Chapter Two

Buddhist Welfare Movements and Approaches of the

Socially Engaged Buddhists

Buddhist Welfare Movements

In course of different stages of its evolution, every great system is
developed and refined in accordance with the ‘native genius’ of the people who
embrace it. On this count, Buddhism stands out as no exception. Standing
testimony to this view is the movement called engaged Buddhism which is still
considered nascent and which is seeking to actualize Buddhism’s traditional ideals
of wisdom and compassion in the contemporary world. Assumptions and claims
that regard the central emphasis of Buddhism on the transmundane goal of
nirvana, or in monastic withdrawal from the world and on individual extrication
from the world, as Weber views Buddhism, are looked upon as antithetical to the
social ethic of ‘Engaged Buddhism’. The fact is that it lays greater stress on world
engagement rather than on world abandonment. It is the ‘Middle Way’ of the
Buddha, which teaches that both extreme asceticism and extreme sensual
indulgence are to be avoided; it has emphasized that even the lives and practices of
monks who live austerely should not be excessively ascetic, and that the life of
even the most lax Buddhist layperson ought not to be so pleasure oriented as to
become an object of attachment. It is in avoiding these two extremes, that the ‘extent’ of the ‘Middle way’ is vast, wide, and very flexible.

After listening and observing the great teachings that the Lord Buddha had delivered to us, the practitioners partially realize the truth and the nature of the universe as disciples and follower of the Buddha. For example, they realize that the world is impermanent, that nations are unsafe and unstable and so on. When we first come across such assumptions, we find it hard to put them into our minds or even believe them at all. As we always hear that “It’s like we put the water on a Taro’s leaf” which is never absorbed. But if we observe the Teachings carefully and think over them we can reach the conclusion that they are simply beyond any comparison.

If we learn and put into practice the Teachings of Lord Buddha, we can avoid the evil speech, evil action, and evil thought and may have the opportunity to practise generosity, and loving kindness to other. Contemplating over everything that the Buddha has taught, we can gradually disentangle ourselves from the cycle of birth and death. Therefore, we should always bear in mind that for all Buddhist organization it is necessary to apply the valuable teachings in order to liberate oneself to let go all the attachment, and to help other in the sense of other’s needs in which making benefit or sharing the unfortunate life partially relief their suffering in both mental and physical fields. There are many organizations in Australia which are strongly engaged in bringing the Buddha’s
teaching into every walk of day-to-day life. Those associated with these organizations have put their hands together to work in closely knitted and dynamic groups to propagate the Buddha's teaching, venerate the Triple Gems, and work towards the welfare and awakening of the world. Among such organizations, the following deserve particular mentioning:

* Karuna Palliative Care Centre/ Hospice Service

* The Buddhist Peace Fellowship

* The Buddha Light International Association (Fo Kuang Shan)

* Association of Engaged Buddhists

The engaged Buddhist welfare movement has been playing a leading in Australia, particularly in the areas of environment, peace and human rights. Wherever these Buddhist organizations are involved, it is easy to identify their contributions. However, it is difficult to quantify the scope because it is the cumulative result of the actions of individuals, many of whom are not associated with formal Buddhist organizations but whose actions and styles of social intervention have been profoundly influenced by Buddhist philosophy.

**The Karuna Palliative Care Centre (KPCC)/ Hospice Service:** Let’s start with the Karuna Palliative Care Centre/ Hospice Service, the first in the list of Australian organizations mentioned above. Here, the key Buddhist values of the
dignity of all life, compassionate service, empowerment of clients and universal responsibility are a firm philosophical foundation for the service delivery. Value and dignity of all life mean that clients are valued equally regardless of beliefs, value preferences or social differences. All clients are seen as sharing basic needs for kindness, cooperation and respect. Dying is seen as an integral part of the living process and as providing an opportunity for the development of insight and the expression of love both for the dying and their families. Karuna Hospice Service is not involved in any action where the intent is to deliberately end life. Buddhist philosophy suggests that healing and growth can occur in dimensions other than the physical and as such a high quality of life is possible for people even up to their death.

Karuna is an organization dedicated to providing compassionate and caring support at home for terminally ill patient and their care-givers. It began its work in 1992, following its founding a year earlier by the Venerable Pende Hawter. Venerable Pende is an Australian-born Buddhist monk, trained as a physiotherapist and later ordained in the Tibetan Gelux tradition. He was encouraged to establish such a service by Lama Zopa, the Spiritual Director of the FPMT (Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition), of which Karuna became a member. From small beginnings Karuna has grown into an organization with eighteen professional staff and about seventy active part-time
volunteers. It is based in Brisbane, Queensland, and delivers services in the Brisbane North region.

The people directly served by Karuna are terminally ill patients with a life expectancy of six months or less. Most are non-Buddhists. Karuna’s fundamental objective is to provide material, emotional, and spiritual support for such people in their own homes, as well as their caregivers, relatives, and friends. The emphasis on caring for patients in their own homes, rather than in the impersonal and unfamiliar environment of a hospital or other institution, is expressed in the slogan: “We’d rather be at home with Karuna.”

The inspiration for Karuna’s work derives from the cardinal Buddhist ideals of compassion, selfless giving, and respect for life (‘karuna’ is a Sanskrit term for compassion). However, the spiritual component for the support itself is not explicitly Buddhist, unless the patient so desires. Counselors take due account of their patient’s own world-view and religious orientation. Karuna’s eighteen professional workers are trained nurses, qualified in all aspects of palliative care provision, and are paid accordingly. Working either full time or part time, they meet patients’ varied needs, from symptom relief to psychological counseling. The seventy-odd part-time volunteers acquire the relevant skills through a six-week training course, provided by Karuna, before they begin work. Volunteers usually contribute one day per week, and commit themselves to maintaining this level of contribution for a year at a time. They mainly provide companionship for patients
and respite for care-givers. With this workforce of professionals and volunteers, Karuna is able to serve about 120 families in the course of a year. Among them, many have already lost the family member and are receiving bereavement counseling, a service that continues for up to a year following the death.¹

Thus, compassionate service is at the heart of the Buddhist worldview that recognizes the suffering is a universal experience as is the longing to be free from suffering. Compassion arises from open hearted empathetic and non-judgmental environment for clients and staff so that there is deep acceptance and loving – kindness expressed throughout the palliative care service.

Empowerment of clients to make their own free choices around their living and dying is supported by the Buddhist world-view that individuals must take responsibility for their own choices and should not be coerced into believing or following out of blind faith.

A gratifying development for Karuna and its supporters has been the recent successful establishment of a branch service, Cittamani Hospice, near the town of Nambour, a two-hour drive north of Brisbane. Other hospice services, modeled more or less closely on Karuna but operating independently of it, have developed into centers more remote from Brisbane. These include the Hospice of Mother

Tara in Bunbury, Western Australia; the Karuna Hospice Group in Bedigo, Victoria; the Tara Institute in Melbourne, Victoria; and the Amitayus Hospice Service in Mullumbimby, New South Wales.

**Buddhist Peace Fellowship (BPF):** In Australia, Buddhist activists share a style of activism that is characterized by at least the following characteristics, eloquently articulated by the Buddhist Peace Fellowship.²

Buddhist peace fellowship was founded by Robert Aitken in 1978. It was first confined with the organization of United States of America. According to Sherwood Patricia stated that Aitken Roshe was much concerned about the absence of active social and political involvement of Buddhist organizations in the United States.

As engaged Buddhism has emerged as a movement in Australia, it must be acknowledged that Aitken Roshi has served as dean, mentor, as well as the strongest supporter of it. His strong moral, almost righteous approach has influenced many people in both Buddhist and peace movements.

Buddhist Peace Fellowship (BPF) continues its leadership around the world particularly to the Australian society, recognizing the interdependence of all things, that the suffering of other is also one’s own suffering, and that the violence of other is also one’s own violence. As a result of this maturity, BPF is putting its

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² Sherwood Patricia. (Ed), *The Buddha is in the Street*, Cowan University Bunbury, Malaysia, 2003, p.37.
energies into addressing structural violence in Australia and throughout the world. At the same time, the BPF leadership recognizes the fundamental, guiding principle of engaged Buddhism, in which “social work entails inner work, and social change and inner change are inseparable.” This purpose of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship is to bring a Buddhist perspective to the peace movement and the peace moment to the Buddhist community.

Buddhist Peace Fellowship is a non-profit organization, an affiliate of the international peace consortium Fellowship of Reconciliation. The organization which almost had four thousand independent Buddhists from a variety of lineages, traditions, and communities who hold a common allegiance to Buddhist practice and to social engagement. For the last two decades it has provided the venue for the discussions that have shaped the American engaged Buddhist identity.

In the context of American engaged Buddhism, BPF’s journey has been largely a grassroots movement. Though there have been influential Asian and American Buddhist teachers who have advised and guided the organization, the vision and identity of BPF have been help by the collective of members, staff, and board, who have been for most part Euro-American lay people, heavily representing West Coast Zen and Vipassana practitioners.

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The Buddhist Peace Fellowship has also been able to appear directly to unaffiliated Buddhists and to non-Buddhist, especially Christian, organizations. Its challenge has been the criticism that its social action agenda has suffered from purely conventional thinking, polarizing the oppressor and oppressed, and that its actions have no distinctly Buddhist analysis or strategy behind them.

