Mission Statement:

The Patriarch’s Vision is the eJournal of the International Ch’ an Buddhism Institute and serves as a sacred place for advanced thinking. It ostensibly exists as a forum to bring Chinese Ch’an, Japanese Zen, Korean Son, and Vietnamese Thien together in mutual respect and support. These and similar lineages preserve the Patriarch’s method of transmitting enlightenment mind to mind. Beyond this, the eJournal encourages the free examination of Buddhism in general, that is the Tathagata’s method of freeing the mind, as well as the exploration and assessment of other religious and secular trends outside of Buddhism, and the opportunities these different paths might offer Buddhism in the future.

Contributions are welcome from all backgrounds, and individuals are encouraged to submit articles about any subject that might be relevant to the eJournal’s aims and objectives. The name of the eJournal – ‘Patriarch’s Vision’ – seeks to regain and re-emphasise the Patriarch’s Ch’an of direct perception of the Mind Ground with no interceding levels of support or distraction. The arrow of insight travels straight to the target, but has no need to stop on the way. In the Chinese language ‘Patriarch’s Vision’ is written as ‘祖師眼光’ (Zu Shi Yan Guang) and conveys the following meaning:

Patriarch (祖師)
1) 祖 (Zu3) founding ancestor worshipped at the altar.
2) 師 (Shi1) a master that brings discipline.

Vision (眼光)
3) 眼 (Yan3) an eye that sees.
4) 光 (Guang1) light that enables seeing.

The eJournal intends to raise the level of consciousness through the stimulation, support, and encouragement of free and directed thought within society, and in so doing create the conditions for ordinary individuals to perfect their minds and realise the Patriarch’s Ch’an here and now. This task requires commitment and discipline if it is to be successful overtime. The human mind is potentially limitless and through the example of the Ch’an Patriarchs – many of whom were ordinary people (the 6th Patriarch was illiterate) – individuals have a model for psychological and spiritual growth.
Editorial

The third edition of the eJournal of the International Ch’an Buddhism Institute – Patriarch’s Vision – has 12 contributors and 13 articles, each originating from within a diverse range of Buddhistic philosophy and meditational derived subjects. Ch’an Master Ru Xiang is this edition’s featured teacher. He offers an explanation of ‘Sila’ or ‘moral discipline’ as the foundation for a good and efficient meditation practice. This is in accordance with the teaching of Master Xu Yun (1840-1959), who is featured twice in this edition; once as a recognised Buddha by the Maitriyana International Association, (an article that features a special ‘colour’ portrait of Xu Yun), and secondly in a story from his autobiography about his 1889 journey to Tibet translated by Adrian Chan-Wyles, who also provides Part II of his analysis of European philosophical influence in the translation work of Charles Luk (1898-1978). Reverend Fa Chāo Shakya (OHY), expertly assesses the underlying unity that is the essence of the Buddha’s message, which has spread into the world through many different and distinct pathways – all apparently different on the surface – but sharing exactly the same Dharma foundation. Master Maitreya Buddha presents the Maitriyana path of reconciliation through the rubric of Buddhist Existentialism, and develops this narrative by explaining how the enlightenment of the Buddha and that of Hui Neng, being identical in nature, express exactly the essence as that of Maitriyana Buddhism. The implication of this study is that Maitriyana Buddhism is an expression of pure Ch’an. Upasika Yukyern traces the practice of strict vegetarianism within Chinese Buddhism, and explores the karmic implications of killing for both food and profit. Nick Bishop offers an insight into contemporary Hua Tou practice ‘here and now’ free of artificial nicety and the trap of superficial effort. Jelena Manestar is a professional Reiki practitioner based in the UK. This article explains the history, philosophy, implications, and practice of Reiki within a contemporary setting. Master Cassandra Tribe presents an extraordinarily lucid explanation of the function of Ch’an meditation in relation to mental illness, and clearly explains the cultural pitfalls of Chinese Ch’an spreading to the West and being ‘altered’ from its original function during the transmission process. Daniel Sharpenburg discusses the very important issue (and implications) surrounding the teaching of Dharma-studies to children, and explains the adaptability that young minds possess whilst encountering the Buddhist teachings, particularly with regard to the importance of class interaction, as opposed to just sitting and listening. The Venerable Bhante Sangharathana conveys the Buddha’s teaching from the Pali Suttas concerning the practice of animal and human sacrifice as prevalent during the Buddha’s lifetime found within Brahmanism; similar practices of which are still found in modern Brahmanism (i.e. ‘Hinduism’) today. The Buddha expertly assesses each category of sacrifice and explains why these types of sacrifice are of no developmental karmic value. The Beijing Office of the ICBI discusses the Ch’an Guild of Hui Neng, and develops its definitional commentary which defines the purpose and direction of this unique spiritual path.

Adrian Chan-Wyles (Shi Da Dao) March 2014
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Participation in the ICBI eJournal the Patriarch’s Vision is purely voluntary and motivated by a pure sense of spiritual altruism. The ICBI acknowledges and offers sincere thanks to those Members who have taken the time to put pen to paper, and produce unique works of spiritual importance. Your efforts will perpetuate the understanding of Ch’an, Zen, Son, and Thien far and wide, and bring genuine knowledge to future generations. The ability to express thoughts and feelings appropriately is very much in accordance with the traditional Chinese notion of what it means to be a spiritual scholar.
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**Featured Ch’an Master**

**Venerable Ch’an Master Ru Xiang (如相法師) b. 1940**

*(Translated By Adrian Chan-Wyles ICBI)*

The Venerable Ch’an Master Ru Xiang was born in 1940 and is from the Kaohsiung area of Taiwan. Master Ru Xiang is a valued Member of the International Ch’an Buddhism Institute (ICBI), and has kindly agreed to be the featured Ch’an teacher in this edition of Patriarch’s Vision. In 1996-1997, Master Ru Xiang was invited by a group of Overseas Chinese students, to travel to New Zealand to teach the Dharma so that they might transcend the great matter of life and death.

Today, Master Ru Xiang lives in Nelson, New Zealand and teaches at the Deva Drum Mountain retreat. Like the Venerable Xu Yun (1840-1959), Master Ru Xiang advocates that a ‘clean’ mind is a ‘clear’ mind, and that the mind is made clear through the following of ‘Sila’, or ‘Moral Discipline’ as taught through the Buddhist precepts, or spiritual vows. The upholding of the precepts assists the development of ‘Dhyana’ or ‘Meditative Concentration’, which in turn leads to the cultivation of ‘Prajna’, or ‘Insight’. When discussing the virtuous power (and benefits) generated by upholding the 5 Dharma precepts, Master Ru Xiang teaches:

“If you take and keep the precepts, and thereby abstain from impure thoughts and actions, then the Way (道 – Dao) that you follow will be pure and clean, like a piece of white cloth. In this way the gateway of the body is guarded. The Buddha’s path to enlightenment generates good karma and is the Dao of much happiness and blessings. If you are not initiated, and have not took and kept the precepts, or applied precept discipline, then this is like a dirty piece of cloth that is badly worn and in a state of disrepair. This is the karmic path of bitterness, calamity, and degradation. In this path Sila is very important whether the practitioner is a wandering monk, or a lay person – all should follow diligently the moral code of discipline associated with the Dharma. The practice of moral discipline (戒 – Jie), strengthens one-pointed meditation (定 – Ding), and this cultivates wisdom (慧 – Hui) – these three distinct aspects are in fact ‘one’ in essence. This is exactly the same as the practice of the Six Paramita (六波羅蜜 – Liu Bo Luo Mi) which are in essence ‘one’ and the same. The Six Paramita are:

1) Generosity (布施 – Bu Shi) Dana Paramita  
2) Uphold the Precepts (持戒 – Chi Jie) Sila Paramita  
3) Patient Endurance (忍辱 – Ren Ru) Kshanti Paramita  
4) Joyous Zeal (精進 – Jing Jin) Virya Paramita
5) One-pointed Meditation (禪定 – Ch’an Ding) Dhyana Paramita
6) Wisdom (智慧 – Zhi Hui) Prajna Paramita

The Six Paramita are designed to cultivate positive habits and behaviours, so that the individual character is developed through the study of the Dharma. This cultivates the Way of Virtue (道德 – Dao De), and creates a respectful attitude in the practitioner, toward the Dharma. Following the precepts with a respectful attitude is the correct attitude and the right Dharma-path; to deviate from this path is incorrect practice. It is good to follow the moral discipline through the practice of the precepts, and it is no good (i.e. unproductive in Dharma studies) not to follow the moral discipline through the practice of the precepts. All should be done in the name of moral discipline. In Volume XIII of the Great Perfection of Wisdom Treatise (大智度論 – Da Zhi Du Lun) it says:

There are ten good attributes for following the Dharma:

1) Cultivate Dharma-study continuously – this is the essence.
2) Cultivate an inherently natural sense of righteousness – this generates behaviour that ensures good karma and avoids negative acts that cause suffering. In this way there is no regret.
3) Cultivate a peaceful and compassionate righteousness – this attitude generates happiness in the world.
4) Cultivate a calm and peaceful righteousness – this creates the conditions for the effective development of meditation practice.
5) Cultivate a quiet righteousness that extinguishes delusion – this generates the conditions that lead to nirvana.
6) Cultivate a strict righteous path that ends suffering – this develops non-attachment.
7) Cultivate a cleansing righteousness – this washes away the filthiness of deluded karma.
8) Cultivate a brave righteousness – enter and lead the masses with a pure and calm mind free of delusion.
9) Cultivate the praising of righteousness – live by righteousness and set an example that the people can praise.
10) Cultivate the essence of righteousness – this upholds the powerful precepts that end suffering.

There are five precepts of Dharma-discipline which should be followed by all male and female disciples of the Buddha whilst living at home. In the Abhidhamma Mahavibhasa Sastra (大毘婆沙論 – Da Pi Po Sha Lun) the five precepts are referred to as the place one has to live within and study here and now, with no deviation. In the Abhidhamma Kosa Sastra (俱舍論 – Ju She Lun) the five precepts are referred to as the method of restraint and discipline. The laity, that is the Upasaka, (male), and Upasika (female), should take refuge in the triple gem – the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, as well as uphold the five precepts. The five precepts are:

1) Do not kill.
2) Do not steal.
3) Do not engage in sexual misconduct.
4) Do not lie.
5) Do not imbue alcohol.
The first four precepts regulate life, whilst the fifth precept is important because if alcohol is consumed the judgement is impaired and this can lead to the breaking of the other precepts. Not killing, not stealing, and not engaging in sexual misconduct are great and important vows, whilst not lying regulates speech. Drinking alcohol leads to uncontrolled speech, and the possibility of breaking all the precepts because good judgement has been lost.

**Explanation of the Five Precepts**

Men and women must pay close attention to the following instruction.

1) *Do Not Kill.*

It is important never to kill. Wherever there is life, it should never be taken. Whether Buddhas, sages, teachers, masters, Buddhist monastics, or parents; no one should harm the smallest creatures (such as insects) that wriggle and crawl, not even larva from mosquito flies. If those in positions of authority, such as parents, masters, monks, and sages take life, then this is a very negative crime. If this crime is not repented, the resultant negative karma is immense; as this is the gravest of crimes.

2) *Do Not Steal.*

Do not take what is not yours – this includes not taking life – as it does not belong to you. Do not take gold and silver, or property that belongs to others, not even a single pin, or blade of grass. Never steal anything. This applies not only in the Buddhist temple; it is an important matter in society. The principle of ‘no stealing’ not only applies to monks, but to officials and ordinary people alike.

3) *Do not engage in sexual misconduct.*

Sexual misconduct should be rejected as immoral action. This means that there should be no adulterous action, or inappropriate desirous behaviour. Appropriate desirous behaviour should only occur between people married to one another. In addition, it is a woman’s responsibility not to behave in an overtly desirous manner. It is better not to develop a bad reputation in this matter. For a Buddhist monastic, the Dao, or Way, does not allow desire to arise in word, deed, or thought.

4) *Do not lie.*

This is using incorrect statements and bearing false witness. This means do not lie or cheat. If lies are knowingly spoken as if they are truth, this is lying. If you take this precept and then break it by lying, the negative karma generated is very heavy indeed, if there is no regret. It is better to repent immediately if this precept is broken. Lying includes stating untruths regarding spiritual attainments that have not actually happened. (If you claim falsely that you have attained an advanced spiritual stage and seen incense, flowers, Arhats, Bodhisattvas, divine beings, gods and spirits, then this is a great lie that destroys the protective power of this precept.) Lying can destroy the reputation of a Buddhist monastic, and so it is important to study and understand correctly. An enlightened being stays far away from lying.
5) Do not imbue alcohol.

It is important not to drink alcohol. Alcohol has the highly negative effect of dulling the intellectual capacity, and of creating an unclear mind. This leads to a despondent state of being, therefore it is best not to drink. If you contract a serious disease, it is better to receive non-alcoholic based medical treatment, and not to drink socially. A committed Buddhist must not pursue an incompatible lifestyle. The first four precepts are designed to protect the mind and body from abhorrent behaviours. The fifth precept, however, prevents the other four precepts from being broken due to mindlessness associated with intoxication. What has been said above is absolutely correct! Every day must be filled with good intentions generated in the mind. This is why it is important to do good things. In this way, everyday we can live with good psychological and environmental energy (風水 – Feng Shui). Many thanks!

Master Ru Xiang can be contacted through his Facebook Page.

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The Influence of Plato, Kant & Hegel in Charles Luk’s Translation Work

Ch’an in European Philosophical Interpretation

Part II – Locating a Philosophical Interface between East and West

By Adrian Chan-Wyles (ICBI)

‘The Buddhist vocabulary is extensive and all terms which were coined either by the Buddha or His enlightened disciples, correspond very well with various stages of spiritual awakening. It is a matter for regret that only a very limited number of these terms has been translated into Western languages, and new Western equivalents should be produced to cope with this wide variety of Buddhist idiom if the serious study and translation of the Tripitaka are to be undertaken by Western scholars. The proneness of some modern translators to standardize Buddhist terms in English should not be encouraged for this work can be undertaken only by those who really understand Sanskrit and Chinese idioms.’ (Charles Luk – Ch’an and Zen Teaching: Second Series)¹

‘...understand the soul ( psyche) in the same way: When it focuses on something illuminated by truth and what is, it understands, knows, and apparently possesses understanding, but when it focuses on what is mixed with obscurity, on what comes to be and passes away, it opines and is dimmed, changes its opinions this way and that, and seems bereft of understanding.’ (Socrates – Plato’s Republic – Book VI)

To translate this developmental path – and its culmination – into a compatible Western framework of philosophical reference, Charles Luk chose to use the Greek tradition as found in Plato (427-347 BCE), and the schematic presented in Book VI of the philosophical text entitled the ‘Republic’.² In this text Socrates conveys that the physical world is comprised of a theoretical dividing line that separates (and defines) physical objects (phenomena) as perceived through bodily senses and ethereal objects

² Cooper, John, M, Editor, Plato Complete Works, Hackett (1997), Page 1130 – Subsection 509, Paragraph D: Socrates states to Glaucon; ‘Understand, then, that, as we said, there are these two things, one sovereign of the intelligible kind and place (nounomena), the other of the visible (phenomena) (I don’t say “of heaven” so as not to seem to you to be playing the sophist with the name). In any case, you have two kinds of thing, visible (phenomena) and intelligible (nounomena). ’
(noumena) knowable only to the mind. For Socrates, the mind of an ordinary person (who is unfamiliar with philosophy) and which is continuously pulled in the direction of physical objects (via the senses), inhabits a world of illusion and shadow. This is a world of intellectual limitation familiar to the common experience, as it lacks any transcendent quality and rests solely upon the perception of physical matter. In this state the human intellect is weighed down by ignorance and is unable to look within and seek the higher states of mind associated with the noumena. This seeking requires a refinement of mind that relocates attention away from the senses (and sense objects), so that it might be directed toward the higher aspects of its own psychic content. Socrates’ dividing line, tucked away as it is within the Republic, represents the entire developmental path of Platonic metaphysics, as represented by the diverse examples of Aristole and Plotinus. It is clear that the dividing line as used by Socrates conveys the implicit notion that all higher learning and attainment lies within, and that the journey to this understanding involves the wilful movement of the mind’s attention away from worldly phenomena and towards that of the rarefied noumena. In this model the mind’s awareness is folded back in upon itself, so that the mind becomes both the contemplator, and the contemplated. This is why Socrates associates the pure and positive intellect with the noumena. An intellect free of attachment to sense data, which is able to function independently of gross physical sensation, and is able to contemplate thought in and of itself, without any other, unnecessary and distracting stimuli, is the highest form of Socratic contemplation. From this purposeful inner gazing, the realm of thought (and beyond thought) is detected, observed, understood and integrated into the mind of the observer, and although Plato, (through Socrates), uses this process as a means to explain his theory of ‘Forms’, notwithstanding, as within the Pali and Sanskrit Buddhist texts, the onus is definitely on turning human awareness away from embroilment in physical sensations and toward the steady contemplation of mental impressions in the mind. Through Socrates’ dialogue in the Republic, the first important aspect involving the direction of intent with regard to self-cultivation is established, that is in broad agreement with the early and later Buddhist developmental methods as conveyed in the Pali and Sanskrit texts.

Of primary importance are the two Greek philosophical terms ‘noumena’ and ‘phenomena’. The term ‘noumena’ (plural) refers to the mind (nous), and the perception of things as they are known to be through the facility of pure intellect. This is awareness unsullied by data received through the senses. Phenomena (plural) refer to things as they appear to the senses (phainein), or that knowledge which is gained from contact with the physical world of material objects. Although knowledge gained through the senses (phenomena), has to be processed by the mind for it to make some kind of intellectual sense, the type of knowledge phenomena represents is not knowledge gained directly by the mind from the perception of thought production, or of its own state or essence. Although noumena and phenomena appear to represent a

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3 Shand, John, Philosophy and Philosophers – An Introduction to Western Philosophy, UCL Press (1993), page 26: ‘The Forms are not objects in the sensible world; sensible objects both are mutable and have properties that vary with one’s point of view, and so are not fully objective; nor are the Forms posited entities that underlie appearances in the way that atoms do. Forms subsist beyond the flux of appearances and space and time in a transcendent, supersensible realm that is ultimately perceived purely by the intellect.’

