JOY OF LIVING

04 動機與快樂
MOTIVATION AND HAPPINESS

10 覺醒的心
AN AWAKENED HEART

14 我為什麼要幫忙
WHY I VOLUNTEER

22 生活的實驗
LIFE AS AN EXPERIMENT

28 尋找幽默感
IN SEARCH OF A SENSE OF HUMOUR
JOY OF LIVING

EDITOR’S NOTE

陳信脡 Chen Chih-jun

To borrow the title of a Stephen Sondheim song about marriage, the experience of putting together this issue of the magazine can be summed up as being “Sunny Side Up”. Our editors have been grateful for the thought and effort everyone put into completing the task at hand, despite the demands of work and family; and one is always sorry for the missed opportunities for oneself to do better.

Working with others is humbling. By its nature, voluntary work particularly encourages this realization.

When we collaborate as a group, each of us with our own habits of thought and behavior, we create an environment rich with the potential for discovery. Every interaction is an opportunity to learn more about ourselves, and about others. Disagreements can and do happen, of course. As volunteers, we can choose to walk away. Yet we choose to be here.

This exercise of choice lies at the heart of this issue's theme: the motivations for our actions and what they have to do with a life well lived. It’s no exaggeration to say that understanding of our motivations will shape our experience of life. In the cover story, we explore why this is so, and discuss the type of motivations that create meaning and happiness: in life.

In the vein, five volunteers at the Tibet & Jerusalem meditation centre tell us what their volunteer work means to them, and what they have discovered about the relationship between this work and their meditation practice. From their accounts, it is clear that their pledge to help others is also a pledge to stand in others' shoes.

In Buddhist understanding, motivation and compassion are deeply linked. Buddhists see compassion as a “spontaneous feeling of connection with all living things. What you feel, I feel, what you feel, I feel” writes Tenzin Dhonden. In his book, The Joy of Living, a passage reproduced in this issue in other words, for each of us, happiness is linked to that of other people. If we seek happiness, this insight must necessarily guide our motivations for action.

Also in this issue, the Taiwanese Buddhist scholar Khongke Lodro Tengbo shares a story about how motivations for practice. In a conversation about education, he raises the lessons he learned at a Buddhist school in India, and how those lessons and his parents' teaching by example have shaped his ideas about the value of education. By showing us how to live a better life, true education is a type of practical wisdom.

Wisdom — and an open heart — also features in our final two articles, on the value of a sense of humor. An appreciation of the nature of life allows us to approach difficulties with more wisdom, but we cannot see life's inner wisdom without a relaxed, open heart. To avoid becoming what Chogyam Trungpa described as a “living center” — fixated intensely on serious matters to the exclusion of all else — it may be time to practice expanding our hearts and appreciating the lighter side of life.
他人
的生命

若我們想生活得
豐盛和快樂，
便要明瞭行為
的動機

從來，Laila習慣在家中吃午餐。因為一個人
進食，她總有想吃簡單、餡飽感美食的
時候。有很多時候，她的午餐只是一碗白米
飯，盡量保持清淡；若適時吃飽，便完全
不饿。

後來，她開始在香港的一間養老中心當
義工。為了有名氣和認識新朋友，但跟她
們一起愉快。自此，她的午餐就改變了，變
成了「三菜一湯」，完整而滿足的一餐。現在，
Laila不再覺得午餐無聊無味的甩棄事，
始終比以前吃得好多了，更享受午餐，也
變得更有意義。

Laila不是個別義工的異名。她希望保留
一些活動，但實用風格請教地改變。其實
Laila的經驗是不獨有的。任何國籍為自己充
滿的義工都曾同過——為自己充得飽飽的有
無動機。但她為他人義工，同-行動的意義
使樂於義工，我們應為義工奉出一批所不同。

感激之感，我們退回義工，這當中增
加了-個重要信息：若我們要快樂，就不應
任我發動我們行動的動機，而是要義工的
行為不只是為了自己的利益。換句話說，我
們的身心健康永遠是我們的動機，還有他
人的利益。

感謝之感

德懷特休姆，運動與感謝的研究指出，謝
謝之情是成功人士的定律。他認定，感謝能
帶動同有親朋好友的感動。在Laila的
身上，她每天都有著五至八人的陪伴午餐。

Laila住在中心不遠處，於是她便在家中
煮午餐。然後出去盡在中心，她與陌生人
聊天，看書場景實在，便決定要善待自己，
她的「草本」負重感，視角從不放懸，與人
不同，而且她會無視不善待草本的意義，
各人生活。

大約這年，她在「感恩」成立了顧問，
向其他義工分享她的美術。義工們感受得
著，此種大賞購買，中心中的Laila，中
心的一位老爺，貢獻是恩典，指導Laila
的顧問。妙的感激言，Laila自己也貢獻
很多。因為有人無意的教授愉快，便想
中心給她一齣重要的。

文字：李萬莉／攝影：林錦州
設計：鄭家祥／版式：梁振華
THE LIVES OF OTHERS

Do our motivations for action matter?
Yes, if we want to live a rich and happy life.