Today, the Buddhist Peace Fellowship is a network of people throughout the United States who are linked by their common concerns with bringing about peace in the world and by Buddhist meditation practice of a variety of traditions. Because Buddhist Peace Fellowship has not been led by a single charismatic spiritual leader and has not been affiliated with a single school of Asian Buddhist practice, it is at times difficult to identify a coherent and consistent philosophy. Rather, it is important to study the materials disseminated by the board and executive staff regarding BPF’s identity, its mission, and its strategies for action. According to its current literature, Buddhist Peace Fellowship has a five point mission, expressed in this way:

1. To make a clear public witness to Buddhist practice and interdependence as a way of peace and protection for all beings;

2. To raise peace, environmental, feminist, and social justice concerns

3. To bring a Buddhist perspective of nonduality to contemporary social action and environmental movements

38
4. to encourage the practice of nonviolence based on the rich resources of traditional Buddhist and Western spiritual teachings

5. to offer avenues for dialogue and exchange among the diverse North American and world sanghas.\(^4\)

If we examine the underlying principles and approaches of Buddhist Peace Fellowship, we can recognize the following features in its charter, its goals, and its actions.

**The Buddha Light International Association (BLIA):** Mater Hsing Yun is the founder of The Buddha Light International Association or the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Order. He has been recognized by international leaders for his bold and innovative methods to spread Buddhist Teachings.

BLIA (The Buddha Light International Association) is an organization consisting of lay Buddhists who observe the practice of Humanistic Buddhism in daily life. Its primary objective is to serve all beings, spread a joyous spirit amongst people and nurture the virtue of compassion. It places emphasis on education, culture, cultivation and service. The Association was initially formed on February 3, 1991 in Taiwan. It was officially inaugurated as "Buddha's Light International Association" in Los Angeles, California on May 16, 1992. The Association also engages itself in activities which are beneficial to society at large.

In Australia and New Zealand, the Association participates in activities such as Clean Up Australia Day, National Tree Planting Day, and the Buddha's Day Multicultural Festival.

Over 100 BLIA chapters have been established around the world to date in the United States of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Russia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Japan, Hong Kong, Macau, Thailand, India, Brazil, Argentina, Africa and other regions. The organization has currently more than one million members worldwide.

The association has cherished a vision and has been propelled by a grand mission which is to "Let the Buddha's Light shine over three thousand realms spread across the five continents, and let the water of Dharma flow through them thoroughly”.

The fundamental objectives of the organization can be summed up as follows.

* Follow and propagate the Buddha's teaching, venerate the Triple Gems, work for the welfare and awakening of the world.

* Promote living, dynamic Buddhism, build the Buddha's Light Pure Land, and actualize the humanistic Buddhist approach, with benevolence and compassion towards all.
* Abide by the Buddhist precepts and harmonize the Five Vehicles, practice the Three Teachings and perfect the human character.

* Involvement in international cultural and educational events, have an open mind

* Treating others with mutual respect.

BLIA in state of Victoria has a sizeable membership, which is made up of lay Buddhist followers. Currently, BLIA in state of Victoria has five branches; these are Melbourne branch, South-East branch, North-West branch, Yarraville branch and Youth Adult Division. Apart from promoting Humanistic Buddhism, it is committed to provide community, multicultural and personal development services for the well-being of its members and the broader community.

The Sydney Branch of BLIA was formed in June 1991 by a group of devotees dedicated to the propagation of the Dharma, cultural exchange, education and charity work.

The guiding Principle of The Buddha Light is to incorporate traditional Buddhist teachings into our modern lifestyles, so as to ameliorate the human race and rid society of ill conducts, to organize Dharma talks and related events for the cultivation of the mind, so members may attain greater knowledge of Buddhism, to provide opportunities for cultural and charitable events to assist those in need, and to function co-operatively with other Buddhist organizations internationally so
that the ideal of the Buddha's light shines throughout the world and the Dharma water flows endlessly can be realized.

**The Association of Engaged Buddhists:** This organization was established in 1993 at Lewisham in Sydney by Venerable Tejadhammo, who was an Australian monk born in Sydney, and ordained in 1981 at the Thai Theravada tradition. The Venerable Tejadhammo has spent many years teaching Buddhism both overseas and in Australia. The Venerable has a long term commitment to visiting the prisons. He has worked in prisons both overseas, particularly in Thailand and Australia and his innovative work in prisons represent a strong commitment of Buddhists to compassionate work with prisoners to help alleviate their suffering.5

The compassionate world-view of Buddhism together with its philosophical understanding of karma cultivates an attitude of prisoners of acceptance and loving kindness, not judgment and rejection. There is the deep understanding that those in prison are deeply suffering, particularly in their mental and emotional states. There is a commitment to provide them with skills to understand and manage their pain so they may find freedom from their suffering.

The Association of Engaged Buddhist also provides assistance and support to those who are suffering from serious or life-threatening illness throughout the

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5 Sherwood Patricia, (Ed), *The Buddha is in the Street*, Cowan University Bunbury, Malaysia, 2003, p. 163.
Greater Sydney area. All major hospitals and hospices are visited by Sangha or volunteer members. The Association also provides a home visitation service to anyone requesting this service. Sangha and members provide guidance and instruction in meditation practice (including various healing practices) to people in their homes, hospices, or hospitals. They also assist in other ways such as pain relief, preparation for death and grief counseling.

Currently, the Association is attempting to establish a live-in hospice/retreat centre in the Sydney area in order to provide more intensive assistance to those who might benefit from such an opportunity. Various fund-raising activities are taking place in order to realize this goal. Anyone who is interested or who would like to assist in establishing this centre can obtain more information from Sangha Lodge.6

B. Approaches of the Socially Engaged Buddhists to Intervention

"A man should hasten towards the good; he should restrain his evil thoughts; if he is slack in doing good his mind incline to delight in evil".7 To follow a spiritual path, however, sometimes seems to demand all of one’s free time and energy. To cultivate love, compassion, courage, and wisdom in a deep lasting way in one’s life, to work through one’s self-centeredness, hatred, fear, and confusion, seems to require an intense focus and dedication, which may preclude

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6 www.buddhanet.net/hospice
getting overly involved with the social world. Furthermore, we sometimes hear from spiritual teachers, as I often have heard, that working for social change places a Band-Aid on human suffering, that it doesn’t address the deep existential roots of the problems, and that it distracts us from the real spiritual work. This mirrors the comments of some people that inner work is at worst a fundamental delusion and at best an escapist luxury- and some other people proclaimed that religion is the “opium of the people.” To really address the roots of suffering, they say, we need to change economic, social, and political structures and ideologies.

The premise of this chapter is to explain that we don’t have to make an impossible choice between these two paths. Instead, we can bring them together. We can even link deep inner work with action in the world, in which our spiritual values infuse our response to the needs of the world, whether we are community organizers, teachers, activists, lawyers, or parents. The two paths deeply need each other: and our times desperately call for both spiritual and social commitments. Without spiritual development, well-meaning attempts to change the world will probably unconsciously replicate the very problems that we believe we are solving. Unfortunately, we can see this all too clearly in the history of revolutions, where so often after an oppressor was toppled, the purported liberator was soon revealed as a new oppressor. Violent “solutions” all too frequently only beget further violence.
Without transforming ourselves and coming to know ourselves deeply through sustained spiritual inquiry and practice, we may only make things worse. We also run the risk of not having the kind of resources of wisdom, compassion, equanimity, and perseverance necessary to respond to the great needs of the times without being quickly burned out by anger and frustration. Outer transformation thus entails inner transformation. But if the path of spiritual transformation is not socially informed, it too is at risk. There is irony of attempting to overcome self-centeredness through spiritual practice while ignoring the cries of the world, of living in a protected spiritual home while the rest of the world is burning. And there is the danger of not seeing how the world is not just “out there” but also “in us” internalized through our self-images; and in our behaviors as consumers, parents, partners, and co-workers. Without transforming the world that is in us, we maintain, usually unconsciously, its patterns in ourselves and our spiritual communities. And when we do attend to the world “in us”, we join in the act of social transformation. In that sense, inner transformation entails outer transformation.  

Engaging Inner Peace

Socially Engaged Buddhism methodology would not be complete without bringing peace in one’s inner life. In this method, we can bring the personal

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8 Sherwood Patricia, (Ed), *The Buddha is in the Street*, Cowan University Bunbury, Malaysia, 2003.
experience and insight of the meditative, inner practice of contemplation and other Buddhist practices such as ritual, merit-making, dana, sila ect… into the social dimension in order to mutually illuminate both areas. This technique could help to dissolve barriers between self and other, us and them, and personal and political; we also can explore the mutual causality and interdependence of these pairs. This modality is also a radical approach to social theory in that it insists that the personal is as important as the structural, political and systemic.

Put simply, what goes on in one mind is mirrored in the world; looking inward is a hallmark of a socially engaged Buddhist critique. We can discover “where am I implicated?” for example, where are the very same structures of greed, hatred, and delusion present in my own mind? How do my inner kilesas create or mirror external reality? This “turning inward” invokes compassion for others who perpetuate structures of violence as well as can provide insight into understanding both how and why these structures work, and what could be done about them.