4 Honderich, Ted, Editor, The Oxford Companion to Philosophy, Oxford University Press, (1995), Page 657: ‘phenomena and noumena. These terms mean literally “things as they appear” and “thing as they are thought”. Platonic Ideas and Forms are noumena, and phenomena are things displaying themselves to the senses. In Plato’s metaphor of the divided line (Republic, bk 6), whatever lies above the dividing-line is noumena, that which is below it is phenomena.’
duality, in reality both are different modes of knowledge acquisition that are processed through the agency of a single human awareness. In this respect, noumena and phenomena represent a scheme for measuring the value and quality of incoming knowledge, a scheme which places a greater weight of worth upon psychical events, and less worth on purely physical ones. The bias is definitely toward the mind and away from the senses. These concepts were developed further through the philosophy of Immanuel Kant in the 18th century, who brought them into the modern age of reason, and rescued them from the obscurity of theological domination. Kant’s approach makes available in the modern age, the developmental methodology of Plato’s time, albeit in modified terms. The important point for Charles Luk’s work is that Kant provides (via Plato) the means to begin a meaningful and relevant philosophical dialogue between the Western mind and the Eastern mind, free of the prejudices associated with theological religion.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was a very eminent German philosopher, and a pivotal presence in the landscape of modern European philosophy. Kant, as an Enlightenment scholar, sought to develop reason as the prime methodology for the assessment of reality. In this project he moved away from reliance upon the theology of the Christian church (which had dominated the previous epoch), but retained a belief in the existence of god as a philosophical possibility. He first addresses the concepts of noumena and phenomena in his 1770 inaugural Dissertation entitled On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and the Intelligible World, where he argues that the intelligible world of noumena is known through the cultivation of pure reason; a process that gives knowledge of ‘things as they are’ (noumena). This pure knowledge is attained through the exclusion of ‘things as they appear’ (phenomena) to the senses, which for Kant includes the abstracts of time and space. This is essentially a restatement of Plato’s developmental method, minus the reliance upon Plato’s theory of pure Forms or Ideas. He further develops this thinking in his Critique of Pure Reason, published in 1781, which serves to deconstruct the prevalent European metaphysical tradition that had its roots in Plato, and which had been brought into the modern world by such thinkers as Leibniz, Wolff, and Baumgarten, etc. Metaphysics is a broad subject with two categories of enquiry. 1) What is the nature of reality? 2) What is ultimately real? When defined in this manner, metaphysics is closely related to the subject of Ontology, which is the study of the nature of existence, and what fundamentally different things exist. Kant is continuing the philosophical investigation of the acquisition of true knowledge. Kant states in his Critique of Pure Reason;

‘By the term Analytic of Conceptions, I do not understand the analysis of these, or the usual process in philosophical investigations of dissecting the conceptions which present themselves, according to their content, and so making them clear; but I mean the hitherto little attempted dissection of the faculty of understanding itself, in order to investigate the possibility of conceptions a priori, by looking for them in the understanding alone, as their birthplace, and analysing the pure use of this faculty.’

For Kant, it is the requirement of humanity to attain moral (or ethical) perfection, and that this perfection should be a matter of practical reason. In other words, spiritual

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5 Guyer, Paul, Kant, Routledge (2006), Page 126 – Plato used the term ‘dialectic’ in a positive sense to emphasis his theory of the existence of pure Forms or Ideas that theoretically lay behind the objects of ordinary sensory experience. Kant uses the ‘dialect’ in a negative manner, to reveal what he believes to be Plato’s pretensions to higher knowledge. Plato’s Forms, for Kant, are a ‘dream of perfection’.

6 Kant, Immanuel, The Critique of Pure Reason, Book 1, Analytic of Conception (1781) Kobo Edition
perfection should not necessarily be at odds with intellectual development, and yet Kant acknowledges that it is. Humanity’s conception of god, according to Kant, is gained from the idea (in the mind) of absolute moral perfection. Kant suggests that if humanity were godlike, then there would be no need for moral cultivation, as this state would already be a reality. Kant appears to be suggesting that the highest and holiest spiritual achievement lies through the mind, and not through the body. The body, comprised as it is with its distracting sensuality, sullies the ability of the mind to transcend its limitations. However, despite this developmental hindrance, the possibility of transcendence is always present. Kant envisages humanity as manifesting through a dual being; homo noumenon and homo phenomenon. Like the ancient Greeks, Kant seems to be suggesting that higher realms lie through the mind, and lower realms through the body, but he is interpreting this schematic through the rubric of Judeo-Christianity. For Kant, whatever qualities his god may possess, it is separate and distinct from the monad of Plato. Nevertheless, Kant is important in the sense that he does not reject the rational intellectual mind for an irrational faith premised entirely upon the teachings of theology. Indeed, Kant emphasises that humanity is aware of both of its aspects simultaneously, and asserts that godlike moral perfection lies in the mind (the noumenon) — and that this is the seat of the real self. The human body (the phenomenon) is the seat of imperfection, or that which is not correct. To attain the godlike perfection, that is to fully realise the noumenon, the imperfect body (phenomenon) has to be subjected to a strict developmental discipline, so that its imperfection is transformed by the process of bringing it into line with Kantian perfection. Despite the apparently continuous dichotomy of being, Kant hints of the ultimate success of a reconciliation. The tension (and interaction) between these two aspects of being constitute what Kant refers to as the ‘natural dialectic’. That is the continuous battle within human nature between the duty to morally perfect, and the inclination of the body to pursue sensual experience. If this conflict is directed (and guided) by the higher self (noumenon), then the phenomenal self, although always prone to rebel, can be controlled so that the dialectical tension (and process) can move always in the direction of self-perfection.

Chares Luk, in his Ch’an and Zen Teachings Series, had to develop a philosophical interface between the East and West, working with established concepts (already existing in both cultures) in a new and ingenious fashion. On the one hand, there is the dichotomy (of Mahayana Buddhism) found within the Ch’an School positing the concepts of void (the real) and form (the seeming) as the true nature of reality (as it appears to the unenlightened mind), and on the other, is Kant’s use of noumena and phenomena. Charles Luk, understanding the Western tradition of inner development (which existed outside and separate to the Christian church), logically chose to use the Greek terms of ‘noumena’ and ‘phenomena’ as a philosophical interface. This choice established the conceptual means of introducing the hitherto unfamiliar Ch’an School to the modern Western mind. Kant’s noumena of pure reason became representative of the Buddha’s concept of emptiness, and Kant’s phenomena of apparent reality, came to represent the Buddha’s teaching on the seeming, or the world of sensory objects as interpreted by the unenlightened mind. Both Kant and Buddha agree that it is through the mind that true reality is realised, and that the body, and the physical world it senses and interacts with, forms a barrier to the unfolding process of realisation.

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However, the Buddha departs from Kant in as much as he does not accept that reality is comprised only of a mind competing with a body, which is trapped in a continuous dichotomy of interaction. For the Buddha, this is an error of interpretation whereby the unenlightened intellect, (that is an intellect that does know its own essence), limits reality to its own boundaries of perception. It is delusion attempting to interpret a reality it does not fully comprehend. The Buddha does not only teach that reality is comprised of void and form, but rather that form is void, and void is form. Or void is in form, and form is in void. Reality, for the Buddha, only mistakenly appears to be separated into its void and form aspects prior to the realisation of enlightenment; after enlightenment, reality is seen as both void and form simultaneously, and with no contradiction. Although Kant provides the conceptual basis for Ch’an Buddhism to enter the Western mind through his concept of the dialectic, nevertheless, his system does not provide a suitable methodology to explain the developmental path associated with the Ch’an School and Charles Luk had to look elsewhere for such a system.

Charles Luk found what he was looking for in the work of Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), another German philosopher of towering reputation in the Western tradition. Although his thinking forms part of the ongoing development of the European Enlightenment project, like his predecessor Kant, Hegel strives to reconcile the Judeo-Christian concept of god with the universe as it appeared to be to the rational mind. On the one hand the power of the church was denied in favour of the development of logic, whilst on the other the very concept the church lays its foundation upon – the divine creation of all in existence – (as a distinct idea), was retained, albeit in modified form. Hegel, as an idealist philosopher in the German tradition, advocated that this divinity worked through the human mind, and equated theistic spirit with that of thought. Furthermore, Hegel’s notion of the dialectic is only understandable when seen through the context of the broader picture that his philosophy advocates; that is his theory that history is really the process of the self-realisation of god. Hegel’s theory of the dialectic is the recognition of the validity of the inner patterns (and trends) experienced in the mind that continuously conflict with one another; this tension of opposites, (god and world, mind and matter, spirit and thought, etc) as a result, facilitates the development of the spiritual, psychological and physical realms. The driving force behind this process is generated from the interaction between these apparent contradictions arising in the mind. Hegel’s system claims to eventually reconcile everything into spirit – or mind – so that nothing remains outside of its parameters. This process of reconciliation, integration, and assimilation is achieved through experience and understanding. Knowledge is gained of the previously unknown, when the unknown is encountered and the conflict between the old and the new is reconciled. As Hegel’s views expanded consciousness as god, and is of the opinion that the entire world (and existence) can be integrated into it, then for Hegel, the mind is the universe. The mechanism that Hegel describes as the dialectic process involves what he termed the thesis, antithesis and the synthesis. It is exactly this mode of Hegelian expression that Charles Luk borrowed to convey the concept of mind development as understood through the Chinese Ch’an tradition. Hegel believed that if a viewpoint was taken to its ultimate and extreme expression, it tended to veer back to its opposite or contradictory position. This is to say that at their extreme point, thoughts exhibit the behaviour of collapsing into one

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9 This teaching is explained in the Heart Sutra. Charles Luk’s translation appears in Ch’an and Zen Teachings First Series, Pages 208-223.
another. From this continuous process of philosophising (i.e. self-examination), new ideas are produced about old or new experiences, and the dialectical process of collapse, stabilisation, conflict and repeated collapse continues uninterrupted. Unlike Kant’s notion of the dialectic (which always struggles to achieve real change); Hegel’s theory is designed to demonstrate that not only is change possible and normal, but so is growth in a continuous and positive direction. This trajectory tends to render all existential states of being as purely transitory in nature and subject to change without notice. The Greek philosophical terms that serve as constituents of Hegel’s dialectical theory can be defined as follows:

1) Thesis = idea (affirmation)
2) Antithesis = opposite idea (negation)
3) Synthesis = integration of ideas (negation of the negation)

Another way of interpreting this scheme is through the ideas of position, opposition, and composition, etc. A synthesis is a momentary stasis or balance between opposites that will eventually breakdown into a thesis, and antithesis, before reconciling yet again into a momentary stasis of synthesis, and so on and so forth. Each new integration leads to inherent internal conflict and the synthesis is torn apart by its own contradictions. However, as new and progressive states are created on the psychological and physical realm, the dialectic as Hegel conceives it to be, creates the mechanism for continuous evolutionary development toward an ever improving, and yet unstable future. It is this instability that gives Hegel’s dialectical theory its most affective attribute. Without conflict and contradiction in the mind (and environment), human progress would not be possible. Charles Luk, in his translation work explaining Buddhist development, uses terms commonly found within the Ch’an School and integrates this technical language together with the terminology found in the work of Plato and Kant; he further combines this with Hegel’s dialectical theory in this formulation;

a) Thesis = Guest (Form) Phenomena
b) Antithesis = Host (Void) Noumena
c) Synthesis = Host in Host (Void in Void) Noumena in Noumena

Making use of the philosophy of Plato, Kant and Hegel, Charles Luk developed a unique conceptual interface between the thinking found within Chinese Ch’an Buddhism, and that familiar to the West. This is a very important achievement, as through it one completely different historical development of thought is able to be represented in another, equally unique and unrelated historical tradition. Charles Luk, through his grasp of the traditions of Western philosophy, managed to establish a doorway between two distinct methods of perceiving and conceiving the world, and in so doing, open a conduit for meaningful communication between the East and the West. It is interesting to note that the strictures of Ch’an Buddhism was not thought conveyable through the Judeo-Christian belief systems extant in the West at the time of translating, but that instead the essentially German re-interpretation of Plato’s ancient Greek philosophy was considered suitably meaningful and effective.

In his Ch’an and Zen Teachings (in three volumes), Charles Luk conveys the idea of the void as ‘noumena’, and the concept of form as ‘phenomena’. This is further clarified by stating that the void is also the ‘host’, or that which is always present and never leaves, whilst the flickering world of phenomena, as it is always changing and is never constant,
is described as the ‘guest’, or that which is always on a journey. Within the Ch’an developmental method, the practitioner is encouraged to turn his attention inward, away from the world of sense objects. This is the abandoning the objective world of phenomena and correlates with the Greek tradition of Plato – particularly that advocated by his descendant, Plotinus. This turning away from the changing world is designed to look into the depth of the mind – beyond its moving surface structure – to find that which does not move and has no limit. Although Kant and Hegel both presumed a godlike-structure somewhere in the human mind, their assessment of it did not go beyond ‘thinking about thinking’. For these European philosophers, god had stopped being a matter of blind faith (as conceived within popular religion), and had become instead a distinct ‘idea’ to pursue, discover, and define. The Ch’an method differs radically from the European philosophical tradition of pursuing thought, in that it does not agree that the act of thinking can solve the matter of human suffering. Ch’an takes a different direction and strives, through its methods, to get beyond the stream of thought, and realise that which lies behind it. For Charles Luk, the highest state realisable, (i.e. the noumena), was not a divine or godlike structure as conceived by Plato and his philosophical descendants, but is rather the empty nature of the essence of the mind itself that lies behind and beyond the observable flow of thoughts. This fundamental difference in objective and understanding did not stand in the way of it being described through the Greek term of ‘noumena’ by Charles Luk.

Buddhist philosophy views the world of physical matter as insubstantial, impermanent, and continuously subject to change. This is the world of sense-objects that the Greek philosophers referred to as ‘phenomena’. Charles Luk also uses this term to describe the physical world from the Buddhist perspective. The changeable nature of the world of matter renders it unsatisfactory and the assumption follows that as it is unstable, it offers no source of spiritual or intellectual stability. Ch’an, like its Greek philosophical counter-part, perceives reality as not existing in the world of fleeting phenomena, but rather as a product of disentanglement from attachment to sensory objects and associated patterns of thought. Until this disentanglement from the world occurs, no perception of reality is possible. Ch’an looks within to find the reality that underlies the world without. It is not the case, as in certain Greek traditions, that the physical world is permanently rejected within the Ch’an teaching. The disentanglement from the world is viewed as a necessary expedient so that the noumena (accessed through the mind) can be clearly perceived unencumbered by the confusion caused by sensory attachment. The noumena (void) that the Ch’an method reveals is not only relevant to the mind that perceives it, but is in fact the true nature of the phenomenal world itself. It can not generally be seen when the ordinary or deluded mind looks out onto the world of phenomena, as the constant stream of deluded thought (in the mind) prevents its cognition, but once the mind is cleared of the conditioned clutter of obscuration, reality is perceived and all contradictions instantly reconciled. This path can be stated as follows;

i) Deluded Mind = Phenomena (Guest)
ii) Relative Enlightenment = Noumena (Host)
iii) Complete Enlightenment = Noumena-Phenomena Integrated (Host in Host – Noumena in Noumena)

The Ch’an method takes its objective as the clear realisation of the state and presence of emptiness. This is not an appreciation of the idea of emptiness, but rather the
realisation of the actual, tangible state itself. Therefore the three discernable stages that are described in various formats with the Buddhist sutras are;

**Deluded Mind (Phenomena):**
The ordinary state of mind that is unclear about its own essence. Reality is obscured by a constant stream of thought that knows no end. One deluded thought conditions the next deluded thought in an endless flow. Reality (i.e. void) is present but remains unseen.

**Relative Enlightenment (Noumena):**
The constant stream of deluded thought is pushed aside through meditative technique, and the void-aspect of its essence is revealed. However, due to residual attachment to subtle thought traits, and to the revealed state of emptiness itself, the perception of emptiness is limited and not fully realised. The Ch’an texts warn that many mistake this state for final enlightenment when it is not. Nevertheless, this state is an important step and those who achieve it are already considered to be beyond the world of phenomena and are called Arhats.

**Complete Enlightenment (Integration of Void & Form):**
Subtle thoughts, and their corresponding attachments are finally uprooted, and attachment to the void dissolved. The void (and perception of it) becomes all embracing. The practitioner is in a state described as one that is not attached to the void (noumena), or hindered by the world of appearances (phenomena). As a consequence the empty mind (noumena) is all-embracing and unbounded, and everything (phenomena) arises and passes away within it.

Hegel’s system of dialectical explanation allows for this Ch’an Buddhist scheme to be presented in Western philosophical terms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thesis</th>
<th>Phenomena (Obscuring Ideas)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antithesis</td>
<td>Noumena (Relative Void)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td>Void &amp; Form (fully integrated)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Through the Ch’an method of introspective investigation into the mind and its essence, a tension is created between the opposites of worldly form and spiritual void. This creates a dialectical interaction that leads to many syntheses over time (or minor enlightenments), none of which are indicative of true enlightenment. Each relative truth, (or transitory synthesis) falls back in on itself, and the dialectical tension begins all over again in a new process (or cycle) of development. In this manner the mind is slowly (or quickly) cleared of its surface obscurations and ingrained patterns of conditioned habits. Eventually, when the mind has been thoroughly cleansed through the developmental process, a permanent synthesis is attained (i.e. full enlightenment) that reconciles all conflict into itself and so removes (dissolves) Hegel’s constituents of ‘thesis’ and ‘antithesis’. Where Hegel’s dialectical system appears to go forever onward in progress, but never achieves a complete conclusion, the Ch’an method, through the attainment of enlightenment, transcends the very dualism that Hegel premised his system upon. This demonstrates that although Charles Luk chose the Western philosophical terms ‘noumena’ and ‘phenomena’ to express ‘void’ and ‘form’, the correlation between these terms is contingent and fluid in interpretation. By interfacing Buddhist and Western philosophical concepts, a new translation doorway is established, that allows a two-way traffic of trans-conceptual exchange. By successfully translating
Chinese Buddhist terms into English, the reverse pathway is also possible which renders Western concepts into readily understandable Chinese Buddhist terms. Translation does not occur in a vacuum and is an exercise of moving disparate cultures toward a consensus of appreciation and understanding. Charles Luk harnessed the Western philosophical tradition and cleverly integrated carefully selected elements of it, into a complex Buddhist terminology that retained a necessary flexibility of interpretation whilst avoiding stagnation caused by dogma and conflict. More than this, however, he has managed to convey Ch’an principles into the Western mind through the appropriate use of English words, opening Ch’an teaching to translation into other European languages. The translators that follow on from this great achievement very much work in its shadow and benefit from its achievement. Once a ‘foreign’ concept is successfully accommodated into another culture, the process of psychological integration begins whereby the concept starts to lose its ‘foreignness’ and becomes familiar and accepted. Charles Luk was a pioneer translator who single-handedly introduced Chinese Ch’an Buddhism into the West, and whose efforts later generations benefitted from – either directly or indirectly.

Key to understanding translation methodology:

Charles Luk drew upon the Western philosophical tradition of:

- Plato: Noumena, Phenomena, Dialectic Interaction
- Kant: Noumena, Phenomena, Dialectic Interaction
- Hegel: Noumena, Phenomena, Dialectic Interaction

Charles Luk chose Hegel’s system to represent Ch’an idioms:

- Hegel: Theory of Dialectical Interaction
  - Thesis
  - Antithesis
  - Synthesis

- Thesis: Antithesis
- Phenomena: Noumena
- Form: Void
- Guest: Host
- World of Appearance: Ultimate Reality

Synthesis

- Interaction of Thesis & Antithesis
- Integration of Phenomena & Noumena
- Integration of Form & Void
- Integration of Guest & Host
- Integration of World of Appearance & Ultimate Reality

Integration also explained as:
- Noumena in Noumena
- Void in Void
- Host in Host
Explanation

When the ‘ultimate reality’ is recovered and fully integrated into the world of phenomena, the world of phenomena is profoundly and permanently transformed. This is to say that the world of phenomena becomes its opposite (noumena) and this quality reconciles all differences. Although it can be said that form and void integrate, in reality ‘form’ is only in a state of illusionary separation from its essence and can not go anywhere. When this illusion drops away, true reality becomes apparent. This is the unconditioned state of Buddhist enlightenment, or reality returning to itself. This can be expressed as noumena in noumena, void in void, or host in host. The idea that form and void integrate is only an expedient to guide the unenlightened mind toward the perception of its own essential reality. As Buddhist enlightenment is unconditioned, it can not be a consequence of any developmental technique. All developmental techniques are merely designed to remove the obscuration that prevents the direct perception of (and merging with) the empty Mind Ground that contains all things.

