligraphic creation naturally reveals a person’s emotions in a way that mediates, controls, and harmonizes the beauty of nature and the beauty of personality. The coordination and reunification of the various elements of calligraphy are attained through understanding and practice.

Art Zen Visual: Meditation with Art

Eva Yuen

In your heart, the seed that will become the flower is planted deeply.
Hidden in the mire, in monochrome, it cannot be seen.
But through colouring the place where it is, you can assume it will appear.
When you observe it, you can see where it is hiding.
Then you realise you are colouring your cognition.
And the Zen flower is born. ~ Eva Yuen

The aim of the workshop is to give us the chance to become more deeply in touch with our own self-understanding as we engage in the medium of sketching flowers. As we observe and draw the flowers, we will come to realize and feel how the mind and the act of drawing work together. Usually in this kind of activity, the mind dominates the way we use lines and shapes, and we draw from our conception of the flower rather than directly from our deep observation of it. Instead, we will explore how to really observe, to draw what our eyes actually see, and experience what our hearts are feeling. Making the sketch look like a flower is not so important – what is more important is that the act of being true to our feelings, which can help us to see how we relate ourselves to the world. If, at this point, we can really recognise how these feelings arise and how we handle them – while still doing our drawings – then we can begin to appreciate what it is to understand ourselves. Our completed sketches will make a statement about how we relate ourselves to the world. This workshop provides a foundation that will bring us closer to letting go of all the self-delusions for the betterment of the mind.

Martial Arts: Moving Meditation – Really?

George Chaplin

Fighting arts are ubiquitous in human societies. In those societies of East and Southeast Asia these arts are usually connected to a Buddhist history. Obviously, fighting is not a Buddhist activity, not even for self-defense, because one can ask who is defending who from whom? I will leave this question for each of you to answer for yourself: Is this self so important that it needs defending? In the past Buddhist countries had many nuns and monks who practiced martial arts. This best known is the Shaolin tradition, which was popularized in movies, tv and in the histories of secret societies. If martial arts are about fighting per se, how then do Buddhists rationalize their practice?

Many Buddhist martial artists claim their art is a form of moving meditation. I would say this may be true but clearly not if the goal is to win, hurt, make money, or bolster a weak ego. For a martial art to be really moving meditation then it needs to develop either *samatha* or *vipassana*, calmness or insight. The foundation of practice then must be *satipatthana* – the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. These four foundations are the basis of all Buddhist practice. When they are developed with energy, then they are an essential part of the Thirty-Seven Limbs of Enlightenment.

In a martial art, these four foundations are essential to the development of knowledge of the body and its positions and postures. These foundations are seen as not self, not mine, not I, and viewed as ephemeral phenomenon. Thus with diligent practice, clear understanding, and mindfulness, this practice will keep away all covetousness and mental pain. Traditional martial arts practice developed these foundations in a considered program of increasing complexity. Sadly, this program is rarely followed by its present day practitioners.

The workshop will begin with an introduction and questions about the participants and any martial arts they have practiced. Participants will be encouraged to interrupt and ask questions. The workshop will include a discussion about martial arts history and the Buddhist connection, and the difference between art (*jutsu*) and way (*do*), I will demonstrate a *kata* and describe the training I have done, including why *satipatthana* needs to be developed for a martial art to really be moving meditation.

The Korean Templestay Program

Hyeyeon Sunim

Korean Templestay is a unique program to present Korean Buddhist culture to international visitors. The program was designated as an internationally successful program in cultural tourism by the The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2009. The Templestay program is a Korean Buddhist cultural experience designed to meet the needs of modern people seeking recreation and healing. It gives people an opportunity to experience traditional Korean monastic life and to interact with the *sangha* community. It also gives them an opportunity to enjoy the beautiful natural environment surrounding temples located deep in the mountains. In addition, it provides people, regardless of religion, with a chance to promote their physical and mental health.

This workshop will be held over four days. On the first and second days, participants will be introduced to the Templestay Program, learn how to make lotus lanterns, and practice Korean

meditation. On the third and fourth days, participants will be introduced to the Templestay Program, learn how to make short rosaries (*malas* or prayer beads), and also practice Korean meditation.

The Spirit of Precepts in Korean Buddhism

Hyoseok Sunim and Nuns of Bongnyongsa Sangha University and Kumkang Vvinaya Graduate School in Korea

This workshop will present the spirit of precepts in Korean Buddhism. It will introduce various ordination ceremonies in Korean Buddhism, the Vinayapitaka on which the ordination ceremonies are based, and other ceremonies for keeping the precepts (e.g., *uposadha* or confession). For one, the ceremony of respecting the Buddha praises the virtue and wisdom of the Buddha. Both monastics and laity can develop the benevolence of the Buddha and aim to live up to the Buddha's teachings. As another example, the almsbowl meal helps monastics think about their commitment and the benevolence of the almsgivers. It is also a way of religious practice that helps remove undue desire, beyond simply satisfying one's appetite and thirst.

This workshop will be conducted over three successive days, illustrating the systematic educational courses followed by *sramaneras* and *bhikkhunis* in the Korean Buddhist *sangha*. On the first day, we will discuss the definition of precepts and the different types of precepts for monastics and laypeople. On the second day, we will present the ceremony for paying reverence to the Buddha and demonstrate the almsbowl meal. On the third day, we will discuss education for Buddhist nuns in Korea. Question-and-answer sessions will be included.

Sunmudo: A Seon (Zen) Martial Art

Jawoo Sunim

Sunmudo literally means "the way of meditative martial arts." It is both meditation and martial art. It is very unique in that it contains a variety of different movements that complement each other. It begins with the dynamic and powerful movements of a martial art and then turns into the peaceful practices of meditation, yoga, and *qigong*. The purpose of Sunmudo is to harmonize one's body and mind with breathing.