Text: Eric Lee / Charmaine Yuen
When Lala used to eat lunch alone at home, the meal was usually something simple. Too often, it was a bowl of instant noodles that took no more than a few minutes to prepare—even though she was a wonderful cook. If she did not feel particularly hungry, she just didn’t eat.

Then she started cooking lunch for the teachers and staff at a Buddhist centre in Hong Kong, as a volunteer, and eating with them. That transformed the meal, for her, into “three dishes and one soup”—a Chinese phrase sometimes used to mean a complete, satisfying meal. Now cooking lunch is no longer a chore for Lala; more trouble than it is worth. As a result, she’s eating better than ever, and lunch is more enjoyable and she feels healthier.

Lala is not her real name, as she prefers to keep her identity private, though she wants to share her story. Her experience is not unique, as we all know from cooking meals just for ourselves. When we cook for others, the very meaning of the act changes. This in turn affects how we feel.

In such a change in meaning can make us happier carries an important message. It would seem that to be happy, not only must we understand the motives for our actions, we must also be sure our behaviour is driven by more than just selfishness. In other words, we should be acting on actions that benefit not only ourselves, but others as well.

What you feel, I feel

For Buddhists, motivation and compassion go hand in hand. Buddhist teachers say all humans are endowed with compassion—an inherent capacity to identify with and understand the experiences of others’, as the meditation master Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche wrote in his book The Joy of Living: Compassion’s Awakened Heart. When told well, movie stories can resonate with our inner sense of the “rightness” of compassion. The 2006 German film, The Lives of Others, is one example. Set in 1984 in East Berlin, the film tells the story of a Stasi secret police agent and a playwright he was assigned to spy on. Through his surveillance, the agent unwittingly becomes a witness to the daily triumphs and tribulations of a man struggling to cope with political repression, censorship, and the demands of his relationships. Slowly and masterfully, the agent’s indifference turned to empathy. Guided by this new motivation, he performed and acted in kindness in the end that redeemed his own life.

Buddhist teachers tell us that if we keep our eyes and hearts open, we will find equally moving—though perhaps less dramatic—stories around us. There are many who devote thought and effort to making life better for others.

Take Lala, the volunteer cook. Ten years ago, when she was asked if she could help cook lunch for the Buddhist centre’s teachers and staff, she didn’t hesitate to say yes. Since then, she has been a constant presence at the centre, serving three meals a day for anywhere from eight to ten people each day of the week except Sunday and Monday, almost year-long except when she’s taking her holiday or travelling.

Lala lives near the centre, so she cooks the lunch at home and delivers it to the centre on foot. She goes shopping for ingredients in the morning, setting what’s available in the shops according to what she will cook that day. The menu is extensive—the cuisine alone appears in several different styles—and she delights in introducing food from her hometown to people at the centre.

About half a year ago, she created a Facebook page to share her recipes with the other volunteers who wanted to learn vegetarian cooking. Lala’s efforts are greatly appreciated, and not just by people at the centre. One of the teachers at the centre said even visitors who had tasted her food had asked if she could give them cooking lessons.

Lala herself has gained much in return. She feels happy to be needed, and says the centre has given her a feeling of home.

The intent to be happy

To have a life of joy, we must first nurture the seeds of joy. This begins by taking responsibility for our own happiness. The Israeli teacher and author Ellen Lesser’s, whose Positive Psychology course at Harvard University was one of the most popular among the students, explained it thus in one interview: “The misunderstanding that many people have about happiness and joy is that it can somehow come from the outside, whereas more and more research, more and more experience, suggests that it can only come from within. In other words, we need to help ourselves.”

We can do this by being clear about our motivations in life, and understanding what motivations will make us happy and what will not. Creatively, having a goal and achieving it brings satisfaction. It’s no secret that a person who is motivated to do a task will generally do a better job than someone with less of a motivation. Being more effective will, in turn, make that person happier. Conversely, someone who feels unappreciated, unmotivated and bored is likely to do a poor job, leading to further unhappiness.

These self-directed goals may seem important for a time. But for meaning and purpose in life, we need to lead an other-directed life. Sometimes it takes a tragedy to bring this home. The mass shooting at a Connecticut school last year shocked the world, and sparked an outpouring of grief for the loss lost, many of them children. At an emotional prayer vigil held at the school, US President Barack Obama spoke of “faith. ‘What gives our acts purpose?’” he said. “We know that we each have our share of pleasure and pain, that even after we have done all that is necessary, whether it’s wealth or power or fame, or just simple comfort, we still, in some fashion, fall short of what we had hoped... There’s only one thing we can be sure of, and that is the love that we have—for our children, for our families, for each other.”