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Maitriyana International Association

Recognises Master Xu Yun as a Vīryadhika Buddha

International Association of Maitriyana

Certifies that

Master Xu Yun

Is regarded as a Vīryadhika Buddha by the Maitriyana Movement

January 22, 2014.

CHIEF ASSISTANT

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The Integral Practice

By Fa Chāo Shakya, OHY (ICBI)

From the very moment we ‘open our mouth’ (to talk), we are in a state of duality; that is firmly within the world of diametrically opposed concepts. Teachers and sages from the beginning of time have intended to transmit their knowledge or spiritual development through the use of concepts and words. The wonderful thing about Ch’an or Zen is that the spread of transmission has been achieved with as few words as possible; suitable for the ‘audience ad-hoc’. In other words, for organisms (body-mind) receptively prepared for this type of communication.

Whether in Buddhism Mahayana, or Theravada, or Advaita, or Ch’an, etc. etc. the psycho-pedagogic that is immersed in the transmission (or the teaching) fits for better reception and understanding of the vessel organism that is receiving it. The essence of all the labels [i.e. Buddhism, Mahayana, Theravada, Advaita, or Ch’an, etc.] are tinted by their particular culture, but all are basically the same in essential theoretical form. As well as in the Zen tradition, the Great Teachers (from all perspectives) have been advocates for ‘no-religion’ and for unity.12

If we accept or eliminate the illusory ‘I’ and ‘mine’, the ‘ego’; we are talking about accepting or eliminating something that does really not exist. Therefore, all the teachers have used different techniques and practices (for example, Ch’an has many methods) through the process of discarding the ‘who’ and the ‘what’, and discovering the ever present Reality / Being / God / the Ultimate Reality, the Absolute and the other names that have been given to IT. The reality is that we always have been and always will be (“That I AM WHAT I AM” or “a Buddha from the beginning”).

There have been a lot of different interpretations from various Buddhist branches, containing concepts that often convey the same meaning (but which offer different interpretations), potentially leading to much confusion in students. It is vital to understand these concepts clearly. There is an example of this, where Master Varasak Varadhammo (a Theravada) makes a comparison of the Essential Points between Buddhist sects, such as Mahayana, Theravada and Zen:

Mahayana devotees have decided; first, to liberate all sentient beings into Nirvana, whilst the Bodhisattva attains the state of Nirvana only after all others have been saved. Theravada practitioners obtain the State of Nirvana (becoming Arahants) first, and then release all sentient beings to Nirvana. Zen followers believe that keeping their

12 Buddhadasa Bhikkhu from Theravada, Balsekar/Nisargadatta from Advaita Vedanta, etc.
minds in the ‘State of Emptiness’, all the time, they will have accomplished the freedom of all sentient beings to Nirvana, and have also won the State Arahant, becoming themselves Arahants. Sometimes, followers of Zen accuse the devotees of Mahayana of being presumptuous in their statements concerning the priority given to conducting all sentient beings into Nirvana; and criticize the practitioners of the Theravada tradition for simply practicing for themselves, being extremely selfish in the process. In the final meaning of the following statement, “The Mahayana sect’s priority is to liberate all sentient beings”, we find that the problem is the understanding of the meaning of the term ‘Sentient Beings’. What is the meaning of ‘Sentient Being’? Many people believe that the term ‘Sentient Beings’ in the above statement means Human Beings in the Physical World, or Human Beings living on Earth. This is impossible as the term ‘Sentient being’ does not just refer only to already existing Living Beings, but also includes all beings existing in whatever state in any place.

It is correct to state that ignorance arises from sensory contact in accordance with the Law of Dependent Origination, (Pratītya-samutpāda). Upon contact, feeling or sensation arises. At the time of feeling, desire arises. Dependent upon desire, attachments arise. Depending on the attachment, the self arises. Depending on being, arises birth. Depending on the birth, aging and death arise. Depending on the age and death, suffering arises. This is the Law of Dependent Origination, (Pratītya-samutpāda), leading to cyclic suffering. Being born in this case means the emergence of a new mind and a new body as a “Life”, a “I”, “Soul” or a “Sentient Being”. There are myriads of births of Sentient Beings every hour, of every day, of every week, of every month, and of every year; this is the endless reproduction of a physical life.

However, this sequence may not always be the case. Depending on the contact (Phassa), feeling arises. At that time, if Wisdom, Right Mindfulness and Truth are present – the impermanence and insubstantiality is understood, and desire does not arise. When desire does not arise, the attachment does not arise. When the attachment does not arise, being, birth, aging, death, and suffering do not arise.

This is the fundamental and ultimate meaning of the statement: “Free first all Sentient Beings to Nirvana.” Or “Sentient Beings do not arise.” Sentient Beings in this meaning are “I” or “Lives” arising from sensation or feeling that begins to lead, then the feeling or sensation, desire and attachment, and therefore are spontaneously born. Sentient Beings arise from this “body of desire”, along with the perception and mind. At the moment of contact and feeling, if the desire is not present or does not arise, that means Sentient Beings have been liberated, and the mind has understood the state of Nirvana, getting to be an Arahanta. In the next paragraph I have abbreviated the meanings of the three types of creatures as Living Beings, Humans and Sentient Beings:

Living Beings: This includes all organic entities from humanity to plants and animals.

Human Beings: This includes all of Humanity.

Sentient Beings: This includes beings spontaneously occurring sensation or feeling under the Law Dependent Origination, (Pratītya-samutpāda).

The “Being” to be liberated into Nirvana is the Sentient Being, and is not just the Living Being or the Human Being. In the time of contact and feeling, when desire and
attachment are not present, this state of being is anything we want it to be. When desire and attachment are not present at the moment of contact, then suffering does not arise. Therefore the following connotations apply:

1. First we liberate all sentient beings to realize Nirvana – then becoming an Arahanta afterwards (as in the Mahayana idea) simultaneously.

2. We realise Nirvana, becoming an Arahanta first, freeing all beings in Nirvana afterward (as in Theravada idea) simultaneously.

3. We maintain the state of Emptiness and liberate all sentient beings into Nirvana, and understanding the state of Nirvana, simultaneously become an Arahanta (as in the idea of Zen).

At the time of contact or feeling, if detachment (Wisdom) is present, this state is Nirvana. Many explanations can be used to say the same thing. A full understanding of this knowledge is critical to the practice and the promotion of mutual understanding between the different sects of Buddhism and Religions in general. All things are included in the term “Dharma” using any meaning we want to choose. As can be seen in this example, many interpretations (differentiations) are the product of a divided (dualistic) mind; for this reason it is vital for the guidance of a qualified Master to understand the teachings.

Once this is understood, what about the practice? Krishnamurti said:

“The understanding comes only through the self-wisdom, which is the attention or watchfulness over one’s total psychological process.”

This is an awareness that is continuously developed as Xu Yun said:

“When I walk, I walk; when I eat, I eat”.

Others call it Chih, Vipaśyanā /Vipassanā (Kuan or Samatha inclusively). This concept is constant awareness. Constant awareness understands that there is not a doer. The doer does not exist, it is an illusion. There is not a ‘who’ and not a ‘what’, there is not a ‘second’. In the “philosophies” and “techniques” mentioned above we can find a “component” of morality (Sila), a “component” of meditation (Samadhi), and a “component” of wisdom (Prajna). All these are reflected within a different method of teaching or methodology. They are the “components” which we have been bequeathed by the sages of the past, based upon their experience toward realizing inner peace. Bearing in mind the words employed by the Buddha in the Kalaṁ’s Sūtra:

“Kalamas! It is proper for you, Kalamas, to doubt, to be uncertain; uncertainty has arisen in you about what is doubtful. Come, Kalamas. Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing; nor upon tradition; nor upon rumour; nor upon what is in a scripture; nor upon surmise; nor upon an axiom; nor up on specious reasoning; nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over; nor upon another’s seeming ability; nor upon the consideration, ‘The monk is our teacher.’ Kalamas, when you yourselves know: ‘These things are bad; these things are blameworthy; these things are censured by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to harm and ill,’ abandon them.”
As the Sixth Patriarch said:

“‘Seeing’ is the purpose in life”.

My perspective is that our body-mind organisms will absorb the concepts which are more “ad-hoc” or more suitable, according to their conditioning and “hereditary programming”, independently of the using of labels, and they will succeed as a consequence. ‘Who’ can be enlightened? The oxymoron will smack our heads.
The principle, practice and style of Maitriyana can be described as the synthesis of the Spirituality, but at the same time they represent the future of the contemplation (dhyana) and the compassionate wisdom (karuna-prajña), seeking the self-realisation of the Awakening (Bodhi) of all humanity. The Buddhist Existentialism not only positions itself as one of the seven entrances of the Maitriyana, but it is also a reference to one of its three practices: the method of the existential meditation. Within the Way of Buddhist Existentialism the spiritual master teaches the Detachment from the ordinary verbal language, by performing a non-traditional or religious or academic teaching that points directly to the perception of the true nature of the mind in order for the apprentice to get the Cure (Nirvana) and thus he may help others. This clearly defines the requirements to understand the practice, the Purpose (Dharma) and the research spirit of Maitriyana.

Each act of the Free and Enlightened Being (Arhat-Bodhisattva) conveys the total significance of Buddhist Existentialism; therefore, if the subject wishes to understand the supreme intention behind the Maitriyana he simply should taste the flavour of Freedom. This path of peak knowledge (satori) is the essential principle of Buddhist Existentialism. The standpoint of the Discourse of the Spiritual Master clearly differs from cultural Religious Discourse, the capitalist Academic Discourse and even from the Discourse of the apprentice, stating that Spirituality cannot be properly explained through the ordinary language and dualistic logic. The supreme principle of Maitriyana – that is the Awakening (Bodhi) of everyone, it certainly is ineffable and beyond the imagination for everyday reasoning, but the words of the Free and Enlightened Being (Arhat-Bodhisattva) must be used for registering and transmitting the spiritual teachings throughout history. The mission of the spiritual master is not only to carry the mystical vision of existence, but also to make sure this is preserved for future generations. Thus Buddhist Existentialism ensures that the revolutionary tradition of peak knowledge (satori) should not perish, whilst at the same time ensuring that the use of silence as a way of direct application of the Being and the Nothingness is protected.
Maitriyana transcends the use of ordinary words by using the poetic language and the paradoxical dialectic logic (koan), producing the event of the experience of emptiness within the dimension of what is symbolic. This openness (sunyata) not only produces Unity of the subject with the entire Universe, but it also allows to harmoniously establish the order of the Buddha-Dharma-Sangha as a revolutionary movement of Metapsychology, Metaphilosophy and Metapolitics which produces the Cure (Nirvana) of the mind, the transformation of human being and the Salvation of the world. According to Buddhist Existentialism, the spiritual guide of the Free and Enlightened Beings (Arhats-Bodhisattvas) is the basic framework for the Awakening (Bodhi) of all living beings, at the same time that it represents a theory about how humanity can evolve by means of the method of spiritual practice. In accordance with Gautama and Bodhidharma, the Maitriyana tradition establishes that the essential method to enter this Spiritual Path is an ethical conduct nourished by existential principles.

In the contemplative method of Buddhist Existentialism an ethical discipline is cultivated along with the development of peak knowledge (satori), by practicing compassion for others with effort and dedication along with the intuitive comprehension of wisdom. The spiritual master declares that the apprentice must transit the Middle Way of the conduct of insight, by performing a unifying practice of the Purpose (Dharma). Maitriyana appreciates the sitting contemplation (za-zen) but only as an accompaniment to the paradoxical dialectics (koan). Buddhist Existentialism considers that authentic spiritual practice is always the combination of analytical existential and libertarian development.

The ethical principle of the Maitriyana tradition is compatible with the fundamental teachings of Gautama and Hui Neng, who were both Awakened Beings (Buddhas). This tradition of Integral and Reconciliatory Spirituality transmits the essential thought of the Free and Enlightened Being (Arhat-Bodhisattva) but in different forms and ways, among which Buddhist Existentialism is one of them. The spiritual master explains that existential meditation is a way to get into the spiritual Way through the understanding that all living beings share the same nature of Emptiness. This Nothing or Openness (Sunyata) in the Being is the essential liberty of life, allowing to reach the Cure (Nirvana) in the here and now.

The Free and Enlightened Being (Arhat-Bodhisattva) states that what is Real is concealed by the illusory manifestations of the Ego, thus repressing the True Self and ensuring a cycle of masochistic repetition (karma-samsara). In this sense, the spiritual master teaches that the subject can reveal the nature of Being and return to what is Real by means of the combination of sitting contemplation (za-zen) and paradoxical dialectics (koan). In existential meditation the apprentice overcomes the difference between subject and object, simultaneously understanding that there is no essential difference between a primitive living being and an evolved wise being. Maitriyana says that in order to transcend the illusions of the Ego and dialectically return to the True Self, the mind must enter into a higher and amplified state of consciousness (H-ASC), practicing Mindfulness in order to paradoxically evanesce the dualism as a cause of psychological illness. By abandoning all dualistic thinking, Buddhist Existentialism considers that the Being is Nothingness; therefore the apprentice actually understands that there is only an inter-existence with others. When the Ego is moved aside, the subject can self-realize the Unity of mind, which constitutes the Awakening (Bodhi) of meta-thought. This means that the psychism can be developed into a concordant state with that of Gautama and Hui Neng. Ultimately, Maitriyana teaches that any apprentice
can become a Free and Enlightened Being (Arhat-Bodhisattva), since even the most ordinary subject has inside him the natural possibility for the Cure (Nirvana). Studying Buddhist Existentialism does nothing more than update that latent potential, breaking the chains of illusory dualistic thinking in the contemplative experience of here and now. The practice of existential meditation provides determination and Sense of Purpose (Dharma) against the uncertainties of life, by providing a form of sacralization for every moment and place. If the apprentice can achieve this Awakening (Bodhi), then he can work without tiring for the construction of Unity within society, being the very embodiment of the Cure (Nirvana) of the ills of the world. Salvation of humanity can occur in an instant if only the contemplation of the here and now is performed, and this is the last Purpose (Dharma) of the Maitriyana tradition, which does not establish any kind of dualistic distinctions. Buddhist Existentialism is a powerful method of existential meditation to get here and now the experience of the Awakening (Bodhi) both of the subject and of the Cosmos.

The spiritual master clarifies that there are no appropriate times to achieve the Cure (Nirvana), since this is rather a completely relative event and it can be reached in time according to the different circumstances of life. In every here and now the apprentice has the possibility to reach the Awakening (Bodhi), as this is found latent within the repressed spiritual nature, but the Ego and the mundane conditions tend to make it impossible for its emergence. The subject must show a lot of determination and impulse to de-repress the True Being and reach the Cure (Nirvana), but in fact this is something that can be experienced at any time and place. Contemplative practice is a spiritual development that provides compassionate wisdom (karuna-prajña); therefore the apprentice can eventually become a Free and Enlightened Being (Arhat-Bodhisattva), although there is no way to predict when this will happen. The only thing that can be said with certainty is how this can happen, because if the subject is committed to existential meditation, the Awakening (Bodhi) becomes a completely affordable and inevitable reality. Maitriyana encourages the use of Mindfulness in order to generate Detachment from avidity, hatred and ignorance, by transcending the ego and transcending the personality created by dualistic thinking. The spiritual master shows how to cultivate an awakened mind (Bodhicitta) so that all human beings can become Free and Enlightened Beings (Arhats-Bodhisattvas).

Although Buddhist Existentialism is a postmodern practice it is determined to follow the spiritual example of Gautama and Hui Neng, correctly accompanying them and without distorting their analytical and existential teachings. The apprentice who enters into this Spiritual Path can Cure (Nirvana) his mind and become one with the Cosmos. This means that the ordinary state of consciousness (OSC) of the subject is transformed, so that the True Being is revealed as an Empty Dynamic Ground. This instant self-realization of the Self as Nothingness is the essential principle of the Maitriyana tradition. When the Awakening (Bodhi) is performed, this event is experienced by the apprentice as a spiritual resurrection. The Purpose (Dharma) transmitted by the spiritual master is clear and it can be understood in the here and now, though certainly the great majority of human beings choose the lifestyle of metaphysics or that of materialism, which is the reason why they do not have the strength required to follow the Way of Buddhist Existentialism. However Maitriyana preserves the compassionate wisdom (karuna-prajña) in a mysterious way, carrying different types of contemplative ways to help people to find their Way Home, so that any ordinary subject has the ability to practice the method of existential meditation. Buddhist Existentialism may seem unusual, but it actually has its origins in one of the most highly evolved Spiritualities of
the story, thus continuing with the transmission of the flame of Chan insight. Given that everything in the Universe is imperfect, impermanent and insubstantial, apprentices not only can show spiritual progress, but also the very disciplines can and must do so, by keeping themselves revolutionary with the aim that their Peak Knowledge (Satori) not be stereotyped by the religious or academic Discourse. Maitriyana takes care to ensure of this happening; perceiving the true nature of what is Real in a single instant. This is the spirit of the Analytical, Existential and Libertarian Discourse which is found in the perennial centre of the Free and Enlightened Beings (Arhats-Bodhisattvas), transcending all barriers of dualistic thought in order to reach the Awakening (Bodhi).

Analytical existential contemplation provides the subject with a state of equanimity and unity which is the plenitude of the practice, since it is an open action (wu-wei) that starts from the Nothing-in-Being. Any apprentice can get to reach this state of happiness and Cure (Nirvana) in a single instant. If the subject has the courage and determination to follow Buddhist Existentialism, reconciling with the present through existential meditation, then his conduct will be boosted by the principles of the Awakening (Bodhi). The spiritual master guides the apprentice to develop the direct contemplation of the Empty Dynamic Ground, which implies a great effort to correct the errors, change the circumstances, be detached from the results and help others to spiritually evolve. In this way the tradition of Maitriyana explains and conveys the Cure (Nirvana) as a practice and as a silent life style that reveals the true spiritual nature shared by all beings.

The Awakening (Bodhi) is the fundamental principle of Buddhist Existentialism, since the Free and Enlightened Being (Arhat-Bodhisattva) is itself the foundation of Maitriyana in the world. Despite the many ways of describing Buddhist Existentialism, it may be asserted that this Spirituality begins with the statement of Freedom. This is the source from which the internal rivers of the great ocean of Maitriyana emerge and flow.

The fundamental thought of Buddhist Existentialism is consistent with compassionate wisdom (karuna-prajña) and with the principle of interdependent origination. However, the spiritual master clarifies that the foundational basis of Maitriyana is the experience of imperfection, impermanence and insubstantiality, while its teaching is a meta-thought or a thought from the Nothingness. The subject who enters the Way of Buddhist Existentialism can get to reach the Sublimation (Nirodh) as an open and empty thinking state from the dualistic and illusory domain of the Ego. Thus, when the apprentice, by means of existential meditation, has reconciled with the traumatic features of what is Real, which are imperfection, impermanence and insubstantiality, a relegation with the spiritual nature and an emptying of the mind is produced, thus becoming a Free and Enlightened Being (Arhat-Bodhisattva). This means that when the subject has a profound contemplation of the here and now he can be positioned beyond good and evil, detaching himself from all dualism. This evolution of the mind produces the irreversible state of superhuman, such as Nietzsche prophesied.

