

Mirror Flower Water Moon

FALL 2020

鏡花水月



DHARMA REALM
BUDDHIST UNIVERSITY

dear readers,

good morning. no matter what time you are reading this, good morning:
for this is the first time we dawn today.

when we notice each other, it is as if we ascend each other's perceptual
horizon. "good morning," we say to morning-sun faces. & when we notice
each other, our light reflects in the other's eyes.

these days our eyes shine backlight blue, reflecting our community's
pixelated inhabitations. in our small bordered rectangles, we are timeless:
for some it is morning; for others, night. for all, it is now.

so, good morning.

good morning to a new day.
good morning to a new way of living, relating, schooling, socializing.
good morning to new constrictions and new pathways for growth.

to be new is to be dawning; to be persistently penumbral. a warm orb
straddling horizon. your face shining with mine. despite time, always arising:
what marvelous resilience. shall we cultivate the courage to shine today?

good morning; good dawning. it's a good day to rise, isn't it?

your editing team

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AMARYLLIS BELLADONNA

It stands proudly
Like a jeweled crown on a pillow of dust
So opulent, so ostentatious, so overwhelmingly pink
My friend asks if it is real
And for a moment, I cannot answer her
Because I don't know either
There used to be two dozen of those flowers in that bed
Sprouting every summer, clustered together like flocking flamingos
Now it is just the one
And yet it is so tall, so perfect, so unafraid
For a moment, I forget my heaving chest, my sweat-soaked hair,
my ash-stained jeans, my broken heart
For a moment, I forget my antique books, my father's gold coins, my
mother's hand-knit sweaters
For a moment, I forget my nightmares, my trauma, my fear
And I believe that I can do that too
That I can burst from the ashes, elegant and complete
Like a firebird
Like a flower

—Phoenix Winters, on a flower found growing in the ashes
of his childhood home



Humble Yourself in the Arms of the Wild

Bhikshu Jin Chuan

Despair is often the first emotion that arises for me when I hear the latest reports on the environment. There is an inner voice inside of me that says, “What can I really do to stop all of this devastation? The magnitude of the modern crisis is overwhelming; human habits are too ingrained.” The realist in me says, “No hope.” Yet I have become a bit suspicious about this despair. It feels depressing and dark, and I wonder, “Are there other options?”

On April 22, 2017, Earth Day, Jin Wei Shi and I were invited to join a group of Spiritual Ecology Fellows on a pilgrimage around Mt. Tamalpais. These Fellows were hand-picked young leaders who have devoted their lives to caring for the environment. The one who invited us, Zilong, went on a pilgrimage around the world riding his bike and trusting the kindness of the planet and complete strangers for places to stay. The rest had similar inspiring stories.

At the trailhead, in the cool morning breeze, the group gathered in a circle and began singing a haunting simple melody that still echoes in my mind:

Humble yourself in the arms of the Wild
Ya gotta lay down low and
Humble yourself in the arms of the Wild
Ya gotta ask her what she knows and
We will lift each other up
Higher and higher



We will lift each other up
Higher and higher

As we began the pilgrimage, I realized this was no ordinary trip. Every mile one of the Fellows would share a contemplative exercise, be it meditation, a reflection on our consumption habits, or appreciation for what we have. A deep reverence and gratitude to the planet permeated the group. They were keenly aware of the planet’s kindness, and in response, they treated it as sacred.

We then got to a point in the journey where Zilong shared his spiritual exercise: three-steps-one-bow. He asked Jin Wei Shi and I to lead it and explain the practice. We said, “Three-steps-one-bow is a way of going on both an internal and external pilgrimage. Three steps is roughly the length of our body, so we cover every

portion of the earth with a bow. While bowing, we are vulnerable; we drop our defenses; we receive what comes. We go to places that are usually hidden to us, perhaps remembering past mistakes. This is our opportunity to say, ‘I’m sorry, I’ll do better.’ This is also a chance to renew ourselves.”

Then in the spirit of the occasion, we reflected, “Usually we bow to honor the Buddha; here, it seems appropriate to bow to the planet. We can show our reverence and gratitude for all she has provided. Also, this is a chance for us to say, ‘Sorry. Sorry for all of the pain we humans have caused you. We will try to do better.’”

Then we began to bow in a line, one after the other. This was my first time bowing outside on unpaved dirt for an extended period of time. It was uncomfortable: my forehead picked up debris, a sharp stone cut into my hand drawing

blood, and my robes got dirty. Rather than finding these difficulties to be unpleasant, I found that they contributed to the rawness of the experience. I was bowing to the earth, literally touching the earth with my forehead, hands, arms, and knees. We were not in an enclosed room or on a concrete sidewalk, but on an exposed mountain trail overlooking a breathtaking view. **‘Sorry. Sorry for all of the pain we humans have caused you. We will try to do better.’**

And honestly, the despair in my heart found a voice, “I’m sorry. I’m sorry for the trash, for the pollution, for the devastation, for the greed, the callousness. I’m sorry.” It was quite cathartic—like letting go of a burden in my heart. A burden I carried unconsciously, afraid to look at because I felt helpless. And then, a renewal, a commitment, “I’ll do better. I’ll try my best.” And, here, this is my imagination: Mother Earth, patient and kind, responded, “Apology accepted. Don’t be too hard on yourself. Just try your best.”

I could feel my eyes water. Something healed in my heart. Despair transformed. Not into hope, but into acceptance, into kindness, into an inner commitment to improve and try my best. Not to hold up some unrealistic perfection or ideal for myself, for the world, or for the human race, but to accept things as they are and simply try my best.

Unexpectedly, the three-steps-one-bow practice resonated with the starting song:

Humble yourself in the arms of the Wild
You gotta lay down low.

—Bowling.

Humble yourself in the arms of the Wild.
You gotta ask her what she knows.

—Forgiveness.

We will lift each other up.
Higher and higher.
We will lift each other up.
Higher and higher.

—May we all lift each other
up, higher and higher.

Abhidhamma's View on Conditioned Phenomena

Jianqiu Wu

In the fire season of 2017, wildfires in Northern California swept across 1.5 million acres of land, causing massive damage and forcing hundreds of thousands of people to evacuate from their homes. Included within this area is the Abhayagiri Buddhist Monastery from the Thai Forest Tradition. On October 9th, monks in this monastery woke up at midnight to discover that the sky was red and filled with smoke. Digital maps showed that a quarter of their monastery was on fire. They were forced to evacuate before their monastery was burned down.

Afterwards, when they were able to come back to the site to determine the extent of damage to their property, they surprisingly discovered that although the fire was still smoldering,

I feel it is impossible to find a satisfying answer to these questions from an entirely materialistic worldview.

no buildings were damaged. Firefighters who had been

fighting the fire for five days reported that the fire was coming down from the mountain but was unable to cross a trail. They said it was as if the monastery refused to burn, and none of them could explain it. After facing the fire for a while, they saw the fire reverse directions and go back up the mountain. They had never seen anything like this.

People from the monastery later expressed their gratitude as well as awe, saying that they believed there was some powerful force that protected the property and made the fire retreat (Bradley).

Instances like this can really pique the interest of a sincere scientist. Instead of rejecting such phenomena, a practitioner of new science can ask, "If this is real, how does this happen? What is this protective force? How does it work?"

I feel it is impossible to find a satisfying answer to these questions from an entirely materialistic worldview. Therefore, I attempt to offer

an explanation based on the *Abhidhamma* view of the conditioned world.

The *Abhidhamma* system is a science of the mind in the Buddhist tradition. Some people call it "the Buddhist psychology of the mind." However, although its primary focus is the mind, it does not only talk about the mind. It also includes material phenomena as one of its major categories of discussion. According to the *Abhidhamma* system, material phenomena includes all the cognitive objects of the senses of sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. They are all "conditioned" in the sense that they cannot exist on their own, but rely on the conjunction of various conditions to exist momentarily.

To illustrate the profundity of this statement, we can take a common object like a rock. Our common sense tells us that the rock lasts, that although it is subject to deformation, it exists continuously over time. However, according to the *Abhidhamma* system, this is not the case! According to the ancient master Vasubandhu, the existence of material phenomena lasts no time at all. They are momentary (2: 1285)! A modern person can understand this through the analogy of movie stills. A movie appears continuous to our senses, but it is not. The illusion of continuity is produced by a sequence of slightly different stills in quick succession, so quick that our senses cannot catch them and deceive us into believing that the movement is continuous!

In the same sense, material phenomena are momentary, devoid of "continuity" or "movement." They only come into being and cease to be in very quick succession. This principle is called "impermanence." Moreover, material phenomena cease to be immediately upon arising (thus they are momentary), and depend on various conditions to arise again. This is called "conditioned arising." According to these two principles, a rock actually does not last. It only exists momentarily,

but because the conditions for its re-arising are still available, its existence is renewed moment after moment. Each time it arises resembling its previous moment. That is why we perceive it as "continuously existing." According to Vasubandhu, movement and change are produced in similar ways, except each time the object re-arises in a slightly different state from the previous one.

The conditions for the arising of phenomena are infinitely deep and complex, so complex that Vasubandhu said that "The causes—in all their various aspects—for even a single eye in a peacock's tail are not to be known by those without omniscience" (4: 2566).

If we apply the above discussion to the forest fire, then we can equally say that they are momentary phenomena that arise on conditions; and, perhaps the conditions of fire are equally

Even though it seems that the forest fire is due to purely physical conditions such as high temperature, low humidity, wind, etc., everything has its root cause in the intentions of living beings' minds.

deep and complex as an eye in a peacock's tail. Keeping in mind this complexity of material phenomena such as fire inspires awe and leaves room for the unknown.

In order to understand and study the conditions for various phenomena, one needs higher levels of stillness. Without enough stillness, one can intellectually understand the impermanence and conditionality of phenomena, but will never be able to penetrate into phenomena and observe the arising of conditions first-hand using one's awareness. That's why development of insight is after stillness.

When one has enough stillness, one can look at the world at a whole new level. Instead of seeing solid objects and living beings, one sees the coming and going of various conditional forces that conjoin to form objects and living beings. The world now has a dynamic quality. Everything becomes alive. "Things" are no longer "things," they are processes. Moreover, at this level, one sees the crucial role of sentience, of living beings' minds. One sees that even material phenomena are not independent from the mind's activities.

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The barrier between the sentient observer and non-sentient world breaks down. One understands that it is the mind's activities that are ultimately responsible for the arising of material phenomena.

In Vasubandhu's writings, he said that "the variety of the world arises from karma" (2: 1281). The word *karma* means actions done with intentions. It is intention that defines karma and produces results. In other words, it is the intentions in the minds of living beings that set in motion everything in the world, including both material and mental phenomena.

If we accept the doctrine that the mind's intentions are ultimately responsible for all material phenomena, then the forest fire is no exception. Even though it seems that the forest fire is due to purely physical conditions such as high temperature, low humidity, wind, etc., everything has its root cause in the intentions of living beings' minds.

However, this causal relation is very indirect and hard to see. Certainly, we cannot start or extinguish fires with our intentions alone... Or, can we? My hypothesis is that if one gains enough freedom from stillness practice, then one's intentions become powerful enough to directly influence the convergence of various conditions responsible for the arising of various mental and material phenomena. Through one's observation, one gains knowledge of how various phenomena rise and fall, then one knows how to use the power of one's intention to create, speed up, slow down, move, or dissipate these conditions so that this person gains the god-like capacities to control the forces of nature at will.

At this point of one's practice of new science, virtue becomes of paramount importance because if this person has not been rooted in virtue from earlier practice, then he or she can easily be addicted to such powers. Then ego grows and contaminates all his or her actions. Consequently, his or her actions result in harm and destruction, whereas another person may have used these capacities for protection and healing. If such power is used for harm, it is called "black magic," whereas if it is used to give hope and deliverance of suffering, it is called a "miracle." I believe the force that protected the monastery from the forest fires is an example of the latter.



Photography: Filippo "Spike" Morelli

An Old House

Filippo "Spike" Morelli

My wife and I recently moved into an old house. How old? We didn't realize until a month later.

We live on the top two floors of this tower section of an old farmhouse, the first part of which was built around 950. Yes, 950, not 1950. I've had problems even saying that number. In over a thousand years, this place has gone through an enormous amount of change. In fact the whole ground floor did not even exist.

See the big door and the little window above it? They were added much later to create a second apartment. Can you see that section of red bricks in between the small and larger window? It looks like it was itself a window that's been closed off, but it used to be the front door! People used a ladder to get into the building and went down to the lower part of the tower from a hatch in the floor.

To live in something so old and *solid* is humbling. It gives us a sense of strength and stability—resilience in the face of adversity—that I've not felt in the houses I've lived in before. Also, if you get up close to one of the walls you can see the hundreds of stones that were needed to fill up a single square foot. Can you imagine the patience and work that was needed to layer all those stones by hand?

In contrast, most of the apartments I see being built today feel like they might fall in just a few generations—huge three foot wide stone walls have been replaced by a couple layers of plywood. Nobody builds the way they used to, and it would be fundamentally impossible to do so due to costs and regulations. And in fact there are perfectly good reasons why we don't. The encroaching winter is a reminder of that since my wife and I have had to deal with leaky roofs and an average temperature that doesn't

climb above 17°C or 62°F, even with the heater on. We've come leaps and bounds in matters of insulation and comfort, and I don't mean to look down on it, especially as I grow older.

Nonetheless, when building something in my business years, I often heard the mantra, "quick, cheap, quality: pick two." You can guess

While it would probably be a poor choice to try to build places the way they used to, it seems we would still benefit from looking at the fundamental intention of preferring quick and cheap over any other combination involving quality.

which ones were most often picked. I wonder if back then the criteria was the same or if that mantra would have even made sense. While it would probably be a poor choice to try to build places the way they used to, it seems we would still benefit from looking at the fundamental intention of preferring quick and cheap over any other combination involving quality. Looking back at my youth in the late 80s, and talking to my sisters that were born in the 60s, it's clear that there's been a fundamental shift of intention toward cheap and replaceable over more expensive and durable. And this does not just concern buildings. Our entire life is affected by this: our clothing, electronics, furniture, and food.