No one should have to wait for a tragedy to strike before they accept a life bounded by the daily ‘to-do’. The meaning of life, in this view, is to be found, it is to be created. Lama Shenphen, a teacher at the Tibetan meditation centre, puts it this way: “If we were given $100 and spend it all on ice cream for ourselves, once we’ve eaten it all, the pleasure of eating quickly fades. But if we gave away $10 instead, we would have created meaning. And the meaning of the gift would remain with us long after the ice cream was gone.”

Not all of us have $100 to give away, or the ability to whip up a tasty meal. But there are myriad ways to live in service of others, and there is one method of cultivating joy that is open to all—meditation. By letting ourselves through the practice of mindfulness, meditation teachers tell us, begin to recognize our own wisdom and compassion.

In his book Joyful Wisdom, Mingyur Rinpoche said our practice “can begin with the simple aspiration to do better”. As an approach to our activity with a greater sense of awareness and insight, and to open our hearts more deeply towards others. ‘Motivation’, he said, “is the single most important factor in determining whether your experience is conditioned by suffering or by peace. Wisdom and compassion actually develop at the same pace. The more attentive you become to the more deeply you examine things, the easier you’ll find to be compassionate. And the more you open your heart to others, the more you appreciate their kindness and their abilities to become all in your activities.”

In time, we see that being helpful to others is part of our nature. When Lala was asked why she put so much effort into her unpaid work, she described it as something special. “It’s natural,” she said, “It’s like you would head to bed if you were sleepy, you would eat when you’re hungry, and you would drink when you’re thirsty.”
覺醒的悲心

問答《世界上最快樂的人》

當我們覺醒時，悲心會因為不能再讓自己的
孩子無痛而感到痛苦。然而，痛苦和悲痛
是相輔相成的，沒有痛苦，悲心就無法
成長。

悲心是心
自然發生的智慧，
無時無刻與我們同在；
一直以來都是如此，
而且永遠都是如此。
Imagine spending your life in a little room with only one locked window so dirty, it barely admits any light. You’re probably tired of the world your a pretty and dusty place, full of strange shaped creatures that cast terrifying shadows against the dirty glass as they passed your room.

But suppose one day you spill some water on the window, or a bit of rain dribbles in after a storm, and you use a rag or a corner of your shirt sleeve to dry it off. And you do the same with all the dirt that had accumulated on the glass comes away. Suddenly a small patch of light comes through the glass. You go to the sink and get more water, and rub and rub until the whole surface of the window is free of dirt and grime. The light simply pours in, and you recognize, perhaps for the first time, that those strange shaped shadows that used to scare you every time they passed are actually people—just like you! And from the depth of your own awareness arises an instinctive urge to form a social bond—to go out there on the street and just be with them.

In truth, you haven’t changed anything at all. The world, the light, and the people were always there. You just couldn’t see them because your vision was obscured. But now you see it all, and what a difference it makes!

This is what, in the Buddhist tradition, we call the dawning of compassion: the awakening of an inner capacity to identify with and understand the experience of others.

The Buddhist understanding of compassion is, in some ways, a bit different from the ordinary sense of the word. For Buddhists, compassion doesn’t simply mean feeling sorry for other people. The Tibetan term—nying-jag—implies an utterly whole expansion of the heart. Probably the closest English translation of nyin-jag is “love”—but a type of love without attachment or any expectation of getting anything in return. Compassion, in Tibetan terms, is a spontaneous feeling of connection with all living things, what you feel, I feel; what I feel, you feel. There’s no difference between us.

Biologically, we’re programmed to respond to our environment in fairly simple terms of avoiding threats to our survival and grasping for opportunities to enhance our wellbeing. Yet it seems that the same biological programming that drives us toward violence and cruelty also provides us with emotions that not only inhibit aggression but also move us to act in ways that override the impulse for personal survival in the service of others. I was struck by a remark made by Harvard Professor Jerome Kagan during his presentation at the 2001 Mind and Life Institute conference, when he noted that along with our tendency toward aggression, our survival instinct has provided us with “an even stronger biological basis for kindness, compassion, love, and nurture.”

I have been told many stories about a number of people who risked their lives during the Second World War to give refuge to European Jews hunted by the Nazis, and of the unnamed heroes of the present day who sacrifice their own welfare to help the victims of war, famine, and tyranny in countries around the world. In addition, many of my Western students are parents who sacrifice an enormous amount of time and energy shuttling their children between sports competitions, musical activities, and other events, while patiently putting money aside for their children’s education.