Furthermore, this gives us a starting point for critique because by referencing personal experience we can break the seemingly enormous social problems into more easily understandable, personal, bite-sized explanations of how structural violence works. More significantly, when we look at the Buddhist practice and see personal responses to suffering and how we antidote or work with kilesa on a personal level, we might be able to abstract these same “personal
antidote” or practices out to the social level. This approach illustrates how the authority of an oppressive structure rests not on something objective, but on the collective and often unconscious agreement of individuals. This agreement can be made conscious and people can choose to act differently.

However, Buddhism believes that the two major core within a human are mental and physical, which are usually called the food for mind (mental) or internal peace and the food for body (physical) or external peace, respectively. Both ordained and lay Buddhist must be aware of all such kinds of beneficent ways (methods) for both majors in order to liberating and developing one’s own mind. Here are the most good sources for practitioner to engaging in mental development and the beneficent to gain peace, awareness, calm and purify of one mind such as Meditation, mindfulness, listen the Buddha Dharma, chanting the sutra, chanting the Buddha’ name…..ect. In other word it would help to bring the mind to deep concentration and able to liberate one’s own mind.

Mind is basic. Mind is primary. Mind is ever-present in each situation. For anything to be happening in this moment Mind is necessarily present, Mind is the basic for this, for what’s going on now.

This is the very heart of what the Buddha taught: “Everything is founded on Mind, is made of Mind. To act or speak with a pure mind is happiness.” But is it
really possible for us to speak or act from such a mind? And just what is a pure mind, anyway?

A pure mind enters freely into each situation, no matter what it is. We may feel sadness, remorse, or grief, but if our mind is pure, it all sweeps through. It doesn’t take hold anywhere; it doesn’t grind us up. There’s nothing in the mind to obstruct the emotion, so it doesn’t get caught. We feel no need to avoid it, block it, take hold of it, work it up into something bigger, or make something else out of it.

There is a story of a Zen teacher who cried when his wife died. His students were very surprised by this. “You’re enlightened! Why are you cried?” The teacher simply said matter-of-factly, “I’ll miss her.” What his students were really saying was, “We didn’t think you were human!”

It’s nonsense, of course. A Zen teacher is a human being, with emotions. Yet many people have this erroneous impression that once we wake up we won’t (or shouldn’t) have deep or powerful emotions anymore. Such an impression is pure delusion. Why would awakening cause to suddenly relinquish all human feeling, to become something other than human?

With a pure mind, our feelings are not fundamentally different. But what we do with them (or, more appropriately, stop doing with them) is very different indeed.
The Buddha also said, “Everything is founded on Mind, is made of Mind. To act or speak with a corrupt mind is misery.” what does it mean to act or speak with a corrupt mind?

A corrupt mind is a fractured, splintered, broken, divided mind—a mind that sees this as opposed to that. It’s the mind of self and other, of separation and alienation—in other words, our ordinary mind.

In a corrupt mind, emotions and ideas arise, just as they do in a pure mind—but then we grab hold of them rather than let them pass through and sweep away. We hold them close and build all kinds of mental structures around them. We carry them around with us, identify with them, and put them on display.

In other words, a corrupt mind is removed from the Whole. It’s the mind of ego, a mind that views everything as though apart from itself. It’s a mind that gets caught up in greediness, selfishness, fear, longing, loathing, and grasping. The Buddha did not hesitate to call this mind “misery.”

**Meditation (Zen)**

Buddhism is a path of practice and spiritual development, providing a person with insight into the true nature of life. Buddhist practices, meditation, serve as the means of changing oneself, in order to develop the qualities of awareness, kindness, and wisdom. Meditation is at the heart of the Buddhist way of life. It basically helps one in to attain a higher level of consciousness. First
learn to identify the negative mental state known as 'delusion', and then develop peaceful and positive mental state or 'virtuous mind'.

Meditation or Zen is a method to develop the mind which emphasis on concentration, focus, clarity, calmness, and insight. It deals particularly with the training of the mind, which is the most important composite of the entire human entity. Because mind is the forerunner and prime source of all actions, physical, verbal, or mental, it needs to be properly cultivated and developed.

The other meaning of Meditation is mindfulness and wisdom in what we do, speak, and think; it means greater awareness and higher ability in self-control. It is not, therefore, an irrelevant other-worldly practice meant only for monks and ascetics, but is one of the most valuable practical skills there are for enhancing fulfillment in everyday life.

Meditation (Zen) practice is about to recognize the corrupt mind for what it is. It’s about seeing what’s going on in each moment without grasping it, without blocking it. It’s seeing the folly and misery of the corrupt mind, seeing that trying to take control only creates pain. This seeing is itself an expression of a pure mind.

We’re always dealing with now, with what is actually taking place. Thus, in Zen practice, our focus is on what’s going on in our mind now.
Misery of any kind—whether it’s fear, anger, loneliness, sadness, or grief—has grasping in it. To the extent that we learn to recognize this, we can let it go, let it wash through.

This is the practice of meditation. As we sit in meditation, thoughts keep coming up. Sometimes they can be disturbing. Sometimes they’re wonderful. But they keep coming. And sometimes we grab on to them.

To overcome delusions we are generally familiar with the virtuous mind. Later, we have to maintain the virtuous minds we have developed and use our wisdom to solve the problems of daily life. As our mind becomes more positive, our actions become more constructive and our experience of life becomes more satisfying and beneficial to oneself and others.

Anyone can learn basic meditation techniques and experience great benefits. However, the progress beyond basic meditation requires faith in the Three Jewels - Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. It is usually seen that this develops naturally as people experience the benefits of their meditation practice.

The Buddha had taught many different types of meditation, each designed to overcome a particular problem or to develop a particular psychological state. But the two most common and useful types of meditation are Mindfulness of Breathing (anapana sati) and Loving Kindness Meditation (metta bhavana).
1. The Mindfulness of breath Meditation. Instead of "body is sweeping", or after a preliminary period of this practice, mindfulness can be developed through attention on the breath.

First, follow the sensation of our ordinary breath as it flows in through the nostrils and fills the chest and abdomen. Then try maintaining our attention at one point, either at the diaphragm or - a more refined location - at the nostrils. Breath has a tranquilizing quality, steady and relaxing if we don't force it; this is helped by an upright posture. Our mind may wander, but keep patiently returning to the breath.

It is not necessary to develop concentration to the point of excluding everything else except the breath. Rather than to create a trance, the purpose here is to allow us to notice the workings of the mind, and to bring a measure of peaceful clarity into it. The entire process - gathering our attention, noticing the breath, noticing that the mind has wandered, and re-establishing our attention - develops mindfulness, patience and insightful understanding. So we don't be put off by apparent "failure" - simply begin again. Continuing in this way allows the mind eventually to calm down.

If we get very restless or agitated, just relax. Practice being at peace with ourselves, listening to - without necessarily believing in - the voices of the mind.
If we feel drowsy, then put more care and attention into our body and posture. Refining our attention or pursuing tranquility at such times will only make matters worse!

2). Loving-kindness meditation can be brought in to support the practice of 'bare attention' to help keep the mind open and sweet. It provides the essential balance to support our insight meditation practice.

It is a fact of life that many people are troubled by difficult emotional states in the pressured societies we live in, but do little in terms of developing skills to deal with them. Yet even when the mind goes sour it is within most people's capacity to arouse positive feelings to sweeten it. Loving-kindness is a meditation practice taught by the Buddha to develop the mental habit of selfless or altruistic love. In the Dhammapada can be found the saying: "Hatred cannot solve by Hatred but by Love” to dissipate with thoughts based on loving-kindness.

Loving-kindness is a meditation practice, which brings about positive attitudinal changes as it systematically develops the quality of 'loving-acceptance'. It acts, as it were, as a form of self-psychotherapy, a way of healing the troubled mind to free it from its pain and confusion. Of all Buddhist meditations, loving-kindness has the immediate benefit of sweetening and changing old habituated negative patterns of mind.
In our daily lives we are engaged in manifold activities. When we are less busy we may try to get whatever deep concentration we can reach. At other times when we meet with people or animals, we can mentally have thoughts of metta. These thoughts of metta, even though they may be only thoughts for a start, play a very important part. We know people disagree even at the most insignificant things. Many strained relations and enmities can be dissolved if we can just forgive and overlook the past and start anew. Very often it may be just “tension in the air” which we cannot pinpoint. Metta can create the mental atmosphere conducive to goodwill as well as spark off whatever good speech and actions that follows.

So besides mental action, we also have to express it in words or others forms of communications to others. Speaking gently, with kindness, truthfulness and for the benefit of others are elements of right speech.

Actions of metta are actions such as lending help materially or spiritually, giving medical and nursing attention to the elderly or kindness for animals, courtesy, hospitality, etc.

Therefore metta in daily life is more active and expressive in nature. In families and offices where there is frequent metta shown, it becomes a house or dwelling that is truly happy.
The practice of loving kindness (*metta*) involves the continual intention to open our hearts—both to ourselves and to others—in all situations. As a practice, it provides the warmth, caring, kindness, compassion, and joy that balance with the development of mindfulness and wisdom—balance that is particularly important for those connecting spiritual and social transformation.