Sunmudo has its origin in the Shilla Dynasty (57 BCE–935 CE). Since then, throughout Korean history, Korean Buddhist monks and nuns have practiced *sunmudo*, not for attacking others, but for the purpose of self-defence and mental cultivation. It can help participants who are tired and stressed due to the daily routines of modern life to relax their body and mind. So I would like to introduce this unique Korean Buddhist Seon Martial Art called "Sunmudo" to the people attending the Sakyadhita International Conference in HongKong with my one fellow layman and one laywoman to have a chance to share the experience of Sunmudo with them.

The workshop will begin with an introduction to the history of *sunmudo*. Next, will be a demonstration of *sunmudo*, followed by instruction in the art. A variety of forms will be presented, including *sam-to-sik*, *yuyeongong* (warm-up exercises for flexibility), *jang-ji-reu-gi* (a basic Soen martial art form), and *young-jeong-jwa-gwan* (moving hand meditation). The

workshop will be offered on three different days.

Metta (Loving Kindness) & Sati (Introspection) Meditation

Jayantā (Shirley Johannesen)

Meditation is a beautiful practice. By gaining experience and knowledge in multiple styles of meditation, we have a better idea of what is most suitable for our own personal practice. Individuals vary, so we should not assume that any one meditation practice will have universal appeal. The word meditation (Pāli: *bhāvana*) encompasses a wide variety of practices, such as sitting meditations, walking methods, mindfulness meditations, and contemplative practices. In this workshop, we will practice sitting meditation, focusing on loving kindness (*metta*) meditation and introspection (*sati*). The practice of *metta* meditation is a great support to many awareness practices. With *metta* meditation, training the heart/mind, we generate loving kindness and compassion for everyone and everything. Loving kindness is a basic expression of wisdom. It can be cultivated as an attitude of the heart/mind and as a way to inner peace. With regular practice, we progress day after day. The heart relaxes, softens, opens, and fills with friendliness towards oneself and all beings. It is a very heartwarming practice.

Introspection (*sati*) is a practice of looking inward. This style of meditation requires mindfulness, sustained inward attention, and a balancing of vitality and relaxation. Mindfulness meditation sets the stage for us to develop insight into the laws of nature. As silence and stillness develop, concentration deepens and awareness expands. With this stable foundation, we are able to recognize and observe the movements of the mind, as our attention goes from one thing to another. By sharpening the skill of mindfulness, we gently redirect the mind's attention back to the object of meditation (either focusing on the breath and relaxing or on loving kindness and relaxing).

Overall, the practice of meditation helps us cultivate greater compassion, peace, contentment, and the capacity to adapt to changing internal and external conditions. Some other benefits of the practice include less stress, improved concentration, clarity of mind, less mental chatter (busy mind, monkey mind), better focus, and restful sleep – to name just a few. This workshop is suitable for anyone interested in meditation, both beginners and experienced meditators.

Relax the Body, Calm the Mind: Mindfulness Yoga

Jayanta (Shirley Johannesen)

The initial intention of yoga postures (*asanas*) was to prepare practitioners to sit in meditation. In this workshop, through yoga postures, breathing exercises, and deep relaxation, we will experience various techniques of these three aspects of yoga. Yoga exercises help to relieve stress, nourish deep relaxation, restore vibrant health, provide for sound sleep, heal physical and mental trauma, and initiate a sense well-being. The goal of relaxing the body and calming the mind is to gain greater bodily awareness, balance the systems of the body, and realign the energy flowing within the body. This awakens us to our underlying wholeness and helps support our natural healing process. Relaxing the body and calming the mind promotes inner balance, harmony, and vitality.

Mindfulness yoga is the integrated practice of mindfulness meditation and hatha yoga. Mindfulness is a Buddhist meditational approach to the practice of the yoga *asanas*. The Pāli word *sati* is usually translated as “mindfulness,” more accurately it is “introspection.” Mindfulness yoga is not about putting oneself in any particular yoga posture, but about remembering to bring one’s attention to the experience of the present moment.

In yoga practice, the breath is a great tool for centering and for focusing attention. Different breathing exercises and relaxation techniques are important for nourishing ourselves, both on the yoga mat and in everyday activities. Relaxing our body calms the mind, and calming the mind relaxes our body. With practice, we encourage the body to awaken naturally to joy and ease, bringing us to our center – balanced, in harmony, calm, and clear.

This class is perfect for any level of student. We will focus on a tapestry of tools that we can integrate into our personal yoga practice and our daily activities. An added bonus is learning to sit for hours, such as sitting during the conference!

Turquoise and Jade: A Proposal for Cultural Exchange

Jin Ho Shi and Sophie Muir

Based on a project that began in 2010, this workshop combines Tibetan and Chinese chanting practices to invite a meeting between the Tibetan and Chinese Buddhist traditions. Reflecting on the compassion of the Tara and Quan Yin *bodhisattvas*, it offers a taste of musical-liturgical fusion, as recorded in the CD, “Turquoise & Jade” (Jin Ho Fashi, Nyima Rainbow, and Vici Williams).

The workshop begins with a brief introduction that tells the story of the project from its inception in a dream in 2004. In this dream, a *dakini* was wearing cross-shaped earrings, one made of turquoise and one of jade – symbolic representations of the Jewel of Dharma in the two lands of China and Tibet. The project, initiated from this dream, gathers Dharma practitioners from the Vajrayana and Chan traditions to explore ways of combining our voices – serving as a kind of liberation through hearing.