Again, in some ways cheap and quick is valuable, even in terms of housing a pre-fabricated home is better than having people living on the streets. Affordable housing is no

small matter, but the intention behind it is very different.

However, I do wonder what that shift of intention means for our minds and lives. Has the appreciation for quality and resilience receded to make space for an obsession with cheap and quick? What are the implications?

Another important impact of this shift is on waste production. Today a lot of emphasis is put on recycling, but what would be the impact of focusing on reuse and building things to last?

The ease of connection with people we like, who think like us, who look like us, can be of great benefit, yet it has made us largely less resilient.

It seems that at least part of the problem is a seemingly inescapable cycle of consumerism.

This is a cycle that revolves, as the name suggests,

around consumption, which depends on the creation of new things to consume and, therefore, old ones to replace. There's no other way to sustain this consumerism, and so much in our modern society depends on it that it seems hopeless to ever get out of it unless we collectively take a hard look at our intentions and preferences.

This mechanism is so pervasive that to believe it stops at the realm of material things would be a mistake. In fact, the same principle can be observed in personal relationships: Facebook friends and speed dating have replaced childhood friends and growing up together. I'm not fond of nostalgia and don't hold on an idea of a golden era when things were better, but if I look at the present there are many indications of loneliness and isolation that reflect a lack of deeper, more resilient relationships. The ease of connection with people we like, who think like us, who look like us, can be of great benefit, yet it has made us largely less resilient. We've become less able to deal with difficult peers or to build bonds that can withstand a bump in the road, which is inevitable in any human relationship. We end up building relationships

that are quick, in the sense of being easy to form, and cheap, in the sense that it doesn't cost us much when we break them off, especially when finding a new friendship is only a swipe away.

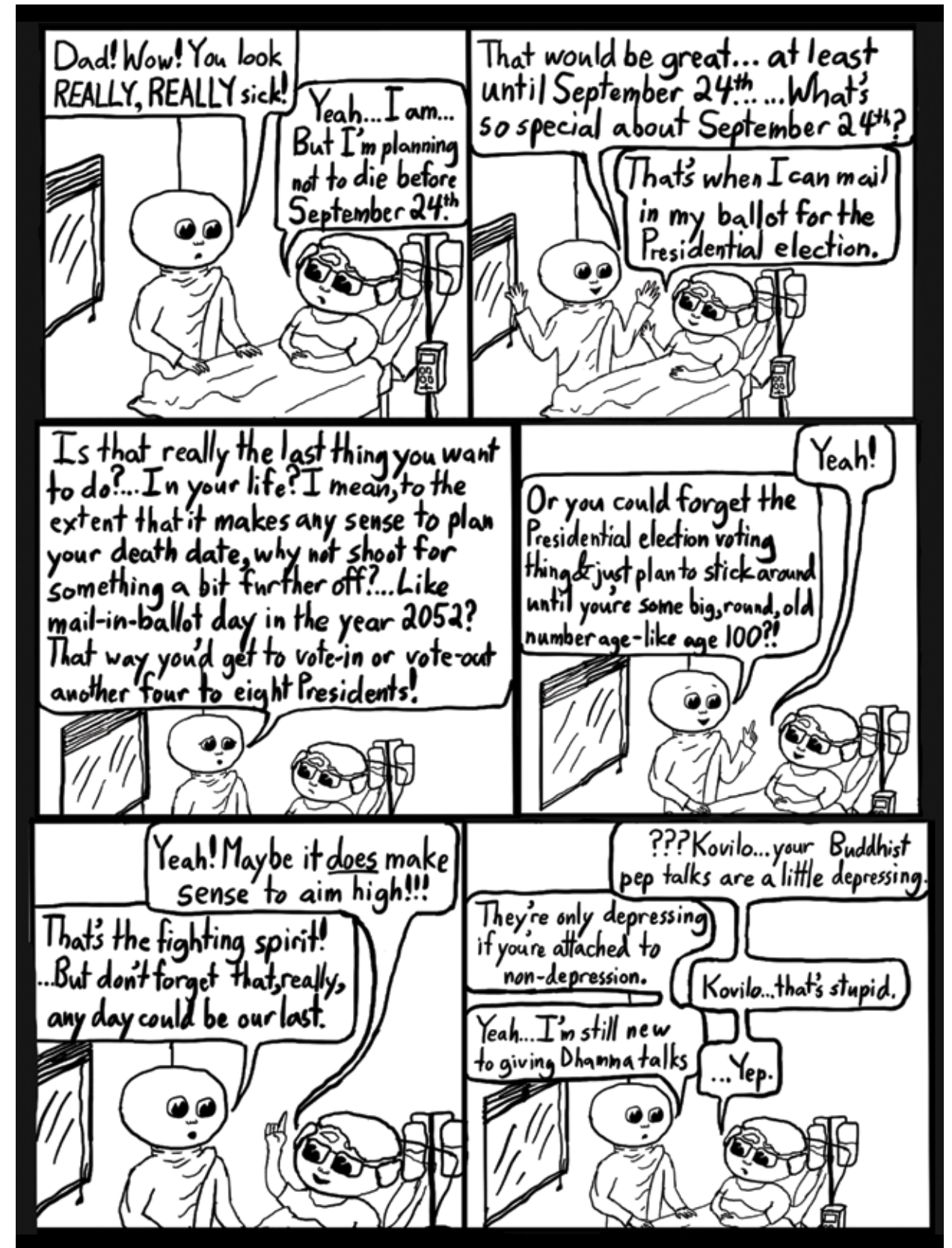
In the end, as I stare at these thick walls and think about the things I've built in my life, I cannot help but notice a pattern: whenever I've tried to cut corners, to be cheap with my time and love to get to results quickly, what I built always ended up failing the test of time. As human beings, we've accomplished some incredible feats and built what we could not even imagine, but somewhere along that path we've gone off the cliff. We've reached a point where, both physically and mentally, we are growing weaker, focusing far too much on the quick and cheap, and in the process, littering our world and souls with ruins of stuff that we didn't want to invest more time and effort into.





Photography: Quinn Anderson

Comics for Dad: "Living Till Election Day"



by Kovilo Bhikkhu

Childhood

It is dinner time.
Grandpa and I sit down as Grandma
puts the dishes out.
Big Yellow, the neighbor's dog,
runs in from the front door.
He is on time,
always.

Putting his warm chin on my lap,
he looks at me with his watery eyes.
We have our secret
under the table.

If I get caught up eating
for too long,
Big Yellow reminds me with his paw,
tapping quietly.

Frogs are croaking
in the watery fields outside,
calling me.
Finishing my last bite,
I put down my chopsticks.

I chase after the fireflies under the stars,
and Big Yellow chases after me.

∞

Every day, I walk home
alone
after school.
Every day, Big Yellow sits
by a narrow log bridge.
How happy he is upon seeing me!
Together,
we walk home.

∞

Across a big river,
Mother comes on her bike
to take me to another home.
"Bye, Grandpa! Bye, Grandma!"

With me sitting on the back seat,
Mother rides away on her bike.
Big Yellow runs after us.
"Go home, Big Yellow!" I cry out.
But he keeps on running,
his tongue hanging out.

Big Yellow runs
and runs,
until the big river blocks him.
The boatman kicks him away
from our small ferry boat.

On the riverbank,
he groans and paces,
and becomes smaller and smaller
through my watery eyes.

When I was little, the residents in our Chinese village kept their front doors open all day. During meal times, my family would greet the villagers who were passing by with, "Have you eaten? Join us for a meal!" It was simply a courtesy. Rarely would any villager actually come in and sit down to eat with us; but, once in a while, someone would accept the invitation. Dogs and cats roamed free. Some of them were fed by multiple families, but their original owners were acknowledged by other villagers.

—Xiaojuan Shu



From Student to Teacher and Back Again

Thao Amanda Phi



What is resilience? Coming back again? Learning how to bounce back? Life feels like a never-ending series on resilience—my thoughts wandered as I stopped paying attention to whatever I was supposed to be doing.

What does teaching at the girls' school have to do with resilience? For me, it has to do with having the courage to come back, particularly after the way I left. Why did I come back? To heal, to repair, and to make improvements. People tend to go to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas (CTTB) to search for answers, but I didn't know I was going back for answers.

The way I left the school made me think I would not return again—at least not as a student. In 2003, I was a seventh-grade dorm student at Instilling Goodness Developing Virtue School, the separated all-boys and all-girls

boarding schools in CTTB. As the middle school experience is for many pre-teens, mine was filled with emotions and angst. I was not having a grand time, but I was looking forward to going home for winter break. My parents drove up from the Bay Area to pick me up on a drizzly Friday evening. My mom had brought her luggage, intending to remain at CTTB for the upcoming Amitabha session. Her last living act of kindness to me was agreeing to come home with my dad and me instead of staying for the retreat. But she never made it home. It was more grief than I knew how to handle.

As if that wasn't enough, the woes of middle school were in full swing. I had no problem keeping up a good image by taking a full-load of courses, joining a bunch of clubs, and excelling at them. Underneath my academic and

extracurricular achievements was a sad, grieving, motherless child. I didn't have healthy coping mechanisms, and the way I chose to express my pain—writing notes to a boy in the boys' school across campus—was the ultimate forbidden fruit.

It wasn't before long that my little world imploded some more. I remember having a bad feeling after waking up one morning. I could barely get myself to class. Before I could make it to my second class, a teacher stopped me in front of the school building and directed me into the administration office. What began as a dozen-teacher intervention on my concerning behavior led to a weeklong suspension where I mulled over what to do next. A week later, I returned to campus thinking I was going to remain a student but was instead given a very opaquely-explained expulsion.

A few months after I left the school, I returned to CTTB for the summer Guan Yin session. It took fine discerning to understand that I had been kicked out of the *school*, not kicked out of the *temple*. Eventually, I would return as a working professional at CTTB. It would take some years after that for me to understand that I can only resolve what I am ready to resolve.

I moved back to CTTB in 2014 when I began working with the university. My return meant confronting and tackling my first layer of pain, the grief of losing my mother. As time went on and I continued working in the community, I began to further peel back layers of my suffering. The next layer that emerged involved unpacking my time at the girls' school.

I remember two incidents when people I didn't know seemed to know the details of my expulsion. On the first occasion, I drove through the mountain gate entrance where the security guard asked me, "Aren't you the one who got kicked out for passing notes?" The second incident was when a visitor casually mentioned

knowing of my previous expulsion. Each encounter made me cringe which should've been enough to tell me that there was still some resilience-building to do in said area.

Fast-forward to 2018—it was my first time teaching at the girls' school. I was teaching one class at the elementary school and one class at the high school.

I had my initial doubts: the elementary school kids are so adorable, but will the ninth-graders intimidate me? To my surprise, the exact opposite ended up being true.

That same semester, questions about my own past arose. What happened in my own experience while I was a student there? I quietly realized how much I had been shaped by getting expelled from the girls' school, how that profoundly affected my sense of self-worth and the decisions I made for myself. After all, there was immense guilt from

It would take some years after that for me to understand that I can only resolve what I am ready to resolve.

having to start over at a new school, embarrassment in returning to my local Buddhist temple and being known as the

"bad kid" who got kicked out of CTTB. This all led to further burying of the heartbreak I was still feeling from losing my mom. And what a time for all of that to happen, right at the beginning of my teen years where my sense of identity and belonging were both so fragile and important.



I needed answers. My curiosity led me to ask three people for their account on what happened, and they gave me three different answers. Initially, I brought up the matter with my former principal, who kindly looked back to old notes from over a decade ago that held the details to the decision of my eventual expulsion. Next, I chatted with an administrator from the boys' school which did not confer any new information. Finally, I asked my dad for his perception

And I was rewarded for having the courage to dive into these uncomfortable questions; the gift was that it opened up new and unexpected doors for me.

of what happened. After having those conversations, I was still left to pick my own ending. I decided that sometimes it's better to have an anti-climactic ending rather than a dramatic one. When I started teaching at the high school, I didn't expect it to propel me to heal my old wounds from my own time as a student at the school. It was a blessing in disguise to have the opportunity to reconcile with questions that have haunted me for years. And I was rewarded for having the courage to dive into these uncomfortable

questions; the gift was that it opened up new and unexpected doors for me.

After class one day, a student asked me, "Is the school better than it used to be when you were here?" I told her, "Of course it is, otherwise I wouldn't be back here teaching." Every organization goes through its growing pains, and private Buddhist schools are no exception. I could see for myself how much progress the school had made since I was a student there. It made me want to continue to help the school and students in whatever ways I can.

There is a special joy that teaching the girls brings. I enjoy my role as the bridge between my students, the school, and the course material. I can empathize with their

situation as someone who was once a teenager going to school inside a very orthodox Buddhist temple. At the same time, because I am so involved with the CTTB community and have positive working-relationships with the nuns, I also have a better understanding of their intentions and the goodness they hope to instill in their students.

It took returning back to the same place and facing my shadows head-on to experience the shift from once being a grieving child and expelled student to becoming a happy, fulfilled, working adult and teacher. I am learning so much about how to be a better teacher and more about myself from my students. Perhaps they are indeed my teachers and I their student.