The ethical discipline (sila) of Maitriyana generates a meta-thought that overcomes the trap of dualistic logic. When the apprentice achieves this in his mind, then the non-concealment of the Being occurs naturally and without any intervention of the personality or of the ordinary reason. In this way of existential meditation there is no narcissism or fear, but there are only virtuous and spontaneous actions with a Sense of Purpose (Dharma) that turns the duty of helping others into something as natural as eating. The awakening mind (Bodhicitta) generates detached actions from all greed,
hatred and ignorance, being the Buddhist Existentialism the ethical discipline which works more for Freedom.

The contemplation on insubstantiality is the central aspect of the practical teaching of Maitriyana, being an action that maintains stable Attention on the flowing of life and death. Existential Meditation is the correct cultivation of the central aspect of the Being: the Nothingness. When the subject reaches the experience of insubstantiality or emptiness-in-form then he can be detached from all mundane identification. The contemplation (dhyana) which remains attached to neurotic and dualistic forms is not only superficial and fortifies the Ego, but it may even be considered as a false meditative practice. Reaching to the Self as Totality and Vacuity is the essence of the Way of Buddhist Existentialism.

At the same time, the apprentice must successfully cultivate the compassionate wisdom (karuna-prajña) associated with the experience of impermanence, which allows the subject not to be trapped in the phenomenal world, by traversing all avidity and all dualistic view between good and evil. Through ethical discipline (sila) and existential contemplation (dhyana) the apprentice can then eradicate the masochistic attachment and manifest the compassionate wisdom (karuna-prajña) inherent to the mystical identification with imperfection, impermanence and insubstantiality of what is Real. The Cure (Nirvana) is the reconciliation (Maitri) with the traumatic features of what is Real, this being the founding objective of the analytical-existential contemplation of Maitriyana training. The fundamental principle of the method of existential meditation can be synthesized by the Detachment which reveals and understands that the Emptiness is the essential structure of the mind. When the subject transcends the dualistic state and is unified with the inter-existence, experiencing the Cosmos as a large Unity, then he becomes a spiritual master of the entrance of Buddhist Existentialism.

The practice of Maitriyana is inseparable from the spiritual principle of Awakening (Bodhi), which implies a supreme effort from the apprentice. When the subject practices the Way of Buddhist Existentialism, he is actually studying the essence of the higher and amplified state of consciousness (H-ASC) of the Free and Enlightened Being (Arhat-Bodhisattva) in the immediacy of the here and now, so he gains the same look or vision which was incarnated in Gautama and Hui Neng. Maitriyana transmits a unified contemplative practice that can be applied to all activities and life situations, so that the existential meditation provides the necessary basis in order to create a Pure Land.

The contemplative method reaches the Cure (Nirvana) in everyday life through the establishment of the Self as a spiritual centre of the mind, strengthening the presence of the Nothing-in-Being inside the psychism. Therefore, when the compassionate wisdom (karuna-prajña) of the spiritual master maintains the strength of the Vacuity or Aperture (Sunyata) of the mind, the apprentice can deploy his practice of existential meditation in each circumstance of life. Buddhist Existentialism is then positioned as a way of live spiritually, continuously acting in accordance with the guidance of Awakened Beings (Buddhas) such as Gautama and Hui Neng. In Maitriyana there is an overcoming of the dualism between lay life and monastic life, by understanding that having a Companion-of-Love and having a child to educate can be advanced contemplative practices. Sadly, most couples and families do not realize that Love and parenting are essentially sacred; therefore they fail in the Purpose (Dharma) of Spirituality.
The Free and Enlightened Being (Arhat-Bodhisattva) maintains present in the mystical centre in every moment of life and death, so he is capable of keeping a marriage of Spiritual Love and also create a libertarian family based on the revolutionary values of mutual aid and spiritual revolution, as Gautama and Jesus did. Buddhist Existentialism teaches to humanity to convert their homes into temples and also to transform their hearts into altars. Only a mind that has not reached Awakening (Bodhi) considers the monastic life as sacred and perceives daily life as ordinary. Therefore, the spiritual masters of the existential meditation demonstrate that even a grass in the garden is a wonderfully mystical experience, as long as the subject is fully in the here and now.

The analytical-existential contemplation sublimates the mind, purifying it from attachment, aversion and unconsciousness by means of the contact with the spiritual centre (Bodhimandala) of the Being. Maitriyana provides fortitude to the apprentice to pass through all circumstances of life, since there is no moment that it can not be considered as an opportunity for change and growth. Even according to the Free and Enlightened Being (Arhat-Bodhisattva) every crisis becomes a function of apprenticeship. In this sense, the world is considered by the spiritual master as a School of life, so that the Cure (Nirvana) is not the absence of suffering but rather the overcoming of this, being a process that it can only be performed by the compassionate wisdom (karuna-prajña) of the Free and Enlightened Beings (Arhats-Bodhisattvas). The spiritual master teaches to the subject how to clear his mind in the here and now, by detaching from all neurotic narcissistic concerns and confusions which the Ego and dualism generate. In the Way of Buddhist Existentialism any apprentice can become a Free and Enlightened Being (Arhat-Bodhisattva), even with a partner or with children because the existential meditation converts these into catalysts of Spiritual Love (Karuna) and of Wise education (prajña). These experiences are important to discover and practice the Purpose (Dharma). Maitriyana is a Spirituality that can be practiced in daily life, turning all situations of life into learning. The subject who cultivates Mindfulness can unify his consciousness at any mundane activity, turning every place of space and time into a Pure Land. This is the true sense of the analytical-existential contemplation.

The practice of Buddhist Existentialism starts from the concentration of the apprentice about the experience of imperfection, impermanence and insubstantiality, emptying the mind from attachment and the dualism of Ego to then unify the subjectivity and reconcile the subject with the Totality. This is the great achievement of Awakening (Bodhi). Therefore, the subject who studies Maitriyana learns a way of living but he also learns a way to die, considering that the meaning of his existence is to provide apprenticeship to the Cosmos.

Buddhist Existentialism is a path where the ancient movement of Gautama and Hui Neng can be united with the new movement of Heidegger and Sartre. If the apprentice is left attending for the knowledge of these spiritual masters, he not only can live an existence disciplined by the ethics of Detachment, but he will discover and fulfill the Purpose (Dharma) of the Universe. The Detachment is based on the paradoxical dialectic logic (koan) because it transcends all dualism, as the avidity and aversion, attachment and non-attachment, gain and loss, good and evil. The state of serenity and tranquility which characterizes the Free and Enlightened Being (Arhat-Bodhisattva) is based on this transcendent vision. This is known as the higher and amplified state of consciousness (H-ASC) of Mindfulness that transpersonalises to the subject.
The existential meditation converts the experience of being-in-the-world into something mystical through the development of Detachment and compassionate wisdom (karuna-prajña), by evanescing the neurotic attachment and traversing the barriers of dualistic thought. Thus, the analytical-existential contemplation introduces a meta-cognition as a natural ability to clearly perceive what is Real and self-realise the Nothingness of the Self. This process of Buddhist Existentialism transforms the apprentice into an Empty Being (Sunyasattva), which implies that he lives in openness, harmony and non-interference with the Purpose (Dharma). The practice of Doing Nothing or Realizing the Vacuity (Wu-Wei) is an existential meditation which overcomes the Ego and sublimes the mind. The Cure (Nirvana) of the neurotic misery (dukkha) caused by attachment (tanha) and the identification with the Ego leads to a space-time continuum of peak knowledge (Satori).

The practice of Maitriyana cultivates the methods of sitting contemplation (za-zen) and paradoxical dialectics (koan) in order to generate a focused, unified and peaceful mind despite the fact of imperfection, impermanence and insubstantiality. Buddhist Existentialism is a Reconciliatory and Unified Spirituality that evanesces all attachment, aversion and unconsciousness through the revelation of the True principle of mind, which is the understanding of the Being like Nothingness. But as long as there is neurosis and dualism in the psychism, the subject will not be able to settle in the Awakening (Bodhi). The spiritual master explains that only by producing the Reconciliation (Maitri) and Integration of the mind the person can reach the Cure (Nirvana), whose higher and amplified state of consciousness (H-ASC) has overcome any notion of Ego. This psychic transformation is a spiritual evolution that converts the apprentice into a Free and Enlightened Being (Arhat-Bodhisattva), acting in the world as a superhuman who is beyond good and evil. Therefore the existential gate of the Maitriyana tradition shows to humanity how to get a peaceful mind, which is fundamental for the Purpose (Dharma) of creating a Pure Land.

Buddhist Existentialism inherited from Gautama and Hui Neng shows how to enter within the state of peace and empty mind which is the genuine mental health, by overcoming the dualistic function that characterizes the neurotic, psychotic or perverse pathology. Only by solving the continued opposition of the poles from the mind, the subject can find Serenity, by developing a type of meta-thought which is proper of a psychism integrated by the experience of imperfection, impermanence and insubstantiality. To unify the mind, the Free and Enlightened Being (Arhat-Bodhisattva) teaches a technique of Mindfulness which maintains a state of open and empty movement of the Self. This is cultivated through the method of existential meditation, which starts from concentration to then provide the mind the flexibility inherent in the floating Attention. This profound practice is certainly not the mere combination of different contemplative methods, but rather it is the expression of Freedom of the human being who remains still while he moves. The spiritual master of Maitriyana teaches to reach the insight through a mind that has overcome the dualism between stillness and movement, which prevents attachment and aversion, but simultaneously it releases a compassionate wisdom (prajña-karuna) evanescing any unconsciousness.

In accordance with Gautama and Hui Neng, Buddhist Existentialism teaches the apprentice to remain in the empty or open movement of the mind, which is the Way to understand the spiritual principle of Maitriyana that is the Awakening (Bodhi) of the Nothingness-in-Being. But if the existential meditation is not deepened by the subject, then the Mindfulness will not be established in life. Buddhist Existentialism must be
studied and applied in depth and dedication by the apprentice, keeping a sublimated mind that is nourished by the Cure (Nirvana). The higher and amplified state of consciousness (H-ASC) is cultivated in a way that never deviates from the Purpose (Dharma), so that the mental position of the sitting meditation (za-zen) can be maintained in the daily activities. The fundamental principle of Maitriyana is to be a spiritual guide in order that humanity builds a Pure Land, disciplining the people to cease their masochistic behavior, since the capitalist civilization has been in a profound state of existential confusion by de-sacralising life and converting the world into an object of consumption. Instead, Buddhist Existentialism produces the unification of subject and object, being an internal Way of Maitriyana that perfectly clarifies what is the Purpose (Dharma) of life. When the apprentice clarifies what is his existential Meaning he not only is capable of reaching the Awakening (Bodhi), directly perceiving the empty nature of the mind, but also he can be fully prepared for the goal of the Cure (Nirvana) from the ills of the world. The subject who becomes a Free and Enlightened Being (Arhat-Bodhisattva) in the here and now is reconciled both with himself and with existence. Therefore, if humanity truly experiences the value of the present moment, the Pure Land can manifest itself anywhere, because in fact it already exists in a latent form in the heart of every human being. However, the dualistic and materialistic thought represses the Perennial Spirituality which is found underlying in all the traditions from the East and West. The self-realization of the Self as Emptiness is produced by overcoming the ordinary state of consciousness (OSC) which neurotically discriminates what is real. The essential method of Buddhist Existentialism seeks to unify the mind of the apprentice, but it also seeks the unification of the subject and object, in order to create peace in both the inner and outer world. To reach such a great aim, the existential meditation requires that the apprentice has a strong and sustained effort in the process of de-identification from the psychopathological habits, by sublimating and purifying the mind. When the subject empties himself from all Ego and transcends dualistic thinking he can become one with the Analytical-Existential-Libertarian Discourse (Buddha-Dharma-Sangha) of the Maitriyana Spirituality.

The tradition of Buddhist Existentialism is defined as a unique style of Maitriyana, emerging through the practice of unification with the True Being and with life itself, so it is very difficult to describe its contemplative practice. For this reason, the different spiritual masters have taught in different styles that are adapted to the unique circumstances of each person, culture and time. As a result, the styles or methods of existential meditation taught by the Free and Enlightened Beings (Arhats-Bodhisattvas) are not completely equal, by possessing their own nuances for being established within everyday life. This adaptation to the circumstances is the basis of the style of the Buddhist Existentialism School, by demonstrating that the practical ability of adapting to daily life is the essential feature of the Maitriyana tradition. The spiritual transmission of the Awakened Beings (Buddhas) such as Hui Neng and Gautama is adapted to the circumstances of each person; this is the reason why their teachings left a heritage of multiple methods, schools and lineages. This characteristic of adaptability enables that spirituality can be practiced in any situation of life and any place in the world. The spiritual master asserts that the Purpose (Dharma) of the Universe lies in its transformation, evolution and learning, so that Buddhist Existentialism calls for all human beings to attain a higher or amplified state of consciousness (H-ASC). In this way everyone can get into the Maitriyana through their multiple internal pathways, as each one of them allows the apprentices to achieve Awakening (Bodhi). This demonstrates the equity that the contemplative practice of Buddhist Existentialism possesses, whose Source is a Way of Life of Cure (Nirvana) able to instruct the people of the whole Earth.
(Gaia) about how to reach Liberty and Self-Determination. Therefore, an unavoidable aspect of Maitriyana is that its integral activity can be very popular, reaching fields as varied as psychology, philosophy, science, politics and religion. Buddhist Existentialism has an active style of Spirituality, so it does not remain stagnant or attached to any of these fields. Existential meditation starts from everyday circumstances, by facilitating any human being to experience the transcendence of dualism and Ego.

When the apprentice is studying the teachings of the Free and Enlightened Beings (Arhats-Bodhisattvas) he understands that the behaviour and practice of the spiritual masters does not rotate exclusively around the sitting contemplation (za-zen) but rather his behaviour and practice rotate around developing the Awakening (Bodhi) in activities as simple as carrying water, chopping wood, lighting fire and cook vegetables, since in the everydayness is where the Maitriyana responds to the mystery of the Sense of existence. The activity of the Free and Enlightened Being (Arhat-Bodhisattva) is deployed over all society through the existential style, by moving spontaneously to pacify the world, helping the oppressed, instructing the ignorant and restoring the balance of nature. Buddhist Existentialism reveals that the Earth (Gaia) is a great living being, respecting it as a sacred and pure place. This characteristic of Maitriyana ensures its place as a spiritual guide for the people of the future, demonstrating that its adaptability transforms everyday life into the Cure (Nirvana) which transcends all social and cultural barriers by means of a profoundly revolutionary style. Spiritual masters instruct the working classes and political leaders through the example of their humble and detached life, by never deviating from their existential Purpose (Dharma). The Free and Enlightened Being (Arhat-Bodhisattva) shows that it is possible to simultaneously be poor and happy, so that he silently or publicly criticizes materialism in every moment of his life. In this sense, the Way (Dao) of Buddhist Existentialism preserves the Spirituality against the temptations of capitalist civilization, by promoting peace, social justice, education and ecology as ethical ways to transform the world. The adaptability of the Maitriyana method is fundamental for the development of a Dharmic Socialist Civilization, guiding the people through the spirit of Gautama and Hui Neng within daily life. The study of Buddhist Existentialism has enormous benefits derived from its meditative practice that can assist in the libertarian cause of the construction of a better world or a Pure Land, integrating humanity so that it can live in harmony. Maitriyana is a way to ensure that Buddhist Spirituality evolves and remains relevant for the coming generations.
**Buddhist Vegetarianism**

By Upasika Yu Kyern (ICBI)

**Be Not Attached to Food**

They for whom there is no accumulation,  
Who reflect well over their food, who have  
Deliverance, which is Void and Signless, as their  
Object, - their course like that of birds in the air  
Cannot be traced.

(Dhammapada: Chapter 7 – The Worthy – Verse 92)

People do not have to be ‘Buddhist’ to be ‘vegetarian’, or ‘vegan’; dietary modification (based upon superior wisdom and insight) occurs throughout human society and is not limited to religious or spiritual persuasion. The choice not to inflict pain and suffering on other living creatures seems to be linked to a higher frequency of human conscious awareness, whereby dietary need, or rather greed associated with appetite, is not allowed to dictate to reason and supersede it through domination. When greed in the human mind and body has prominence, then hurting, brutalising, and killing other livings creatures, so that their body parts can become food, is acceptable to individuals as long as they never allow the intellect to start functioning fully and assessing the situation. Greed is so powerful that when it is not controlled, regulated, disciplined, and appropriately channelled, it has the ability to lower the frequency of human consciousness, and consequently limit the type of thinking that is produced. In the case of killing animals for food (and monetary profit), the process of brutalisation suffered by the animal from birth to death is intellectually sanitised, so as not to allow for a single moment, the consideration to enter the mind that the animal is a sentient being that is aware and experiences fear, pain, and suffering throughout the entire destructive process.

Animal welfare, whether it is related to the village goat, or the industrialised (and intensively farmed) chicken or cow, is a relevant subject throughout the world, regardless of local conditions. The default excuse across the entire spectrum of the human mistreating of animals is that ‘we need to eat’ – this may be logically countered from the animal’s perspective with assertion ‘we need to live’. The human intellect, limited as it is by the power of greed, concocts all kinds of fantasies which it mistakes for higher knowledge, to justify a process that in its most simply stated form deprives one living creature of its body, whilst providing the dead body as food to another living creature. It is good to consider and contemplate the fact that by eating the flesh of another previously living creature, a human being is quite literally eating ‘death’. Here, in this cycle of killing to live, is the basic issue of ignorance and delusion associated by the Buddha with the experience of human suffering. Humanity is quite literally the victims both psychologically and physically of its own collective choices. Not only this, but in its choice to actively harm and kill animals for food, human ignorance and suffering is spreading between species and is not limited to just the human realm. Just as the innards of an animal spills out during the slaughtering (i.e. killing) process, just so does the ignorant karma of human greed spill out to other species.
Although it is true that some species of animals kill others as a form of food, human beings possess a higher consciousness that is able to cognise, contemplate, reflect, and formulate ideas and theories; human beings do know better and should use the intellect to diminish suffering in the world, and not add to it, as is its current and general trend. The type of animals used in world farming, be they pigs, cows, sheep or chickens, etc, do not kill one another for food. This truth is maintained despite the hellish conditions they are forced to endure in their short and suffering filled lives. Millions upon millions of animals, (the number is so high it probably can not be accurately calculated), have died to give human beings life, and in modern industrialised farming practices, the number of animals that move through 24 hour slaughter houses in the world is staggering. The human intellect, affected as it is by greed, hatred, and delusion either chooses to ignore and deny the sheer horror of this process, or worse still simply condone the process as ‘necessary’ when it obviously is not. For many people in the developed world, the body parts of animals appear (as if by a mystical process) on the shelves of supermarkets. These objects of dead animal body parts represent the modern (and sanitised) acceptable face of death. The body parts are actually in a state of rotting decay from the moment of the death of the animal, and this process of disintegration is hidden from the general public by the washing away of blood and other bodily fluids accrued through the slaughtering process, and the wrapping and freezing of the body parts in cling film. Just as the Buddha advocated meditation on the unsatisfactory nature of the human body when alive and functioning, as well as when as a rotting corpse, the chain of events for animals that have passed through the industrialised process (or village equivalent) is clearly discernable from beginning to end. As human beings possess the facility of higher consciousness, there is no excuse for not applying the Buddha’s assessment of the conditioned chain of events that deliberately assist the production of living creatures just so they can be brutally killed for food.