Such sacrifices do seem, on an individual level, to indicate a set of biological factors that transcend normal fears and desires. The simple fact that we’ve been able to build societies and civilizations that at least acknowledge the need to protect and care for the young, the weak, and the defenseless supports Professor Kagan’s conclusion that “an ethical sense is a biological feature of our species.”

His remarks resonate almost completely with the essence of the Buddha’s teachings. The more clearly we see things as they are, the more willing and able we become to open our hearts toward other beings. When we recognize that others experience pain and unhappiness because they don’t recognize their true nature, we’re spontaneously moved by a profound wish for them to experience the same sense of peace and clarity that we’ve begun to know.

From what I’ve learned, most conflicts between people stem from a misunderstanding of one another’s motives. We all have our reasons for doing what we do and saying what we say. The more we allow ourselves to be guided by compassion—to pause for a moment and try to see where another person is coming from—the less likely we are to engage in conflict. And even when problems do arise, if we take a deep breath and listen with an open heart, we’ll find ourselves able to handle the conflict more effectively to find the way to peace, to speak, and resolve our differences in such a manner that everyone is satisfied, and no one ends up as the “winner” or the “loser.”

Once we recognize that other sentient beings—people, animals, and even insects—are just like us, that their basic motivation is to experience peace and to avoid suffering, then, when someone acts in some way or says something that is against our wishes, we’re able to have some basis for understanding. “Oh, well, they’re just what they are. I’m acting from the position of judgment. Just like me, they want to be happy and they want to avoid suffering. That’s their basic purpose. They’re not out to get me; they’re simply doing what they think they need to do.”

Compassion is the spontaneous wisdom of the heart, and it’s always with us. It always has been, and always will be. When it arises in us, we’ve simply learned to see how strong and safe we really are.
我為什麼要幫忙

五位德修禪修中的義工談做義工與修持的關係

李麗薇

雙腳與身體的關係

李麗薇

身體與心靈的關係

李麗薇

心靈與世界的關係

陳妙娟

在 2011 年就業於好心人的關懷下參加了身心靈成長禪修中

李麗薇

於還願活動中，感到心靈的成長與成長禪修的關係

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程

李麗薇

成長禪修的過程中，使我..
WHY I VOLUNTEER

Five volunteers at Hong Kong’s Tergar centre talk about their motivation to help, and what this has to do with their life

Illustration: Frenes Lai

Vivian Li
Translated from the Chinese by Julie Wang Evans

I have been drawn to Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche’s teachings since attending the Joy of Living meditation course in 2011. The Rinpoche used very simple yet clear ways to teach more than 10 different kinds of meditation. We learned that we could meditate whenever we are—when we walk, sit, or lie down. It’s simply the best method I know.

I am grateful for the teachings of the Rinpoche, and thankful for the generous guidance of the teachers, volunteers and fellow students on how to deal with life’s ups and downs. One piece of good advice I received is that whenever I feel overwhelmed by emotions, I should remember not to be carried away by them. Instead, I should observe them. By doing so, I will calm down and regain a sense of peace.

After those first classes, I went on to attend levels two and three of the meditation course, where I gained an inexpressible feeling of peace and belonging. So I decided to become a volunteer. The reason is simple: it’s a way of showing my gratitude, and taking part in the centre’s activities makes me feel very much at home.

There is another motivation: I use this volunteer work to review what I have learned and deepen my understanding of the Rinpoche’s teachings. I took part in a series of study sessions that began in the middle of 2011. They taught me a lot, and helped me reflect and practice.

The centre also organizes classes for volunteers conducted by sitting teachers who have much to share with us. As an old Chinese saying goes, the processes of learning and teaching are complementary, with one enhancing the effectiveness of the other.

After just a year, I sensed some changes in myself. I found myself constantly adjusting my thinking, behavior, attitude, emotions and the way I express myself. My mind has also become much clearer and at peace.

Modern life is frenetic. We face pressures at work, and conflict and contradictions in society. Disasters are happening one after another: both natural and man-made; there are problems of information overload and overconsumption; our environment, including air and water, is seriously polluted; even our values have become distorted. How are we to cope? All kinds of mental afflictions are surfacing: how do we turn our own mind into something positive and find our balance in a turbulent world? This is why we need to listen to the Rinpoche—to deal with these problems through meditation.

I feel a sense of mission: I hope our work as volunteers will help to introduce the Rinpoche’s Joy of Living methods to more people in Hong Kong, across Asia and even the world, so that more and more people will be able to find happiness.

Lily Lee
Translated from the Chinese by Michelle Yau

I started volunteering at the Tergar centre after completing all three levels of the Joy of Living meditation course with its meditation “homework.” At a friend’s invitation, I decided to take a 10-day retreat, because I felt able to help, now that I had completed the meditation course. That decision to volunteer changed my life.