John Lewis, A Life Well-Lived

The Honorable John Lewis, civil rights leader and congressman from Georgia, joined his ancestors on the seventeenth of July. Cognizant of his pending departure, he penned, "Together, You Can Redeem the Soul of Our Nation," urging "good trouble, necessary trouble" to write "the next chapter of the great American story." In his short op-ed piece, which appeared in The New York Times on July 30, 2020 on page A23, he shared his vision of human dignity, embracing nonviolence, moral urgency, and other aspirations. There is much to reflect on; so, I offer a Buddhist reflection on his views on civic responsibility. The tenor of his essay is without rancor, and is imbued with wisdom honed by years of struggle for justice, peace, and, above all else, optimism. The political turmoil and the public health crisis spawned by COVID-19 must have been foremost on his mind when Lewis wrote: "Democracy is not a state. It is an act, and each generation must do its part to help build what we call the Beloved Community, a nation and world society at peace with itself." His words, an almost religious adoration of the democratic experiment of the USA, remind us that we must contribute to the life of the country.

Our Constitution, Congress, courts, elections, and other institutions are mere instruments of our democracy. It is far too easy to shun our civic responsibilities and rely on others to "form a more perfect Union," a phrase enshrined in the Preamble of our Constitution.

Cognizant that the young country is a work in progress, the framers of Constitution recognized the need to "establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity..." As a country on its way, we will

experiment with political, economic, and social policies. Mistakes will inevitably occur. Thus, Lewis chides, "When you see something that is not right, you must say something. You must do something."

If we cherish our democracy, we must vote, serve as jurors, and speak at city council meetings to give life to our cherished democratic ideals and to bequeath a peaceful community. For John Lewis, American democracy is an experiment that must be continually nourished by each generation. Living in a community entails shared responsibility; everyone must do what he or she can. Francis Cook reminds Buddhists of their imperative:

...Buddhism is a praxis, something that one does. Although elements such as having faith, possessing a warm feeling about the religion, and adhering to certain credal formulas are not absent from Buddhism, it may safely be said that these things are not in themselves enough.

...Faith, attitudes, credal purity, and the like, are not without value, but in themselves they are insufficient for spiritual freedom. They may help in some way to make the long journey to infinite light, but the journey itself is a series of acts of a certain kind, (i.e. the ethical life which is an outflow of meditation) including some glimpse, however partial and imperfect, of the light itself.¹

Like democracy, Buddhism is not a state; it is a Path that leads "from the darkness of ignorance to the light of perfect wisdom."² To be a

1 Francis Cook. *Hua-Yen Buddhism: The Jeweled Net of Indra*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977, p. 109.

2 Sangharakshita. *The Bodhisattva: Evolution and Self-Transcendence*.

For John Lewis, American democracy is an experiment that must be continually nourished by each generation. Living in a community entails shared responsibility; everyone must do what he or she can.

Buddhist is to strive toward and to live out our aspirations. The Dharma is rooted in the search for and the realization of Enlightenment for ourselves and for all beings. Embedded in this rarefied realization is the need to do something to relieve the suffering that is ever present.

The model for the Buddhist Path is Śākya-muni Buddha, whose efforts are idealized in the bodhisattva, a most intrepid spiritual warrior. Śāntideva, a poet and reputed one-time rector of Nālandā Mahāvihāra [University], eloquently writes of the path of the bodhisattva's life:

Those who will falsely accuse me, and others who will do me harm, and others still who will degrade me, may they all share in Awakening.

I am the protector of the unprotected and the caravan-leader for travellers. I have become the boat, the causeway, and the bridge for those who long to reach the further shore.

May I be a light for those in need of light.
May I be a bed for those in need of rest.
May I be a servant for those in need of service, for all embodied beings.

These passages, verses sixteen through eighteen, appearing in "Adopting the Awakened Mind," Chapter Three of *Bodhicaryāvatāra*,³ are the aspirations the bodhisattva is willing to undergo to relieve the suffering of his fellow beings. Chapter Three together with Chapters One and Two and the subsequent Chapter Four are patterned on the liturgy Supreme Worship (*anattara pūja*) that intends to heighten the Mahāyāna devotee's aspiration, just as Buddhists recite the Three

Glasgow: Windhorse Publication, 1983, p. 8.

3 Śāntideva. *The Bodhicaryāvatāra*. Trans. Kate Crosby and Andrew Skilton. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Treasures at every service, wherever they may be.⁴ The liturgy is meant to cultivate merit, the counterpart of wisdom, necessary for the bodhisattva to continue to attain Enlightenment. His determination strengthened; the devotee resolves in verses twenty-two through twenty-four to:

In the same way as bygone Sugatas⁵ took up the Awakening Mind, in the same way as they progressed in the Bodhisattva training.

So too, I myself shall generate the Awakening Mind for the welfare of the world; and just so shall I train in those precepts in due order.

The wise one, who has taken up the Awakening Mind with a serene confidence in this way, should continue to encourage his resolve as follows, in order to fulfil his wish.

In Chapter Three, Śāntideva proclaims soaring aspirations. In Chapter Four, "Vigilance Regarding the Awakening Mind," cognizant that he may have over-stated his resolve, he says in the forty-second verse: "At that time I was intoxicated, speaking without realizing my own limitations." Still, he vows to strive on. Śāntideva undertakes the task of relieving beings from suffering, "I should dispel the suffering of others because it is suffering like my own suffering. I should help others too because of their nature as beings, which is like my own" (Chapter Eight, Verse 94).

This seems to be the sentiment of John Lewis, the son of a sharecropper in rural Alabama, who experienced firsthand the suffering wrought by the injustices of legalized racial segregation and prejudice. He organized and participated in lunch counter sit-ins, bus boycotts, and freedom marches, fulfilling the ideals stated in the U.S. Constitution. On March 7, 1965 Lewis, together with Hosea Williams (1926–2000), led more than 600 marchers across Edmund Pettus Bridge in

4 It is difficult to separate Śāntideva's determination and the Supreme Worship liturgy's charge to all devotees.

5 lit. "well-gone;" those who have attained spiritual emancipation.

Selma, Alabama. When the marchers stopped to pray, Alabama State Troopers charged the demonstrators. Lewis suffered a fractured skull.

On June 7th, a day before he entered the hospital, Lewis visited Black Lives Matter Plaza (formerly, Lafayette Square) to see for himself “that, after many years of silent witness, the truth is still marching on.” The truth that Lewis referred to is “the great American story.”

John Lewis’s last words betray no bitterness, no call for revenge. He had faith that persistent nonviolent lobbying would shed the scales that blinded people to injustice and recognize the inherent dignity in all people. The tenor of John Lewis’s essay exhibits all the hallmarks of a most matured individual, a quality reminiscent of *kyōgai* (境涯). Ordinarily, “*kyōgai*” refers to a person’s socioeconomic station, but in Japanese Buddhist *sho* (calligraphy) culture, the expression refers to “a capacity for life,” a virtue that is nurtured through a long and wide-ranging experience in living. An individual with “a great capacity of life” meets the vicissitudes that life brings with equanimity and dignity. The very late *sho* and ink sketches of the Rinzai Zen cleric Hakuin Ekaku 白隠慧鶴 (1685–1768) exhibits such quality. Yamamoto Hatsujiro writes,

Hakuin’s works exhibit no skill, no seasoned maturity, no quiet simplicity, no refined dignity, no ornamentation, no beauty, exhibiting only strength and some uncommon quality. I sense in his *sho* and ink-sketches an incomparable strength that transcends all places and all time. Might these qualities be expressive of an unsurpassed beauty that escapes ordinary intelligence or knowing?⁶

Yamamoto notes that Hakuin’s works exhibit “only strength and some uncommon quality, ...expressive of an unsurpassed beauty...” The tone of John Lewis’s op-ed essay reveals the beauty of a personality replete with formidable strength. He spent a lifetime trying to dismantle racial segregation and the

He organized and participated in lunch counter sit-ins, bus boycotts, and freedom marches, fulfilling the ideals stated in the U.S. Constitution.

inequalities it generates. Towards the end of his essay, Lewis writes, “In my life I have done all I can to demonstrate that the way of peace, the way of love and nonviolence is the more excellent way.” These words are without regret. His karmic energy spent, the Honorable John Lewis has taken a great leap, trusting that his peace-loving successors will carry on:

When historians pick up their pens to write the story of the 21st century, let them say that it was your generation who laid down the heavy burdens of hate at last and that peace finally triumphs over violence, aggression and war.

John Lewis spent a lifetime to “form a more perfect Union.” His efforts are indeed worthy of the bodhisattva’s dedication to relieve suffering. Invoking Mañjuśrī, Śāntideva declares, “As long as space abides and as long as the world abides, so long may I abide, destroying the sufferings of the world” (Chapter 10, Verse 55).

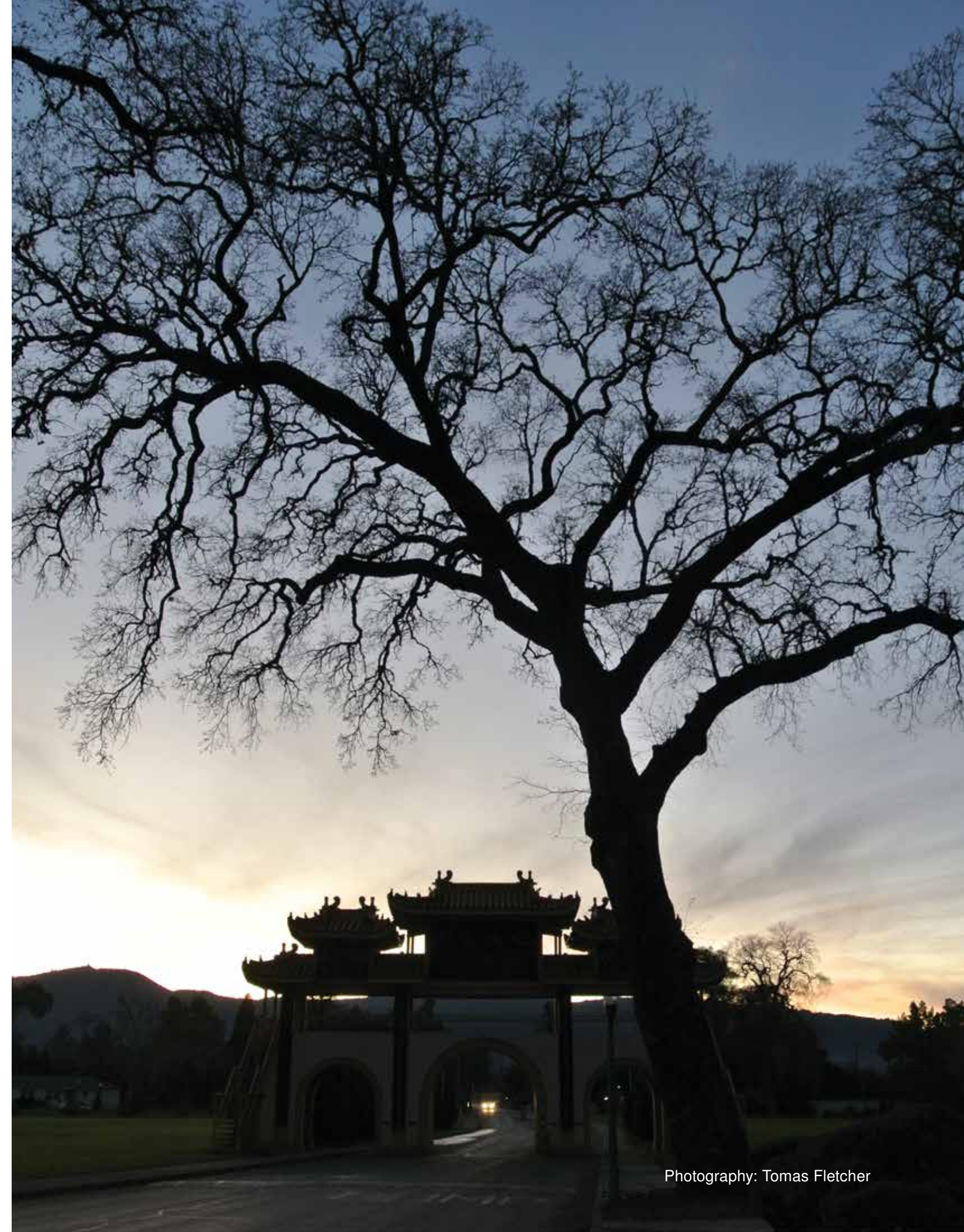
22 August 2020

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Photography: Reverend Heng Sure

⁶ Yamamoto Hatsujiro, “Hakuin geijutsu no tokuisei [Uniqueness of Hakuin’s Art],” *Bokubi* no. 78 (1958), p. 13.



Photography: Tomas Fletcher

English Translation of Mencius

Gavin Ding, Brenda Li, Hui Xuan Ooi, and Xiaojuan Shu

In the Reading Seminar course of the Translation Certificate Program, we read and compare multiple translations of Western, Chinese, Buddhist, and Indian classics. We learn a lot from looking at how different translators render a particular text: What works, what doesn't, and why?

We spent a couple weeks on Mencius (ch. 孟子 *mengzi*), and while there were certain things we enjoyed from each translation, we found a particular flavor present in the Chinese to be absent in the English translations. Mencius can invoke a sense of uplifting encouragement, nature-nurturing, and self-respect; yet, in the English translations, there is often an authoritative and deterministic tone.

So, for one of our group exercises, we translated Mencius with the intention of bringing out this powerfully inspirational and empowering side of his works. Hope this translation brings you some joy!

7A1

孟子曰：「盡其心者，知其性也。知其性，則知天矣。存其心，養其性，所以事天也。夭壽不貳，修身以俟之，所以立命也。」

Mengzi said: "Those who fully explore their heart know their nature. From knowing their nature, they then know their higher calling. Tend to your heart and nourish your nature. This is abiding with your higher calling. Life, whether long or short, is to be cultivated. Await your calling. Thus, proceed in life, free from doubt and fear."