Simple Buddhist meditative techniques should reveal in an instant the horror of chains of events that lead from birth to death of an animal raised only for the potential food content of its body parts. This situation is further compounded by the vanity of the fashion industry, and the ignorance of feudalistic medical systems, that use the pelt, horn, genitals, fins and others parts, to adorn human stupidity in all its glory. A contributing factor to continuing animal cruelty in the West lies partly in a Judeo-Christian theology that has a theistic entity informing humanity that animals have no ‘souls’, and therefore no spiritual quality and are not protected by the commandment ‘thou shalt not kill’. Animals for the Jew, Christian, or Muslim, are viewed as nothing more than self-propelling food storage units that can be deprived of their ability to ‘self-propel’ at any time through the slaughtering process. This a priori, or default setting effectively establishes animal cruelty as a religious rite, and a rite which has survived into the cold and indifferent slaughterhouses of secular modernity. Modern slaughterhouses carry on this theological process of conditioned and cyclic death by replacing the worship of god with the worship of profit. Although outer definitions change, the inner process that strips the animal of all dignity and consideration continues unaffected by historical change.

Within Chinese Buddhism, the practice of vegetarianism is considered the most important mode of dietary discipline. This common sense approach to animal welfare is the product of the Buddhist teaching of karma which recognises volition as its driving force. If it is ‘willed’ in the mind, then any action in the environment has implicit within
it, a karmic consequence. If pain and suffering is inflicted upon an animal, then the nature of that suffering will visit (at a particular point in time) the perpetrator of the original act. This is not a punishment inflicted by a god upon humanity, but in the Buddhist sutras is presented very much as a common-sense approach based entirely upon the principle of cause and effect. In other words, the Buddha is stating that how an individual lives their lives is dependent upon their view of the world, and the actions that are performed. These actions serve to condition the reality that is inhabited. Although an individual is born into certain physical circumstance, the inner imprint of these circumstances upon the mind can be checked, turned back, reformed and transformed through Buddhist meditation techniques, and wise contemplation.

The Buddhist attitude to animals is based entirely upon the unbiased application of the universal principles of loving kindness and compassion. This should not be mistaken for sentimentality or an anthropomorphising attitude toward animals. The Buddhist attitude is far more succinct and practical. All life is considered worthy of respect simply because it is ‘alive’. Not only this, but karma is the regulatory mechanism that can be used in the mind and the world to ensure a pathway toward diminished suffering and ultimate enlightenment. A wise person, who does not wish to unnecessarily suffer, realises that personal wellbeing is inherently linked to the wellbeing of others. Treating others badly will not lead to the good conditions to enhance one’s wellbeing; but treating others – including humans and animals – with dignity and respect, showing a caring attitude toward their needs and welfare, sows the seeds for future happiness. An act that produces pain and suffering in the environment sets the tone for existence. Buddhist logic simply states that it is better to live in good conditions, than in bad. Human beings simply have to decide to do this ‘here and now’ and instantaneously break free of historical conditioning. This is the purity of Ch’an training, and is in accordance with the teachings of the Lankavatara Sutra and the Brahmajala Sutra.

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A Personal Account of Hua Tou Questioning

By Nick Bishop (ICBI)

This article is a personal account of using Hua Tou questioning in everyday personal activities. The hardest part of writing this article is that every day my perception of the Hua Tou questioning changes. What held true a while ago does not hold true now! In fact, what I type now may not hold true in a few minutes. Thus, this article captures a snapshot of my personal experience of Hua Tou questioning.

My original personal reason for using the Hua Tou is the unfolding of my neurosis which formed from many sources, especially parental influences. Hypothetically starting in the pre-natal stage of birth, and leading to this present moment. This is just part of the journey, as the next stage of the journey of using the Hua Tou is to realise the true essence of the mind.

The choosing of a Hua Tou depends on the psychic terrain of the mind. For myself, (whose neurosis has symptoms of over dominance to submission, premised upon anger, guilt, shame and other such negative emotions and belief patterns), the Hua Tou questioning goes some way toward transcending the neurosis.

Some of the Hua Tou questions I have used over the last few months (as suggested by the Teacher) are:

- Who is present?
- Who is conditioned?
- Who is separate?

Each Hua Tou is like a zapper gun that when first used, usually inspires images that bubble up from the unconscious. Insights are realised and physical martial techniques improved.

What seems clear is that the continued use of the Hua Tou questioning is a mundane activity that is akin to the act of breathing where one must breathe to stay-alive; thus the practice of Hua Tou has no place for triumphalism or any other indulgence. The continued daily practice is to gradually increase the quality of Hua Tou questioning. It is sometimes very hard to practice a Hua Tou because of emotional confusion brought on by the over magnification of a given contemporary situation. This is an area requiring improvement to reduce the frequency and duration of time spent in emotional confusion and turmoil.

To practice a Hua Tou requires insightful guidance from a teacher. Without guidance, one is prone to jump to incorrect conclusions and become confused as to the practicalities and subtleties of using the Hua Tou. An example that I found confusing recently was the term “The Great Doubt”. My intellect asked “should I doubt the Hua
Tou? Is there some hidden esoteric meaning to the Hua Tou?”. Certainly not, it is the desire to transcend, to break free of internalised thoughts and emotional conditioning. Such terms as “The Great Doubt” has a cultural context that is present in Chinese culture but not found in European culture. In addition, the context of the practicalities and subtleties of a Hua Tou and the method of applying the Hua Tou must be clearly defined so as to go straight to single-mindfulness instead of dilly dallying around.

For example, when using the Hua Tou “Who is Separate?”, I may repeat this question a few times and then focus on some other thought patterns. This is the dilly dallying around.

It appears that the neurosis is looking for some logical process to supposedly “fix the problem”. This is a clear example of a dog chasing its tail. The right-view here is to look for the space between the thoughts. The neurotic state is trying to draw one’s focus onto the external world by asking a question. This is learnt uncertain and confused behaviour learnt from a very early age.

To reinforce this right-view, it is important to recognise that instead of having five senses from a western perspective that there are at least six senses. With this perspective in mind, the practicing of Hua Tou questioning becomes more profound in that one starts to disentangle from the thinking mind so prevalent in western culture.

Interestingly, whilst in the state between sleep and awake, whilst practicing the Hua Tou “Who is separate?” the mind perceived thoughts as a linear cylinder from behind my head, originating in the past and travelling forward to the future. Within the cylinder were many hues of colours. This visualisation represents the linear mind at work in a world of thoughts going from the past to the future. Within these thoughts are regret of the past and anxiety for the future. Whilst writing the word “Anxiety”, I felt heaviness in the chest. This shows a direct correlation between the mind and physical sensations in the immediacy.

New insights give way to the inner truth, immediacy is the byword. Whilst doing solo training, I attempted to switch from “Who is Separate?” to “Who is Hearing?” and back again to assess any physiological and physical differences using either Hua Tou. From direct experience, the “Who is Hearing?” Hua Tou is more profound.

The reasons why practicing this Hua Tou are more profound include:

1. It was easier to perform deep abdominal breathing with this Hua Tou.
2. It was easier to focus on the body’s gravitational midpoint.
3. Applying the visualization of seeing a triangle going between each ear reinforces a calming mind state.
4. Awareness of tension in the hands and soles of the feet was very noticeable.
5. Energy levels were higher and a more tranquil state came over me.

As with practicing a Hua Tou, there are usually visualisations that come up from the unconscious. Such an example involves a man dressed in black and wearing a black helmet, together with a picture of a blue dragon. This snap-shot of practicing Hua Tou questioning will certainly change, maybe now?
Reiki Healing

By Jelena Manestar – Yu Dao (ICBI)

History: Reiki was re-discovered by Dr. Mikao Usui, a Japanese Buddhist in the 1800’s. It was his purpose to find how Buddha healed the sick. Reiki Ryoho is an original therapy method using the power based on Reiki, which is a universal power in the universe. During his 10 year quest he studied the teachings of old Sanskrit writings, and the sacred literature of Japan, China, India, and Tibet. At the end of his quest the complete system of Reiki came to him during a mystical experience on the Holy Mountain of Kuriyama in Japan. Mikao Usui initiated sixteen masters, one of whom was Chujiro Hayashi. At the age of 47 Dr. Hayashi received Reiki teacher training from Usui Sensei. For about ten years he ran a Reiki clinic. During those ten years he came up with a more complicated set of hand positions and divided the Reiki training into three levels or degrees.

Hayashi initiated thirteen masters, one of whom was Mrs Takata. After being healed from serious conditions in Dr. Hayashi’s clinic, Mrs. Takata decided to learn Reiki. She spent at least a year working for Dr. Hayashi in his clinic before receiving the second-degree training. In 1938, she received her teacher training from Dr. Hayashi. Hawayo Takata features prominently in Reiki history as the master who brought Reiki to the western world. She lived in Hawaii and before her death in the 1970’s, taught 22 Reiki masters. Most of the Reiki that we know and use in the western world comes through the Takata lineage. The word Reiki is made of two Japanese words – Rei which means “God’s Wisdom or the Higher Power” and Ki which is “life force energy”. So Reiki is actually “spiritually guided life force energy.”

Theory: Reiki is a Japanese natural healing technique for stress reduction and relaxation that also promotes healing. It is administered by “laying on hands” and is based on the idea that an unseen “life force energy” flows through us and is what causes us to be alive. If one’s “life force energy” is low, then we are more likely to get sick or feel stress, and if it is high, we are more capable of being happy and healthy. Reiki is a simple, natural and safe method of spiritual healing and self-improvement that everyone can use. It has been effective in helping virtually every known illness and malady and always creates a beneficial effect. It also works in conjunction with all other medical or therapeutic techniques to relieve side effects and promote recovery.
Reiki can be used for many ailments to:

- Promote natural self-healing
- Balance the energies in the body
- Balance the organs and glands
- Strengthen the immune system
- Treat symptoms and causes of illness
- Relieve pain
- Clear toxins
- Adapt to the natural needs of the receiver
- Enhance personal awareness
- Relax and reduce stress
- Promote creativity
- Release blocked and suppressed feelings
- Aid meditation and positive thinking
- Heal holistically

It is important to understand that Reiki should never be used instead of medical treatment; it should be used as a compliment and a way to become and remain healthy. There is no belief system attached to Reiki so anyone can receive a Reiki treatment or a Reiki attunement. As with any healing the first step towards a healthier life is a desire to be healed.

**Practice:** Reiki treatments can be given in direct contact by laying hands on the person, or in distance treatment. In **DIRECT CONTACT**, Reiki treatment is given fully clothed. The Reiki recipients’ privacy, modesty and dignity are always respected. For enhanced relaxation, the recipient is usually lying down, but could be sitting or even standing. There are seven classic positions where generally the practitioner will place his/her hands on or over the recipient. These positions equate to the seven main ‘chakra’ areas of the body, which feature in various Eastern mind-and-body and spiritual concepts. Reiki (healing energy) will flow where is needed. Feelings experienced by the recipient during Reiki treatment vary between individuals, and also from session to session. Treatments are typically very relaxing, and recipients often fall into a lovely drifting state, or actually fall asleep. These states may be accompanied by dreams, floating sensations, warmth, tingling or a general sense of security and peace. Sometimes, if the healing is on a mental level, the recipient may shed a few tears as the emotional pain is released. This will be followed by calmness and later by a sense of increased energy as the body is freed from the weight of the stored distress. Healing may not always manifest in the way the recipient wanted or expected. For example a ‘patient’ presenting with an ear problem may simply leave the Reiki session with some vague idea about listening to someone’s complaints more sympathetically. The position on the body of an ailment or complaint can be a good clue as to its underlying mental and/or emotional cause. Addressing the cause is where healing begins.

Sessions can be as short or as long as needed, with full treatments typically lasting 30 to 45 minutes. **REIKI DISTANCE HEALING** can be performed at any distance from the recipient. A mutually convenient time is normally arranged, although a Reiki Master can send healing to anyone at any time. Reiki treatment raises the vibrational frequency of the recipient and clears blockages that disrupt the energy flow, allowing healing to begin at a cellular level. The energy supply is limitless. It is unaffected by the channeller
and flows through him/her to wherever needed in the recipient. The nature of Reiki is that it can only be beneficial.

**My Practice:** Every disease or medical condition is the result of karma or trauma. If a person is born with some type of medical condition, the cause of that condition is in that person’s karma from their past life or his/her mother’s karma.

**Procedure for giving treatment at a distance:**

To connect with a person who is receiving treatment at a distance, I will need a picture of that person and we will have to establish a short telephone call (only first time), or we can connect on Skype. I always need to know the person who is to receive treatment, because I need to feel his/her energy to make a better connection between us which is the foundation for successful healing.

**Steps:**
- **Day 1** – cleaning karma from the past life
- **Day 2** – cleaning karma on the day when the person was born
- **Day 3** – cleaning all karma from the day when person was born until now

**Next step:** After 3 days of cleaning karma, changes must be seen on this person. If healing is helping, I will continue to work 3 more days on the current problem. Giving a treatment to a person for a first time, I need to work six days in a row to be sure that all blockages are gone.
Shouting in a Silent Room:
Rethinking Meditation and Serious Mental Illness

By Cassandra Tribe, Master (ICBI)

Dragon Mountain Chan Temple and Zen Community Centre

Dusty is indolence.
Dust comes in its wake.
With knowledge and vigilance,
Draw the arrow of suffering from yourself.

_Buddha Vacana_

The use of movement and meditation within group recovery practices for people with a Serious Mental Illness (SMI) is a contentious practice in the United States (1). Part of the struggle comes from the problems inherent to this community and the other stems from the lack of practical and traditional training in meditation by the facilitators and program designers. A recent year-long initiative introduced a traditional program of Chan meditation and movement to a community centre for those with Serious Mental Illness to examine the viability of movement and meditation in a population identified by Any Mental Illness. The hope was to gain a better understanding of the problems with meditation and Serious Mental Illness and to suggest what the potential resolution could be.

What was discovered was that the majority of the problems associated with using meditation as a complementary or support practice with those with Serious Mental Illness stemmed from the inadequate training of the facilitators and program designers. It was not the result of anyone with a Serious Mental Illness being unable to manage their reaction to meditation. In examining why the training and programs were inadequate, the core problem stemmed from the Westernization of traditional Chan practice to increase its accessibility to Western culture, which has resulted in a dilution of its ability to be effective by making the current practices and mind-sets of facilitators too rigid to be able to respond to what is happening in the moment.

By further following the hypothesis that the principle of the mass line theory (2) could be applied within this setting to correct the approach of the facilitator and the design of the program, an effective and supportive meditative practice could be developed and used by persons with Serious Mental Illness, as well as Any Mental Illness as it would be rooted in the traditional teachings and practices informed by the community.
involvement. It was also believed that by using the mass line results as a guiding tool a new program for training facilitators could be implemented to restore flexibility, presence, mindfulness, discipline and compassion to their education.

Where perception of danger lies, rigidity and exclusion thrive.

Two forces are at work in the social welfare system that has prohibited meditation from being effectively introduced as a supporting or complementary therapy for those with Serious Mental Illness and Any Mental Illness. The first is the standard declaration by the U.S. Department of Health that has discouraged the use of meditative practices with mentally ill consumers because of a perceived risk of dissociation, disturbance and inducement of psychosis or delusions. The second comes from the adaptation of the traditional Chan practices to a popular alternative culture within American society that has reduced the focus of the practice to one of self-focus and individualized experience. The lack of contextual study of the sutras, diligence in practice and the promotion of patient practice over a form of rapid achievement have allowed a diluted form of Buddhist practice to be embraced by the alternative culture. The unfortunate effect of going too far in adapting the traditional practice to a culture is that the meaning and effectiveness of the practice, with or without fidelity to the beliefs – has lost its ability to provide a check for the mental stability, intent and methodology of the practitioners promoting it as a treatment for the reduction of stress and anxiety in those with mental disorders of any degree.

Rather than promote a more independent and freer interpretation of Buddhist practice and belief that leads to greater accessibility and application; the removal of discipline and structure has led to a preponderance of schools and practitioners that are more engaged with individualistic interpretations that cling to a kind of materialism and reject change, adaptability, flexibility and responsiveness as a value in community practice. The duality of sudden enlightenment and revelatory enlightenment of the Chan tradition has made it particularly susceptible to adoption by those who under less kind circumstances would be considered narcissistic seekers of a cult of personality.

Core to the identity of these practitioners is the presentation of meditation as having a specific goal, as well as all experiences and belief systems being but only differently voiced versions of the same universal experience. This individualistic and self-centred interpretation of traditional practice has gained a strong foothold in the Western world as it retains the individual as the centre of the essence of all cycles, removes the need for training and supervision, and establishes a role in which authority is not to be questioned or constructively criticized. When this is combined with the recent scientific studies of certain types of meditation that have quantitatively defined a physical effect for the practice – the result is the creation of a false behavioural operand that can only lead to failure, as well as harm when introduced to a marginalized and vulnerable community along with a complete invalidation of the social capital of marginalized communities by refusing them the value of their unique identifiers.

This phenomenon is not unique to the religion of Buddhism. Unlike its companion trends in Christianity and Islam; the practices of the latter faiths are not being used by medicine and science in healthcare because they are culturally recognized as being religions only; while Buddhism suffers the perception of being more philosophy than faith. This has led to practices being adopted and taught out of context of experiential development and meaning. (3) Many programs that have tried to bring in meditation
sessions for their consumers have been confronted with the reality that the majority of Certified Meditation Instructors (CMI) in the United States are ill prepared to handle the realities of working within a community of the seriously mentally ill. (4)

**Dragon Mountain and Mental Health Care Advocates of Rhode Island/OASIS**

In the summer of 2012, the Mental Health Care Advocates of Rhode Island/OASIS Community Centre (MHCA/RI/OASIS) approached Dragon Mountain Chan Temple and Zen Community Centre with the idea of adding a meditation and movement program to their existing schedule. In Rhode Island, Dragon Mountain is the only Chan Centre, originally organized under the name, The Zen Studies Program of Rhode Island. The concept behind the program is that it would provide secular instruction informed by Chan practices that were responsive to the needs of the community.

MHCA/RI/OASIS was aware of the work being done in the European Union with meditative techniques and persons with Serious Mental Illness and given that grant monies were not available in the states for such programs as they are not encouraged for these communities, both Dragon Mountain and MHCA/RI/OASIS struck an agreement to provide a 7 session, 5 day a week program designed specifically for MHCA/RI/OASIS and drawing from traditional Chan methods of Qi Gong, Kung Fu, Tai Chi and seated meditative practices.

MHCA/RI/OASIS has been in operation since 1985 providing a community centre for any persons who have received treatment for Any Mental Illness in Rhode Island. Up until 2012, MHCA/RI/OASIS functioned as a combination drop-in centre and meal site for those with mental illness, dual diagnosis and the homeless. Due to a change in management in the middle of 2012, the focus of MHCA/RI/OASIS was redefined to place an emphasis on creating a recovery centre for those with mental illness. Membership requirements are that the participant has received, or be receiving treatment in Rhode Island for a mental illness. Further requirements were instituted that to participate in the lunch meal program, members had to arrive early enough to sign in to be able to also participate in the wellness and recovery programs although they are not required to attend any group and may just come to sign in, wait and eat. Applicants with issues of active substance abuse were also redirected to different programs in the area whose primary focus was substance abuse treatment. The guiding program OASIS uses as a source for their support structure is the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) (5) and the Intentional Peer Support (IPS) system. (6) The definition accepted by MHCA/RI/OASIS, WRAP, IPS and Dragon Mountain for this purpose as defined by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the United States (SAMHSA). (7)

Participants for the program were self-elected from a population of mental health consumers who are members at MHCA/RI/OASIS. At no time during the entire 12 months was it possible to anticipate the participation level for the day as participation was self determined and not required. The community of MHCA/RI/OASIS reflects the current population ratio of Any Mental Illness in the United States; however it is also reflective that the State of Rhode Island has the highest ratio of Serious Mental Illness per state population.
Developing and Implementing an Approach

In turning to a traditionally trained resource, MHCARI/OASIS tried a year-long study (8) in introducing daily movement and meditation to a community support centre for those living with Serious Mental Illness. The results were positive in the sense of proving the benefits of meditation for persons of all stages of mental health; however it has revealed both a dearth of appropriate training for CMI facilitators, and a growing gap in capabilities of facilitators coming out of Buddhist traditions as their programs and practices continue to be diluted to suit western and American culture. The reflection on the findings of the course study suggests that a reconsideration of meditation with those with Serious Mental Illness, and a reconsideration of how far cultural adaptation of traditional practices can go before they become ineffective is suggested.