During those 10 days, I had many opportunities to observe my own mind—as many as there are stars in the sky. It seemed: the rise and fall of different emotions in me and others, and the interactions between us. Every moment provided a useful support for meditation. On the final day of the retreat, my emotions encouraged and complimented me. At that point I felt it was wonderful to be a volunteer—even though it was exhausting.

During the retreat, I saw there was room for improvement in Tergar’s information technology (IT) system. Wanting to help, the centre with my expertise, I offered my services.

Initially, there were misunderstandings because people at the centre were not familiar with IT and I needed time to learn to work with new people. Then things began to go smoothly. I am still working on this, but the process has already taught me much of value.

What we learn in books written by the great teachers is only knowledge—we have to use it. As Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche says, practice is very important. The most valuable thing about volunteering is the experience of using what I have learned through meditation, and the confidence I get by trying to apply it in my daily work and life.

Everyone is seeking happiness, including me. As I become more aware of how my mind produces concepts, labels and emotions, I find my own ego and attachment slowly dissolving. The more I use this, the more I understand both why I choose to serve and my own purpose in life. By volunteering to serve, we remind ourselves not to lose our mindfulness.

I should have started volunteering sooner, right after I completed level one of the Joy of Living course, because volunteering is not just altruism. I always thought it meant helping others, in fact, others help us—by giving us many opportunities to strengthen our meditation practice.

As the Buddha said: “Don’t go by reports; Don’t go by legends; Don’t go by traditions; Don’t go by compare; Don’t go by logical conjecture; Don’t go by inference; Don’t go by analogies; Don’t go by agreement through pondering reasons; Don’t go by probability, or by the thought; Don’t go by ‘This contemplative is our teacher’.”

We must each discover the secrets of life for ourselves, and practice is the key. Learning to serve others is part of our Buddhist practice. It is the only way to verify that what we have learned is true.

* Excerpts from MR-10, Kennett Sutta, translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.
Eliza Lau

I first became a Targer volunteer at a weekend meditation retreat in 2011. I fell in love with being a part of the Targer community, and I joined the volunteer team. As a volunteer, I helped out whenever I could make a contribution. I wanted to be accepted by the family I came to help. The most important thing for me was the support I received from the Targer community. I was always welcomed with open arms and given opportunities to participate in the activities. This support was very important to me, and I continued to volunteer in order to give back to the community.

Just as important as my own meditation is the support from the other volunteers. They help me deal with the stress of being a volunteer and are always there to offer support.

The meditation sessions are an integral part of the volunteer experience. Through meditation, I learned to focus my attention and develop a peaceful mindset. This helped me manage the stress of being a volunteer and provided me with the necessary mental strength to continue volunteering.

Miranda Chan

Trained in Targer's traditional methods, I joined the Joy of Living Community in 2014. The Joy of Living Community provided me with a supportive and nurturing environment, and I found solace in the teachings of Targer. The community has become an integral part of my life, and I have grown to love it.

Volunteering has taught me the importance of giving back to the community and the joy that comes from helping others. I have gained a sense of purpose and fulfillment from volunteering and have become more connected to my community. I have also learned how to manage my time and prioritize my responsibilities.

In conclusion, volunteering has been a valuable experience for me. It has allowed me to give back to the community and has helped me grow both personally and professionally. I would encourage anyone who is considering volunteering to do so, as it can be a rewarding and fulfilling experience.
我們上學唸書，只是為了學習一種賺錢謀生的技巧嗎？這樣一個狹窄的教育定義，許多教育家都感到震驚。謹慎如此，在現代社會裡，很多家長和學生都似乎為了追求這個目的而被壓得喘不過氣來。去年七月，在台灣澎湖的澎湖龍舟節後，後壁湖中心堂的《覺心論》課程就這樣開了。在這個訪談中，他指出教育的真正價值就是教育我們這樣處待他人，就好比一個實驗——真正的教育是要我們把在家裡、課堂裡學到的理論，應用到我們自己的生活上。

問：你講的《覺心論》是儒學的一門學問，它是不是一種思想，或者是儒家的教育？

答：是的，它結合了儒家的教育和儒學的概念。我們在台灣的教育系統中，它是離我們最近的一門學問。然而，它並非只是儒家的教育，而是結合了儒家的教育和儒學的概念，它結合了儒家的教育和儒學的概念，它結合了儒家的教育和儒學的概念。這種結合，使得我們的教育體系更加完整，也更加符合當今社會的需求。