7A2

孟子曰：「莫非命也，順受其正。是故知命者，不立乎巖牆之下。盡其道而死者，正命也。桎梏死者，非正命也。」

Mengzi said: "Nothing is not part of life. Accord with the proper path life calls for. Therefore, those who know life would not put themselves between a rock and a hard place. Those who die having fully explored their path have lived a fulfilled life. Those who die in shackles, not so."

Chinese Translations of Western Classics

Cindy Wang

After studying excerpts from Classical Chinese texts, we turned to the Western Classics—a small selection of William Shakespeare's sonnets and Emily Dickinson's poems. We compared their original poetry alongside different Chinese translations rendered by various translators.

We chose our favorite poems to interpret and translate on our own.

The following are my original Chinese translations of Shakespeare's "Sonnet 29" and Dickinson's "I dwell in Possibility —."

Sonnet 29

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone bewep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
(Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.
—William Shakespeare

當我落魄，世人也羞辱我
遭遺棄的我獨自哭泣
蒼天不應
我怨懟自己，詛咒命運
期盼幸運降臨
冀望如他人一般友朋環繞
也願有他人之才華和境界
萬念俱灰
顧影自憐
意興闌珊
霎時你進入我心
如晨曦初現於大地
如聖樂於天堂響起
甜美的愛的記憶是我的財富
即便江山君王亦於我如糞土

I dwell in Possibility –
A fairer House than Prose –
More numerous of Windows –
Superior – for Doors –

我在期待裡
比詩集更美
數不盡的窗
更勝於門
眼穿不透的屋椽
透過延綿的屋頂
直達天際
身為個旅人
我該做的是
伸出小手
迎向天堂

Of Chambers as the Cedars –
Impregnable of eye –
And for an everlasting Roof
The Gambrels of the Sky –

Of Visitors – the fairest –
For Occupation – This –
The spreading wide my narrow Hands
To gather Paradise –
—Emily Dickinson



Can love truly die,
or does it change its flow?
We create the space to house it;
when our fears grow we ask it to go.
We say love has left me,
but was it there to start?
Unknown in its true nature,
we scarcely understand our hearts.

If I could live a thousand years
I doubt I'd ever know,
but I would think it's like a river
created to flow and flow.

— *Claire Robb*



Artwork: Abigail Setera

三獸論道

The Three Little Critters

Gavin Ding

泰山之東花草叢生。復有百獸棲於此山林中。而飛禽走獸之中不乏特異之輩。其中有三。一猴，一狐，一鼯鼠。此三者好思維。所聞所見皆奇之。正所謂物以類聚人以群分。此三獸志趣相投，以友相稱。在追逐打鬧之間見山中行人，奇之。

On the East side of Mountain Tai, trees and bushes thrived. Many animals inhabited the forest there. Amongst them were three very unique little critters: a monkey, a fox, and a squirrel. What differentiated them from the rest was their interest in exploring the world. They were curious about all the things that they could see and hear. Like the saying goes, "Birds of a feather flock together." The three little critters, sharing the same interests, became friends. When they would playfully run through the forest, they would notice the people that would come and go. They soon began their exploration of the human way of life.

猿猴喜隨獵戶，狐狸常從樵夫。鼯鼠應其體弱好坐於私塾房頂聽書。三獸應其境遇所學非同。一日，三友齊聚，笑談近來所遇。

"What I praise is not the hunting skill, but rather the natural Way within the archery. The hunters are able to embody this. I too can realize the Way between the flowers and fruits."

The monkey was particularly interested in the hunters that would occasionally come to the forest. The fox liked to observe the woodsmen. The squirrel, being physically incapable of following people, liked to sit on the rooftop of a private school and listen. The three little critters learned lots from listening and observing. They soon gathered to share their newfound knowledge.

猴先言道：「吾隨獵戶而觀其行。見其手足之間一舉一動皆順應自然。其人射時，其發看似無力，卻如無為而為。雖是獵生卻實為養身也。」狐聞其言笑問道：「汝所學於汝何意？莫非汝欲棄素從葷？」猴頭笑道：「我所讚嘆非其射術。其中精妙乃法自然之道。眾獵戶可以合乎於道。吾亦可以悟道於花果之間。」

The monkey was the first to speak: "When I followed the hunters, I noticed how swift their moves were! All their gestures seem to harmonize with the natural course. When shooting, their actions are effortless. Although they are hunting, they are actually preserving the spirit of life." The fox smiled and poked fun at the monkey, saying, "How is any of this useful for you? Are you giving up on veganism?" The monkey giggled, replying, "What I praise is not the hunting skill, but rather the natural Way within the archery. The hunters are able to embody this. I too can realize the Way between the flowers and fruits."

狐聞之，不解。道：「吾所學之道於汝有異。吾隨樵夫進山觀其伐木，見眾樵夫皆情同手足。『視人之室若其室。視人身若其身。』¹」所信非命。知自強可利己利他。『強不執弱，眾不劫寡。』²」吾以為此乃世間當循之道。廣布兼愛，利益大眾。」鼯鼠不明所以問道：「汝所言兼愛為何意？狐狸道：待人之父母如其父母。待人之子女若其子女。」

The fox was still unsure what to make of the monkey's story. He began, saying: "I learned a different Way. I followed the woodsmen and watched them log in the forest. They cared for each other like brothers. They 'regarded others' families like their own family, other persons as their own person.'¹ They did not believe in fate. They constantly strived for the well-being of all. 'The strong would not overpower the weak, and the many would not oppress the few.'² I think this is the Way one should follow: Spread impartial caring and benefit the great masses." The squirrel was confused and asked, "What do you mean by impartial caring?" The fox replied, "That is caring for everyone equally. Respecting other's parents just like your own, and looking after others' children just like your own."

鼯鼠驚叫道：「豈有此理！吾所學乃世間君子之道。修身始於格物致知。有此為根本方能不踰矩。汝所言實乃本末倒置！不知輕重！」

狐狸聞言面露不滿慾要反駁，不料這鼯鼠嘴尖舌快又說道：

「兼愛可合乎於性？吾怎可愛汝室如吾室？正所謂『無軍無父是禽獸也！』³」

狐狸聞言勃然大怒道：「吾等本就是走獸之輩，汝何當出此狂言？！」

The squirrel was shocked and let out a scream, "How could that do?!" He continued, saying: "I learned the way of the gentlemen from school. The first step of self-cultivation is to formulate the correct conceptual grid. Only then can one extend their knowledge without going off course. You got it totally wrong from the beginning!" The fox was offended by what the squirrel said and wanted to defend himself. However, the squirrel was too fast. He continued before the fox could even gather his thoughts: "Your theory on impartial caring simply doesn't follow that nature of living beings. How could one care for others the same as those who are closest to them? 'To not have a ruler and a father is to be a beast!'³ Upon hearing this, the fox angrily shouted, "What?! I am an animal and so are you! Look at the foolish words that are coming out of your mouth!"

猴子見形式有變，慾勸二獸莫要爭執。不料那狐狸怒意難消，手指猴頭喝道：「汝自認學道有成，吾看也不過如此！汝不解道之真意，而執於虛無飄渺之物，實為無根無本之輩。」猴子聞言隨即怒目圓睜，面目振寧，火冒三丈，迎上前去要與那斯理論。



Photography: Stan Shoptaugh

The monkey, seeing the tension between the two, tried to calm them down. However, the fox could no longer control his rage. He pointed at the monkey fiercely and said, "You think you're so liberated with your half-learned thoughts of this 'Natural Flow.' I think you're just living in your fantasy with no actual roots. Go off with your flow and see if you could not starve to death." The monkey's eyes blazed like an inferno. With his face twitching, he too could no longer hold in his anger. The meeting truly became chaotic.

當那三獸爭吵之際，全然不知有一斑斕猛虎正緩緩行來。等察覺之際三獸皆心中一緊，以知無路可退。

While the three little critters were arguing, they did not notice the danger that was approaching. A tiger had been waiting in the bushes. By the time they noticed, their hearts skipped a beat. "It's too late to run!" thought the critters.

先覺不妙者為猴。猴頭心想：「吾應學眾獵戶一般，順應虎性，切勿將其激怒。」隨即倒地裝死。猴頭知曉老虎只啖鮮肉，虎性應不慾以死物為食。不料猛虎見此情形不怒反笑，張口將其咬住拋向一旁。只見那猴頭撞樹發出一聲長嘯。

The monkey was the first to notice and the first to act. He thought to himself, "I must act like the hunters. I must work with the nature of the tiger, not exciting or infuriating him." The monkey fell to the ground and played dead. He knew that tigers didn't like dead meat, and that it is probably the natural instinct of the tiger to avoid him. The tiger looked at the monkey and let out a grin, dragging it with his mouth, and throwing it to the side. The monkey hit his head on a tree and let out a loud cry.

鼯鼠忽有所憶，想起課中所學。所謂君子動口不動手，若見他人所行非禮，應當勸其為善。鼯鼠雖是膽戰心驚卻仍踏步向前對老虎言曰：「虎兄，莫要再多添暴行！『子曰：質勝文則野，文勝質則史。文質彬彬，然後君子。』⁴虎兄所為非君子之行經！」老虎聞言不為所動。反將鼯鼠壓於掌下。鼯鼠不得動彈。

The squirrel thought of the things he learned from school. It is improper for a gentleman to fight. So, the squirrel thought, "When someone is trying to fight you, convince him that this is improper and not in accordance with the rites." He stepped out shivering and said, "Mr. Tiger, please stop this madness! The Master once said, 'When native substance overwhelms cultural refinement you get a savage. When cultural refinement exceeds native substance you get a pendant. It is only when the two are in balance that you get a gentleman.'⁴ Please stop this savage act! Have some propriety!" The tiger looked at this little animal blabbering in front of him, and pressed his front paw on the squirrel, trapping him under his might.

狐狸見此情此景，忽有所念。憶起山中樵夫所行兼愛之道。此刻正是捨生取義之時。但它一隻小狐怎可勝過百獸之王？此時忽又憶起眾樵夫亦是良工巧匠，所造伐木之械可伐蒼天巨木。如臨大敵之際當以巧勝之。只見狐狸以草為繩，以木為棍，以石為錘，擊向猛虎。奈何雖有兵器但無實效。猛虎受擊仍不動如山。其雙掌離地動如雷震，穿殺山林疾馳如風，一掌便將狐狸掃落。

三獸皆伏地而倒，哀嘆不已，心想：「今日恐難逃一劫，吾等將為猛虎腹中之食。」

The fox, looking at this situation, thought about the life of the woodcutters. They were willing to risk their lives protecting each other. This is the time to practice that kind of impartial caring! However, how could he, a little fox, be a match for the king of forest? He remembered that the woodsmen were

"But, the tiger stood there unmoving like a great mountain. Lifting his palms off of the ground, he shook the earth like a thunderbolt."

also very advanced craftsmen. The tools they made could even cut down the tallest trees. In the face of this massive enemy, he also needed to use his intellect. He tied a long fibrous piece of grass to a stick with a rock on the end and launched at the tiger. This allowed him to repeatedly strike the tiger at a safe distance. The first couple of hits seemed to be effective. But, the tiger stood there unmoving like a great mountain. Lifting his palms off of the ground, he shook the earth like a thunderbolt. Taking off, he was like a gust of wind swaying the trees. With only one strike, he swiped the fox over. At last, all three were defeated. Lying on the ground they sighed in their minds, "This is the end. We are surely going to become dinner tonight."





Photography: Jason Tseng

猛虎漸漸逼近，其鼻息若穴中之嘯風，其垂涎如洞中之湍水，其血口似無底之深淵。此時三獸皆面如死灰，黯然失聲。

The tiger began pressing towards them. His breath was like the howling wind in a hollow; his drool like the running water of a cave; and his bloody mouth like the bottomless abyss of death. The three critters, with their faces like a pile of dead ashes, fell into silence.

豈料猛虎頓時放聲大笑說道：「吾聞爾等閒談已有多時。孺子皆懵懂無知。所學未達然則大放厥詞。不明道卻以道之名鄙夷異端。實乃忘失法本也。」

To their surprise, the tiger began laughing out loud, saying, "I have been listening to your conversation. You kids are all too naive and ignorant. You have not fully learned your pathways, yet speak as if you know it. Not understanding the Way, but using its name to diminish people with different dispositions. This is indeed losing the fundamental root."

虎向樹旁望去問道：「小猴兒，汝欲順應虎性但可曾想過汝之猴性？當猴頭擊中大樹時還可裝死乎？小猴慚愧，面色漲紅竟更勝其赤尻。」老虎隨即與鼯鼠道：「汝未曾明晰處境而欲以聖賢之言勸一霸王棄惡從善。豈不知欲說善言者必先有所倚仗。吾亦無話可說。以子之呆頭鼠腦，不明此理，不足為奇。」鼯鼠聞言面露難色欲以反駁卻不敢造次。虎與狐狸道：「我看你頗有一些膽識手段，將汝所學用於此類險地。不過火候未足，尚須歷練。汝之攻勢猶如撓癢一般，並無實用。」

The tiger looked towards the tree, saying, "Little monkey, you were trying to follow the nature of the tiger, but have you considered your own nature? When you hit your head on the stump, could you still play dead?" The monkey felt embarrassed, his face blushing even redder than his butt. The tiger then glanced at the squirrel. "You did not evaluate the situation you are in, yet you try to convince a hegemon to abandon evil acts by using the words of the sages. What you don't know is that those who wish to speak good words must first have something that they rely on. I can't really blame you for that. You are physically smaller with a limited brain capacity," he told the squirrel. Upon hearing this, the squirrel made a frown. He wanted to defend himself, but was too afraid to do so. The tiger then spoke to the fox, "I see that you have some skill and courage. You applied what you learned in dangerous situations. However, you still need more time to perfect your skills. Your attacks felt like mere scratches with no actual damage."