In the workshop, we will be meditating and chanting together, for example, by invoking Tara, Quan Yin/Avalokitesvara, and Amitabha. Through visualization and *mantra*, we shall offer these chants in a spirit of prayer for harmony and peace. One piece combines the ten-syllable mantra of Green Tara and the mantra of Quan Yin. The Homage to the Great Compassionate combines the six-syllable mantra of Chenrezi/Avalokitesvara with the mantra of Quan Yin. Another piece combines Invocations to Pranaparamita: *Om Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate Bodhi Swaha* and *Mo Ho Bo Re Po Lo Mi Do*. Another combines Pure Land practices: the short Dewachen Prayer and the Amitabha (*amitofa*) recitation. Creating space for devotional expression and mutual aspiration, we shall invite new ideas, encourage inquiry, and consider further possibilities for uniting our Dharma voices.

Applied Loving-kindness Meditation for Schoolchildren

Joticandā Hang Ho

Gautama Buddha's teaching of *mettā bhāvanā* or loving kindness meditation (LKM) distinguishes him from other previous religious teachers. This meditation not only helps to cultivate universal love and self-compassion but also brings about sublime states of mind leading to awakening. Applied *metta* meditation for 8 to 12-year-old children aims to foster selfless love towards oneself and the others through heartfelt care. Nurturing selfless love, amity, and benevolence from a young age, as suggested by the Buddha in the Pāli canon, may help prevent stress in subsequent years. LKM interventions have been tested in both psychopathology and mental health for a decade and the cultivation of loving kindness has been shown to be efficacious as a "mental vaccination" with great promise. In order to apply LKM with school children, a set of ethical principles and clear guidance for meditation teachers and parents need to be discussed in detail. This workshop provides guidance and a step-by-step model practice plan.

The workshop will begin with an ice breaker and an introduction to the topic of selfless love, amity, and benevolence for children. This will be followed by group discussion on topics such as guidance for practice (related to age, place of residence, family's religious inclination, suitable times for practice, and other issues), preparing teachers and parents as guides, and developing a six-week program plan. Next will be a discussion of the ethical foundations of the practice. The workshop will conclude with a guided meditation on *mettā bhāvanā*.

Creating Buddhist Picture Books

Juyarn Tsai

Storytelling was one of the main ways the Buddha propagated his teachings. This workshop will discuss how the Buddha conveyed his liberating ideas through stories and how Buddhist practitioners can use picture books to pass on the Buddha's wisdom. We will survey several contemporary Buddhist picture books created in Taiwan and also demonstrate how to compose Buddhist picture books.

To begin, we will introduce the Buddha and his followers as great storytellers. Next, we will take a look at contemporary Buddhist picture books produced in Taiwan. Then, I will share the picture books that I have written:

1. *The Giraffe and the Little Ant I & II*

These books teach compassion and generosity as key values of being a Buddhist. It also discusses how to keep our balance when we are suffering and how to handle being torn between compassion and social justice.

2. *The Giraffe and the Little Ant III*

This book illustrates how to recover when things change and accident happens. In addition, it discusses the topics of sameness and difference.

3. *A Series of Six Roots*

These six picture books provide Dharma education for youngsters by focusing on the six faculties – eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind – as they come into contact with the six types of objects and give rise to the six types of consciousness and resulting actions.

The workshop concludes with a discussion about how to compose picture books, incorporating writing, drawing, dancing, and chanting.

Compassionate Listening

Karma Lekshe Tsomo

Cultivating deep listening skills has many benefits, both spiritual and practical. Mindful listening is useful in countless ways in everyday life and can be viewed as a spiritual practice that moves beyond ourselves to actively focus on others. By developing deep listening skills and taking time to listen mindfully to ourselves and others, we can improve the quality of our relationships – in the family, workplace, and community. Through careful and caring listening, we are able to develop deeper trust, empathy, and connection. We will also learn to be mindful of our feelings during difficult conversations.

In this workshop, we will practice listening mindfully to others, bringing our full attention and presence to the experience, without judgment, comparison, or response. Careful, compassionate listening is a way of being fully grounded in the moment. We will learn to listen to others' words and feelings with full attention. Focusing respectfully on what our partner has to say, we are able to let go of our own stories and preconceptions. As we practice being fully present, moment to moment, we gradually become better at moving beyond our fixation on ourselves, freeing up limitless potential for the benefit of ourselves and others.

Wisdom & Insight: Crosscultural Perspectives

Karma Lekshe Tsomo & Malia Dominica Wong

Wisdom and insight are elements of both Buddhist and Christian philosophy and practice, but the terms derive from very different cultural contexts and may refer to different ideas and experiences. Interreligious dialogue often flounders when partners discover that they are using the same term to refer to completely different things. It seems logical that dialogue will be more interesting and fruitful if partners investigate in advance their definitions of key concepts and discuss what they mean in actual practice.

This workshop will be an exploration of what wisdom and insight mean in the Buddhist context and the Christian context. It will begin with introductions and participants' reflections on any experience they have had with interreligious dialogue. In the second round, participants will express what the terms "wisdom" and "insight" mean to them. Next, the facilitators will share ideas and stories from their respective wisdom traditions to shed light on the commonalities and differences in Buddhist and Christian interpretations. The final phase will be an attempt at comparative analysis to get a deeper understanding of the Buddhist and Christian interpretations of these two key concepts.

"Empty Hand, Empty Brush," A Contemplative Immersion into Brush Painting Integrated with Qigong

Kichung Lee Lizee

This workshop will present a unique blend of Asian calligraphy and Western thematic materials. Asian calligraphy is a type of meditation and a process of discipline in centering, starting from the correct posture alignment, preparing calligraphic ink, holding the brush correctly as an extension of the arm, and executing the brush stroke in oneness. Participants will learn how to sensitize themselves to their internal energy through *qigong*, *taiqi*, and free-flowing calligraphic art. This workshop offers a unique opportunity for participants to integrate mindfulness with creative expression in a contemplative setting – meditation in action.