問：你認為儒家的教育方式和現代的教育方式有什麼不同嗎？

答：儒家的教育方式和現代的教育方式有很大的不同。儒家的教育方式更注重學生的個人發展，更注重學生的個人價值，更注重學生的個人品行。而現代的教育方式則更注重學生的群體發展，更注重學生的群體價值，更注重學生的群體品行。儒家的教育方式和現代的教育方式的優點和缺點都應該被注意到，我們應該將儒家的教育方式和現代的教育方式結合在一起，才能真正達到教育的最佳效果。
LIFE AS AN EXPERIMENT

Getting a well-paying job isn’t why we go to school, yet it’s the goal pursued by many stressed-out students — encouraged by stressed-out parents. Khengo Lodro Tengye, a Buddhist scholar based in Taipei, came to Hong Kong last July to teach three days of classes on the nature of the mind. He tells us the value of education lies in teaching us how to live better. Just as theories of science are tested in laboratories, the knowledge we learn must be used in daily life.

Q. The Buddhist understanding of the nature of mind provides useful knowledge for living well. But must people have a contact with Buddhist scholarship? Can this useful knowledge be shared more broadly?

A. I find in conversations with non-Buddhist friends in Taiwan that most of them are very interested in the topic of understanding the human mind. Many of them already have some idea of how their minds work, but at the same time they feel helpless when faced with problems of life and work. These are very practical problems. Take this mother I love. She has three children. Sometimes I feel that her meditation practice is better than mine. At dinner with her and her family, on occasion the younger ones would try or make a fuss, I would be totally-focused, but she kept her cool. Her calmness comes from experience. She told me her eldest son came home one day and declared that he didn’t like the food at home. Hearing that, she got angry immediately. But then she calmed down and tried to see things from his point of view. Perhaps he’s going through adolescence, a phase of rebellion, she thought, and she could

---

Joy of Living

Interviewed by Chen Zhijun
Translated from the Chinese by Mabel Sih

---

Joy of Living — IN CONVERSATION

Alama’s views on life, experience and ideas that work
have changed, and we begin to see the problems associated with the system. The more we conceive, the faster we may destroy our planet. We see the conflicts around us. More and more people understand that we need to get back to the essence of education, which is to teach us how to live.

Q: Your parents introduced you to Buddhism, and you spoke of meditating when you were quite young. What was that experience like? What was going through your mind then when you were meditating?

A: It’s hard to say now; I was so young. I suppose you could say that I was daydreaming. I didn’t know much about meditation then, so I would tell people, “Oh, I was just daydreaming.” Later, I had the opportunity to learn from Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche. Actually, meditation teaches you a way of life, a way of living well. We live in a world that is very inward-directed, that encourages us to always seek more. Meditation helps to bring us back to ourselves. It’s that simple.

Education, too, teaches us a way of life. I’ve recently been reading about education. One of the books is Democracy and Education, a classic work by the American education reformer John Dewey. This book was written nearly a century ago, but reading it now, and other books by these pioneers of education philosophy, you realize they were all matters of living well. They did not use the word “happiness,” but they were clear that the purpose of education was how to live well. I really like Dewey’s book, which seems to speak to our problems today.

I went to school in Taiwan, and later to India to study Buddhism. The Buddhist school was located on a mountain, quite remote. All we had was a modern education would have some ideas about what education should be. As it turned out, these preconceived notions were dashed one by one when I went to India. From day one.

The day I arrived at the school, no one was there to receive me. A young monk came and said the teachers were up in the mountain, having their lunch. So I said I would wait. Instead, I was already sitting, grumbling that even though the school was notified of my arrival, they didn’t make any arrangements to receive me. Worse, when I saw the three monks who would become my teachers—leisurely eating lunch from their lunch, happy and contented, while I had been waiting for more than half an hour, it made me even madder.

One of the teachers looked at me and asked, “Why are you here?” Are you studying? I thought to myself then, I was speechless. Then he repeated the question, “Why are you here?” I then started to calm down. Maybe it was the high altitude and the lack of oxygen, but I wasn’t until he asked the question a second time that I realized why he was asking. “Do you want to study Buddhism?” I blurted out, “I want to learn how to be a Buddha.”

The answer was simple, but it took me a while to find it. The khenpos then said, “Good.” He said the khenpos had already informed him that I was coming.

I became very fond of this teacher. He gave me a lesson on day one. He helped me to get back to the fundamentals of why I wanted to study Buddhism. He didn’t ask me the question, “Will arrangements for food, board and other aspects of life there be made for me without a hitch?” Instead, he gave me the opportunity to be honest with myself, and to begin my journey this way. He gave me an opportunity to grow.

To use a computer analogy, the Buddhist college helps me to “clear the desktop,” and “reloaded” me to my “original settings.” Take another example. One teacher there was often late getting to class. I found that intolerable at first. But when he taught, he put so much care into the teaching that it really touched me. Also, when I first got there, I aimed to finish off all class. I was so full of plans for my life. In the first two years, my results were excellent, though few people at school liked to talk to me because I was so serious. I remember I came in second in the class teaching us how to be a Buddha—how to be a friendly person. [laughs] So ironic! I had a classmate who was always last in exams, yet he was friendly and popular and the most Buddha-like among us.