此時三獸皆長舒一氣，喜不自勝道：「吾等甚驚，幸子非歹人！」

By now the three critters all let out a long breath. They were relieved and rejoiced saying, "We were all so frightened! Thankfully you are not an enemy!"

只見那虎仰天長笑道：「方才聽汝等之言頗有幾分自命不凡，但遇險之時還能固持本心乎？汝之修行發端雖善，卻被種種名相所迷。諸般法門皆同源於道。其根本為慈悲智慧。吾不忍見知己好友應一時之惑而恩斷義絕。」

The tiger, raising his head and laughing towards the sky, said, "Moments ago, when I listened to your speeches, you all sounded a little pretentious. But when you were in danger, could you still maintain that attitude? Where was your original heart? I'm sure that your origin of cultivation stemmed from good roots, but you were confused by the names and appearances. All pathways of cultivation arise from the same Way, its basis being great compassion and wisdom. I could not bear to see dear friends break apart from misunderstandings and not appreciating each other."

三獸聽言皆拜服於地道：「先生有大恩於我等。今日若非先生點醒，我等終會釀成大錯。」老虎聞言，面露讚許之色說道：「孺子可教。我有一偈，汝等且聽：是非皆尤人自尋，道本同源無所別。迷者只見方寸光，悟時方明大千界。」

The three critters fell to the ground and bowed to the tiger. "We truly thank you, sir, for your teaching! If you did not inspire us today, we may have created a horrible mistake!" The tiger was appeased saying, "You kids have good prospects! I have a verse. Listen carefully as I speak:

Right and wrong are only identified by people,
The Way itself stems from the same origin with no duality
Those who are muddled only see inches of light,
Upon awakening can one understand the entire cosmos."

從此以後，三獸不見他人過，唯省自身失。

From then on, the three critters did not look for the faults in others, only reflecting on their own flaws. The End... Maybe...

NOTES:

- 1 Mozi: Impartial Caring I- Passage 4
《墨子：兼愛上》- 4
- 2 Mozi: Impartial Caring II- Passage 3
《墨子：兼愛中》- 3

- 3 Mengzi Book 3B9
《孟子：滕文公下》- 14
- 4 Analects 6.18
《論語》6.18



Artwork: Bhikshuni Jin Run



An Overthinker's Guide to Letting Go

Hui Xuan Ooi

As I write this, I contemplate the news around the world that may induce me to feel sorrow, outrage, apathy, or numbness: natural disasters razing through where loved ones live, a worldwide pandemic prolonged by human obstinacy, heart-plummeting headlines about the state of the country. It is almost too easy to completely lose all hope, exchanging what little optimism I have left for the next playlist or series that creates the best ambience for the end of the world. Like all of you, I have spent many days marinating in this type of atmosphere; but, after DRBU's Fall 2020 Contemplative Exercise Immersion (CEI) week on the four *brahmavihāras* (boundless hearts) of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity, I think I've turned over a new leaf on one of my strongest habits: overthinking.

While the goal of meditation is to still the mind, bringing about some inner peace, I have unintentionally spent many sittings entertaining my own fantasies, expounding on endless thoughts. There's a Pāli term for this: *papañca*, or mental proliferation. Whether standing, sitting, or lying down, my mind chugs away about the same topics over and over, especially those that I wish to completely get over and let go of. Back when I was still on the DRBU campus, I was walking back to my dormitory after dinner alone, my mind reeling from a past moment of regret. While absentmindedly moving onto the

sidewalk, I saw something dart out of the dry grass toward my leg. I lept away in vain, already snagged by a long, multi-branched bramble which managed to wrap itself around my leg. I escaped it, but was shocked out of my *papañca*. While removing the remaining thorns from my pant leg with a pair of tweezers I thought, "Someone is trying to tell me something."

I've written an academic paper on *papañca*, attempted to shift my focus to reciting, tried writing my thoughts in my diary just to get them out of my head, spoke to my friends about what's on my mind; yet, those approaches never seemed

to do quite enough. However, this past week I found that I resonate strongly with a simple *mettā* (loving-kindness) recitation, which I was formally introduced to in a guided meditation led by DRBU chaplain Jin Chuan Shi during the CEI. It goes as follows:

*May I be well.
May I be peaceful and at ease.
May I be happy.
May I have the patience, courage, and
understanding to face what arises.*

I tried it out during the contemplative immersion. I repeated this four-lined verse of well-wishing in my mind while I sat. My breath went from irregular and shallow to natural, relaxed, and comfortable. The tension in my shoulders melted away. My thoughts quieted and I felt serene and uniquely open. I've continued using this method for a few days and it has led me to be profoundly soothed. What I have wanted to let go of has begun to naturally, without coercing or manipulation, leave from

its burdensome place in my heart. There is much more to this *mettā* practice; so, I'll detail it in my own words in a way that I found to be helpful.

It is a natural occurrence for thoughts to arise during meditation. For me, the trouble comes when I react and expound on them instead of letting them go on their way. Frustrating thoughts become frustrating meditations. The same goes for thoughts of insecurity and fantasy. *Mettā* practice involves extending a nondiscriminatory warmth inward and outward, meaning that with a simple recitation, you are welcoming in what you've always pushed away, rejected, and hid from. My favorite line from *The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra* comes to mind. As part of his unconditioned verse in the "Prajna" chapter, Master Huineng says, "When attraction and aversion no longer

What I have wanted to let go of has begun to naturally, without coercing or manipulation, leave from its burdensome place in my heart.

block the mind, / Stretch out both legs and lie down" (34).

I imagine myself as I am, sitting in half lotus on the floor. The thought that arises, if associated with someone in particular, manifests as that person. I see myself looking up and gently tapping the spot on the floor next to me, silently inviting him or her to join me in my meditation. I repeat the four lines, sending loving-kindness outward from the center of my body, and continue expanding it beyond, radiating *mettā* onto those who have accepted my invitation and are, in my imagination, meditating next to me. If the mind moves to start remembering either pleasant or not-so-pleasant memories, I repeat the four lines again, calmly reminding myself to not engage in the narratives. When

tension or pain arises, I do the same, inviting them to sit next to me as I

The power of these thoughts only comes from the power that I've continually granted to them, possibly through many lifetimes.

wish myself well. This registers in my head as, "Observe what arises and empty out the narrative. Watch those that are passing by and do not follow."

In this practice, I contemplate my mind as something vast, be it the ocean, the sky, or empty space itself. Another line from the Sixth Patriarch: "The myriad dharmas, absolutely everything, are within the nature of all people. If you can regard all people, the bad as well as the good, without grasping or rejecting, free of any clinging, your mind will be like empty space..." (25). I relate this to my good and bad thoughts. I remind myself that I may visit previous memories, but only for a moment, not staying for long. I am only a tourist in my own mind museum.

The power of these thoughts only comes from the power that I've continually granted to them, possibly through many lifetimes. While repeating the four-lined verse, I accept my thoughts exactly as they are. As someone who has the tendency to be sensitive and take many things personally, I realized through this practice that nothing is personal. It only seems so because I grant it the consent to be personal and make it about me. I had a thought: "Maybe I'm not unable to let things go, but that is what I have been saying to myself for years now. Let's break the cycle with *mettā* and give myself the open space to see what happens."

I have honestly just dipped my toe into the boundless realms of the practice of loving-kindness and relating it to the other four *brahmavihārās*, but it has already opened the door to the idea that I *can* maintain a constant peace of mind that I have been striving for—a state where the mind is unattached to the thoughts that arise. To conclude, I'll leave off with a line from my go-to sūtra: "What is no-thought? If you can view all dharmas with an unattached mind, this is no-thought. This mind is everywhere engaged but is nowhere attached" (32). I know that despite the apparently hopeless world that seems to only be worsening, I am able to maintain brilliant hope in my heart and mind. I believe in myself, and I believe in you!

May you be well.

May you be peaceful and at ease.

May you be happy.

And may you have the patience, courage, and understanding to face what arises.

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Sorrow in a velvet margin thickly like a swath of grass (yon odalisque reposing, bored) sodden, luxuriant, beyond the sidewalk teeming threads.

How I love to spread my toes between the heavy clumps of soil there! And egg me not, I beg you, to formulate the nature of the yawning yawning there,

(as though that un presupposing fellow at g7 should venture to philosophize

the undiscovered country biding fallow at g9,)

that melancholy promenade I so incline to habit jostling close upon the precipice, like the bluff of a headland making inroads on the sea:

like falling backward into morning, arms outspread; or the predawn fog that sloshes heavy in the valley, thick as a dairy cow's cream, when the daylight

like an eager wave rushing in to greet the sun breaks its brilliance on the twilit hills—

how you let yourself get lost there of an adolescent idyll, and the silence

was immense; and the trees like ancient galleons kept on creaking out from ambiguity, the feeble lanterns of their leaves

timid in the mist—
an absenting of light.

By which I do not mean to say some cowardly withdrawal of light, its dereliction or retreat. Not the lack

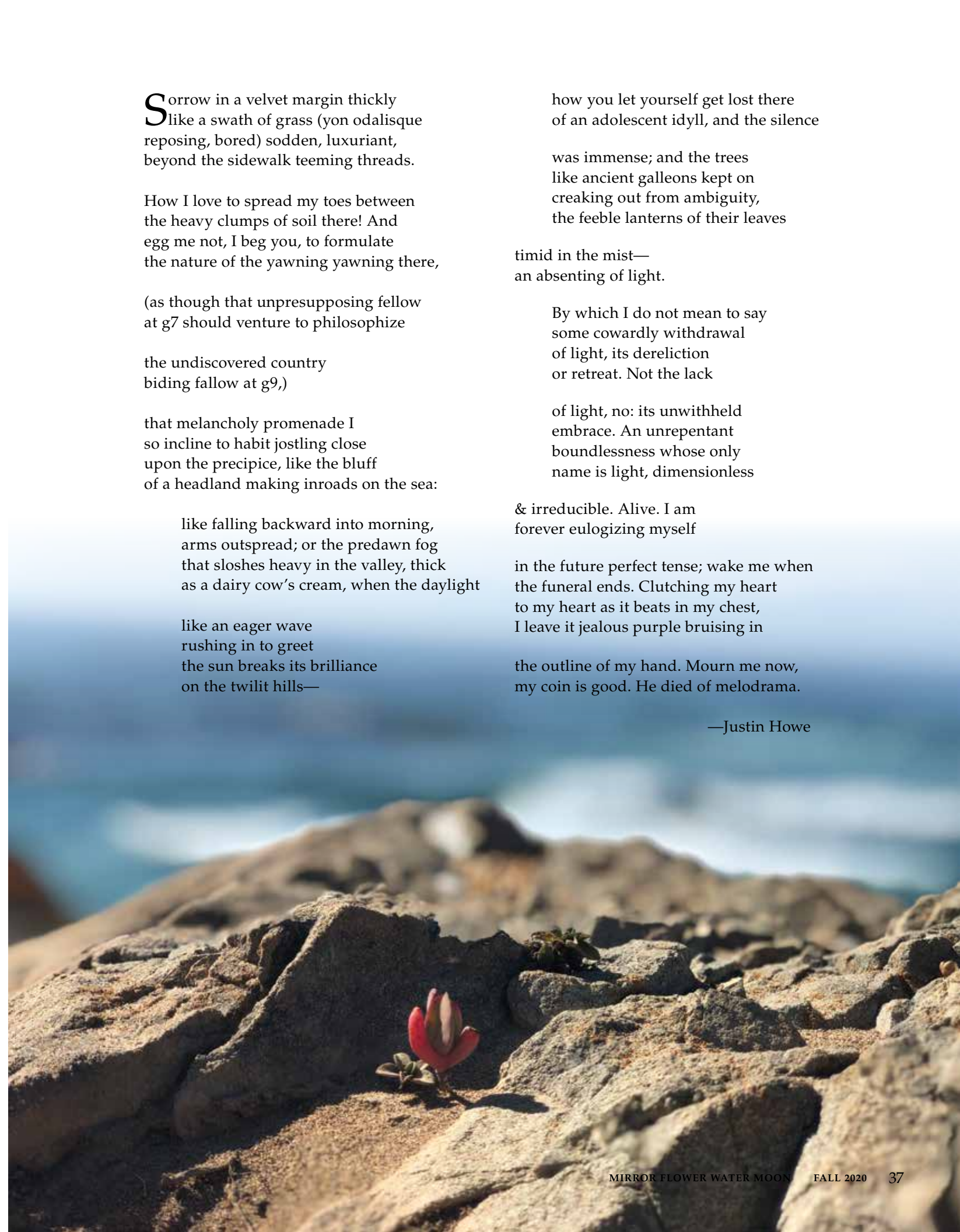
of light, no: its unwithheld embrace. An unrepentant boundlessness whose only name is light, dimensionless

& irreducible. Alive. I am forever eulogizing myself

in the future perfect tense; wake me when the funeral ends. Clutching my heart to my heart as it beats in my chest, I leave it jealous purple bruising in

the outline of my hand. Mourn me now, my coin is good. He died of melodrama.

—Justin Howe





The Divine Farmer

Yanik Davison

For this issue's theme of "Resilience," I chose to depict Shennong, the Chinese god of farming and herbalism. He is sometimes known as the "Divine Farmer" and is often associated with Traditional Chinese Medicine. I figured it would be a timely subject for this particular theme, given the state of the world today. Shennong is often depicted with the features of an Ox, which is a very strong and resilient animal. I depicted the figure with muscles to show his strength, and his face shows the expression of laughter, to contrast the snake biting his hand in a show of no fear. In addition, his bodily form is reminiscent of the well-known stance in Kung Fu, horse stance, which is known for its solidity and power.