To put it into its context, Loving-kindness is the first of a series of meditations that produce four qualities of love: Friendliness (*metta*), Compassion (*karuna*), Appreciative Joy (*mudita*) and Equanimity (*upekkha*). The quality of 'friendliness' is expressed as warmth that reaches out and embraces others. When loving-kindness practice matures it naturally overflows into compassion, as one empathises with other people's difficulties; on the other hand one needs to be wary of pity, as its near enemy, as it merely mimics the quality of concern without empathy. The positive expression of empathy is an appreciation of other people's good qualities or good fortune, or appreciative joy, rather than feelings of jealousy towards them. This series of meditations comes to maturity as 'on-looking equanimity'. This 'engaged equanimity' must be cultivated within the context of this series of meditations, or there is a risk of it manifesting as its near enemy, indifference or aloofness. So, ultimately you remain kindly disposed and caring toward everybody with an equal spread of loving feelings and acceptance in all situations and relationships.
Cultivating goodwill (metta) gives another dimension to the practice of Insight. Meditation naturally teaches patience and tolerance or at least it shows the importance of these qualities. So one may well wish to develop a friendlier and caring attitude towards oneself and other people. In meditation, one can cultivate goodwill very realistically.

Focus attention on the breath, which we will now be using as the means of spreading kindness and goodwill. Begin with yourself, with our body. Visualize the breath as a light, or see our awareness as being a warm ray and gradually sweep it over our body. Lightly focus our attention on the centre of the chest, around the heart region. As we breath in, direct patient kindness towards ourselves, perhaps with the thought, "May I be well", or "Peace". As you breathe out, let the mood of that thought, or the awareness of light, spread outwards from the heart, through the body, through the mind and beyond us. "May others be well".

If we are experiencing negative states of mind, breathe in the qualities of tolerance and forgiveness. Visualizing the breath as having a healing colour may be helpful. On the out-breath, let go of any stress, worry or negativity, and extend the sense of release through the body, the mind, and beyond, as before.

This practice can form all or part of a period of meditation - we have to judge for ourselves what is appropriate. The calming effect of meditating with a
kind attitude is good for beginning a sitting but there will no doubt be times to use this approach for long periods, to go deeply into the heart.

Always begin with what we are aware of, even if it seems trivial or confused. Let our mind rest calmly on that—whether it's boredom, an aching knee, or the frustration of not feeling particularly kindly. Allow these to be; practice being at peace with them. Recognize and gently put aside any tendencies towards laziness, doubt or guilt.

Peacefulness can develop into a very nourishing kindness towards ourselves, if we first of all accept the presence of what we dislike. Keep the attention steady, and open the heart to whatever you experience. This does not imply the approval of negative states, but allows them a space wherein they can come and go.

Generating goodwill toward the world beyond ourselves follows much the same pattern. A simple way to spread kindness is to work in stages. Start with ourselves, joining the sense of loving acceptance to the movement of the breath. "May I be well." Then, reflect on people we love and respect, and wish them well, one by one. Move on to friendly acquaintances, then to those towards whom we feel indifferent. "May they be well." Finally, bring to mind those people we fear or dislike, and continue to send out wishes of goodwill.
This meditation can expand, in a movement of compassion, to include all people in the world, in their many circumstances. And remember, we don't have to feel that we love everyone in order to wish them well!

Kindness and compassion originate from the same source of good will, and they broaden the mind beyond the purely personal perspective. If we're not always trying to make things go the way we want them to: if we're more accepting and receptive to ourselves and others as they are, compassion arises by itself. Compassion is the natural sensitivity of the heart.

After that, some integration, or meditation in action. Once our mindfulness has been awakened by our meditation, our mind is calm and our perception a little more coherent. Then, whatever we do, we are present, right there. As in the famous Zen master's saying: "When I eat, I eat; when I sleep, I sleep". Whatever we do, we are fully present in the act. Even washing dishes, if it is done one-pointedly, can be very energizing, freeing, cleansing. We are more peaceful, so we are more "we". We assume the "Universal We"

One of the fundamental points of the spiritual journey is to persevere along the path. Though one's meditation may be good one day and not so good the next, like changes in scenery, essentially it is not the experiences, good or bad which count so much, but rather that when we persevere, the real practice rubs off on us and comes through both good and bad. Good and bad are simply apparitions, just
as there may be good or bad weather, yet the sky is always unchanging. If we persevere and have that sky like attitude of spaciousness, without being perturbed by emotions and experiences, we will develop stability and the real profoundness of meditation will take effect. We will find that gradually and almost unnoticed, our attitude begins to change. We do not hold on to things as solidly as before, or grasp at them so strongly, and though crisis will still happen, we can handle them a bit better with more humor and ease. We will even be able to laugh at difficulties a little, since there is more space between us and them, and we are freer of ourselves. Things become less solid, slightly ridiculous, and we become more lighthearted.

Purpose of Meditation is not to create a system of beliefs, but rather to give guidance on how to see clearly into the nature of the mind. In this way one gains first-hand understanding of the way things are, without reliance on opinions or theories - a direct experience, which has its own vitality. It also gives rise to the sense of deep calm that comes from knowing something for oneself beyond any doubt.

The term Meditation refers to practices for the mind that develop calm through sustained attention and insight through reflection. A fundamental technique for sustaining attention is focusing awareness on the body; traditionally, this is practiced while sitting or walking.
Focusing the mind on the body can be readily accomplished while sitting. We need to find a time and a place which affords us calm and freedom from disturbance. A quite room with not much in it to distract the mind is ideal. Timing is also important. It is not especially productive to meditate when we have something else to do or when we're pressed for time. It's better to set aside a period - say in the early morning or in the evening after work-when we can really give our full attention to the practice.

Begin with fifteen minutes or so. Practice sincerely with the limitations of time and available energy, and avoid becoming mechanical about the routine. Meditation practice, supported by genuine willingness to investigate and make peace with oneself, will develop naturally in terms of duration and skill.

**Mindfulness**

Engaging in mindfulness practice and other forms of meditation has become increasingly frequent at public events and demonstrations. These practices serve as a helpful preparation for being more attentive, less distracted, wiser, and more open-hearted in these activities. Such innovative uses of the 2,500-year-old practice of mindfulness point to a vital way in which there can be a deep integration between inner and outer transformation, through the cultivation of a ‘mindfulness in action’ that can build on and complement our ‘mindfulness on the cushion’. Mindfulness practice has been called the heart of Buddhist meditation
and is central to all forms of Buddhist meditation. The practice involve cultivating the ability to be directly aware, moment by moment, of what is occurring in one’s experience- including both inner experiences of bodily sensations, thoughts, and emotions, and the outer experiences of being with our world, with objects, or with other human beings. When such mindfulness is sustained over time, wisdom, the clear seeing into basic inner and outer patterns of experience, arises, guiding us in our choices.

Mindfulness being the main controlling faculty of the mind is of course indispensable. It brings the mind to the point of concentration skillfully. Besides it guards against defilements and extraneous thoughts. Then it causes us to take the appropriate action to remedy it. It also keeps the mind flexible, workable, soft, and so on. Therefore there must be plenty of mindfulness at various depths.

What is the mindfulness? In one of the ancient Buddhist commentaries on this discourse, it is said that mindfulness means “presence of mind, attentiveness to the present….It has the characteristic of not wobbling, i.e. not floating away from the object. Its function is absence of confusion or non-forgetfulness.”

Mindfulness as the aware, balance acceptance of present experience. It isn’t more complicated than that. It is opening to or receiving the present moment, pleasant or unpleasant, just as it is, without either clinging to it or rejecting it. So mindfulness is a way of being attentive to whatever is predominant in the present moment of

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experience, whether of our inner experiences of body sensation, emotions, thoughts, and so on, or of our outer experiences of external objects and other beings. What is distinctive about this way of attending is, on the one hand, its directness, focus, fullness, and ability to penetrate deeply and, on the other, it’s nonjudgmental, nonpreferential and nonreactive quality.

To be fully mindful is to approach one’s moment-to-moment experience freshly, as much as possible not bringing the cognitive and emotional baggage of the past, which lead us as well to project into the future. (It is possible, however, to look freshly at how the past and future are present in our experience.) With this openness, there can be a great sensitivity to and curiosity about what is occurring in the present moment, even a sense of attending to a wondrous and awesome mystery.

Typically in contemporary settings, the practitioner learns mindfulness first by focusing on his or her individual experience, undergoing an initial training separate from the more relational and collective aspects of experience and from ordinary actions in the world. On the basis of this training, it becomes possible to sustain mindfulness in more complex actions and interactions, in a variety of settings. And so the Buddha speaks of first finding a quiet place and starting with mindfulness of breathing: Having gone to a forest, the foot of a tree, or an empty building, a practitioner sits down with legs cross and body erect. Establishing mindfulness in the present, one breathes in mindfully, breathes out mindfulness.
There are four main ways were taught by The Buddha to cultivate mindfulness, linked to four different aspects of experience. The first way is mindfulness of the body, often beginning with mindfulness of breath, and commonly understood as the development of present-centered awareness of bodily sensations, including the sensations of the breath. In the highly mind oriented culture such as ours, this kind of practice is particularly valuable in helping to cut through the mental “cloud” of repetitive thoughts is which many of us live or most of the time, bringing us back, so to speak, to our senses.