We cannot understand Buddhism through our worldly thinking and concepts. It will not work. Buddhism teaches you to let go of thinking such as “I have to do this.” I have to be the first or second in class, because these are not the important things in life. This is why Buddhist teachings are so inviolable. Buddhist teachings are how to live and communicate with others with better emotional intelligence. It teaches you how to build a better relationship with others by avoiding confrontations and conflicts. Also, these teachings are not just theories. They ask that you put them into practice, through meditation, to verify them by changing yourself.

But are such teachings completely absent in modern education? Of course not. Recently I read a best-seller book by Professor Stuart Diamond of the Wharton Business School, on communicating better. It gives many successful examples, and practical tips for good communication. It starts by saying: “If you want to communicate well, you need to think from the perspective of the other person. That is, if you were him or her, what would you think?” It is such a simple idea and it’s so appealing. So you can see this is what all we all want in education. There will be challenges, but there is also hope.
格子配條紋

讓我們放開習慣性的對立思維，尋找我們的幽默感吧

文字：汪精文
設計：王文英

幽黙生活的實戰篇

文字：溫驥騮
PLAID WITH STRIPES

A sense of humour is found when we stop seeing things as either-or

Text: Chen Ziyuan
Illustration: Fumio Fushimi

The slapstick was in a hallway commonly described as "first prize". They were among the first things you noticed when Yingying Mingjun Rinpoche walked into the West Campus stadium in Hong Kong to begin his talk, nine years running. He was wearing multicoloured and striped trousers. You could not tell, from where you sat, but there might have been prints of cartoon characters plastered on them.

His choice of footgear might strike some as odd. Why, in the world would match cutout slippers with Buddhist teachers of international renown, especially one revered by those in the community as a reincarnated master?

Albert Einstein might, if he were alive today.
The great physicist was well known to Princeton University - where he spent the final years of his life - for his dishevelled hair tangled clothes and reluctance to wear shoes. With a sense of touch, our heroes are quick. "Once you accept the universe as matter expanding into nothing that is something, wearing shoes with plaid comes easy," he said.

Apart from unconventional footwear, the Rinpoche and Einstein clearly have one other thing in common: neither took their reputation too seriously. Many would agree that having such a light touch is a useful skill in life, because being serious all the time can be exhausting.

Just ask Lama Sherab, a student of the Rinpoche's who is now based at the Norbulingka meditation centre in Hong Kong. People who meet Lama Sherab now may think he has always been a person who's good for a laugh. But the truth is very different. "I was such a serious person," he said. "You know the Rinpoche likes to joke. When I first met him, whenever he told jokes, I couldn't laugh. I wanted to, but I couldn't. I thought then that making a joke was somehow inappropriate."

Only when he began to let go of his rigorous concepts of the proper way to behave did he find his sense of humour. Over time, he discovered that knowing when to use humour to respond to a situation is a kind of wisdom. "I asked myself, why must I be so serious all the time? It's being serious my only choice? Of course not," he said.

A lack of humour, the late great meditation teacher Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, seems to come from an "attitude of the 'hard fact'". "Things are very hard and deadly serious, deadly serious," he wrote in the third volume of his collected works. A person with this attitude "lives in pain, has a continual expression of pain on his or her face. He has experienced some kind of hard fact - reality - he is deadly serious and has gone so far as to become a living corpse."

A game of your choosing

Now ask yourself: do you sometimes feel like a zombie? If the answer is "yes", you may be excused for thinking so. Life can be harsh, no one needs more than a few seconds to come up with a long list of unhappiness, downright depressing experiences that exist on making our acquaintance over the course of our lives.

Death ranks high on the list. - that of a loved one or even the thought of your own inevitable demise. Surely there’s little cheer to be found here. But that’s not how Dr Vincent Van, the founding chairman of Hong Kong’s Society for Life and Death Education, sees it. During his years as a practicing oncologist, he met many terminal cancer patients who learned, after some struggle, to accept death with grace and good humour.

"Really, you won’t believe it: if you’re seen -" he said. "Of course, in the beginning, everyone took it really hard. But when confronted by death, a person is forced to think through things. Many eventually came to see that making a miserable attitude just made them miserable. If you saw some of them near the end of their lives, you’d think they had been cured - they were in such good spirits."

One patient, a pastor, was writing a mining book about his inner journey, said Dr Van. In need of an observation that life is too serious to be talked about seriously, the pastor came to realise that "death is too serious, so I have to let go of my own seriousness and treat it instead with a rich sense of humour."