On Despair and the *Lifeworld*

Dr. Squash

The fact that the only world we ever live in is a *lifeworld*¹ is a proposition with which both phenomenologists and Buddhists would agree. “But so what?” you might be wondering. Well, I have an idea of a potential “what.” Bear with me.

I’m going to be a bit bold, but I think that one of the current overarching cultural moods at the moment is a sort of generalized despair and pessimism about the world and humanity. At least that’s what I feel from talking to my friends and consuming media. Be that as it may, from my own individual experience I can attest to seeing the world (“the world”—wink, wink, phenomenologists) as a bleak, threatening place full of violence, instability, injustice and on the brink of environmental collapse. (This reminds me of that joke by Woody Allen about a restaurant: ““The food was terrible! ‘Yeah, and such small portions!’” —“the world is horrible” “yeah, and it’s ending!””).

But, jokes aside, I guess you can see where I’m going with this. That the world is a horrible, threatening place is, of course, just a *lifeworld*, meaning that it’s an interpreted reality. This dawned on me when one of my instructors asked us in one of the guided meditations at the Contemplative Exercise Immersion to see how we *are* constructing our world—our *lifeworld*—and to realize that we can “build the world we want to live in,” and use the loving-kindness, compassion and sympathetic joy we’d been cultivating for that purpose. It was very liberating to feel, at that moment, the possibility of letting go of that sense of an external horrible “really-going-on” thing out there and instead, see it from a place of compassion and unconditional positivity, or, at least, glimpse into the possibility of that.

But is this a kind of naïveté? Putting on rose-tinted glasses? After all, the world *is* in danger of environmental collapse by many experts’ estimates, and terrible things do happen all the time, and there does seem to be a crisis of leadership, and so on. I think this is the wonderful thing for me, where the puzzle kind of came together, and I’m going to try to put it into words by being even bolder than before and quoting Guan Yin Bodhisattva in the *Surangama Sutra*. He (it’s “him” in this sutra) says that, as a result of his cultivation of emptiness:

“First, my mind ascended to unite with the fundamental, wondrous, enlightened mind of all Buddhas in all ten directions, and my power of compassion became the same as theirs. Second, my mind descended to unite with all beings of the six destinies in all ten directions such that I felt their sorrows and their prayerful yearnings as my own.”²

What is this mind like? What is it like to be completely sensitive and aware of (in fact, to identify with) all the world’s troubles, and, simultaneously, cognizant of the all-pervading luminous awareness within which all things are seen as empty of independent existence? For the real answer to that question, I invite you to cultivate for three great aeons with me. But for now, I want to say that a wonderful thing happened when I performed the mental exercise

of seeing the constructed-ness of the “horrible world” I was living in (its *lifeworldly*-ness), and seeing things through a lens of loving-kindness and compassion: I felt like I could

look at those horrible things as still going on, still real, yet, at the same time, completely false—just the product of billions of very confused, very afflicted minds working at the same time. The anger and the pain were still there, yet they were completely unnecessary; the objects they were directed at were empty. All it would take is for every single person to change their minds, to “turn around” for it all to vanish like a bad dream. For real.

Now, I do realize I’m getting into very tricky PR ground here. As Professor Doug Powers would say, this is a subject for a whole book (and probably the subject of many books already), so I will leave it at that. I fully welcome any philosophical and moral objections the reader may have. But what I will say is that, at the moment, it “clicked” in my heart and it gave me the sense of a lighter, more hopeful, and, ultimately, more useful place from which to engage the world. A place in which there is no space for hopelessness nor ironic detachment nor even “righteous indignation,” which is kind of shocking to my liberal superego that thinks that “if you’re not indignant you’re not paying attention.” Instead what comes forth is the kind of calm detachment that a doctor needs to diagnose and treat an emergency patient (can you imagine the doctor being angry at the disease?). We cannot know whether the patient will live or not but we will still try our best simply because it’s the right thing to do.

All it would take is for every single person to change their minds, to “turn around” for it all to vanish like a bad dream. For real.

¹ *Lebenswelt*, in phenomenology, the world as immediately or directly experienced in the subjectivity of everyday life, as sharply distinguished from the objective “worlds” of the sciences (Encyclopedia Britannica).

² *Surangama Sutra*, Buddhist Text Translation Society, p. 235.



Artwork: Yang Liu

the way unfurls beneath your feet: bible translations for resilience

sjon ljos

the way bubbles up
through the spring in my step
psalms 119:105

tight is the grasp of those who seek to bend
time to their preference;
but it is the way of the heart that inevitably
unfurls over time beneath your feet.
proverbs 19:21

that i may be quiet enough
to hear my heart turn
1 kings 18:37

to follow peace with all beings is to be holy
hebrews 12:14

longevity blesses patience
romans 1:17

commit to a path, & the path shall guide you.
proverbs 16:3

to follow the way, turn your commitment inward.
do not tell others what is true.
then you will lead with clarity.
joshua 1:8

this small life, witness it:
for without it, there could be no witness
mark 2:27

do you abide by your ethics?
then in every moment, become yourself.
james 3:13

lightly, soul stirs in the heart, that i may
remember why i am here.
psalm 119:11

spirit rests in our heart,
graciously rising from the shadow of our step.
galatians 5:25

the way lies deep & vertical as the spine. once
upon the path, all leanings are experienced
relative to uprightness: and the way unfurls
when the tongue of the heart hath spoken it.
isaiah 40:3-5

for if i were still trying to please people, to my
heart i would no longer be in service
galatians 1:10

temptation beckons to dethrone the heart; and
the heart rules not by desire, and so while seated
is incorruptible.
james 1:13

true nature reveals itself through the heart.
matthew 5:8

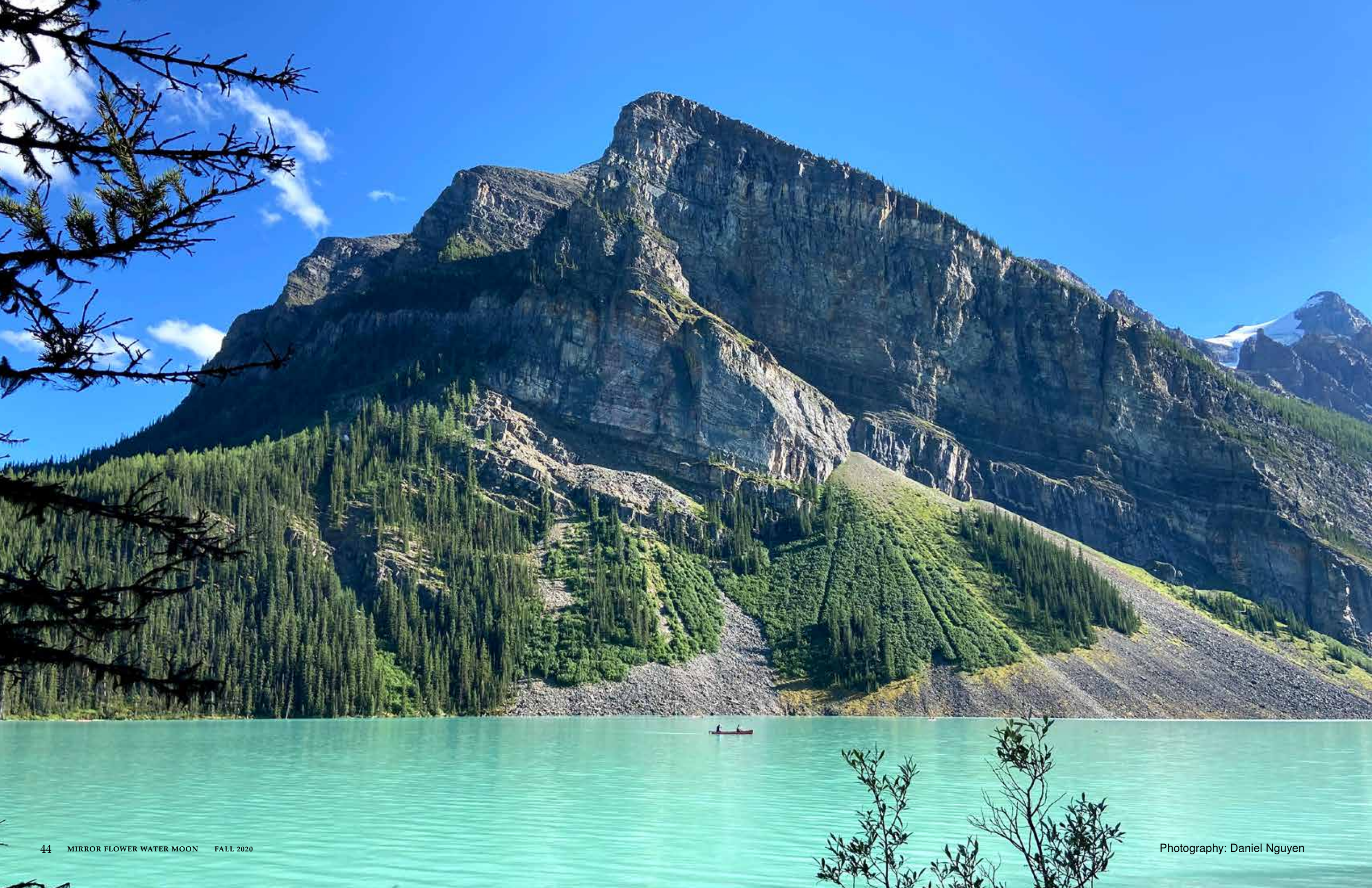
to be sentient is to long-suffer self-ward
2 peter 3:9

balance, like dawn, inevitably arises from the
motion of time.
amos 5:24

the small heart harbors evil, & the big heart
constricts. the small heart forgives, & the big
heart expands.
mark 11:26

all that you do, do in service of the heart, and not
unto the personality;
colossians 3:23

to align with your purpose is to live in your favor
romans 8:28





THE EMPIRE OF GIVING

The Ego-Death Star blows itself up
As a selfless gift to others.
Was it big enough? Did anyone notice?
Try again next lifetime.

— James Roberts

Opportunity to Fail

Lisa Liang

Nobody likes to fail. It hurts to aim high and then end up falling short. There's also a sense of wasted time and effort when results are not achieved. Then the fear of not being good enough sweeps in when my peers and teachers see me as a big disappointment. That fear of looking like a clown in the eyes of others is real. From that, there's the pull to gain approval and validation from the pressure to succeed. This sense of pressure creates stress and needless worry. But my experiences have shown me otherwise. From this reality, looking bad and silly in the eyes of others isn't as bitter as I thought. Of course, rejection and failure sting. Yes, it is embarrassing, but failure isn't the end of the world (obviously!). Failure does not make me feel less than adequate because I can always try again. I can even make myself feel better by acknowledging that ultimately there's nothing to get or to achieve. I don't need to be anything for anyone. I can stop comparing to others or to some ideal version of myself. I can relax. Also, I admit that the opportunity to fail is precious because it protects me from reinforcing my personal narrative. I tend to take what happens to me too personally, worrying that I might not be good enough compared to others. I fear others giving me labels such as, "You're lazy, you're foolish, you're incompetent, you lack talent and skills, you're pathetic, you're immature, you're hopeless, etc." However, I learned that my fears are trapping me in my own made up stories, thereby keeping me from the willingness to take responsibility, accept defeat, and admit mistakes. Through my failures, I learned that life goes on and many opportunities are still available. What is more precious than the results achieved from success is the opportunity to learn and grow

from failure. Accepting failure, as counterintuitive as this sounds, improves my chances of success and triumph. From this growth mindset, then no matter if I succeed or fail, it's a win-win game. This flexible mindset also makes it easier to accomplish more meaningful goals and to develop self-reliance. Uncomfortable feelings toward rejection and failure become fertile ground for nurturing positive, playful, resilient, and carefree qualities.

When I have the opportunity to fail and wish to take a wider view, a particular quote helps reorient me back on the path. The Buddha spoke these famous words as he was lying on his deathbed, exhorting his disciples: "*vayadhammā*

I learned that my fears are trapping me in my own made up stories, thereby keeping me from the willingness to take responsibility, accept defeat, and admit mistakes.

saṅkhārā appamādena sampādethā'ti." I translate this to mean, "all conditioned phenomena are subject to decay; it is through vigilance that you succeed" (DN 16). Thus

were the Buddha's last few words before becoming extinguished. Here in the "Mahāparinibbāna Sutta," the Buddha, at the ripe old age of eighty, spoke to a large group of monks in the *sāla*-grove of the Mallas of Kusināra, imparting motivation for persisting on the path. These last words have served as an impetus and refuge in my cultivation, reminding me to not lose sight of the goal of liberation. The path seems long and difficult, but the Buddha encourages all to persevere with vigilance or diligence (*appamāda*) by keeping a critical watch of the mind. Having done so, there opens the possibility of freedom. The Pāli-English Dictionary (hereafter PED) renders *appamāda* as "thoughtfulness, carefulness, conscientiousness, watchfulness, vigilance, earnestness, zeal."¹ *Appamāda* is often translated

¹ PED, p. 57.

as heedfulness, vigilance, or diligence. More specifically, *appamāda* may refer to being vigilant of one's physical and mental actions. Thus, it has a quality of care and restraint. A person who is constantly vigilant is like a shepherd with his dog watching over his sheep so that the sheep will not get eaten by wolves. The shepherd and the sheep-dog watch over the flock like a person who carefully watches over (guards) their own mind. Applied to cultivation, this orientation helps guard me from any afflictive states and unchecked habitual tendencies that carry me away from the goal. In other words, *appamāda* can help "guard one's sheep," the qualities of mind and cultivation I wish to nurture.