The second way, mindfulness of “feeling-tone” (vedana) involves paying attention to the quality of pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral that is present with every moment of experience, on a scale that ranges from ecstasy to agony. Attending to the feeling-tone is particularly important because when we are relatively unconscious of feeling-tone, we tend to grasp pleasant experiences, push away unpleasant ones, and “space out” with neutral experiences. Such tendencies are the roots, on the Buddha’s analysis, of suffering, of the so-called three poisons of greed, aversion, and delusion.

The third way of mindfulness is the “mind and heart” (citta), is usually interpreted to mean the clear awareness of the presence of the particular “mental and emotional formations” (cittasamkara). Here, we identify and are present to various formations such as desire, anger, distractedness, concentration, joy, peace, planning, remembering, and so on (the quality of pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral
is also a mental formation but because of its importance is treated separately, as the second way of attending). In the contemporary practice of mindfulness, the usual instruction is first to know that a particular formation is occurring, which helps us to begin to notice the range of our basic patterns of mind and heart and the details of our experience perhaps as we may never have noticed them before. Then we are invited to investigate more deeply the qualities of these states.

The fourth form of mindfulness is mindfulness of the broader patterns of experience (of dharma). In the Satipatthana Sutra, the Buddha mentions several teachings that provide lenses to help us see more clearly the nature of experience. So, for example, a practitioner might work with the core teachings of the Fourth Noble Truths: (1) we all suffer in life to a significant extent; (2) the cause of suffering is the compulsive grasping or pushing away of aspects of our experience; (3) peace, or the overcoming of suffering, is possible; and (4) there is practical path toward such peace. The practitioner might try to note when there is suffering, examine its nature, and look for how there might be compulsive grasping or pushing away. Similarly, one might explore the nature of peace and what lead to it.

One way to interpret this fourth way of training is to understand it is a second-level study of the more complex patterns and dynamics of our experience, based on having learned first, in the first three foundations, to identify more clearly some of the basic constituents. We are particularly instructed to examine
those dynamics that lead to suffering and those that lead to freedom. This help to deconstruct, as it were, the seeming solidity of our patterns of reactivity, to bring awareness and clarity where there previously was automatic, relatively unconscious behavior.

We then extend this fourfold training, which occurs initially in the simplified “laboratory” of meditation, to the further complexities of ordinary day-to-day actions and interaction. Since the intention of mindfulness practice is simply to be aware of what predominates in our experience, such a practice is particularly suited to any ordinary “informal” moment of our live.

I know what should be known

What should be cultivated, I have cultivated.

What should be abandoned that I have abandoned?

Hence, I am the BUDDHA, the Awakened One.\textsuperscript{10}

**Reading/Listening to the Buddha Dharma**

Buddhism teaches that the solutions to our problems are within us not outside. The Buddha asked all his followers not to take his word as true, but rather to test the teachings for them. In this way, each person decides for themselves and takes responsibility for their own actions and understanding. This makes

\textsuperscript{10} Piyadassi. *The Spectrum of Buddhism*, Karenaratne, Colombo. 1991
Buddhism less of a fixed package of beliefs which is to be accepted in its entirety, and more of a teaching which each person learns and uses in their own way. Therefore, the Buddha has taught all the basic teachings for all castes are able to understand the dharma and relieve own their suffering.

One day, the Buddha sat down in the shade of a tree and noticed how beautiful the countryside was. Flowers were blooming and trees were putting on bright new leaves, but among all this beauty, he saw much unhappiness. A farmer beat his ox in the field. A bird pecked at an earthworm, and then an eagle swooped down on the bird. Deeply troubled, he asked, "Why does the farmer beat his ox? Why must one creature eat another to live?"

During his enlightenment, the Buddha found the answer to these questions. He discovered three great truths. He explained these truths in a simple way so that everyone could understand them. From this the Buddha had stated that there are three basic teachings of universal truths

1. **Nothing is lost in the universe**: The first truth is that nothing is lost in the universe. Matter turns into energy, energy turns into matter. A dead leaf turns into soil. A seed sprouts and becomes a new plant. Old solar systems disintegrate and turn into cosmic rays. We are born of our parents; our children are born of us.

   We are the same as plants, as trees, as other people, as the rain that falls. We consist of that which is around us; we are the same as everything. If we
destroy something around us, we destroy ourselves. If we cheat another, we cheat ourselves. Understanding this truth, the Buddha and his disciples never killed any animal.

2. **Everything Changes:** The second universal truth of the Buddha is that everything is continuously changing. Life is like a river flowing on and on, ever-changing. Sometimes it flows slowly and sometimes swiftly. It is smooth and gentle in some places, but later on snags and rocks crop up out of nowhere. As soon as we think we are safe, something unexpected happens.

Once dinosaurs, mammoths, and saber-toothed tigers roamed this earth. They all died out, yet this was not the end of life. Other life forms like smaller mammals appeared, and eventually humans, too. Now we can even see the Earth from space and understand the changes that have taken place on this planet. Our ideas about life also change. People once believed that the world was flat, but now we know that it is round.

3. **Law of Cause and Effect:** The third universal truth explained by the Buddha is that there are continuous changes due to the law of cause and effect. This is the same law of cause and effect found in every modern science textbook. In this way, science and Buddhism are alike.
The law of cause and effect is known as karma\textsuperscript{11}. Nothing ever happens to us unless we deserve it. We receive exactly what we earn, whether it is good or bad. We are the way we are now due to the things we have done in the past. Our thoughts and actions determine the kind of life we can have. If we do good things, in the future good things will happen to us. If we do bad things, in the future bad things will happen to us. Every moment we create new karma by what we say, do, and think. If we understand this, we do not need to fear karma. It becomes our friend. It teaches us to create a bright future. The Buddha said,

"The kind of seed sown
will produce that kind of fruit.
Those who do good will reap good results.
Those who do evil will reap evil results.
If you carefully plant a good seed,
You will joyfully gather good fruit."\textsuperscript{12}

The teachings of Buddha reveal a step-by-step path to lasting happiness. By following this path, anyone can gradually transform his or her mind from its present confused and self-centered state to the blissful mind of a Buddha.

\textsuperscript{11} Karma is the law that every cause has an effect, i.e., our actions have results. This simple law explains a number of things: inequality in the world, why some are born handicapped and some gifted, why some live only a short life. Karma underlines the importance of all individuals being responsible for their past and present actions. How can we test the karmic effect of our actions? The answer is summed up by looking at (1) the intention behind the action, (2) effects of the action on oneself, and (3) the effects on others.

\textsuperscript{12} Dhammapada Sutra
It is said that: "Every living being has the potential to become a Buddha, someone who has completely purified his or her mind of all faults and limitations and has brought all good qualities to perfection. Our mind is like a cloudy sky, in essence clear and pure but overcast by the clouds of delusions.”

Just as the thickest clouds eventually disperse, even the heaviest delusions can be removed from our mind. Delusions such as hatred, greed, and ignorance are not an intrinsic part of the mind. If we apply the appropriate methods, they can be completely eliminated and we will experience the supreme happiness of full enlightenment.

**Chanting the Buddhist Suttas**

Chanting is very common to any religion. Buddhism is no exception in this regard. However, the aim and purpose of chanting is different from one religion to another. Buddhism is unique in that it does not consider chanting to be prayer.

The Buddha in many ways has shown us to have confidence in our own action and its results, and thereby encouraged us to depend on no one but ourselves. This in fact is the sum and substance of His last message in the Mahaparinibbana Sutta. One of the passages in this discourse reads: "Ananda, be dependent on yourself, take refuge in yourself and not in others, by this mean be dependent on the Dhamma, go for refuge to the Dhamma -- the righteous principles".
When a Buddhist does chanting, he is not asking someone to save him from evil nor is he hoping to be given a place in heaven as a result after he dies. Instead, through chanting he may be learning, teaching, philosophising or re-memorising the discourse.

Actually, in the Anguttara Nikaya there are some discourses dealing with chanting like Dhammavihari Sutta. It mentions five categories of people who make use of the discourses.

The first one studies it just for the sake of study without putting it into practice or explaining it to others. He even does not reflect deeply on what he has studied. He is known as 'Pariyatti-bahulo' who is keen on studying it alone.

The second one preaches or teaches what he has learnt from the discourses but does not follow it himself. He is 'Pannyatti-bahulo' who is keen only on teaching.

The third one does chanting. He philosophises about the discourses, trying all the time to satisfy his philosophical thirst. He forgets to make use of as mode or life. He is called 'Vitakka-bahulo' who is eager only to indulge in philosophical aspects of the Suttas (Discourses).

The fourth one is the one who chants the discourses to make them last for a long time in his memory. He memorises and re-memorises. Nevertheless, he does not go further to follow it in daily life. He is 'Sajjhayaka-bahulo' who is
enthusiastic only in memorising or chanting the teachings of the Buddha; He may even expect some magical power from chanting.

The fifth and last one is who studies the discourses, teaches them to others, reflects on their philosophical points, chants them regularly and above all actually practices it in daily life. He is the one the Buddha praises to be 'Dhammavihari' -- a practitioner of the Dhamma, which he has learnt from the discourses.