Buddhism and Healing: Contemporary Experiences and Reflections

Kin Cheung

In this workshop, we will discuss the intersection between Buddhism and healing in the contemporary context. The focus will be how Buddhism currently provides people with avenues of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual healing. The facilitator will share personal experiences and encourage everyone to do so as well.

Participants will be asked to come up with their definitions of healing and health. They will then be asked explicitly how Buddhism may add to or alter such notions. Afterwards, we will compare various definitions in order to discuss how Buddhist conceptions of health tie in karma and ethics in such a way that broadens health beyond an individual burden toward a broader communal and environmental understanding of what it means to be healthy.

Everyone will then reflect on and have the opportunity to share their experiences with healing and healers. We will pay attention to how the boundary blurs between religion and medicine. The facilitator will provide examples of Buddhist healing practices and ask the participants for more examples in order to highlight the rich and multifaceted functions these activities provide. For instance, we will discuss chanting, prayer to Buddhist deities, life release, and other healing practices and rituals.

Art and Meditation

Dharmacharini Anagarika Kiranada

I came to meditation and to Buddhism more than forty years ago, through art. The first time I sat with meditation instructions, I went into a deep, pristine place where “self” was gone, there was no separation, and I merged into that inner space. I knew I had been there before many times with my artwork. There was no “me” on the cushion, just as there had been no “me” at the end of the brush. With years of occasional research among meditation teachers, psychologists, and fellow artists, I found some explanation for what I experienced with this “losing self,” merging, and deepening meditation. With some interactive art experiences (simple drawing and meditative writing), I plan to lead participants into this realm. Special talent or experience in art is not necessary.

The workshop will begin with an introduction to art and meditation, including my personal experiences and some of the research I have done in this area. Next, I will set up activities to take

participants into this area, beginning with some meditation centering and quieting. Following this, we will chant some simple *mantras* or do “meditation writing” practices to “loosen our hands,” connect with line and the flow of the mantra. Next, we will engage in some drawing activities that will help us explore the old Zen instruction on drawing:

First draw bamboo for ten years.
Then become bamboo.
Then forget all about bamboo
When you are drawing.

The workshop will conclude with suggestions for making art part of daily life, to continue to connect with these experiences, and deepen our meditation.

Bringing a Sutra Into the World: Shakyō as a Devotional Practice

Konin Cardenas

Shakyō is the practice of copying Buddhist teachings (usually *sutras* as broadly defined in the Mahāyāna) by hand, using brush and ink. In the Japanese Buddhist traditions, *shakyō* has become a widespread devotional practice. This workshop will begin with a brief overview of the history of sacred writing around the world, beginning with cuneiform, bone carvings, and palm leaf writings made around 4,000–3,000 BCE. It will then explore sacred writing as a devotional practice in East Asian cultures up to around 1,300 CE, focusing on the Japanese practice of *shakyō*.

The practice of *shakyō* became so important within Japanese Buddhism that by 673 CE the government had created an official bureau of *sutra* copying to help ensure the accuracy and availability of texts. The devotional aspect also became very widespread, with some individuals copying the entire canon over the course of decades, and others commissioning texts for the purpose of generating merit. *Shakyō* is still performed today and we will investigate the reasons why it is recommended for practitioners in the Soto Zen School.

This workshop will enable participants to explore *shakyō* by bringing *sutras* into the world and experiencing the compassion and concentration of the practice. They will have the opportunity to make ink tracings or free hand copies of the *Heart Sutra* in a variety of languages. This is a quiet, meditative way of experiencing the *sutra* and participants will be able to take all or part of it home with them.

Dancing the Lokeshvara (Quan Yin/Avalokiteshvara) Sloka

LiAnne Takeuchi Hunt

Charya nritya is a rare *upaya* or skillful method for Dharma practitioners to awaken on the path. The dance is a yogic ritual art and three-dimensional moving *mandala*. Practitioners engage in deity yoga practice through techniques of body, speech, and mind. First, I will teach a short *sloka* or verse of devotional praise to Lokeshvara, also known as Avalokiteshvara or Quan Yin. Next, participants will explore the symbolism and form of the *bodhisattva* through dance. The

workshop will conclude with learning the *mudras* and *mantras* of the dedication prayer. The workshop is open to beginners and all levels of physical ability.

Refuge Prayer and Dance

LiAnne Takeuchi Hunt

In this dance workshop, participants will be introduced to the Buddhist dance of Nepal known as *charya nritya* through the practice of taking refuge in the Triple Gem: Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Participants will learn the refuge prayer in Sanskrit, along with the accompanying *mudras* and dance. This will include an explanation of Newar Buddhist *mantrayana* techniques of movement meditation. *Mudras* (sacred hand gestures), *mantras*, breathing exercises, and physical yogas will be included. The workshop is open to beginners and all levels of physical ability.

Teaching Dharma through English Songs

Bhikkhuni Lieu Phap

In Buddhist countries, parents often want their children to learn something good from Buddhism, because it is in fact a good way of living. Apart from fascinating illustrated stories of the Buddha, short simple songs with beautiful melodies are also a means to introduce children to the teachings of the Buddha and leave an impact on their minds.

In this workshop, we will exchange experiences about teaching Dharma to children through songs. First, participants will share their experiences of teaching Dharma to children and how songs can be used as a means to introduce the Dharma to them. Then together, we will listen to and sing some English Buddhist songs. Participants can also teach one another the songs they know. Below are some selected songs:

The Birth of the Buddha

In the ancient land,
A child was born
Once a long time ago,
And both gods and human beings
Paid homage to the Lord:
Namo tassa bhagavato arahato samma-sambuddhassa.

To Love is to Care

Be kind to all your friends and family.
Be kind to cats and butterflies and trees.
Don't hurt the fishes swimming in the sea.
Here is what the Buddha says to me:
To love is to care for all the living beings around us
To love is to be kind to all beings around us.