But what is a sense of humour? According to Trungpa Rinpoche, it means seeing both poles of a situation, from "an aural point of view". "There is a good and there is bad and you see both with a panoramic view as though from above," he said. "Then you begin to feel that these little people on the ground, killing each other or making love or just being little people, are very insignificant in the sense that, if they begin to make a big deal of their wanton or loving, then we begin to see the ironic aspect of their clamour."

Good or bad: life or death, plaid or stripes. Such a notion or thinking is a big help, in an expansiveness of heart and mind is crucial for a sense of humour. So is a sense of irony. The writer Lin Yutang, a skilled observer of satiric, once a centre of humour as kind of a big ladder between silly dreams and stark reality. Its function, he wrote in The Importance of Living, first published in 1937, is to exercise criticism of man’s dreams, and bring them in touch with the world of reality. It is important that man dreams, but it is perhaps equally important that he can laugh at his own dreams."

Buddhists often liken life to a dream. This can help us, when presented with a problem, from taking it too seriously. More often than not, taking a simple and light-hearted approach takes us closer to finding a solution.

Plainly, this is different from turning everyday into a joke, thinking that nothing matters. Life is a dream, but life isn’t a joke. As Trungpa Rinpoche put it, a sense of humour is not merely a matter of trying to tell jokes or make puns, trying to be funny in a deliberate fashion. It involves seeing the basic irony of the juxtaposition of extremes, so that one is not caught taking them seriously, so that one does not necessarily play that game of hope and fear.

Instead, treat on a game of your own choosing. Every day, choose the world’s top minds in science gather at a ceremony at Harvard University to honour achievements that "make people laugh, then think." The Ig Nobel prizes, a silly brother-in the prestigious Nobel, commemorate the world and whimsical in science. Last year, one award went to a research project determined to succeed that it failed to detect brain activity in a dead salmon. The ironic award statement said, "brain researchers, by using complicated instruments and simple statistics, can see meaningless brain activity anywhere - even in a dead salmon."

Another award went to a study that tried to show that leading to the left made the Eiffel Tower less picturesque. Puts of the event showed a group of Nobel laureates standing on a side by side in steps, looking at a toy model of the Eiffel Tower placed on a table in front of them, and leaning to the left.

At least one of them was wearing a funny hat. So, the next time you feel you may have walked out of the house wearing a wardrobe mistake, remember this and then remember about the expanding universe and relax.

THE FUNNY BUSINESS OF LIFE

An ability to laugh at the travails of life brightens up our days. It acts as a lubricant in a strained, stressed-out society where fiction is common. A sense of humour helps us live with joy. It has nothing to do with making deliberate jokes at the expense of others. It is responsive and spontaneous. It doesn’t set out to hurt.

We’ve all experienced how, in times of trouble, a simple change of perspective can lift our mood. Laughter can greatly reduce the levels of stress hormones in our bodies, such as cortisol and adrenaline, it can release a flood of happiness-producing endorphins. This stimulates our brains, helping us learn new ways of thinking. It’s like trying to correct bad posture by sitting up straight. This teaches our bodies new memories of how to sit correctly, in turn reshaping and strengthening our backs.

A sense of humour is particularly important in three areas. First, a light touch can help improve family and work relations. Most of us lead hectic lives with long working hours, and we live in cramped homes. These things add to our already heavy load. But creating a good joke from time to time helps to ease the burden.

Second, when we are confronted with pain and death - in hospitals, for example - a sense of humour relaxes not just the patients but also the doctors and nurses.

Last but not least, Hong Kong’s game-oriented education system needs an injection of fun. If we can teach our children to relax and see the lighter side of things, this will help them to deal better with the other stressors of life.

We appreciate how a sense of humour enriches our lives. But how do we learn to be funny? Many people misinterpret a sense of humour to be merely gags or rude jokes. It isn’t. A sense of humour is practical wisdom. Some say it is the art of simplifying things, while others see it as the ability to laugh at oneself and make a joke out of even unpleasant experiences. Or it can be as simple as not taking things too seriously when opinions differ.

However you see it, a sense of humour depends on an attitude of openness and acceptance, one that says, “I may not have the same experience as the next person, but I can learn to mind less.” In return, we gain an open heart and a flexible attitude to life.
The Joy of Living I (Calming the mind) course
will be held over two days in March 2013.
Tergar Meditation Centre H.K. invites you to join us

Date: 29 & 30 March 2013 (Friday & Saturday)
Time: 9am to 7pm
Venue: Shun Tak Fraternal Association Cheng Yu Tung Secondary School,
No. 9 Hok Lam Lane, Tseung Kwan O
Enrolment or enquiries: 2566-1699 / www.tergarasia.org