Having reflected on this Sutta, it is left to us to judge ourselves to which category we belong and why we study or chant the discourses.

We would like to dwell a bit more on chanting in general. This is, after all, an All-night Chanting ceremony. It is nothing but right for us to be fully convinced of what we are doing. Initially I did mention that Buddhism is unique because it does not consider chanting to be a form of prayer.

Then why do we, Buddhists, chant? In the olden days, before there were sufficient support materials for study like books, translations and computers we had to memorise to learn a discourse. After we had learnt it, we still had to chant regularly to protect it and hand it down to future generations. If we did not recite it daily we might forget it and omit some part of it. The Anguttara Nikaya says that if the discourses are poorly maintained this will lead to the disappearance of the Sasana. It was so important those days to memorise and chant it regularly. This
must have definitely contributed in developing chanting practice. Chanting meant almost for the survival of the Dhamma itself.

Now we have sufficient support materials, why we should then be still chanting? Is there any more reason to do this?

There are some reasons sufficient to continue chanting practice. Regular chanting gives us confidence, joy and satisfaction, and increases devotion within us. This devotion is really a power. It is called the Power of Devotion (Saddhabala). It energises our life in general. I do not know about the others. For me I often have a joyous feeling when the chanting goes right. I become more confident of myself. I see it as a part of developing devotion.

In Buddhist monastic education tradition, chanting and learning by heart still forms a part of it. We study some of the Theravada Abhidhamma texts -- the highest teachings of the Buddha which deal with the ultimate nature of things -- in that way in Burma. We are explained the meaning and how the logic develops in the Abhidhamma. In the night we try to chant without having learnt it by heart. We could do it because of the technique. It is known as evening-class (nya-war) over there. It means a certain technique of studying the Abhidhamma and some of the Suttas. It is very helpful as it helps you to reflect very quickly.

When we examine the nature of the discourses, the reasons for chanting will become clearer to us than ever.
A day in a temple begins early for monks and nuns. Long before daybreak, they attend morning ceremony and chant praises to the Buddha. The ceremonies lift one's spirit and bring about harmony. Although the Sangha lead simple lives, they have many responsibilities to fulfill. Everyone works diligently and is content with his or her duties.

During the day, some monks and nuns go about teaching in schools or speaking the Buddha's teachings. Others may revise and translate Buddhist Sutras and books, make Buddha images, take care of the temple and gardens, prepare for ceremonies, give advice to laypeople, and care for the elders and those who are sick. The day ends with a final evening ceremony.

In the daily life of work and religious practice, the monks and nuns conduct them-selves properly and are highly respected. By leading a pure, simple life, they gain extraordinary insight into the nature of things. Although their life is hard and rigorous, the results are worth it. It also keeps them healthy and energetic. The laity, who lives in the temple or visits, follows the same schedule as the Sangha and works along with them.

**Reciting the Buddha’s name (Pure Land)**

After attaining enlightenment of prince “Siddhartha Gautama”, who became the Buddha, the Awakened One, turned his newly omniscient eye to view the world and see if there were beings around of sharp faculties and advanced
religious practice that would be able to comprehend the fullness of his vision. When he had found such people, he went to them, preached to them, trained them, and led them to avoid from the world of defilement and suffering into the peace Nirvana. Sadly, however, the world has changed and grown turbid since that time. Human lifespan has shortened, so that people who wish to practice do not have sufficient time to achieve enlightenment. Violence is rampant, virtuous teachers are scarce, and the chance of avoid has all but disappeared. Traditional means of Buddhist practice – meditation, moral conduct, philosophical reflection, and so on – no longer provide a realistic hope for the vast majority of suffering beings at the Dharma ending age.

Even though, hope still remains for those trapped in the burning house of samsara which is meaning that world of fully suffering. Long ago, in an age separated from our own by countless eons, a monk named Dharmakara made a series of vows before a fully enlightenment Buddha named Lokesvararaja. He would do whatever it takes, for however long it takes, to achieve a level of enlightenment so perfect that this pure karma would create a Buddha-land of utmost purity. Beings who dwelt in it would want nothing; their every need for food, clothing, and long life would be fulfilled simply by willing it. The Buddha that Dharmakara would become would be ever-present, along with celestial Boddhisattvas who would assist him, to provide training and instruction to all the inhabitants of this land. They could dwell in it for a time without limit, so that all
would be assured of attaining buddhahood themselves. Best of all, being would not need to achieve perfect purity themselves before they could enter this land. In fact, all they would have to do is think of this Buddha, and call out his name, and he would come to meet them at the time of their deaths and escort them to this Pure Land. They needed only faith in him to attain rebirth there\(^\text{13}\). Which is one of the three significant elements were emphases by Amitabha Buddha to adopt them in his pure land that were Faith, Vows, and Practice, known as the essential conditions for rebirth in the Pure Land- in the Pure Mind. This approach is presented as the easiest, most expedient way for the majority of people in this day and age.

After the passage of an unimaginable span of time, Dharmakara achieved his goal. He became a Buddha named Amitabha (Immeasurable Light), or Amitayus (Immeasurable Light) and in so doing, satisfied all of the conditions of his vows. He indeed created a Pure Land, called Sukhavati, the land of Ultimate Bliss or Pureland\(^\text{14}\).

Pure land is belonging to Mahayana schools approach that employ, inter alias, the techniques of meditation/visualization (of pure land, Amitabha Buddha…) and of oral recitation of the Buddha’s name, to realize the paramitas.

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That is, when a practitioner is busy visualizing the Buddha or reciting the Buddha’s name, one cannot commit transgressions or violate the Buddhist precepts. Therefore, one has effectively fulfilled the paramita of Discipline. Likewise, reciting the Buddha’s name with a completely focused Mind is nothing less than fulfilling the paramita of Concentration. Once concentration is achieved, the practitioner’s Mind becomes empty and still, leading to the emergence of one’s innate wisdom—the Wisdom of the Buddhas.

Thus, a Buddha Recitation practitioner, by dint of his own effect, effectively attains Buddhahood. This is a simple, straight-forward alternative to strict monastic ascetism (Theravada school), deep and extensive study of the Buddhist Canon (Sutra Studies School), esoteric yogic practices, ceremonies and services (Tantric school) or intensive meditation under the personal instruction of highly competent mentors (Zen).

According to Pure Land doctrine, however, most practitioners in this Degenerate Age find the “self—power,” self-help approach too difficult and arduous; therefore, in the Pure Land teachings, the Buddha and Sages compassionately emphasized the additional element of “other power.” This involves reliance on the Vows of Amitabha Buddha, made countless eons ago, to welcome and escort all sentient beings to his Land of Ultimate Bliss—an ideal training ground, an ideal environment. Once this “Land” is reached and training completed, the practitioners will naturally discover that “training is no training”
and that the training ground, the Pure Land, is Mind-Only. Rebirth at the time of death is rebirth within our own Mind.

Therefore it can be practiced at anytime, anywhere, under any circumstances, with no special training or guidance. It’s also adaptable to all levels of practitioners of intellectual and spiritual development.¹⁵

In this method, the ever-wandering mind is not only focused on many wholesome activities (bowing, reciting, circumambulation, etc.), it also has a single transcendental focus: Amitabha Buddha. A concentrated mind, free of greed, anger and delusion, is a pure mind. The Easy Path involves reliance on the power of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, in particular Buddha Amitabha ("other-power") in addition to one's own cultivation ("self-power"). Moreover, Pure Land draws upon Amitabha Buddha's Vow to rescue all sentient beings. Reciting His name tunes the practitioner in to that Vow, to that compassion.

To purify one mind cannot be achieved by study or verbalization alone. It can be attained only through determined practice. The goal espoused by all Buddhist schools is for the practitioners to achieved Buddhahood, i.e., to become an Enlightened Being. Thus, to practice Buddhism is to cultivate enlightenment, to attain wisdom.

¹⁵ Pure Land Buddhism. Dialogues with Ancient Masters by Patriarch Chih I and Master Ju. Translated by Master Thich Thien Tam. New York, third Edition : 1992
Although there are many paths to reach this goal, they all involve severing greed, anger, aversion, desire and delusion, thus perfecting the qualities of the mind.

Overall, Buddhism has many paths that have been discussing as above but still many paths have not yet mention. In order to help all living beings the Lord Buddha compassionately show us so many ways to suite our karmic that we usually heard “Everyone have different karmas” so its tell us that each of us do not be afraid that we are not fit in the Buddha teachings, we all have our own choice to choose the ways as we like to practice to bring mind peace. But we do afraid that we do not have enough the merit will leading us not be able to see or hear the Buddha’s Dharma and we are not really have much times to put into practices in order to relief our bad past karmas and unwholesome roots. Therefore, we try to cultivating as like the fires it’s burning on our head. So we are not waste times and let times gone the way its waste.

**Engaging Outer Peace**

Buddhism teaches that wisdom should be developed with compassion. At one extreme, you could be a goodhearted fool and at the other extreme, you could attain knowledge without any emotion. Buddhism uses the middle path to develop both. The highest wisdom is seeing that in reality, all phenomena are incomplete, impermanent and do not constitute a fixed entity. True wisdom does not simply believe what we are told but instead experiencing and understanding truth and
reality. Wisdom requires an open, objective, unbigoted mind. The Buddhist path requires courage, patience, flexibility and intelligence.