For myself, I am easily distracted by alluring objects and beautiful forms, derailing me from the possibility of freedom. Rather than having to do something fun and wanting those Nike Pegasus 37 running shoes or the new 27-inch iMac, I can resist the compulsion

Resilience, to me, has a quality of *appamāda*, a surveyor's broad vision that lets me know that I can broaden my perspective by accepting the possibility of failure.

by bringing forth *appamāda* to ease those distractions of wanting and to draw up an experience in which there is a moment of "enoughness." Deep down is a feeling of contentedness to the degree that I am mindful of abundance and fullness, which is unconditioned. Through the application of *appamāda*, I can bring the mind back to its centeredness, reminding myself to stay present without being pulled in aimless directions. When I am not present, I lose focus and forget that I am content, lacking nothing. This forgetfulness resembles a theatrical play from which we seek entertainment, thereby indulging in compelling fantasies and narratives. To stay present and not lose sight of the goal, the guidance of *appamāda* gently but firmly keeps me from engaging in nonsense and reminds me to value each moment as precious, without wasting the opportunity to free the mind from incessantly chasing after conditioned phenomena, i.e. my personal narrative. Rather than letting the arising and passing of the conditioned control me, I can just let them flow naturally in a

democratic process, without letting them become fascist dictators of my life.

The words "*vayadhammā saṅkhārā*" remind me that achievements and sense pleasures are ephemeral and insatiable, since all conditioned phenomena are subject to decay. In other words, they are impermanent and ultimately unsatisfactory. Chasing after them brings no lasting peace. Recognizing their impermanence enables me to simply rest and receive without wanting things to be otherwise. There is nothing to get or to achieve. The simple task of letting whatever arises and passes allows for a sense of protection and fullness to sink in.

PED gives the meaning "to procure, obtain" for *sampādethi*, which is a causative form of the verb *sampajjati*. For *sampajjati*, the PED offers "to

come to, to fall to, to succeed, to prosper." *Sampādethi* thus means "to cause to procure or obtain successfully." The shepherd's flock is then safely routed onto a path free of raven-

ous wolves. Similarly, to the degree that I apply *appamāda* or vigilance, my mind can safely reorient itself onto a path that is free from the dangers of unchecked karmic habituations.

In the "Appamāda Sutta" (SN 3.17), King Pasenadi of Kosala asks the Buddha what is one quality that brings security in this life and in the future? The Buddha responds saying that *appamāda* is that one quality. Elaborating, the Buddha then relates *appamāda* to an elephant's footprint, in which the feet of all beings can be encompassed. The size of an elephant's footprint is regarded as the most supreme among all animals. Similarly, *appamāda* is considered supreme in its all-embracing function. Relatedly, the application of *appamāda* in my own process gives me a bird's-eye view of my mind, allowing me to survey its terrain for danger.

Furthermore, in the *Dhammapada*, a whole section (Dhp 21-32) is dedicated to *appamāda*. A particularly poignant passage points out that Indra, who is sometimes depicted riding an elephant, is constantly keeping watch: "By



vigilance [*appamāda*], Indra had gone to the excellence of the gods. Vigilance [*appamāda*] is praised and non-vigilance [*pamāda*] is always blamed."² The shepherd who lacks vigilance will find his sheep eaten by wolves. Instead, one must cast the net of one's vigilance wide. This vigilance is like the elephant's footprint in the Buddha's simile, encompassing all others in its wake. Resilience, to me, has a quality of *appamāda*, a surveyor's broad vision that lets me know that I can broaden my perspective by accepting the possibility of failure. Having failed, I can foster

the confidence to find my footing again. Drawing on the quality of *appamāda*, I can keep an eye on the path and navigate back to it when confronted by victory or defeat. Once I find my footing, as the Buddha advises, keep going with vigilance in tow.

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² *Appamādena maghavā, devānaṃ seṭṭhatam gato. Appamādaṃ pasamsanti, pamādo garahito sadā.* This is a literal translation. An alternative translation may be, "Through vigilance, Indra became the foremost of the gods. Vigilance is praised and non-vigilance is ever reproached."

I Love Relationships, Sometimes but Not Always

Jiaying Chen

TRYING to love, and I, I am.
I feel brave, I feel grave,
but I love.
and She's a prayer under the sun in the crowd.
bit by bit. young Love circling in ancient
drought.
Sigh!
love evaporates when the light has rusted **OUT**,
its shadow passes—like a wild cloud.
I scream loud,
She has, more than one doubt.

I love her, **SOMETIMES** but not always.

「我愛人來人往，有時，但不總是」

陳佳瑩

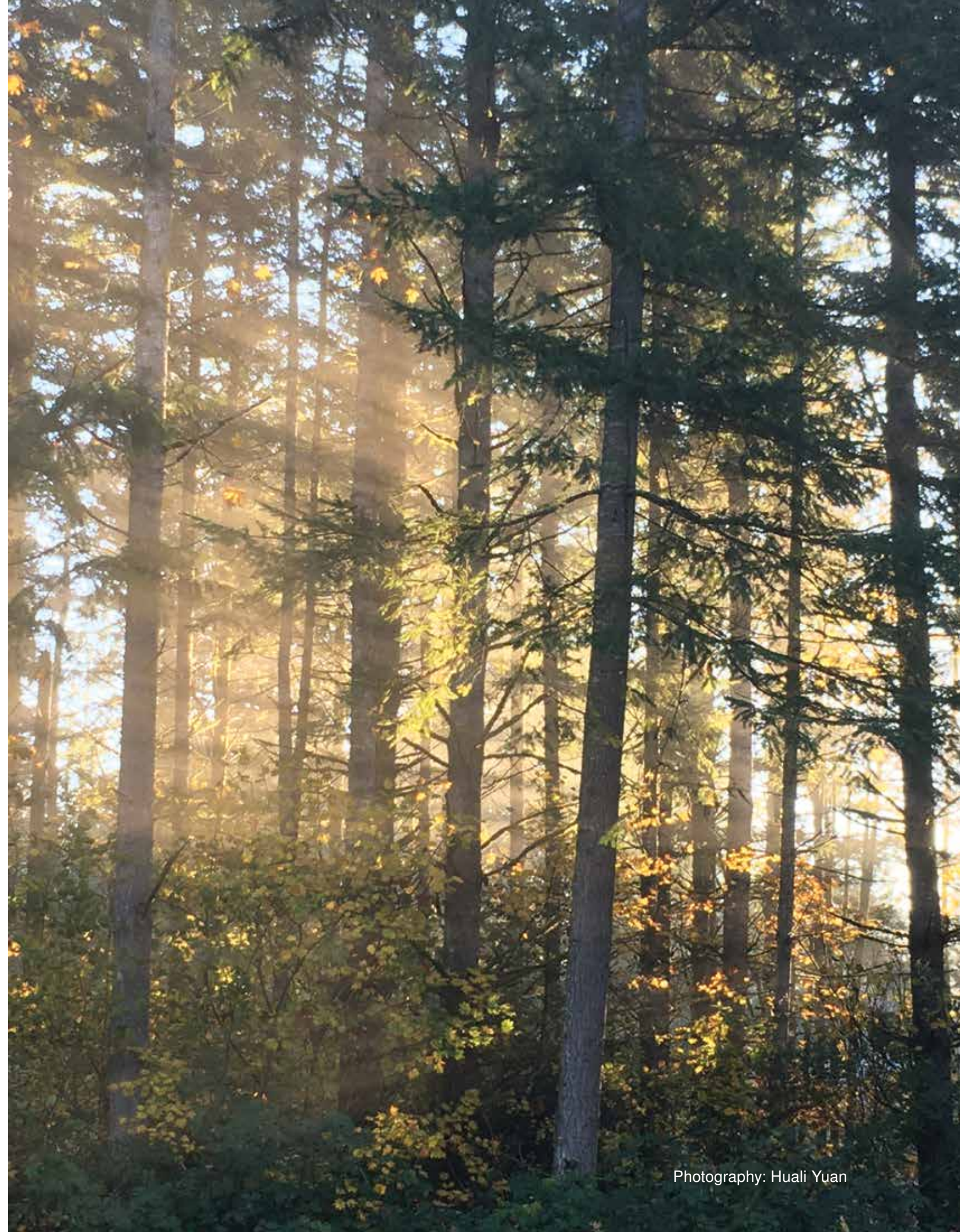
初探桃花源，心，我。

我勇敢，又自恃沈重
但是我愛。
而她是，繁忙人間，向陽的祈禱者。

斷斷續續，青澀的愛盤旋於陳舊的乾涸里。
唉！
斑駁發繡的光暈下，愛蒸發了，
它的影子像朵野雲般掠過。

我歇斯底里，
她也，不經滿懷疑惑。

我愛她，有時，但不總是。



Certain Objects

Hasan Friggle

i.

Light enters not only the eyes but any orifice it can find. It fills the mouth like a second tongue, thick and warm, suffusing the head with a thin, untraceable ache, seeping through the pores of the skin down to the bone, where it rests in a wet, marrowy bed. There is no place where light does not want to look. Even your dreams are filled with light, while your waking hours become more like dreams, so difficult is it to tell what's going on at any given moment. You begin to fantasize about a room. A simple room. Bare walls, no windows, a single door, the entering of which will take the rest of your life.

ii.

We see a man standing on a balcony. The man looks down and smiles. We cannot see what he is looking at but we must assume, because he is smiling, that it is not unpleasant to look at. The man wears a white shirt. The shirt clings to his body. We watch. Now the man turns and steps into what was, until this moment, just a darkness behind him. We remain outside, watching. The man moves from one place to another. He picks something up then puts it down. He puts it down in the same place or in another place slightly beside where it was before, or else he puts down a different thing, something different from the thing he'd picked up, that he had already been carrying, which we did not notice. He walks away, into another room, then he comes back. He stands by the bed. He pauses a moment, then raises his arms. Something falls away. He climbs into the bed, wrapping himself around a suggestion, which shudders ever so slightly before settling back into stillness. Demurely, we withdraw.

iii.


Later we see a man in a car. The same man or a different man. The man is driving through a city at night. The lights of the city lie on his face, transforming him into an advertisement for cigarettes or shoes. There is a slight tension in the man's jaw and in his fingers. We observe this tension. At a stoplight the man lowers the window of the car, letting in the cool night air. He turns up the volume on the radio. The light turns from red to green. The man drives on. We follow him across the city to a street that spills out of the darkness. The closing of the man's car door, though not loud, fills the night. The man walks up a gravel drive. We wait down by the car. The man knocks. The door opens. The man enters. We wait for a minute, then for a few minutes, then for what seems like a much longer stretch of time. We look at the door. The door, which now has become the thing at which we look. We look at the door as though we wished to obliterate it with our looking, or else seduce it. But the door remains opaquely unbothered. It betrays no sign of its being looked at. It hides, like all clever things hide, behind itself.

iv.

The most unfortunate aspect of being a character in a horror movie is that you do not realize you are a character in a horror movie until it is too late.

v.

It occurs to you lying in bed one day that between a moment of being awake and a moment of being asleep there must exist something else, something that is neither of these things or both. When you are awake you know that you are awake, or at least your waking mind knows it, just as when you are asleep your sleeping mind knows that it is sleeping (though we use the word 'knowing' very loosely here as knowing is a structure peculiar to the waking mind, which the sleeping mind has no use for), but what of that moment in between? Does it too know itself? You begin to stay up late into the night, watching your mind, waiting for the moment to reveal itself. But no matter how closely you watch, you find that it always sneaks up on you. Before you know it you are asleep and then, somehow, awake again. You wonder if your sleeping self is equally perturbed at its inability to witness the moment of its waking. Does it too hold onto itself as long as possible in the hopes of observing the moment at which it becomes awake? There is nothing in your life that seems so irretrievable (and yet so intimate) as that moment, which preys on you nightly like a predictably unavoidable assassin. You begin to grow paranoid. You develop a habit of turning suddenly, even in the middle of the day, even in the middle of a conversation, wondering if that faint brush on the back of your neck is the moment announcing itself, biding its time, waiting to steal you away into sleep.



Spacious, Responsive; Wakeful, Alive

Quinn Anderson

What we are never
ceases to change, and
always adapts anew, as
the soil to the rain or
the wind.


I.

When I think about my experiences since the lockdown, and I consider what it is that allows one to weather the difficulties of circumstances, I think of the idea of flexibility, adaptability, and spaciousness.

The *Visudimaggha* describes loving-kindness as having the property of “solvency.”¹ Solvency describes something which dissolves another substance. Cultivating this energy of mettā, and applying it as a salve to our own wounded places, the parts of ourselves that stubbornly hang onto self-protection, can dissolve those rigid spaces. Mettā, this well-wishing, encourages a generosity spirited towards communal harmony and flowing in peace with others. When absorbed in mettā, I see others with a wish to encourage their happiness, and thus, I find myself willing to let go here and there, just to let them have that space. Slowly over time, an ease of personality sets in. Where maybe once I was opinionated or domineering, I can become accommodating or receptive. Perhaps if I sought an activity for my own sake, now I might consider more commonly how I can lift the spirits of those in my vicinity.

Of course, this is a practice. A lot of this is garnered from an intermittent experience, and not a consistent state. My understanding and cultivation of mettā is still minimal, just glimmering here and there. Regardless, it gives a sense of faith to experience those glimmers.

Kindness changes everything. Any part of my practice or my daily existence varies wildly depending on the presence of kindness or its antithesis, ill-will. I look back on my cultivation prior to this summer, and I see how a great deal of ill-will imbued into my practice. There was frequently a misunderstanding about each piece of practice. Lately, I’ve discovered some new things: it’s okay for practice to shift; it’s okay to choose a relaxing method. Forgiving yourself and your conditions, forgiving others, starts with knowing that life is complicated and the road is long and winding. With a harsh thought, cultivation becomes misery. With a thought of gentleness, it becomes a balm. From this, I’m learning how to write, read, contemplate, sit, recite, repent, bow, speak, relate, transfer, change. All of these are acts of kindness, which move the mind to a gentle spirit of forgiveness. Everything can become okay in our hearts. Everything in me, in you, in the worlds we perceive. Practicing that patience of letting go, of meeting things with a kind thought rather than our habitual minds, our minds naturally adapt and release that which impedes.