Hatha Yoga

Lyudmila Klasanova

Yoga is a practice of mind and body. The primary goal is to gain balance in one's life and provide a sense of calmness and inner peace. Like other meditative movement practices used for health purposes, various styles of yoga typically combine physical postures (*asanas*), breathing techniques (*pranayama*), relaxation (*yoga nyidra*), concentration (*dharana*), and meditation (*dhyana*).

Hatha yoga is a path toward creating balance and uniting the opposites within us. The word *hatha* combines *ha* meaning "sun" and *tha* meaning "moon." This refers to the balance of masculine aspects (sun) and feminine aspects (moon). Hatha yoga is a powerful tool for self-transformation. It helps us to bring our attention to our breath, which allows us to still the fluctuations of the mind and be more present in the unfolding of each moment.

The workshop will start with series of postures that liberate the principle of movement (*pawanmuktasana*) to loosen up the joints and make the muscles supple. This will be followed by a set of basic *asanas* performed for general health and balance. Different breathing techniques will be applied to harmonise the pranic body, which is a network of nerve channels carrying the vital force to each and every cell and organ, infusing them with life and dynamism. The workshop will conclude with a deep relaxation practice known as *yoga nyidra* or yogic sleep – a state of consciousness between waking and sleeping in which the body is completely relaxed, and the practitioner becomes aware of the inner world by following a set of verbal instructions.

Buddhism, Ethics, and Values in Education

Meenakshi Thapan

Scholars across the world are noting that education had turned into an outcome-driven process that thrives on achieving material and political ends. A worrying concern is the shrinking space for compassion and consciousness in individual sensibilities. The changing socio-political climate has changed over the last few decades has certainly had a direct impact on religious temperaments and the psychological development of children and young adults. This has made educators re-consider the role of educational processes in instilling compassion in classroom practices. A critical question has been how to approach such a transformation in pedagogic practice.

The aim of this workshop is to gain an understanding of how teachers may bring Buddhist values and practice into education in order to bring about change. The workshop will involve the participants in examining aspects of Buddhism that contribute to the development of an elementary school curriculum grounded in the development of core ethics and values.

Following introductions, we will begin with an ice-breaker focus on the question: What has been your personal educational experience at school and/or in your training in a religious institution? Participants would be encouraged to share their views, feeling, and experiences. Further questions will include: What kind of Buddhist knowledge can help bring compassion into elementary school classrooms and how can it be conveyed? How can we teach

interdependence, empathy, and compassion to young children in a world dominated by the internet and other media? What techniques can we use? What is the role of introspection, mindfulness, and meditative practices in this process and how may we use them? Without removing traditional and scientific knowledge and related skills from the curriculum, what practical methods, emerging from Buddhism, can we use to ensure that children grow up to be more sensitive, nurturing, caring human beings?

Green Tara and Her 21 Emanations

Rachael Wooten

This workshop focuses on Green Tara and her 21 emanations according to the tradition of Atisha. In May 1997, I co-authored a text of translations of the *sadhanas* of the 21 Taras with my teacher, Lodro Tulku Rinpoche, in Zurich, Switzerland. For the last 19 years, with Rinpoche's blessings, I have taught these *sadhana* practices in my community. The original community, which formed soon after I returned to the United States, expanded into a larger group that practices together even today. The practitioners are Buddhists, Christians, Jews, and followers of indigenous teachings.

I recently completed a manuscript that consists of extended commentaries on each of the emanations of Tara. The writing illuminates traditional and feminist Tibetan Buddhist teachings as well as feminist perspectives from other religious traditions. Offerings from depth psychology, my personal experiences and those of other women who have applied this material in everyday life are included. Meditation instructions in the traditional *sadhana* format are explained in detail. Specific suggestions are also given to approach psychological issues that may be addressed by a particular emanation.

I propose to present this material in a workshop format at Sakyadhita for several reasons. I want to discuss Tara's pre-Tibetan Buddhist origins in southern India, which includes several religious traditions other than Buddhist. This is a living example of interdependence, where a teaching cannot be attributed to or contained by one single tradition. Her story was radical then; the fact that it has survived patriarchy for more than 14 centuries seems miraculous. It is heartbreaking that countless women from non-Tibetan Buddhist lineages have never heard of her or drawn sustenance from her courage, brilliance, and compassion.

I have applied these teaching in numerous interfaith settings that included a call to activism. Topics have included ending torture, supporting the struggling people of Tibet, bringing examples of the feminine divine into Jewish and Christian pastoral care, and religious advocacy for climate change. I accompanied a rabbi, a Presbyterian minister, and an interfaith minister to return a Czech Torah scroll that had survived the Holocaust after 60 years. I offered Tara teachings to a community gathering in a restored synagogue in the Czech Republic, where no living Jew had survived.

This workshop introduces several Kriya Tantra *sadhana* practices that can be done without an initiation. Attendees would be encouraged to apply Tara practice and teachings in multiple settings. These practices, teachings, and stories can be an inner resource for women in their

struggles for agency and activism on their own behalf, on behalf of all women, and all beings. Tara's story provides an antidote to the misery still evident in countries where women believe that only men can become enlightened. Reducing crippling self-doubt arising from the abuse and neglect of women makes room for greater personal happiness and greater resolve to become Tara in the world, acting to decrease suffering in all its forms.

Dharma Rap

Rotraut (Jampa) Wurst

Since the 8th Sakyadhita International Conference on Buddhist Women in Mongolia, rap has been part of the Sakyadhita gatherings. This contemporary musical form, the rhythmic intoning of texts, is a way to impart Dharma in a practical way that may help link the generations. Those of us who have been members of Sakyadhita International for many years are getting older. Rap holds the potential to open up the conferences to the next generation in an appealing way and help transmit the Dharma to future generations. Rap is a creative way to motivate people to come together, share ideas about Buddhism, talk about these ideas, and come up with new raps. It is an easy way to put Buddhist ideas into sentences that can be remembered like *mantras*. Rap is a rhythm that motivates young people, a musical form that they are familiar with. It is also a fun and easy way for those of us who are older to share the experience of learning Dharma with young people.