It has been discussed at length by Master Sheng-yen (9) that the core Western misunderstanding of the purpose of meditative practice has served to limits its ability to be applied as a complementary therapy in communities such as these. The need to scientifically quantify an effect of meditation has led to a misinterpretation of the actual result of developed practice. The scientific quantification has focused on the physical reactions as most often measured by skin response tests and heart rate. In communities with mental illness where long-term medication has been common, the basal metabolic rate and metabolic predictability of the person becomes impaired. Added into this is the newly recognized aging acceleration caused by depression and mental illness (10) and populations with mental illness will also have other physical ailments associated with demographics a decade or more years older than the chronological age of the community recorded with its attendant mobility issues, chronic problems and long term medication effects.

In defence of the need for a quantifiable and replicable result driving studies of metabolic reaction to meditation, there is a need for solid statistical surveys to show the efficacy of these programs as a means to complement support and therapies for those with Serious Mental Illness. There is a noted lack of any material showing a direct study of the implementation of adjunctive therapy and support through meditation in individuals and communities with mental illness due to the perception of the risk of meditation practices with certain disorders. The majority of the studies on the effects of meditation have been limited to qualitative self-reporting of the experience of a healthy group, medical imaging and quantitative studies of the effect of meditation on the brain on healthy people and the very limited experiential reports of psychiatric communities that have used forms of guided relaxation hypnosis inductions for select patients.

Mass Line Governance of Development and Implementation

Anticipated participants represented a broad spectrum of mental illness, mobility and cognitive functioning level. The range of mental illness within the membership can come from managed clinical depression to adult psychosis and schizophrenia among others. The level and length of medication for each participant is also widely variable with some exhibiting Tardive dyskinesia, tremors, balance issues, cognitive functioning and problems with staying awake while others are barely impacted by their daily protocol. Members typically suffer from a variety of mobility issues, some associated with age and others a potential aggravated condition from long term psychiatric medication – participants may range from fully ambulatory, athletic, require walkers, canes or mobility scooters.
The study proposed to use a statistical analysis of behavioural patterns in lieu of biological metrics. The principal behind this choice is based within the theory of paleontological speech analysis and its detection of intent, effect and existential value/context in persons with schizophrenia. The assumption that this would be appropriate for this community, which has a range of functionality and diagnoses, is based on studies that show how quickly independent and critical thinking is impaired by exposure to the public and private Western mental health treatments and how chronic medication can cause a confusion of cognitive and communicative abilities without compromising the intent and thought of logical communication. (11)

Through a careful review of studies that isolated the effects of movement and meditation on the overall mental, emotional and physical health of healthy communities, enough evidence was present to suggest that the problems inherent in introducing the same techniques of movement and meditation as adjunctive therapy for communities with mental illness came not from the unpredictable participant responses that create a risk with this population, but from the formation of the approach and presentation of programs by designers and facilitators who are working without guidance from the population as to what of the intended program was accessible and of use to them in the present. This suggested that the usual vertical design and implementation of mental health support programs was ineffective with communities with mental illness but that by using a mass line development and implantation approach, a lateral program could be successfully implemented without a noticeable risk undertaken.

A core misunderstanding of meditation is that the positive reinforcement of the practice lay in the result of creating a more relaxed physical state. While that is a measurable affect in healthy populations, that this is an outcome of meditation is considered to be incidental and not guaranteed or sought by advanced practitioners as it is not considered a reliable positive reinforcement of the practice. The state that is sought to be created as positive reinforcement through the practice of meditation guarantees neither relaxation, decrease in stress or insight; instead the repeated effect is to enter into a condition best described as “safe harbour.”

Safe harbour being defined as the state in which there is enough disassociation from immediate emotional states and control over physical action that the practitioner may then choose to explore the current distress, contemplate a topic, or choose to recreate stress in order to explore it without having it cause ill effect outside of the designated time period of practice. It was thought that participants with mental illness would benefit from learning techniques to create at will such a state of safe harbour so that even if they were unable to diminish stress, distress or anxiety that they would be positively reinforced by entering a state in which their choice of action and reaction to it was under their control.

This state of safe harbour was also projected to allow for those with functioning psychosis to be able to participate and share their experience of emotions, moods and daily life within a group setting so their language and experience would be understandable and accessible to others in the group to promote a sense of belonging to the community and ability to give and receive support within the community as well.

It was thought that by adapting the theory of mass line thought to the design of a moving meditation and seated meditation program, the program could become
inclusive of behavioural operants identified within the community to dynamically change the design to increase its effectiveness while reducing any associated risk. Through using mass line analysis and implementation, the program could adhere to the guidelines of health and wellness defined by the community directors as necessary to promote support and recovery while allowing the participants to experience the positive reinforcement of symptom management and self-regulation no matter what their mental illness or cognitive/physical functioning level. By using this approach, the goal was to identify patterns of behavioural momentum unique to psychiatric communities, to select specific areas for additional quantitative study in regards to the effect of the program on health and social capital standings, as well as to suggest a training approach for facilitators that would allow for similar programs to be introduced into other communities with the same fluid customization as the result. It was also the goal of the program to shift the understanding of meditation from one that was only successful in promoting relaxation to an experience in which success was determined by the participants’ willingness to experience themselves in an effort to become better integrated in the world at any stage of their functionality.

Contemplating a year of co-creation and practice

In order to properly discuss the suggested findings of the study, it is necessary to split the discussion into three areas – movement, meditation and mass line. Each of the areas inter-relate and used self-contained materials that were distributed at four different points during the process – the Android app, a CD of meditation recordings, the introduction of focus objects and a DVD of meditation and movement videos. Central to the program, which was named the “Responsive Wellness Program (RWP)” was the mutual agreement between the author and guiding agencies of MCHA/OASIS that what was possible as the benefit of introducing movement and meditation practices could far exceed expectations if it was done with a lateral community developmental approach, rather than applying the standard clinical vertical top down implementation of complementary programs.

It should also be noted that the majority of the background research for this study originated in European and Asian studies that have not been generally publicized or adopted by the American mental health community as it runs contrary to the central premise of Maslow’s Theory of the Hierarchy of Needs which is used as the backbone in most complementary and supportive therapy programs in the American Social Welfare community. Instead, the theory of the mass line was adopted in which the assumption is that while there is in existence a defined structure of needs, the primary need is for one of self-esteem and belonging through purposeful and meaningful contribution to the community.

The implementation of ways to meet individual needs in a communal setting must be determined by the community and not the agency. The agency best serves to maintain and make resources available to achieve the common goal of mental health and wellness, but the community is always assessed using the mass line to know which of the resources is currently in need.

This lateral form of implementation disposes of the vertical hierarchy of bureaucratic mental health treatments that place the client at the bottom of the priorities of achieving health. In measuring mental health and wellness, the goal was also to abandon efforts to normalize the experience of living with mental illness and to instead
seek to affirm the supporting community membership while using social proof to show that the marginalized community shared much in common with the larger community while maintaining a distinct identity rooted in the experience of living with a Serious Mental Illness or Any Mental Illness.

Movement

The vehicle chosen for movement was the traditional Chinese forms found within the Northern Shaolin Qi Gong and Gong Fu styles. These original styles developed at the same time as yoga practices in India as their origination coincided with the split of the Hindu and Buddhist belief system. Each belief system recognized that the integral use, discipline and mastery of the body were essential to maintaining and creating physical, emotional and mental health. Movement practice is considered one of the earliest forms of meditation and the most accessible, particularly when taught with its emphasis on breath control. The movement section was placed before the seated meditation to encourage more people who would not normally be willing to try meditation to explore it in a more accessible environment of movement. It should be noted that part of the history of Chan Buddhism allows for the adoption of current and modern forms and practices in order to allow for easier development of a meditation practice.

An additional reason for choosing traditional Chinese forms such as Qi Gong, Chen Tai Chi and Gong Fu was that all of them have an association with power, independence and survival in Western Culture. The mythos of the Chinese martial arts is shared across the American culture in particular and by presenting movement and exercise in this fashion, a marginalized community that was getting an adaptive form of the techniques was able to connect to a broader cultural anchor within the community at large increasing their social capital. Rather than doing “hospital exercises,” participants were learning Tai Chi and Qi Gong. They were also frequently reminded that everything they were learning was also being taught by the same facilitator to classes with participants from outside their community.

It is unique to a population with Serious Mental Illness that they typically have a “perfect storm” of issues that will complicate any type of training or practice with movement or exercise. The first issue comes from long term medication. Many psychiatric medications have a serious impact on balance, memory and visual perception, as well as causing muscle fatigue, cramping and/or joint inflammation. Add to this the additional effect of psychiatric medication, along with many other types of medications common to this population such as those for diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol and the effect on the body’s ability to regulate body temperature becomes radically altered. One of the choices made in creating the movement part of the program was to not separate participants into groups by abilities, but to focus instead on doing a multi-level accessibility presentation of every exercise to foster a group environment where accommodating different skills and ability levels was the norm and viewed as part of the skills of the group set. The traditional learning process of both Qi Gong and Kung Fu is designed to be adaptable to different physical skills in order to promote healing and health as well.

The second issue stems from the devaluation of the individual in regards to respect for their communication and contribution of constructive criticism from the participants towards the program and facilitator. In general, those who have been exposed to the
American mental health care system are taught that they do not have input that is of value because they are ill. They also quickly adopt the self-disparaging view that as someone with a mental illness, their contributions and potential contributions to the community at large are null and void. They wholly personify the designation of “consumer” to the point that they do not feel competent in communicating their physical or emotional reactions to situations when asked. When asked to self-report, the population tends to default to a form of speech that echoes clinical terms and serves to further their disassociation from their present experience as something that is valid for the uniqueness of its experience.

The adoption of institutionalized vocabulary serves to further devalue their life experience and hinder the ability to use complementary practices. This made the inclusion of a paleontological approach imperative in the mass line assessment design as it was recognized that without the facilitator and assessor learning the ontology of the participants, no accurate results could be presented, or an effective program implemented.

Part of the facilitator’s role was to continuously reflect and affirm the life experience and validity of the group membership being open to all members and that the group session could fluidly adapt to be inclusive of all. Uniformly, this was successful with some prominent exceptions. For example, during the brief time that one volunteer facilitator was in place, the emphasis shifted to there being a defined, single goal for all and a single set of movements to achieve. This resulted in some members using clinical and institutional terms towards other members of the community to tell them that they “couldn’t do the movement part and had to wait until the meditation because they would hold everyone back.” This exact phrasing was documented from four different participants. The volunteer facilitator was removed, and the issue was addressed by reaffirming the adaptability of the group and through contradicting the bias statement.

This brought up an important issue in handling and testing the extent of a facilitator’s training and skill. It was found that the facilitators who had trained a minimum of 2 to 7 years in a Buddhist identified Western school or program had the least ability to identify distress or to respond to stress within a group environment. The striking consistency of their rigidity of thinking and behaviour was the basis for eliminating potential facilitators who listed Buddhist training on their application from consideration. Exceptions were made for those willing to undergo an intensive training process at Dragon Mountain that adopted hospice orientated methods of teaching non-verbal pain assessment, compassionate communication and detachment with awareness that then passed a hospice based evaluation of compassionate care ability. It should be noted that the same was found to be of a defining consistency among applicants listing a background in New Age meditation as well, and the other common factor was the lack of awareness of the scope of meditative practices within each respective tradition.

**Homo-lateral and Hetero-lateral Movement**

During the initial months of the movement practice, several of the most regular participants had difficulties with balance, physical memory, memory of sequences and lacked the ability to tell their left from their right. A break through session came when the facilitator opted not to lead the class but instead had two volunteers come forward. One person, who was more physically able and cognitively aware, was the “moved” and the other person, a man with very poor sequential memory, balance and the inability to
tell his left from his right played the role of the “mover.” The Mover had to verbally instruct the Moved how to do a sequence that the facilitator demonstrated silently to the Mover. What came of this was the discovery that the man’s balance and muscle difficulties had been so profound for so long that he ceased to think in terms of right foot and left foot and only identified parts of the body by clothing and shoes. This led to the facilitator dropping the use of foot and hand from the vocabulary used with the group and adopting shoe and glove for most of the movements.

The additional introduction of the Chinese concept of Dragon, Tiger and Gate to represent the forward and receding sides of the body in a pose, rather than right and left sides, further reduced confusion on the direction of movement for all members of the group. This base realization that the length of time living with impaired cognitive function acted to disassociate connection to the body as something that was connected to the person led to the introduction of resistive touch in group. Resistive touch is a teaching technique used with Qi Gong and Tai Chi to teach the participant the proper amount of muscle tension to hold while moving. For example, if a hand is moving downward, the facilitator will place their hand under the participants, so the participant is pushing down against a resisting force. This allows them to experientially learn muscle control for the movement.

Part of the Qi Gong movements that were also introduced are designed to alleviate loneliness, consisting of a series of brushing movements that imitate comforting touch done in a pattern over the body. The combination of these movements, with resistive touch, brought to the group human contact – something that is denied people with mental illness who are inpatients, outpatients or who are in support communities. The importance of touch has been proven essential to maintaining mental health. (12) The use of the Qi Gong touch pattern and partnered resistive touch (the facilitator teaching participants to do it in turns) allowed touch to re-enter participants experience of community without the touch being of a sexualized nature or overly intimate. The other adaptation to the original formula of the movement section was to become more cognizant of the effect of barometric pressure on participants, with highs and lows leading to increased joint stiffness. A more flexible routine of movements and exercise were used that all drew from the same core form sets, but the actual teaching of sequential forms was abandoned early on in favour of working on isolated sequences. This was the result of a mass line analysis that emphasized the need for feeling a mastery of the idea of a movement in a single session rather than trying to create a multi-session attendance requirement that many would not be able to make, and thus felt as if they could not attend at all.

**Introducing Meditation Practices**

The meditation portion of the session was the one that was greeted with the most anticipation by the community. Often denied inclusion in meditative programs in social welfare agencies because of concerns of “stability” or only offered guided meditations and hypnosis – many members had pursued a wide variety of meditative practices on their own. No less than 2 members reported being specifically told by their mental health counsellors at other agencies that meditation wouldn’t work for them because they had a mental illness. It was one of the few areas in which the most members reported a willingness to leave the comfort zone of a community of similar life experiences and to walk into a community of unknown experiences and commit to participate. Several members had also made it their habit to listen to meditation
Lectures and tapes found on the Internet. The identified problem with introducing a meditation session was not having to introduce the concept, but to make sure the appropriate expectations were in place for the effects of mediation and to find a way to adjust to the varied attention and focus abilities, as well as motor control issues and anxiety that were present in the community as a whole so the meditation session would not be exclusive.

The Safe Harbour and Silent Sitting

Meditation sessions were designed to last between 5 and 8 minutes to accommodate physical and cognitive limitations. Facilitators were told to present multiple aspects of meeting guidance for the session (eyes closed, eyes open, and feet flat or crossed ankles) and trained in nonverbal pain assessment to gauge when a session should end to preserve the stability of the group. The form of silent sitting that is popularized in the West was de-emphasized and returned to its traditional role of an advanced form of meditation. Emphasis was placed on training the awareness of, and skill in, controlling thoughts and physical reactions.

A pattern of different types of meditation that used leading sounds, words and interruptions in order to allow participants “permission” to change thoughts or to leave emotional states proved most effective. The use of focus objects also served to transform the amount of participation and willingness to participate in the group. The focus objects ranged from small stones and smooth glass pieces that could be mindfully observed to rope balls and rope pieces that could be tugged and squeezed as an outlet while remaining still. By the end of six months, silent sitting was introduced and remains as an option performed once or twice a month to great success. Much of this was due to training in what was called “safe harbour.” As mentioned before, it removes the unrealistic expectation that meditation is to make one feel good or relaxed and instead reintroduces the traditional concept that it is a time for contemplation that could bring any feeling or no feeling but never resulted in one having to remain in an emotional state when done. The meditative period, for many, became a time where they could choose to escape, to relax, to focus on problems or to reinforce positive memory recall.

The Mass Line and Meditation

Mass line analysis was used at the end of each meditation session by the facilitator encouraging each participant to share what they would have changed about the session, or what worked best for them. This is a radically different approach from the standard encouragement to share the individual experience. This approach resulted in more members of the group connecting and voting on what would make a better group experience, as well as making it alright for one individual not to have a good session and yet still come back for more. The mass line approach created a behavioural operand that meditation was necessary to living a life in which life was not overwhelming in either good or bad ways. It reduced extremes of emotional reactions to the point that 95% of the participants self-reported that they were using the techniques at home as a way to end or begin their days because even if they did not enjoy or experience relaxation during the meditation, they felt that it made it easier to get through the day.
As a result of the group, input facilitators were encouraged to expand beyond their known training and routines and to find new ways to bring in different lessons and exercises in meditation. Half of the facilitators have chosen to begin intensive and daily study in sutras and to practice meditation as a part of their daily routine; whereas 80% of the facilitators trained and placed at the beginning – despite meditation backgrounds for many, reported meditating less than one time per week and having limited to no exposure to canonical texts.

**Going Forward**

While much was learned and more was discovered to investigate, the reality is that the program is continuing to exist in MHCARI/OASIS staffed by Dragon Mountain trained facilitators. To this end, continued documentation and development of a program of training for facilitators in the compassionate leadership and the wide variety of meditation techniques within the Chan School continues. The group at MHCARI/OASIS has stated a long term goal of trying to create a program that can be exported to other wellness and recovery centres to support those with Serious Mental Illness. It should be noted that going into the second year of the program, the diagnostic ratio within the MHCARI/OASIS population has shifted in response to the cuts in U.S. government funding for Serious Mental Illness treatment and support. There is a stronger presence of those suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress as well as tactile hallucinations and psychosis. It is the findings of this first year’s study that has allowed the group to fluidly change the meditation techniques used to allow for safe inclusion of those with potential behavioural triggers without one person in the group feeling as if they have been displaced. Even in instances where the sessions have been disrupted due to crisis, the group and the facilitator were mutually supportive in resolving the crisis and reclaiming a space of wellness.

Going forward for Dragon Mountain, the results of the study have served as a call to return to traditional disciplines and teaching methods that accommodate modern needs, but do not let go of the depth and value of tradition. In regards to developing an effective training program for facilitators westernized interpretations of Buddhism and meditative practices are being de-emphasized in favour of the core developmental practices of the Chinese Chan tradition practiced prior to the 1800s and the introduction of neuro-biological and physiological training for non-verbal pain assessment and behaviour operands is being taught alongside the process of mass line assessment as an on-going tool for improving service.