Extending the same logic, Buddhist social ethics, in keeping with the Buddhist doctrine of Pratityasamutpada (doctrine of dependent origination), shows that individual betterment and perfection on the hand and social good on the other, are fundamentally interrelated and interdependent.

A society, in which all individual members are self-sufficient or self-sustaining, can be called happy and secure to a large extent.

Further, a secure and peaceful society is favourable to individual, intellectual, and spiritual pursuits. The Buddhist standpoint ascertains that a minimal amount of responsibility for individual betterment and perfection is required of all individual, while maintaining an appropriate degree of social responsibility. Even the most solitary monks have been in regular contact with-and are responsible for-the ‘well-being’ of a community, and studies show that it may not be entirely true to say that the Buddhist monastic order, for instance, stays entirely aloof from society. Therefore, even though it is acknowledged that Buddhism is a religion of renunciation and transcendental understanding, the ‘challenge’ to Buddhist praxis was-and is-to create, and to perpetuate an institutional framework that is ‘of –the-world’, yet at the same time’ out-of-the-world’.

Creating Merit /Virtue Work at the Monastery
In Asia, it is considered the highest honor if a member of one's family leaves the home life. Westerners, however, may be shocked at the idea of anyone leaving their family to become a monk or nun. They may think this is selfish and turning ones back on the world. In fact, monks and nuns are not selfish at all. They dedicate themselves to helping others. They don't wish to own a lot of things, or to have money or power. They give these things up to gain something far more valuable--spiritual freedom. By living a pure simple life with others on the same path, they are able to lessen their greed, hatred, and ignorance.

Although monks and nuns live in a monastery, they do not entirely give up their families. They are allowed to visit and take care of them when they are ill.

The laity is very important in Buddhism, for they are the supporting members of the Buddhist community. They build the temples and monasteries and give offerings of food, robes, bedding, and medicine to the monks and nuns. This enables the Sangha to carry on the Buddha's work. In this way the Sangha and laity benefit each other and together keep the Dharma alive. Whether one is a member of the Sangha or a lay person, the ideal is to practice Buddhism for the sake of all.

**Imparting Education to the Public**

Education is the principal tool of human growth, essential for transforming the unlettered child into a mature and responsible adult. Yet everywhere today,
both in the developed world and the developing world, we can see that formal education is in serious trouble. Classroom instruction has become so routinized and pat that children often consider school an exercise in patience rather than an adventure in learning. Even the brightest and most conscientious students easily become restless, and for many the only attractive escape routes lie along the dangerous roads of drugs, sexual experimentation, and outbursts of senseless violence. Teachers too find themselves in a dilemma, dissatisfied with the system which they serve but unable to see a meaningful alternative to it.

One major reason for this sad state of affairs is a loss of vision regarding the proper aims of education. The word "education" literally means "to bring forth," which indicates that the true task of this process is to draw forth from the mind its innate potential for understanding. The urge to learn, to know and comprehend is a basic human trait, as intrinsic to our minds as hunger and thirst are to our bodies. In today's turbulent world, however, this hunger to learn is often deformed by the same moral twists that afflict the wider society. Indeed, just as our appetite for wholesome food is exploited by the fast-food industry with tasty snacks devoid of nutritional value, so in our schools the minds of the young are deprived of the nutriment they need for healthy growth. In the name of education the students are passed through courses of standardized instruction intended to make them efficient servants of a demeaning social system. While such education
may be necessary to guarantee societal stability, it does little to fulfill the higher end of learning, the illumination of the mind with the light of truth and goodness.

A major cause of our educational problems lies in the "commercialization" of education. The industrial growth model of society, which today extends its tentacles even into the largely agrarian societies of South and Southeast Asia, demands that the educational system prepare students to become productive citizens in an economic order governed by the drive to maximize profits. Such a conception of the aim of education is quite different from that consistent with Buddhist principles. Practical efficiency certainly has its place in Buddhist education, for Buddhism propounds a middle path which recognizes that our loftiest spiritual aspirations depend on a healthy body and a materially secure society. But for Buddhism the practical side of education must be integrated; with other requirements designed to bring the potentialities of human nature to maturity in the way envisioned by the Buddha. Above all, an educational policy guided by Buddhist principles must aim to instill values as much as to impart information. It must be directed, not merely toward developing social and commercial skills, but toward nurturing in the students the seeds of spiritual nobility.

Since today's secular society dictates that institutional education is to focus on preparing students for their careers, in a Buddhist country like Sri Lanka the prime responsibility for imparting the principles of the Dhamma to the students naturally falls upon the Dhamma schools. Buddhist education in the Dhamma
schools should be concerned above all with the transformation of character. Since a person's character is molded by values, and values are conveyed by inspiring ideals, the first task to be faced by Buddhist educators is to determine the ideals of their educational system.

If we turn to the Buddha's discourses in search of the ideals proper to a Buddhist life, we find five qualities that the Buddha often held up as the hallmarks of the model disciple, whether monk or layperson. These five qualities are faith, virtue, generosity, learning, and wisdom. Of the five, two — faith and generosity — relate primarily to the heart: they are concerned with taming the emotional side of human nature. Two relate to the intellect: learning and wisdom. The second, virtue or morality, partakes of both sides of the personality: the first three precepts—abstinence from killing, stealing, and sexual abuse—govern the emotions; the precepts of abstinence from falsehood and intoxicants help to develop the clarity and honesty necessary for realization of truth. Thus Buddhist education aims at a parallel transformation of human character and intelligence, holding both in balance and ensuring that both are brought to fulfillment.

The entire system of Buddhist education must be rooted in faith (saddha) — faith in the Triple Gem, and above all in the Buddha as the Fully Enlightened One, the peerless teacher and supreme guide to right living and right understanding. Based on this faith, the students must be inspired to become accomplished in virtue (sila) by following the moral guidelines spelled out by the
The four and fifth virtues work closely together. By learning (sūta) is meant a wide knowledge of the Buddhist texts which is to be acquired by extensive reading and persistent study. But mere learning is not sufficient. Knowledge only fulfills its proper purpose when it serves as a springboard for wisdom (pañña), direct personal insight into the truth of the Dhamma. Of course, the higher wisdom that consummates the Noble Eightfold Path does not lie within the domain of the Dhamma school. This wisdom must be generated by methodical mental training in calm and insight, the two wings of Buddhist meditation. But Buddhist education can go far in laying the foundation for this wisdom by
clarifying the principles that are to be penetrated by insight. In this task learning and wisdom are closely interwoven, the former providing a basis for the latter. Wisdom arises by systematically working the ideas and principles learned through study into the fabric of the mind, which requires deep reflection, intelligent discussion, and keen investigation.

It is wisdom that the Buddha held up as the direct instrument of final liberation, as the key for opening the doors to the Deathless, and also as the infallible guide to success in meeting life's mundane challenges. Thus wisdom is the crown and pinnacle of the entire system of Buddhist education, and all the preliminary steps in a Buddhist educational system should be geared toward the flowering of this supreme virtue. It is with this step that education reaches completion, that it becomes illumination in the truest and deepest sense, as exclaimed by the Buddha on the night of his Awakening: "There arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, understanding, and light."

**Fund Raising For the Poor and Needy**

According to the Nipata Sutta has stated that “To have much wealth and ample gold and food, but to enjoy one’s luxuries alone this is a cause of one’s downfall.” This teaching can be seen as a Buddhist dictate towards charity and to not accumulating wealth. This may be viewed as a critique of avarice, and we can
confidently say that the Buddha discouraged large accumulation of wealth, simply, this is one of the Buddhas social teaching.

The need for global solidarity may seem like a modern concept, but it is not. More than 2,500 years ago, the Buddha taught that nothing exists in isolation, and that all phenomena are interdependent. Just as profoundly, he taught that we cannot be happy as long as others suffer, and that when we do reach out, we discover the best in ourselves.

"Once there is seeing, there must be acting

We must be aware of the real problems of the world.

Then, with mindfulness, we will know what to do,

And what not to do, to be of help".16

All of us can learn from the Buddha's spirit of compassion. His timeless teachings can help us to navigate the many global problems we face today.

Giving is one of the first six paramita in Buddhism. Giving of any kind is unquestionably good. The Buddha encourages us to give generously whenever anyone asks for help. And even the smallest of gifts, when offered with a generous heart, has tremendous value: "Even if a person throws the risings of a bowl or a cup into a village pool or pond, thinking, 'May whatever animals live here feed on this,' that would be a source of merit". But the actual rewards of giving depend

strongly on the climate in which the giving occurs. The giver and the recipient — the donor and the organization — share an equal responsibility in fostering a climate that makes the most of generosity. If both are serious about putting the Buddha's teachings into practice, they would do well to consider the following points:

First, the benefits of giving multiply in accordance with the purity of the giver's motives. A gift we give half-heartedly yields modest rewards for all concerned, whereas a gift given with genuine open-handedness, "not seeking [our] own profit, not with a mind attached [to the reward]," is of far greater value. If we give with an expectation of receiving something from the recipient in return — membership benefits, a certificate of appreciation, a book, a meditation course, etc. — we shortchange ourselves, and dilute the power of our generosity. Buddhist organizations should therefore be cautious about rewarding gifts with these sorts of perquisites.