This workshop will be an opportunity for participants from many traditions to get together and create international Buddhist rap that can be performed and shared with others. We will not only perform rap at this workshop. At the last conference in Indonesia, we also began writing and drawing graffiti, and we began to dance or move, with a little bit hip hop. These three pillars of Dharma rap are new ways to convey Buddhist texts and ideas: through rap, images or graffiti, and dance moves or hip hop.

Find Your Path: Buddhist Women and Science Fiction

Rotraut (Jampa) Wurst, Diana Ingalls-Farrell, and Hsiao-Lan Hu

Imagine you are a woman. You are a woman? Oh, congratulations because you are who we are looking for! No matter in which place, dimension, galaxy, or universe you live, being a woman means you have got a problem or being a woman may be seen as a problem. In society, women are not considered as important as men, are not paid equally at work, and do not have the same chances professionally. In Buddhist communities, women need to navigate through layers of hierarchy that block their access to Buddhist education and ordination, and female monastics are still not as well accepted as male monastics. Whether monastic or lay, many texts tell women that the female body presents an obstacle on the path to enlightenment; in fact, they say that women are a problem for men on their path to enlightenment. In “nerd” circles, that is, among intelligent people with a keen interest in academic, technical, technological, and scientific subjects, being a woman is also a problem. Just as in the Buddhist traditions, these circles mostly cater to men. In science fiction, for example, meaningful characters are overwhelmingly male, just as the enlightened figures in Buddhist traditions are overwhelmingly male. When female characters are found, they are either trivial and/or sexualized, defined by their relations to male

characters. Both Buddhism and science fiction point to the possibility of being free from business-as-usual thinking, and Buddhists and nerds both walk unconventional paths. Yet that path is often marked as male. Female Buddhists and female nerds are easily left with the feeling that there is no path for them, just like career women in “boys’ clubs” often feel there is no way to break the glass ceiling.

The good news is that things are changing, even though very slowly. Since the 1980s, there have been books on Buddhist women and female masters, deities, bodhisattvas, and Buddhas. In science fiction, meaningful female characters have also emerged. Now it seems there *is* a path for women, but one still needs to look for it, and look hard. This workshop invites participants to find the path through creating skits based on Buddhist women’s experience and science fiction characters. It is a difficult task, but the joy of accomplishing a difficult task is tremendous, and we will enjoy comradery along the way, as we explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no [wo]man has gone before.”

LGBTQQI

Rotraut (Jampa) Wurst

When I first read the letters LGBTQ on the Call for Papers for the 11th Sakyadhita International Conference on Buddhist Women in Vietnam (2009/10), I thought it was something like “lesbians talk about Buddhism,” but I did not know what the letters stood for. Still, I thought that bringing Buddhism and different lifestyles together would be good, because Buddhist points of view can help people overcome prejudices against diverse lifestyles.

When the word “lesbian” was mentioned in a talk for the first time at the 10th Sakyadhita Conference in Ulaan Batar, Mongolia (2008), I thought, “wow”; it’s good that this is mentioned. There are different people in the world. And there are different Buddhists on the world. Great! Let’s talk! But the path was somehow much more difficult than I expected. After several Sakyadhita workshops from 2010 onwards, I thought it would be much easier to talk about LGBTQQI issues in Germany, where I come from, and to show that people can confront prejudice, whether they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, questioning, or intersexual. But I was mistaken. The situation in Germany was not easier. Often women, especially Buddhist women, are not willing to talk openly about what they think, how they live, what they know about Buddhism and diversity, and similar issues, even if they are living in a diverse partnership.

At the last Sakyadhita conference, in Indonesia (2015), we were fortunate to have two different LGBTQQI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, questioning, or intersexual) workshops and a panel on Diversity and Multiculturalism. It is clear that there is a strong need to discuss the topic, to get people together, and to share ideas and experiences of Buddhism and diverse lifestyles. At this workshop, we will continue the conversation.

Sakyadhita’s Herstory: A Puppet Theatre

Rotraut (Jampa) Wurst, Phan Thuan Quoc, and Ranjani de Silva

Since the 11th Sakyadhita International Conference on Buddhist Women in Vietnam in 2010, talking, discussing, and rapping together via Facebook, across national borders, continents, and times zones. The idea of this workshop is to tell about 30 years of Sakyadhita's herstory (1987–2017) through puppet theatre, using rhymes, various musical genres, mantras, rap, and folksongs. Reciting this herstory will commemorate Sakyadhita's thirtieth anniversary of giving Buddhist women a voice. The workshop will engage young people by letting them tell their stories based on a common understanding about Buddhism.

Participants will discover the power of puppetry arts as a popular tool to share ideas for sustainable development. They will learn how to make puppets using basic materials such as paper, markers, and cartons. We will have the collaboration of puppetry experts and young puppeteers from Mekong Youth Puppetry Group, a network of colleagues based in Mekong region, to share their experience of our common Buddhism heritage. Together, we will bring new inspiration to the Sakyadhita International Conference for Buddhist Women.

Guqin and Healing

Ruoke Liu & Sirei Li

The *guqin*, the most ancient Chinese string instrument, expresses the depth and richness of Chinese culture and has long been regarded as the “Father of National Music” and the “Instrument of the Sages.” It is regarded as a Dharma instrument that assists in our cultivation of the mind and is also a way of life. In this workshop, participants will experience the amazing beauty of the *guqin*.