In September, I moved to Sudhana Center, and by the time I was out of the quarantine period, the Contemplative Immersion on the *brahmavihārās* (loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy, equanimity) had begun. I experienced a profound awakening, one that is as ordinary as life: that conditions cannot change the mind / the mind is the place of awakening. Who I am now is much different than who I was a year ago. All of a sudden, I have all of these experiences, feelings, layers that I didn't recognize before. I'm happier, lighter, freer. But I'm still, like anyone, facing the constant deluge of the mind. It's just become deeply apparent that it's in my perception that all of my own suffering is manifested. Hope and faith are springing in the well, and I feel the future is full and bright with potential. The world itself may look a mess from a certain vantage point, but from the view that we can ultimately be free, hope is restored.

II.

Writing needs to be an exploration of the inner layers of being. The spaces that feel full, rich, alive. The deep blue territory that vibrates with openness and mettā, with joy and connection. It is the part waiting to be tapped, waiting to be melded into, your mind focused on one single wisdom: you. There's a lesson in each breathing moment of life wherein the body of parts that makes up your being moves responsively within the world. It responds, and you listen. There, you learned, and joy is the result.

Writing is a method for touching this pool of creative potential. This watery energy that saturates the moment-to-moment experience with a deep and profound awareness of lovingkindness. An embracing of the world and its many parts, the beings and their many natures. The self and its infinitely complex machinations, most of which remain unseen.


This space is hard to find, as it rests beneath the surface of the roiling activity of distraction, of anxiety, of personality, of ego. Moment to moment, my focus is lost in the foray of habituation. What if we could find it in our living, breathing moments? In our relationships, our work, our home life? The mind that lives here is the mind that is alive. It is the mind that is in motion with the world. The mind that illuminates and fills the space between each moment. It opens the cracks, revealing valleys. It opens the valleys, revealing the universe. Every present phenomenon is dust on its fingertips as it reaches out, everywhere, at all times, to the known and unknown, breathing in the lightless and lightful equally.

Every moment is the same and different. Every moment is perfectly still and breathing deeply. There is nothing there, nor not there. There is nothing to think, say. The spaciousness is its embrace. The more it opens, the more it fills; the more it potentiates, the more it reduces. It is endless and undifferentiated. It is forgiving. It remembers, and so it forgets — we are all the same substance, and gone forever is that hatred once known. What was it? Who was the enemy?

There is nothing to fight — everything is in my own mind.

III.

I think that the mind itself is beyond resilience. Every wound, every adversity, is narrative, and I'm only ever fighting myself. It's never another person or a situation. Each moment that challenges me simply sparks a process in my own consciousness. If I want to blame the spark, I can; but I carried the tinder around on my sleeves. If I burn, isn't it my carelessness?



Lately, I can sometimes see how a single interpretation of experience as it happens can turn what is otherwise neutral into a whole context. Take discomfort, which indicates a positive change towards liberation. Discomfort could be the moment when that around which we've designed a sense of security in ourselves is in jeopardy. When things are uncertain, the uncertainty is whether our dynamic, interpretive basis is met with support from the environment around us. If understood correctly, this process can actually feel good - liberating. A loss of support for the ego is a space to let go and relax into, thus embracing a relaxed awareness of experience.

This interpreting is an impediment to liberation. Without it, there would be no pressing need to protect, defend, prove, fight, push. Without this, I think the mind would become endlessly and perfectly responsive and free. That mind — the bright mirror — is without stain. It does not have the narrative of trauma, the narrative of fear, the narrative of hatred. No narrative rests in its branches. No stimuli in the consciousness draws from its depths the roiling well of habituation. It remains perfectly still, reflecting in clarity the exacting nature of whatever its awareness observes. It knows, it does not speculate. It knows, it does not recall. It knows, it does not interpret.

IV.

Wisdom is just this knowing, without process, endlessly.

Wisdom is not arrived at, nor is it forced. You are already it; it is already you. Wisdom is the breath and body, the mind and heart, the life lead or observed. What we are evolves in that way, as a tree adapts to the wind or the soil or the flood. What we are never ceases to change, and always adapts anew, as the soil to the rain or the wind. What we are has no center and no outer limit, as the forest, which expands and recedes as a breath, its many minds collectively standing still in its multiplicity.

As you experience, as you imagine, underneath, the new roots are growing. Above ground, a sprout appears. An old tree falls and rots, returning to soil. New sprouts rise from its decaying form. As you take in the water of wisdom, of knowledge, of insight; as you bathe in the light of good friends, a field is filled with abundance.

The best way to tend this field is simply to keep an eye on it. You may sprinkle your seeds through good acts and consistent practice; you may water your soil with knowledge and kindness; you may invite the light of good friends to shine on it. Then you may simply sit back and allow your awareness to spread open. Take all of it in, lightly. Respond gently, as needed. Don't worry about fruit; it will fall anyway, becoming seeds beneath the layer of the known. Don't worry about the roots; they will grow deeper and deeper of their own accord. Attend as though it is timeless, joyful, and timelessness and joyfulness will be its spaciousness.

That which survives the winter storm was hardier in the first place. It was meant to survive it. It was cared for properly. It is the future of your hard-won life. So don't fret the losses or fear the changes. Seek the flower that cannot be burned, the tree that cannot be felled. That which is soaked through, which is unburned by the flames; that which is flexible, which withstands the gale storm. That bright mirror, dustless, full of light.

1. The reference to mettā as a solvent can be found in *The Path of Purification*, "Chapter IX: The Divine Abidings" by Buddhaghosa, Buddhist Publication Society, 2011, pg 311. The text can be downloaded from accesstoinight.org.

Cold Mountain's Poems

Translated by Tomas Fletcher

The following poems are written by Chan Master Han Shan (寒山,
literally "Cold Mountain")

重巖我卜居，鳥道絕人跡。
庭際何所有，白雲抱幽石。
住茲凡幾年，屢見春冬易。
寄語鐘鼎家，虛名定無益。

I chose a home within a lofty cliff
On trails of birds beyond the reach of man.
What's there within the boundaries of my yard?
Snow-white clouds embracing hidden ledges.
Living here now for how many years?
Time and again I've seen the seasons change
You who put your trust in bells and cauldrons
Empty names won't do you any good.

欲得安身處，寒山可長保。
微風吹幽松，近聽聲愈好。
下有班白人，喃喃讀黃老。
十年不得歸，忘卻來時道。

If you're looking for a peaceful refuge,
You'll feel at ease upon Cold Mountain's peak.
With gentle winds that stir through shaded pines —
Come closer and the sound keeps getting better.
Underneath them sits a gray haired man
Mumbling away his ancient texts.
Unable to return now for a decade,
He forgot the path by which he came.

貪愛有人求快活，不知禍在百年身。
但看陽焰浮漚水，便覺無常敗壞人。
丈夫志氣直如鐵，無曲心中道自真。
行密節高霜下竹，方知不枉用心神。

There are those who seek for happiness in greed and love
Unaware of all the trials this mortal body brings.
Still there are those who see a floating bubble or mirage
And thus they realize impermanence undoes us all.
A real man has determination that's as firm as iron
With a heart that's most straightforward, he truly walks the Dao.
A row of dense and tall bamboo that bear the snow upon them
Are teaching you how not to use your mind and heart in vain.



Photography: Tomas Fletcher



回春醫療保健操動作、要領、作用與圖解

INSTRUCTIONS AND ILLUSTRATIONS FOR PERFORMING THE
MOVEMENTS OF THE RETURNING TO SPRING EXERCISES
FOR CURING AND MAINTAINING HEALTH AND DESCRIPTIONS
OF THEIR FUNCTIONS

Translated by Bhikshuni Heng Chih et alia

These exercises are part of an ongoing series, exercises 1 to 10 were published in the Summer 2018 issue, exercises 11 to 20 were published in the Fall/Winter 2018 issue, exercises 21 to 30 were published in the Fall 2019 issue, and exercises 31 to 40 are in the Spring 2020 issue.

41. 左右蹬腿動作

兩手叉腰，右腿曲膝，提起小腿，用力向右側蹬，左右交替進行16次。
作用：活動膝關節，通經活絡。
防治：下肢酸痛、麻木無力。

HOPPING TO THE LEFT AND RIGHT

Motion: The two hands clasp the waist. Bend the knee of the right leg, and then lifting the lower part of the leg, hop vigorously to the right. Alternate the motion to the left and right 16 times.

Function: Exercises the joints of the knees. Clears the Principle and Connecting Channels.

Preventative cure: Aches and pains in the lower limbs as well as numbness and weakness.



42. 後踢腿動作

兩手叉腰，右腿曲膝，用足跟踢臀部，左右交替進行16次。
作用：同第41節。

KICKING BACKWARD

Motion: The two hands grasp the waist. Bending the left knee, kick backward with the left leg. Alternately kick the left and right legs backwards 16 times.

Function: same as #41



43. 轉脖頸動作

兩手叉腰，低頭緩慢向右、後、左轉8次。再反方向轉8次。
(由不能做到能做)。
作用：活動頸椎。
防治：頸椎病、骨質增生、落枕、腦血管硬化。



ROTATING THE NECK

Motion: The two hands grasp the waist. Lowering the head, slowly rotate it to the right, back, and left in a circular motion 8 times. Then reverse the rotation 8 times (or as many times as you are able).

Function: Exercises the neck vertebrae

Preventative cure: Helps with pain in the neck vertebrae. Increases the production of bone matter. Aids a stiff neck. Stimulates circulation in blood vessels to the brain.

44. 揉、45. 搓、46. 壓膝動作

右腳前跨一步，直伸，左腿曲膝，右手下，左手上，按右膝，由右向左揉。再由左向右揉，然後兩手上下搓膝。搓畢，向後壓膝。再換左腿，各32次。
作用：按摩膝關節，活血化癥。
防治：關節炎。



MASSAGING, RUBBING, PRESSING THE KNEES

Motion: Place the right leg forward one step, keeping it straight while bending the left knee. With the right hand below and the left hand above, massage the right knee in a circular motion from left to right. Then, using the two hands, rub the knees in an up and down motion. After rubbing, press on the knees. Then repeat the same motion on the left leg. Repeat the entire motion alternately 32 times each leg.

Function: Massages the joints of the knees. Stimulates blood circulation. Cures bruises.

Preventative cure: Inflammation of the joints.

47. 洗眼動作

兩手半握拳，眼輕閉，拇指曲，用拇指關節，輕揉兩黑眼球32次。
作用：促進血液循環。
防治：老花、近視、白內障、眼瞼下垂。



CLEANSING THE EYES

Motion: Place the two hand in half fists. Close the eyes lightly. Bend the thumbs. Using the first joints of the thumbs, press lightly on the pupils of the eyes 32 times.

Function: Stimulates blood circulation.

Preventative cure: Helps with nearsightedness and farsightedness, cataracts, bags around the eyes.

48. 摸眼皮動作

用兩手中指肚，由內眼角順上下眼皮，輕揉白眼球32次。再反方向推揉32次。
作用：同47節。



STROKING THE EYELIDS

Motion: Using the tips of the middle fingers, place them on the upper eyelids and massage the whites of the eyes in an up and down circular motion 32 times. Then reverse the circular motion and repeat the massage 32 times.

Function: same as #47

49. 摸魚腰(推眉稜骨)動作

用食、中、無名指肚，從攢竹穴向外推過魚腰，絲竹空到太陽穴。(穴在眉內側凹陷處，眉中心，凹陷處)32次。
作用：疏通足太陽膀胱和手少陽三焦經。
防治：頭痛、眼病、面神經麻痺。

MASSAGING THE YUYAO (FISH WAIST) (PRESSING THE EDGE OF THE EYEBROW BONE)

Motion: Using the tips of the index, middle, or ring fingers, start at the zuanju (spinning bamboo) points, massage outward, pressing the yuyao (fish waist), ssujukung (silk bamboo hollow), and taiyang (ultimate yang) points (These points are in the hollow concave below the eyebrow bones at the edges and in the middle of the eyebrows.)

Function: Clears the Urinary Bladder Channel of the Maximum Yang aspect of the Foot and the Triple Burner Channel of the Lesser Yang aspect of the Hand.

Preventative cure: Headache, pain in the eyes, numbness of the facial nerves.



50. 揉承泣四白動作

兩眼微閉，用兩手指中肚按揉承泣、四白穴(穴在眼眶下緣眶邊上，和承泣直下眶下孔凹陷處)32次。
作用：活血化癥。
防治：結膜炎、面癱、三叉神經痛、青光眼、近視、遠視、視神經萎縮。

MASSAGING THE CHENGLI (MAKER OF TEARS) AND THE SSEBAI (FOUR WHITES) POINTS

Motion: Lightly close the two eyes. Using the tips of the middle fingers, lightly massage the chenglei and ssebai points (These points are located below the base and at the sides of the upper eye sockets and chenglei is located straight down from the eyebrow bone on the sides of the nostrils) 32 times.

Function: Stimulates blood circulation and heals bruises.

Preventative cure: Relieves sclerotic inflammation, facial tic, pain in nervous system, and clears eyes. Helps with nearsightedness, farsightedness, and shrinking of the eye nerves.



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KEY:

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IITBT - International Institute for the Translation of Buddhist Texts

GTU - Graduate Theological Union

TC - IITBT Translation Certificate Program

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Good and Wise Friends, we want to hear from you! This magazine is what you make of it.

We cherish your work and want to see it in print. The theme of our upcoming Spring 2021 issue is HABIT. Let it inspire you, but don't be beholden to it!

Please send us your:

- Visual art
- Literature
- Academic work
- Personal reflections
- And much more!

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