Second, the Buddha does not encourage us to ask for gifts. In fact, he says quite the opposite: he encourages us to make do with what little we already have. This theme of contentment-with-little echoes throughout the Buddha's teachings. To my mind, a fundraiser's long "wish list" of needed items conveys a sense of dissatisfaction, and thus seems at odds with this message. Donors most enjoy giving when they know that their gift — no matter how humble it may be — is truly appreciated by the recipient. If I have only a small gift to give, I wonder if it
will be appreciated — or even noticed — by an organization with ambitious fundraising goals or a long and expensive list of needs. An organization can promote the Buddha's teachings most effectively, and inspire the greatest confidence among its supporters, by keeping its needs modest and its requests rare.

Third, the purity of the recipient also matters. When we give to virtuous people — those who, at the very least, abide by the five precept— we not only acknowledge their intention to develop virtue, but we also reinforce our own resolve. Giving to virtuous people is thus a powerful karmic force whose benefits extend far beyond the moment of giving itself. Generosity and virtue are deeply intertwined; when we learn to exercise our generous impulses skillfully, and give where the gift reaps the greatest fruit, we make the most of them both. Whether we are giver or recipient, we stand to benefit most from generosity when we take virtue seriously.

Finally, an appeal to fledgling Buddhist groups and organizations: please be very, very patient, and resist the temptation to make your organization grow. The success of a Buddhist organization should never be measured in conventional commercial terms: number of members, number of downloads, number of courses taught, amount of money raised, etc. Its success can only be measured by how well it embodies the Buddha's teachings. If it does good work that is rooted firmly in the principles of virtue, people who recognize virtue when they see it will inevitably take notice and be inspired to lend a hand with unbounded generosity.
Any organization that can do this much passes on to others, in the most direct way possible, the priceless tradition of generosity, which is the heart and soul of Dhamma — the greatest gift of all.

Eventhough, it’s very difficult to have a case in which the right Dharma is heard while the stomach of hearer is empty. It means that the mercifulsness must show the status of oneself firstly.

Charitable work of Buddhism could be place the first foundation of the six paramitta and the 11th great vow of Healing Buddha which carries two major sides in this vow. First major side is “I take vow that after I attain enlightenment, I will give food and water to people who are hungry and thirsty, I will give clothing to people who are cold; I will give happiness to people who are in sorrow. Second, after their matter life and basic demands of life are enough, I will give them the magic right Dharma in order to be free from long suffering. The first side is only a span of bridge lead to the great important of second side. In other word, socially engaged Buddhism is not simply sharing the food, clothing, and all such kinds of material things to poor people, if we just do so, we will make poor people to rely on us, and we will never have enough material needs to help them in whole their life. So suffering will continue happen\textsuperscript{17}.

Therefore, whenever we do the charity work remember to attach along a short Buddha’s sentences with the gift. The sentence that we feel suitable and favorable for the person needs. It will save them from suffering and poorness. For example, a person sorrowed in old scores of underworld, now understand thoroughly the Buddha’s saying in the Dharmapada, “Hatred never solve by hatred but by love and compassion, this truth forever” or the other short example “Health is the most precious heritage of everybody, please do blessing and serve living beings because it’s an offering to Buddha practically”. So the receiver will have a precious heritage of spirit besides the gifts of matter. To pay the homage to all Buddha and Healing Buddha we try to do both side as much as possible in order to help other sentient beings to relief suffering in both mental and material needs, which socially engage Buddhist are use to contribute. The Buddha had taught that when one lights a candle from the flame of another candle, the flame of the first candle does not lose its light. Instead, the two lights glow more brightly together. So be surely to contributing all our effort to other needs.

**Being Compassionate Towards Non-human Sentient Beings**

Unlike other friend religions, Buddhism affirms the unity of all living beings, all equally posses the Buddha-nature, and all have the potential to become Buddha, that is, to become fully and perfectly enlightened. Among the sentient, there are no second-class citizens. According to Buddhist teaching, human beings do not have a privileged, special place above and beyond that of the rest of life.
The world is not a creation specifically for the benefit and pleasure of human beings. Furthermore, in some circumstances according with their karma, humans can be reborn as humans and animals can be reborn as humans. In Buddhism the most fundamental guideline for conduct is ahimsa-the prohibition against the bringing of harm and/or death to any living being.

Why should one refrain from killing? It is because all beings want to live; they love their lives and do not wish to die. Even one of the smallest creatures, the mosquito, when it approaches to bite us, will fly away if we make the slightest motion. Why does it fly away? Because it fears death. This figures that if it drinks our blood, we will take its life. . . . We should nurture compassionate thought. Since we wish to live, we should not kill any other living being. Furthermore, the karma of killing is understood as the root of all suffering and the fundamental cause of sickness and war, and the forces of killing are explicitly identified with the demonic. The highest and most universal ideal of Buddhism is to work unceasingly for permanent end to the suffering of all living beings, not just humans.

There are some striking examples on the news that related to an animal's acting with more humanity than most humans. The point is not saying that animals are more humane than humans, but that is dramatic evidence, animals can act in ways that do not support certain Western stereotypes about their capacities.
In 1990, the news has reported by Associated Press. The first news was about northern Japanese fishing village. Several people from a fishing vessel were washed overboard in a storm far at sea. One of the women was found still alive on a beach near her village three days later. At the time a giant sea turtle was briefly seen swimming just offshore. The woman said that when she was about to drown the turtle had come to rescue her and had carried her on its back for three days to the place where she was found. The other news was happened the same year in February about a man lost at sea was saved by a giant stingray: A man claims he rode 450 miles on the back of a stingray to safety after his boat capsized three weeks ago, a radio station reported. And the other news Radio Vanuatu said 18-year-old Lottie Stevens washed up Wednesday in New Caledonia. It said Stevens' boat capsized January 15 while he and a friend were on a fishing trip. The friend died and after four days spent drifting with the overturned boat, Stevens decided to try to swim to safety, Radio vanuatu reported. There were sharks in the area, but a stingray came to Steven's rescue and carried him on its back for 13 days and nights to New Caledonia, the radio said.18

Buddhist rules of conduct-including the First Precept “Do not kill”- apply to our treatment of animals as well as our treatment of human beings. This would lead us naturally to expect Buddhists to oppose all forms of animal exploitation. In

the Mahavagga, the Buddha proclaims: “A bikkhu (monk) who has received ordination ought not intentionally to destroy the life of any living being down to a worm or an ant.” This concern for animal and plant welfare shaped monastic life.

In the early days up to now of the Buddhist community, the monks traveled during all three seasons, winter, summer, and the rainy season. In order to protested and save all living being, particular when traveling the rainy season. The Buddha requires that all his disciples enter retreats and stop wandering during the monsoons. This public protest clearly telling that, the practice of ahimsa had by the time of the Buddha exerted broad influence, sufficient for people to follow great ethic by members of a religious order.19

The Great Compassion grew out of a deep conviction that the Buddhadharma calls upon all of us who take refuge in the Triple Gem not to abandon those beings whose suffering and pulls up short where self-interest begins. The Great Compassion is also intended for animal protection advocates who wish to take part in a dialogue with members of the Buddhist community. It is, therefore, a book about why—once we have put aside the very appetites and customs that Buddhist practice is intended to help us overcome—the Buddha’s teaching leads us to the realization that we must always strive to harm no sentient being, human or nonhuman, whether or not it is in our selfish interests to do so.

Buddhist ethics are not a legalistic system that allows us to justify behavior on the basis of loopholes, technicalities, or a strict construction of the text. Buddhist ethics are based on motivation and intent. An ethical act is one that is driven by love and compassion and guided by the desire to do the least harm possible to any living being in whatever circumstance we find ourselves. An unethical act is one that is driven by craving, fear, or anger and guided by the desire to benefit ourselves by harming another living being. Thinking like a lawyer or an academic logician and claiming that it is acceptable to harm another sentient being for our own selfish benefit based on hair-splitting distinctions and nimble logic is contrary to the teaching of the Buddha.

After noting that “Ethical conduct (sila) is built on the vast conception of universal love and compassion for all beings, on which the Buddha’s teaching is based,” the Venerable Walpola Rahula, a monk, university professor and social activist who was one of the twentieth century’s leading exponents of Theravada Buddhism, observes, “It is regrettable that many schools forget this great ideal of the Buddha’s teaching and indulge in only dry philosophical and metaphysical divagations when they talk and write about Buddhism. The Buddha gave his teaching ‘for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world.’
A trend in contemporary Western Buddhism that is just as pernicious is the growing tendency to treat the Buddha as just self-help. According to this school of thought, the purpose of spiritual practice is to reduce stress, lower anxiety, and generally make us better adjusted and less neurotic. Advocates of Buddhism as self-help do not so much deny the importance of compassion as reduce it to a set of mental exercises that fill us with warm fuzzes while having little or no effect on the world around us. The Buddha taught that we cannot achieve our happiness until we are prepared to sacrifice it for the happiness of others.