The workshop focuses on *quqin* and healing. We will practice playing the *quqin* and learn how it integrates music, Chinese medicine, and modern psychology. Under the facilitators' guidance, participants will be able to get in touch with their own body and mind. They will practice Chinese folk techniques such as “collecting *yin*” and traditional Chinese medical practices such as “measles scratching” to improve their physical state and enhance their mental and spiritual state.

The renowned 2,000-year-old Chinese medical classic, *Huangdi Neijing*, explains the correspondences between the five elements, the five sounds of music, and human emotions, and how playing the *guqin* contributes to the health and well-being of the player. The liver corresponds to the wood element, *jue* in terms of music, and anger in terms of emotion. The heart corresponds to fire, *zhi*, and joy. The spleen corresponds to earth, *gong*, and thoughtfulness. The lungs correspond to gold, *shang*, and worry. The kidneys correspond to water, *yu*, and fear. The five sounds of music – *jue*, *zhi*, *gong*, *shang*, *yu* – are called the “heavenly five elements.” The aim is to bring these all into balance. As a chapter in *Suwen* (“Theory of All Pains”) states, “all diseases derive from (imbalances of) *qi* [vital energy].”

The traditional Chinese medical system teaches that each human finger contains various acupressure points. Through stimulating and massaging them, human emotions may be soothed and health conditions improved. Modern psychology points out that body language and behavior often reflect one's subconscious mind. When we touch the *quqin*, every movement of the fingers

and the sounds they make reflect the state of one's body and mind. To practice *quqin* is to embark on a journey of learning about oneself and life in general. It allows practitioners to relax, return to inner peace, and become one with the universe – serene, awakened, and peacefully engaged with nature.

Chaos Theory as Buddhadharma

Ruth Richards and Ting Chuk Lai

Join us for the second part of this engaging workshop experience. The aim of the workshop is to nurture rich reflections, potential artistic expressions, and deep discussions among participants. The focus of the workshop is a creative dialogue between Chaos Theory and Zen Buddhism that was originally written by Stephen Muho Proskauer, who drew from classic texts that are both scientific and spiritual. Even without any prior exposure or study in these areas, remarkable resonances can be discovered. The workshop will be accompanied by a series of stunning images. The dialogue, which is both contemplative and artistic, can have deep meaning for Buddhist women, cultural exchange, and dialogue between science and spirituality.

After an introduction and the powerpoint presentation, there will be time for personal reflection and subsequent expression related to images that arise and potentially the creation of a *mandala*. This will be followed by sharing in small groups and general discussion. We hope to explore new types of awareness, along with questions for future inquiry.

CHAOS, CREATIVITY, SPIRITUALITY, AND GENDER

Ruth Richards with Ting Chuk Lai

Join us for a new type of dialogue that we hope can transform society. Our manifest world is full of change, complexity, and surprises. It is not all linear, predictable, or caused by limited factors or simple, controlling relationships. As Buddhists know well, all beings are profoundly interconnected and interdependent. This is now becoming more clear to Western science due to advances including Chaos and Complexity Theory. Metaphorically, these advances can be used in engaging and colorful ways to open up and advance understanding of our mutual effects on each other (all of us), including multiple unpredictable factors in our lives.

The wonder and humility of emergent systems and events, including the importance of loving kindness, compassion, equanimity, sympathetic joy, and other spiritual virtues become clear as we advance together. Our roles as “open systems” in dynamic interaction feature and honor modes where women have brought great value and benefit, while also revealing areas of stereotyping and gender polarization in society. Women and men alike can benefit from recognizing these systems.

There will be four phases of interaction in this workshop: (a) an introductory powerpoint presentation; (b) an activity that includes brief narratives, then dyads and group sharing to illustrate the importance of change and “bifurcation” in our own personal lives; (c) a fun activity with Playdough in groups of two to four people that vividly portrays our connectedness and emergent creativity, work, and play together, with discussion; and (d) a general wrap up and Q &

A session for raising issues raised in the powerpoint. Hopefully, attendees will emerge with broader views of life, self, and our fuller potential.

Asking All Beings for Help with Climate Change

Shodo Spring

Most civilized human cultures are deeply identified with the idea that everything is an object for our use and our control. Most attempts to solve problems, including climate change, are based on the same idea. This attitude is not supported by Buddhism; to be human is simply a fortunate state.

This workshop will focus on asking all beings for help with climate change. It will begin with introductions and an icebreaker on the question: “Has climate change directly affected you? How?” I will tell my own story, from recognizing the problem, up to thinking that if we rely on humans alone, it may well be too late. Finally, I realized what many traditional cultures know: we are not alone on this planet and we can ask for help.

Next, we will read the *Metta Sutta* and discuss its story, in which the trees (or their *devas*) talk with each other and consciously repel the intrusive monks. I will describe my practice of intentionally asking the trees, plants, hills, soils, grasses, and animals nearby to teach me, so we can work together to heal the earth. We will then do a practice of aligning with nonhumans in this endeavor. We will finish with a talking circle/council, to share our responses to the practice and learn from each other.

Peace is Every Step

Sister Thuan Nghiem

Walking meditation is one of the most relaxing practices. We can do it anywhere, whenever we need to move around. Walking from home to the bus stop or MRT station, strolling around the market, or taking a leisurely hike up to the peak. We can apply the style of walking meditation to our daily life. This practice helps us to slow down and enjoy life in the present moment. With each step, we solidly place our foot on the ground, bring our mind back to the moment, and regain full sovereignty over our body and mind. As we walk, we relax our whole body and feel refreshed.