**ENDNOTES**

2. – Mao Tse-tung, Surplus Labour has found a way out,” The Socialist Upsurge in China’s countryside, Chinese ed., Vol. II. 1955.
Master Xu Yun in Tibet – 1888/89

By Adrian Chan-Wyles (ICBI)

What crosses the horizon
Looking like clear emptiness?
Such a bright and silvery world
Differs not from Brilliant jade.

(Master Xu Yun crossing the Himalayas 1889/90)

During his long and event filled life, master Xu Yun (1840-1959) travelled to many places outside of China, including Thailand, Taiwan, Bhutan, India and Sri Lanka, etc. Xu Yun was born during the last decades of the imperial system which had been established in China by the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BCE). In 1840, this system had less than a hundreds years left to survive, and had already begun the slow, inevitable decline toward dynastic collapse. This process manifested as social collapse, war and famine throughout China. Open warfare occurred as indigenous Chinese groups challenged the foreign (Manchurian) Qing Dynasty for power. This process led to bloody confrontations such as the Hakka-Punti Clan Wars, the Taiping Rebellion (in Southern China), and the Boxer Uprising in North China. Political and social disintegration was compounded (and encouraged) through the destructive presence of Japanese and European colonial forces that continuously sought to undermine the independent dynastic power of the Chinese state and replace it with unfamiliar religious and political

13 See my English translation: Great Master Xu Yun and the Unrivalled Legend of the White Fox
http://wenshuchan-online.weebly.com/master-xu-yun-and-the-white-fox.htm
influences loyal to authorities existing outside of China. Xu Yun was well aware of this situation and even visited Japan in 1906/07 in an attempt to heal wounds between the two countries. He attempted to establish a confederation of Chinese and Japanese Buddhists, but due to antagonisms between the two cultures, prevailing conditions prevented this from happening.

Nearly two decades prior to his journey to Japan, Xu Yun travelled to the secluded country of Tibet. This journey took place in 1888/89 when Xu Yun was in his 49th year of life. Much of the 1880’s had been taken with pilgrimage, with Xu Yun walking Fujian province in Southeast China to Sichuan province in Southwest China, visiting many historically prominent and spiritually important places along the way. On occasion, when Xu Yun was approaching a particularly ‘holy’ area he would walk carrying incense sticks as an act of sincere veneration. Despite owning nothing except his robe and bowl, he wandered about the countryside of China with no concern for his own daily well-being. In his autobiography it is interesting to observe that throughout his 120 years of life, he never once allowed the greed associated with the drive toward human survival to enter his mind – he was perpetually unconcerned about material possessions, or the acquisition money and resources that occupy the minds of ordinary beings. In this sense he was ‘at one’ with his physical (and predominantly natural) environment. In this regard, he manifested the persona of the unconcerned Ch’an master going about his daily activities that do not deviate from the Dao.

Although Xu Yun had spent many years in isolated Ch’an practice, this period of his life appears to be one of moving meditation. His old teacher – master Miao Lian – of Mount Gu had advised Xu Yun to balance isolatory training with interaction in the world so that good karmic roots could be established – this was in 1862/63, when Xu Yun was in his 23rd year, and had been living in the wilderness eating pine-needles and green blades of grass for sustenance, and drinking water from mountain streams. Master Xu Yun, in his autobiography describes his journey into Eastern Tibet through Southwest China in considerable detail. His trek just from the province of Sichuan took a year to reach Tibet – with Xu Yun walking (and climbing mountains) in the day and resting at night. For much of the journey he did not meet a single person, and made a note of the different animals and beasts that he encountered along the way. Master Xu Yun states:

“As I continued my westward journey, I arrived at Shida, A-lan-to and Lhari, where the vast expanse of terrain had only a scattered population consisting of a few Han Chinese, Tibetans, Mongolians and wild tribes whose languages differed, very few of them speaking Chinese. At Litang, there was the sacred mountain of Gonga (7556m.), a holy site for adherents of Tibetan Buddhism. At Batang, there were very high mountains and Qamdo was a town where the rivers converged. Most people in this region were adherents of Lamaism.

From Lhari I walked southwards reaching Jiang-da (probably Gyamda), beyond which was the Tibetan border. Continuing my journey across the border into Tibet, I crossed the Wusu-Jiang River and later the Lhasa (Kyichu) river, soon arriving in Lhasa, the capital and joint administrative religious centre for the whole of Tibet.” (Empty Cloud: Luk & Hunn, [Element Books], 1988, Page 29)
The 13\textsuperscript{th} Dalai Lama – Thupten Gyatso – was enthroned in 1879 at just three years of age, and did not assume full political power until 1895 at around nineteen years of age. Master Xu Yun entered Lhasa around 1889, when the 13\textsuperscript{th} Dalai Lama was thirteen years old. Indeed, Xu Yun recalls that although he could not speak Tibetan, and was not familiar with the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, nevertheless, he held the post of Dalai Lama in high esteem, and considered its holder nothing less than a ‘Living Buddha’. Xu Yun states:

“To the north-west of the city was Mount Potala on which stood the thirteenstored Potala-palace; its buildings of glittering gold against the blue sky were of an imposing majesty. It was here that the ‘Living Buddha’, the Dalai Lama, sat on his throne surrounded by a community of 20,000 monks. As I did not understand Tibetan, I only went to the monasteries to offer incense and pay reverences to the ‘Living Buddha’.”

(Empty Cloud: Luk & Hunn, [Element Books], 1988, Page 29)

From Lhasa Xu Yun continued on westward through Tibet heading toward the Tashi-Lunpo Monastery situated to the west of Shigatse. Xu Yun describes this place as being a ‘large and beautiful structure’ serving as the home of the other ‘Living Buddha’, His Holiness the 9\textsuperscript{th} Panchen Lama (Thubten Chökyi Nyima – 1883-1937). Tashi-Lunpo Monastery served as the administrative and religious centre for Western Tibet, and Xu Yun travelled there to pay his respects to the Panchen Lama.
The world of Tibetan Buddhism within its distinct cultural milieu appeared unfamiliar to Xu Yun at this time, although Tibetan lamas were not uncommon in south-western China, and as far north as Beijing. Later Xu Yun would have numerous dealings with Tibetan lamas, but during this visit to Tibet, he attempted to gain an understanding of Buddhism as arranged and organised within this tradition. Xu Yun stated:

“The Sangha did not observe the Monastic code and most of the monks ate beef or mutton. They were divided into sects distinguishable by their red and yellow hats. I thought of the days of the Jetavana Assembly and could not refrain from tears. As the year was nearing its end, I returned from Shigatse to Lhasa to pass the New Year period.” (Empty Cloud: Luk & Hunn, [Element Books], 1988, Page 30)

Cen Xue Lu (1882-1963), the editor of Xu Yun’s autobiography in the 1950’s, (which Charles Luk translated into English as ‘Empty Cloud’), stated in an extensive footnote that meat eating is not actually forbidden in the Vinaya, or Buddhist Monastic code. The Buddha states that no living creature should be killed in the presence of, or with the knowledge of a Buddhist monastic. However, in ancient India, Buddhist monastics were termed ‘beggars’ and acquired their daily sustenance from this method. Walking in a meditative manner through various neighbourhoods, the monks would move quietly along whilst members of the laity placed waste-food in their begging bowls. Sometimes these offerings included meat left-over from family meals. The Buddha’s attitude of compassion implied that a Buddhist monastic should not kill or cause to kill an animal, but lay Buddhists, who often lived a precarious existence, occasionally acquired meat from various sources, and passed on small portions to monks and nuns. This was despite the obvious lay precept against killing. As Buddhist monastics in India relied
entirely upon the laity for the providing of food and water, they exercised a non-discriminating mind to the meat they received.

In Tibet, where fresh vegetables is a rarity due to climate and environment, Buddhist monks and nuns, whilst following the Vinaya by not killing or causing to kill, often acquire small amounts of meat from non-Buddhist Tibetans, such as Muslim, and tribal people, etc. If they did not do this, they would face the possibility of dying of starvation. Even in ancient India, Buddhist monastics ate meat if it was given to them. Indeed, it is thought that the Buddha may have eaten rotten pork (that had been given to him as an offering) just before his death. In China, however, things are very different. Begging was made illegal by a Chinese emperor, and Chinese Buddhists preferred to follow the Brahmajala and Lankavatara Sutras when it came to dietary discipline. Both of these sutras advocate a strict vegetarian diet, a diet that Xu Yun preferred and endorsed in Ch’an monasteries throughout China. These sutras emphasis the ‘no killing’ aspect of the Buddha’s teaching and in so doing are far stricter than the mainstream Vinaya literature that emphasises a pragmatic approach to conditions on the ground. As Chinese monks and nuns had to grow their own food, the cultivation of vegetables and fruit was generally easier to achieve than animal husbandry, the latter practice of which would have been pointless to monks and nuns as they were forbidden from taking any life.

Cen Xue Lu also points out in his commentary to Xu Yun’s autobiography that as Xu Yun could not speak the Tibetan language, he could not understand exactly what he was seeing, or fully appreciate the nuances of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. His presence in Tibet was more practical – paying respect to the Panchen and Dalai Lamas – rather than theoretical. From Tibet, Xu Yun crossed the border into Bhutan and then into India in the spring of 1889/90; traversing the Himalayan Mountain Range.
Bringing the Dharma to Children.

By Daniel Hengxue Scharpenburg (ICBI)

I teach a ‘Buddhism for Children’ class at a non-sectarian Buddhist Center in Kansas City. I can’t believe how interested my daughter is in Buddhist practice. She seems more interested in learning about Buddhism than she is in learning about almost anything else. Taking her to the Sunday Dharma School at the Rime Center makes her very happy. She is thrilled that I teach her and the other children about Buddhism. A lot of the children are, actually. However, like any young child, she does get distracted once in a while.

There are usually ten to fifteen kids, between the ages of 4 and 12. It’s hard to have lessons that can interest the very young kids and the oldest ones, but we do pretty well. I feel like I’ve learned as much from the kids as they have learned from me and the other teachers. I am in charge of the Dharma School, but I have to admit it’s more something I fell into than something I earned.

We chant mantras at the Rime Center. We chant them in a nice and relaxing way. When the children chant the mantras, they get excited. Nissa shouts the mantras and the other kids sometimes giggle. But it makes me wonder, why shouldn’t we be excited about chanting a mantra for greater wisdom or compassion? It is exciting, isn’t it? When I hear adults chanting mantras they often sound bored or disinterested. This is not the case with children. They really get into it.

Buddhism teaches the interconnectedness of all things. Kids seem to understand that intuitively. Maybe as we get older, we accumulate more delusion. I’m not sure. But children seem to take to learning about some of the deepest Buddhist concepts very well. And they are compassionate too, most of the time. Nissa saw some kids squishing bugs on the sidewalk one time and asked them to stop. I asked her why and she told me that she felt compassion for the bugs. They weren’t doing anything wrong. They were just outside living their bug lives.

With only a few exceptions once in a while, all of the kids in the Dharma School want to be there. But, some of them do have trouble focusing sometimes. They are excited about participating and sometimes they get too excited. They get to make offerings to the shrine and lead mantras. We all do prostrations together, with a child leading us. Letting them participate is important and they certainly learn more through participation than they do simply listening.

But, it’s not all reciting mantras. We also do activities. Sometimes we do crafts and sometimes we read stories to the children. The kids usually enjoy crafts the most. My daughter has had the opportunity to make her own Tibetan Prayer Flag and her own Thangka. She was very proud of them and I have put them on the wall in her bedroom.
don’t know if the other children are as proud of their crafts as my child, but I suspect they are. Many children love feeling like they’ve created something of value.

Then, we let all the kids play. There are a few games and toys in the Dharma School. I am very glad to say that in spite of their diverse age differences, all of the kids seem to play together very well. There are very few arguments and there is no fighting. They act like a community. That could be because of the very positive atmosphere of the Rime Center or I suppose it could be because they are being raised by their parents with Buddhist values. I don’t know, but it is a great thing to see.

I think that practicing Buddhism with children is just as moving as practicing Buddhism with other adults, maybe more so. Helping them learn is a very rewarding spiritual experience. I’ve learned so much about the Dharma from practicing it with children. If you’re a parent, I encourage you to include your child in your practice.
The Non-Buddhist Religious Practices of Sacrifice

By Bhante Sangharathana (ICBI) of Nepal

The Brahmin Practice of Sacrifice

The Oxford English dictionary defines sacrifice as: the killing of an animal or person or the giving up of a possession as an offering to a god or goddess. An act of giving up something you value for the sake of something that is more important. Thus the word sacrifice has two meanings; killing an animal, creature or a person and offering them to God and giving up something, the valuable things in order to help another person. In fact, the Brahmin caste used sacrifice in the name of god, killing hundreds or thousands of living beings, (including animals and humans). They introduced this kind of activity as worship, but later the Buddha used sacrifice as defined through the meaning of giving up something in order to help another person.

The Brahmin priests had introduced many kinds of sacrifices. They were very complex and systematically arranged. Common people sang Vedic hymns explaining how the world was originally created through utterances of the god Maha Brahma. In order to get the best results from these, correct pronunciation was essential, otherwise even death could happen. Thus the Brahmin priests had full authority over these religious performances. According to this Brahmanic teaching, correct and systematic sacrifices had the ability to make people ethically developed and assist their rebirth in heavenly realms of Brahma. The importance of the strength of the Yāga (Sacrifice) was stressed, because rebirth would depend on it. For example a good sacrifice would make one reborn in a higher world. Therefore Rhys Davids said: "The sacrifice if only rigidly carried out in each of its details, is a source of all profit and advantage. The gods...are utterly unable to counteract the effects of such a sacrifice.

14 Oxford English dictionary p. 798
Indeed, they owe their supremacy, their own positions in heaven to sacrifices which they themselves had carried out to older gods.\footnote{Rhys Davids: Buddhist India, p.241.}

Performing a sacrifice is said to be a rich and prosperous act, designed to get the blessings of the gods. Brahmins became the mediators or the organizers of the sacrifices. They charged money to perform sacrifices for other people. They charged so much that only rich people could perform sacrifices through their mediation. To carry out any kind of sacrifice, there were three kinds of Brahmin priests who were specialized in Yāga; without them, people could not perform the sacrifice. They are:

1. Hotru: person who prepares the Yāga (Sacrifice).
2. Udgatru: person who calls the gods and deities to accept the Yāga.
3. Advaryu: the director of the sacrifice.

Likewise, the Brahmin priests present many kind of Yāga, especially to gods and other non-human divine beings. According to Buddhist texts, there were great sacrifices termed ‘Mahāyānā’ including the Assamedha – or horse sacrifice, and Purisamedha – or human sacrifice, as well as the Sammāpāsa, Vājapeyya and the Niraggaḷha. The Buddha rejected all these sacrificial practices stating that:

“Even if large numbers of animals such as goats, and horses, etc are killed, such killing of animals in the name of god, (through performing sacrifice) is neither a fruitful nor meritorious act.”\footnote{Anguttara nikaya IV, maha yañña sutta CSCD}

- Assamedha

The ‘Assamedha’, or horse sacrifice was one of the most important royal rituals of Vedic religion. In the (SNA) Saṃyutta-nikāya Aṭṭhakathā this sacrifice is named ‘Assamedha’ because in this sacrifice they kill the horse - ‘Assametthā medhanti vadhantī assamedho’. Furthermore, in the sacrifice there must be slaughtered five cattle in a day and every thing must be offered to the priest.

\begin{verbatim}
Dvīhi pariyaññehi yajitabbassa ekaviṣatiyūpassa ekasmiṃ majjhimadivaseyeva sattanavutipācaspusatathābhīṃsanassa ṭhapetvā bhūmiṅca purise ca avasesasabbavibhavadakkhiṃassa yañṇassetam adhivacanaṃ.
\end{verbatim}\footnote{(SNA) Saṃyutta-nikāya Aṭṭhakathā CSCD.}

In the Vedic literature there can be found detailed explanations of this sacrifice, in Sanskrit it was named as ‘Aśvamedhā’, because the sacrifice slaughtered the royal horse. It could be conducted only by a king. Its object was the acquisition of power and glory, sovereignty over neighboring provinces, and general prosperity of the kingdom.
Therefore it was said that this sacrifice is to be performed only by the king, with the view that he might become emperor.

According to the Brahmanical teaching the horse to be sacrificed must be a stallion; the horse is bound, bathed and set free (towards the North-East), for the period of one year. In this period the horse is free to roam around wherever it will, and the wandering horse is guarded by a hundred young men, the prince or high court officials will be the men charged with this duty and they have to protect the horse from all dangers and inconvenience. During the absence of the horse, an uninterrupted series of ceremonies is performed in the sacrificer’s home. When the horse is returned, further special rites and ceremonies are performed. Then the horse is slaughtered and offered to the gods.

- **Purisamedha**

  Purisamettha medhantiti purisamedhe. Catūhi pariyaṅnehi yajitabbassa saddhiṃ bhūmiyā assamedhe vuttavibhavadakkhiṇassā yaññassetam adhivaćanaṃ.

  In this sacrifice, the human is killed, and therefore it is named Purisamedha. It should be performed with another four sacrifices; finally including the offering of everything to the priest.

  In Sanskrit it was called ‘Purisamedha’ which means ‘human sacrifice’. In the Teettriya Bṛāmaṇa (of the kṛṇayajur Veda) the full and detailed explanation can be found regarding this Brahmanic sacrifice. According to this text, there should be 184 humans from the different castes, and races. Therefore at this time in India there must have been at least 184 castes and races. They collect the 184 people, selecting only one person from each cast and race, before they are finally slaughtered in sacrifice. Therefore this sacrifice could only be preformed by the King, because it was not possible for other people to collect the 184 different kinds of people from the various castes and sacrifice them.

- **Sammāpāsa**

  Sammamettha pāsentiti sammāpāso. Divase divase sammaṃ khīptvā tassa patitokāse vedimī katvā saṃhārimihe yūpādihe sarassatinādiyā nimuggokāsato pabhuti paṭilomaṃ gacchantena yajitabbassa satrayāgaṃ adhivaćanaṃ.

  The ‘Sammāpāsa’ is so called because this sacrifice is performed on an altar built on the spot where a ‘sammā’, a peg or pin of a yoke, thrown from a certain distance, falls. The altar is built with movable material like a sacrificial post. Therefore, it is said to be a Yātra Yāga or Sātra Yāga. According to the Buddhist literature this Yāga is performed on the bank of the Sarasvati River.

- **Vājapeyya**

  Vājamettha pivantiti vājapeyyo. Ekena pariyaṅneṇa sattarasahi pasūhi yajitabbassa beluvayūpassa sattarasakadakkhiṇassā yaññassetam adhivaćanaṃ.

  *SNA* Saṃyutta-nikāya Aṭṭhakathā CSCD

  *SNA* Saṃyutta-nikāya Aṭṭhakathā CSCD
Vājapeyya means the sacrifice which is performed whilst drinking the vāja. Furthermore, the commentary mentions that this Yāga is performed by sacrificing 17 animals. The word ‘vāja’ means the strength, vigor energy, spirit. This sacrifice is especially performed by the king; it is performed for the attainment of victory and power by kings or wealthy people.

- Niraggaḷa

This sacrifice is performed with all bolts withdrawn. This means that whilst this sacrifice is performed, all stores of food must be unlocked for the use of the poor people. Therefore it is named as ‘Niraggaḷa’ – ‘Natthi ettha aggalāti niraggalō’. The sacrifice is also named ‘Sabbamedha’, or the ‘sacrifice of everything’, because at the end of sacrifice everything must be offered to the priest.

Apart from these five great sacrifices, according to the Brahmins there were another five great sacrifices mentioned as ‘Pañca-Māhāyajñas’, which were performed daily. They are:

1. Deva-yajña: sacrifice to a God, it is made using milk, curd and other materials and offered silently into the fire by the house-holder.
2. Bhūta-yajña: sacrifice to beings, whereby some oblations are placed on the ground and offered to the ‘Prthvi’ (earth).
3. Pīr-yajña: sacrifice to the ancestors, whereby libations are poured out as an offering to the ancestors.
5. Manuṣya-yajña: feeding a guest or a beggar before taking a meal20.

Furthermore, the Brahmin concept of the ana, can be seen in the AN Saṅgārava Sutta, according to the Brahmin Saṅgārava, Brahmin sacrifice was a ‘anekasārika’ practice, which means a meritorious practice that extends to many people, because this Brahmin sacrifice could not be done by oneself. This sacrifice was performed by many Brahmin priests and house holders, but the Buddha said that the attainment of Nibbana is the best fruitful sacrifice in this world. The Brahmin said that Nibbana could only be attained by the individual alone, and therefore is as a selfish practice described as ‘Ekasārika Patipada’. The Brahmin Saṅgārava, (in the AN Saṅgārava Sutta), describes the purpose of ‘sacrifice’ to the Buddha in the following manner; ‘We Brahmins sacrifice and enjoin others to offer sacrifices. Now both one who himself sacrifices and one who enjoins other to offer sacrifice engages in a meritorious practice that extends to many people, that is, one based on sacrifice. But one who leaves his family and goes forth from the household life into the homeless life tames only himself, calms only himself and leads to Nibbana only himself. In such a case he engages in a meritorious practice that extends only to one person that is based on going forth21.

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20 Sing B.N. Dictionary of Indian philosophical Concepts, P.335

21 Bhikkhu Bodhi, The Numerical discourses of the Buddha P. 262
‘mayamassu, bho gotama, brāhmaṇā nāma. Yaṇṇaṃ yajāmapi yajāpemapi. Tatra, bho gotama, yo ceva yajati, yo ca yajāpeta sabbe te anekasārīrikaṃ puṇṇappatipadaṃ paṭipannā honti, yaṭṭaṭṭaṃ yaṇṇāṭdhikaraṇaṃ.'
Likewise, in the commentary of the same sutta, it mentions the seven kinds of Brahmin blood sacrifice, which were performed by sacrificing particular numbers of animals, namely:

1. Sabbacatukka Yanna
2. Sabbatṭhaka Yanna
3. Sabbasoḷasaka Yanna
4. Sabbadvattiṃsāya Yanna
5. Sabbacatusatṭhiya Yanna
6. Sabbasata Yanna
7. Sabbapañcasata Yanna

Here, the Sabbactukka is named so because in this sacrifice there must be sacrificed the four animals from each species. Likewise in the Sabbatṭhaka, there must be sacrificed eight animals from each kind; in the Sabbasoḷasaka there must be sacrificed sixteen animals each from all the categories. Sabbadvattiṃsāya calls for the sacrifice of twelve animals each from the categories, with Sabbacatusatṭhiya sacrificing sixty animals from each category, and Sabbasata sacrificing a hundred animals from each category. Finally the Sabbapañcasata sacrifice demands five hundred animals from each category.

In the Kūṭadanta Sutta, it was mentioned that the Brahmin kūṭadanta prepared seven hundred bulls, seven-hundred bullocks, seven-hundred heifers, seven-hundred goats etc. they all were tied up to the sacrificial posts. Looking at the number of animals from each kind of species, the commentator suggests that it could be the ‘Sabbasatasatika’ sacrifice, where there must be seven hundred animals from a variety of species.

‘Kūṭadantassa brāhmaṇassa mahāyaṅno upakkhaḷo hoti. Satta ca usabhasatāni satta ca vacchatarasatāni satta ca ajasatāni satta ca urabbhasatāni thūṇūpanītāni honti yaṇṇatthāya22.’

Likewise, in the Kosalasaṃyutta Yaṅna Sutta, it is mentioned that king Pasenadi kosal had prepared for the great sacrifice. It was said that the king prepared five hundred animals from each kind of species for the sacrifice such as: five hundred bulls, five hundred bullocks, five hundred heifers, five hundred goats, and five hundred rams. Therefore, this sacrifice must be the Sabbapañcasatika Yanna, where the five hundred animals from each group must be sacrificed. Furthermore, there is mentioned that even the workers who participated in the sacrificial place were fearful, because if they made any mistake in the killing process, they must be punished or even sentenced to death. Therefore the king’s slaves, servants and workers were spurred on by punishment and 

Yo paṇḍaṇa, bho gotama, yassa vā tassa vā kulā agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajito ekamattanaṃ dameti, ekamattanaṃ sameti, ekamattanaṃ parinibbāpeti, evamassāyaṃ ekasārīrikaṃ puṇṇapattipadaṃ paṭipanno hoti, yadidaṃ pabbajjādhikaraṇa”nti.

22 DN Kutadanta sutta CSCD
fear – as they were busy making the preparations, there was often wailing and tearful faces.

2 The ascetic practice of Sacrifice

The ascetic or Samana tradition developed contrary to Brahmin authority; therefore it rejected all the teachings of the Brahmin. The Samana tradition totally rejected blood sacrifice, but some ascetic sects, such as of the Jatila (an ascetic group that wore long matted hair) practiced fire sacrifice; because of this the Buddha called them Aggika Jatila (Pāyāsi-Sutta). The story of the three Jatila brothers – Uruvelakassapa, Nadikkassapa, and Gayakkassapa – explains how they practiced the fire sacrifice. This evidence can be found in the Mahāvaggapāli. In the Uruvelapāṭhiyakathā, it is mentioned that the Buddha dwelt in a hermitage known as the ‘Agyāgāre’, or the ‘fire room’; it may be that this used to be the place where the fire sacrifice was performed. The ascetics practiced the fire sacrifice and at the end of the sacrifice, the fire would be extinguished:

‘Tena kho pana samayena te jaṭilā aggīṃ paricaritvā na sakkonti aggīṃ vijjhāpetum.’

Furthermore, it is mentioned that the ascetics lived with the necessary instrument for the fire sacrifice. At the end of this section it is mentioned that the ascetics, having let their braided hair down, gathered their possessions into bundles (on carrying poles), and together with the fire-worshipping implement (which had been washed with water) approached the Buddha.

‘Te jaṭilā kesamissaṃ jaṭāmissaṃ khārikājissamaggihutamissam udake pavāhetvā yena bhaṅgavā tenupasaṅkamiṃsu.’

Likewise, at the time of the Buddha, apart from the Brahmin great sacrifice, there was the fire sacrifice of the Jaṭila, which was also accepted as the best fruitful religious practice. Therefore it was said that the people from all around the country, enthusiastically participated in the fire sacrifice of the Jaṭila, and even sponsored its performance. The braided hair ascetic named Uruvelakassapa was going forward with the sacrifice, whilst the entire population of the Anga and Magadha areas provided abundant solid and soft food – wanting to participate in its performance.

23 A.N Yaññasutta CSCD

rañño pasenadissa kosalassa mahāyañño paccupaṭṭhito hoti, pañca ca usabhatāni pañca ca vaṭṭhatisatāni pañca ca vaṭṭhisatāni pañca ca ajasatāni pañca ca urabhmisatāni thūṇāpuṇīthāni honti yaññatthāya. Yepissa te honti dāsāti vā pessāti vā kammakarāti vā, tepi daṇḍatajītā bhayatajītā assumukkā rudamānā parikammāni karonti.

24 I.B. Horner, Vinaya Pitaka Vol IV, P43. (Mahāvaggapāli)

Apart from the Jaṭilā, the other ascetic sects rejected even the fire sacrifice. Likewise the well known (and famous) six heretical teachers forcefully rejected the sacrifice. The ascetic Pūraṇakassapa, representing the Akiriyā Vāda (non-action sect), rejected the idea of good or evil actions, stating that there was not any karmic fruit generated whilst performing either good or bad actions. He said that actions of generosity, self-taming, self-restraint, and truthful speech, had no merit, and no source of merit.

“Uttarañcepi gaṅgāya tīraṃ gaccheyya dadanto dāpento yajanto yajāpento, nattthi tatonidānāṃ puññāṃ, nattthi puññassa āgamo. Dānena damena saññayamena saccavajjena nattthi puññāṃ, nattthi puññassa āgamo’ti.”

The ascetic Makkhali Gosāla said that there was no cause, and no requisite condition for the defilement of beings. Beings are defiled without cause, without requisite conditions. There is no cause, no requisite condition, for the purification of beings. Beings are purified without cause, without requisite condition. Thus by presenting the Ahetuka Vāda, teaching of fatalism or determinism, he rejected the sacrifice.

Likewise, the Ajita Kesakambala, espousing Materialism and Annihilism, said:

“nattthi, mahārāja, dinnaṃ, nattthi yiṭṭham, nattthi hutaṃ, nattthi sukatadukkaṭānaṃ kammānaṃ phalaṃ vipāko, nattthi ayaṃ loko nattthi para loko, nattthi mātā, nattthi pitā, nattthi sattā opapāṭikā, nattthi loke samaṇabrāhmaṇā..., natthi, mahārāja, dinnaṃ, nattthi yiṭṭham, nattthi hutaṃ, nattthi sukatadukkaṭānaṃ kammānaṃ phalaṃ vipāko, nattthi ayaṃ loko nattthi para loko, nattthi mātā, nattthi pitā, nattthi sattā opapāṭikā, nattthi loke samaṇabrāhmaṇā...,27 – there is nothing given, nothing offered, nothing sacrificed. There is no fruit or result of good or evil actions. There is no this world, no next world.”

Then Pakudha Kaccāyana, by his teaching on Atomism, and Non-relatedness, rejected the theory of kamma as well as sacrifice. In fact, the Sañjaya Belaṭṭha putta’s view regarding sacrifice was not clear because he practiced agnosticism, skepticism and evasion; therefore he never answered any questions clearly but instead was vague and confusing.

Nigaṇṭha Nataputta rejected blood sacrifice because he practiced the four restraints. Howsoever, in the Sāmaññaphala Sutta he was addressed as the Aggivessana, therefore, the Nigaṇṭha accepted fire sacrifice. Likewise, he believed in past kamma, which, according to him, enabled a person to become purified; he must finish past kamma therefore his teaching is also named as the Pubbakamma-hetuvāda. Indeed, his teaching is based on the Parama Ahimsa, of profound non-violence. Therefore, in his

26 DN, Sāmaññaphala sutta CSCD
27 DN, Sāmaññaphala sutta CSCD
28 Walshe Maurice, The Long Discourses Of The Buddha, the Fruits of the homeless life Pp. 95.96.
teaching even cutting a tree and breaking the branches is also considered as a sin, because he believed that even in the tree and plants there is life. Therefore, they adamantly rejected the Brahmanas sacrifices.

Thus, the contemporaries of the Buddha – the non-Buddhist ascetics – represented their teachings as opposed to the Brahmanical teachings, as well as against the Brahmin sacrifice; and through their teaching they expressed that the practice of Brahmin sacrifice is meaningless and not of any help for a person to get final purification, therefore, they extremely rejected the Brahmanas sacrifices.
Ch’an Guild of Hui Neng - An Introduction

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The world of modern Buddhism is often a confusion of concepts, ideals, notions, assertions, negations, sublime understandings, and many contradictions and misunderstandings. The entry of Buddhism into the West has been a tumbling, haphazard affair, often with little structure or development. By and large, modern Westerners have not learned their Buddhism from Asian migrant communities living in the West, but have instead gained a working knowledge from Western explorers who travelled to the East and encountered Buddhism often as another form of exotic entertainment; a distraction from the otherwise Judeo-Christian culture of their upbringing. This type of ‘encountered’ Buddhism entered the West through the psychological filter of the Judeo-Christian tradition (to varying degrees), and through secular logic and reason, which, although claiming a non-religious predication, nevertheless often retains distinct elements of religiosity. This historical backdrop has served as the foundation for the processing of unfamiliar Buddhist teachings into concepts considered readily understandable to the Western mind. This method of transmission is peripheral rather than essential. The distinct historicity of Buddhism, that is its unique developmental trajectory, has not always been cleanly transmitted but has rather been modified by the psychology of the receiving community. Other pathways for the entry of Buddhism into the West have been through the work of translators such as Charles Luk, DT Suzuki, Thomas Cleary, and Rahula Walpola, etc, whose valuable contributions have offered genuine Buddhism to many adherents; and through the academic work of intellectuals such as Sukumar Dutt, Edward Thomas, Heinrich Dumoulin, Nyanaponika Thera, and many others. This pathway has been useful and has conveyed a rarefied version of Buddhism interpreted as a ‘Buddhism of
ideas’. The problem with the latter pathway is that the ‘idea’ of Buddhism often becomes detached from the ‘culture’ (and ‘beyond thought’) aspect of Buddhism. This is to say that Buddhism becomes, for the average Westerner, a ‘de-culturalised’ experience that tends not to contradict the familiar Judeo-Christian tradition (and its secular manifestation), whilst not importing the unfamiliar culture of the East into the West. Buddhism of this type becomes a spectre, shadow, or mirage, as it is stripped of its distinctiveness at the point of entry into the Western mind. Although Buddhism is not a culture and should not be associated with any human grouping or system of life, preferring a theistic format (to no format at all) is a fundamental misunderstanding of the Buddhist teaching. Buddhism is acultural and therefore can not be correctly interpreted through any particular culture.

The problem of misrepresentation through dispersal is not unique to the modern West, but also exists within Asia. Buddhism is not, and was never designed to be homogenised. Buddhism is not a religion or a philosophy, and as a distinct teaching avoids the traps of ‘idealism’ and ‘materialism’. It has been misrepresented from its very beginning. As individuals heard the Buddha speak, and then interpreted his words (through their own, limited understanding), his teaching became distorted. Although designed solely to attain a state of being non-reliant upon thought or circumstance, when interpreted through the ‘limited’ mind (which the Buddha intended to be transformed), his pristine teaching became sullied by the very egotistical mind the Buddha declared to be the source of all human suffering. It has been a matter of the diffusion of Buddhism across one Asian country to the next, correcting misinterpretation and error ever since, for it is the case that no matter what an individual may think, the Buddhist Suttas (Sutras) act as a continuous corrective to unfounded beliefs. Coupled with this remedial approach to Buddhist transmission is the Ch’an teaching outside the sutras. Although outside the sutras, its premise lies entirely within the sutras and does not deviate from the original teaching of the Buddha in any way. All words (in the mind) have an essence beyond their structure. The Buddha’s teaching uses words in such a way so as to point to their essence and avoid attachment to their structure. Sutras quite literally point to the ‘emptiness’ that underlies (and permeates) all perception – in this respect Ch’an manifests the point of Buddhism (contained within the sutras) without the need to acknowledge the importance or ‘specialness’ of the words themselves.

The point of evolutionary conscious growth is to see through nature here and now – to its very essence – and reveal reality. In this sense, Buddhism has become a counter-cultural remedy to the problems of existent cultures – similar to a shadow to an object. This relation to reality inverts the original and the actual meaning of the Buddhist method. The Buddhist method facilitates the development of insight on the one hand, so that the non-conditioned nature of reality can be revealed on the other. Buddhism, although passed around the cultures of the world as if it were an important parcel, is in fact a method that goes nowhere, but is relevant everywhere. The appearance of travelling is a façade created by the limited human mind that must be cultivated so that the layers of obscuration that prevent clear vision are removed. The quandary is this; how does the knowledge of how to clear the mind travel from ‘there’ to ‘here’, when ‘here’ appears bereft of insight? The answer is the same as how an unenlightened mind – existing in one place – can become enlightened whilst still existing in the same position. Movement is an illusion that drives the everyday world through its cycles of manifestation. As the Buddha taught that enlightenment is unconditioned, then logically it follows that enlightenment can not be attained through conditional means.
This is the central paradox of Buddhist thought that at once ensnares the practitioner with doubt, and yet clearly shows the way to freedom. Indeed, non-specific definition frees the mind from the tyranny of history and the requirement for conditionality.

To be ‘free’ is the objective, but within the Ch’an School this is not good enough, as the practitioner must be free also of any preconceived notions of being ‘free’. There is no valid duality between ‘good’ and ‘evil’ within Buddhism as there is within theistic teaching. For a Buddhist, to grasp after an abstract ‘good’ and push away an equally abstract ‘evil’ occurs only within the realm of the deluded mind. It is a comic-opera played out within the ordinary thought patterns from which the individual is never free. Buddhist enlightenment is a state beyond states, and is not dependent upon redundant methods of categorising phenomena into this group or that group. The deluded stream of thought will never be overcome, seen through, or transcended, as long as its ordinary functionality is allowed to continue unabated. Seeing through the apparent (and illusionary) substantiality of this uninterrupted stream of deluded thought is the primary purpose of Ch’an training. Although this always seems a difficult task, it can happen ‘here and now’ with no problem, difficulty, or complication. The breakthrough to emptiness can be attained through prolonged periods of introversion, (i.e. formal, seated meditation), or stimulated (or triggered) by an appropriate utterance or action. Sometimes, it is both methods at once, occasionally one or the other, and rarely none at all. How the mind ‘turns about’ at its core is never a matter of speculation, or more thought about thoughts, but is rather a natural process which involves the dramatic or gradual removal of the obscuration that prevents the true and profound empty state of manifesting and being clearly perceived. The removing of obscuration, (i.e. klesa), is the conditioned element of the Buddha’s teaching, but what it reveals is not the product of the developmental process – as the empty, shining mind is always present and is never ‘created’ by the process of searching for enlightenment, or ‘destroyed’ by the many levels of accrued obscuration (i.e. karma) in the mind. The enlightened mind is here and now; it does not leave and will not arrive.

The Ch’an Guild of Hui Neng is an expedient device designed to free the mind from its attachment to structure and direction – through the use of structure and direction. When an individual first perceives the gateway to this guild, their mind will hesitate and create many illusions and frightful fantasies. This is the first barrier to be transcended. The rules and regulations must be followed exactly until such a time that they cease to be an issue. If the mind is already free, then the rules and regulations are like the sun moving cross the sky and there is nothing different from everyday life. The deluded mind must have doorways to move through whilst the mind that is free has no boundaries. For the mind that is free, the doorway is never open or shut, but for the deluded mind, traversing an open doorway is like crossing an abyss. The Ch’an Guild of Hui Neng is an exercise in skilful means; how it appears (from one individual to the next) is dependent upon the state of mind of that individual. The light of prajna exposes all darkness, and there is no obscure corner left for the ego to hide. It is like a beautiful imaginary bridge linking two geographical points that do not exist. Different imaginary content in the mind is designed to produce different imaginary universes. Every individual has a mind conditioned by various factors in life. This produces dualistic thought patterns that have no end. Any one (from any background) can apply the Ch’an method (Who is hearing?) and clear the mind of its obscuring surface content. In this matter no stone must be left unturned, and all thought must be seen directly through to its empty essence. If you are already like this, then the Ch’an Guild of Hui Neng is in
accord with your understanding; if not then the Ch’an Guild of Hui Neng moves further from you, the nearer you try to get to it. It is what you want it to be.
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