The practice of walking meditation helps us release our negative emotions and stress. When we are agitated or disturbed, we can walk slowly, watching each-each-breath, until we are calm and peaceful. We can also release stress and tension on the way home from work with each mindful step. When we walk mindfully, we become the living Dharma. People around us will feel ease and relax when they see mindfulness in their environment. This helps them also get in touch with what is most alive in them at the moment. This is how we apply the Dharma in daily life. We cultivate the energy of mindfulness at any moment, anywhere. We are alive in the moment, even in stressful and challenging workplaces. We are present with our family at dinnertime. We can deal with difficulties and obstacles with clarity. We can relax and enjoy life each day.

Buddhist Women in Contemporary Hong Kong

Sudanee Taekul

Buddhism is quickly spreading globally and having a major influence internationally. It is also having a strong impact in Hong Kong, one of the most highly populated cities in the world. Buddhism in Hong Kong has its own unique culture and history. This workshop will focus on locating women's voices in Buddhist culture in contemporary Hong Kong.

To gain deeper insight on Buddhist women in Hong Kong today, the workshop will take two different approaches. First, ideas and reflections in simple dialogue form will be gathered from participants in order to understand their perspectives on Buddhist in the daily lives of women in Hong Kong. Second, we will explore how Buddhist women of Hong Kong are represented in the media, including films, websites, graphic imagery, and print media. The workshop will conclude with an open discussion about these media images and how they compare and contrast with the actual daily lives and Buddhist practices of women in Hong Kong.

The Precious Earth Healer: Buddhism, Women and Environment

Sze Man Ng

There is increasing discussion in global development discourse about the recent numerous environment disasters that are the result of modernization. Many have been trying to solve the problem within the modernization framework – technology and economic tools – which has not been too successful. Meanwhile, some people are looking into the fundamental issue – the overall worldview – and doubt whether the current dualistic human-nature perspective of modernity can solve the problem.

Buddhism suggests harmony and unity. Traditional Asian cultures with a Buddhist background have practiced sustainable living for the past thousand years and have been characterized by an eco-friendly and sustainable approach toward natural resources. Various NGOs, Buddhist monastics, and academics believe that Buddhist values can be a positive force in conserving nature. In addition, women can play valuable roles in environmental protection by teaching sensitivity and compassion toward nature and sentient beings.

In this workshop, participants will compare the modernization and Buddhist worldviews toward the environment. For example, cases in Thailand show that it is possible for Buddhists to contribute to environmental solutions, both in theory and practice. Participants will be invited to share case studies and stories about traditional and modern environmental projects in Thailand, India, and other countries to illustrate how women can contribute more to creating a sustainable future for us all.

Cognitively-Based Compassion Training

Teresa I. (Teri) Sivilli

Cognitively-Based Compassion Training (CBCT) is based on the premise that compassion is a

trait that can be developed and cultivated. Through progressive exercises, one gains insight into how one's attitudes and behaviors support or hinder compassionate response, and deliberately and systematically works to cultivate compassion. The exercises begin with the development of attentional stability and progress through various analytical meditations, including equanimity, interdependence, gratitude and appreciation, and empathy. The practice of CBCT intensifies the desire to help others, allowing compassion to become more natural and spontaneous in one's everyday life. It also helps increase personal resiliency by grounding one in realistic expectations of self and others. At the same time, CBCT is a secular program that is independent from – and supportive of – any faith or belief system.

This experiential workshop will explore the key components of CBCT, a method developed at Emory University by Geshe Lobsang Tenzin Negi. Based on centuries-old techniques from the Indo-Tibetan tradition, specifically *lojong*, a set of meditative practices is designed to bring about “thought transformation.” In addition, I will review some of the research that has been conducted on CBCT, demonstrating its effectiveness with various populations.

Zen Practice at Perfect Enlightenment Monastery

Thich Nu Vien The

By the first half of the 20th century, the Vietnamese Zen master Bhikkhu Thich Thanh Tu, who is now the rector of Truc Lam Zen Monastery, started the work of reviving the Truc Lam Zen School, which was founded in Vietnam in the 13th century by the realized Zen master Truc Lam (Bamboo Grove), a great ascetic. Today, thousands of monastics and lay Buddhists in Viet Nam and abroad practice this Vietnamese tradition of Zen (Thien) Buddhism in about twenty monasteries around the world. Vien Chieu, a monastery for nuns, was among the earliest to practice this revived tradition of Zen meditation. The 17 pioneering nuns of Vien Chieu, led by the present abbess, had to work hard to survive. They wore rags, lived on meager meals, and toiled most of the day. Owing to the fresh inspiration of Zen practice and guided by Bhikkhu Thich Thanh Tu, they lived in peace and harmony and the monastery developed quickly.

This workshop will begin with an interactive discussion about the participants' own meditation practices. For example: What is your way of meditation practice? How did you get to like meditation? How does meditation help you in everyday life? Next, it will introduce meditation as practiced at Vien Chieu Monastery. The schedule at Vien Chieu includes early morning and evening meditation sessions, each lasting between one and two hours. Every month, there is a week with additional meditation sessions in the afternoon. Practitioners take at least five precepts, since this helps them make steady progress in meditation. They learn to practice in sitting posture first. At the beginning of each session, they pay homage to the Triple Gem and chant the name of Buddha Sakyamuni three times. They sit on a thick mat, with a cushion, preferably in the full lotus position. The meditation begins with counting the breaths, then watching the breaths, then watching the thoughts that arise and letting go of them, and finally attaining calmness of mind. The session ends with a thorough massaging of the body and a chanted dedication of merit to all sentient beings. After practicing sitting meditation, the meditation extends to other postures: walking, standing, lying, working, and so on.

In the last part of the workshop, participants will try out different meditation methods, including Zen meditation, to help tame and purify their minds. They will learn how, with practice, they can learn to maintain balance, generate less negativity, and be more sensitive to others. The more they experience the benefits of meditation, the more they will want to go deeper into meditation practice. Out of appreciation for the Buddha's teachings, they will naturally want to serve others, creating harmony and peace in their communities.