JOY OF LIVING

04 沒有了雲，便有了雨
NO RAIN
WITHOUT CLOUDS

10 好生就有好死
GRACE IN
GRAVITY

14 生活的藝術
THE ART OF
LIVING

20 我的朋友，恐懼
MY FRIEND,
FEAR

28 正念的空隙
THE GAP OF
EXPERIENCE
編者話
EDITOR'S NOTE

陳子健 Chen Zijian

你獲食在裡邊見到死亡。

別害怕——死亡並不值得一，和反向，你對他起。建築死亡是門和
過程。甚至它有懷心事，你會發現，有它在一起去盡無來可以如此行
動。

我們為每一刻決死——可是當中哪有多少人選擇無所不見，直直遇到
與可能的那一天？畢竟，那天必定會到來，因終死亡的確不離不棄，它
不會因此而消失，總會只使我們不遺遺絕它的承載。因為若不承，我們
對它產生幻想，便它變得毫無靈感，即可又可的。

這不是死亡的真義。

這兩段討論故事敍述了一位女性的興奮之時，當她在業下的死亡良善百
誘，不可倖數。但是最後驚覺怎會受死，因為是她發現它善善的驚奇；一旦
生命的好處及與一個顯著的重導，她的經驗並不奇怪，我們的財產感到另
多真實的例子，在簡短的討論中，變為一種混雜成一個華誕為故人生存付
出的努力，他們的滿意無地告訴我們，死亡並不意義，能死亡到到破
口是一個難度真實人生的門，否則出現進一步決定自己。

我們在論述死後並不是生命的重要任務，浪費為無意義，何曾思
死亡？我們從此在談論生死的門而來，再表達我們對於永生的支離破碎。
我們的產品們的看書，我們得到經常出現的畫像，而在仁義這切貼給我
們提及於為準備死亡的“達計說”，順利仁義這樣平日的開心並不是是
最好的死亡準備，更有關於我們為過去的“生活藝術家”。

生活藝術的現在意義在於實現，防風防雨。

希臘戰略的聖賢們的人和詩術文學或美學表演，席應（Seamus
Heaney）。年七十四年，是農在週的一次談話中，他提
議被作者評估可以在戲劇生的作品從一個知音子的表觀。席應是
了一位名譽，然後講了出自己發明的藝術最後在（Sappho）會長《伊
殤歌》（Ode at Cnidus）前的一首詩。在美國，報
紙的《Messenger》報告兩週的書信回信了“不斷地去嗎，别
是把你永遠再見。”

席應的興奮之前，他的兒子順應父親時告訴在場的嘉賓，父親的最
後幾世紀和他活了 50 年推的太太的，最後幾個盟，父親以喜變
談到;“我母親最喜可見："Not time", 延展"，不要怕" (Don't be
afraid)

"不要怕。" 遇見死亡時，你怎麼辦？

In these pages you will meet death. But it won’t be the death you fear; it’ll be a
death you open doors to, take tea with, and hold near. This death is to be
welcomed, not feared.

Death, the theme of this issue of the magazine, touches all of us without
exception. Yet most of us choose to ignore it — until it happens to someone
close to us, or when we’re forced to face our own mortality. Pushing it out of
view doesn’t mean it’s not there, of course. It just means we see it less clearly.
Is it any wonder, then, that it became strange and terrible, forever fixed in our
mind in a grimace of pain?

This is not to true face.

In our cover story about a father’s final departure and a daughter’s grief,
the death we encounter is not to be reasoned with, but to be accepted and
even embraced, because what had seemed like an end turned out to be a
beginning. The writer’s experience with loss is not uncommon, if we saw to
recall the examples around us of people bought by the death of a beloved to
discover new meaning in life. Every death that wounds is really an opening —
an invitation to lead an authentic life. It’s up to us whether or not to take up
How aren’t afraid to live, we aren’t afraid to die. In two articles here —
one by Tibetan Buddhist teacher and author Tsokyi Rinpoche, and the
other an interview with Terje’s meditation teacher Lama Jampa — we hear how
we can approach death without regret or fear. In their own ways, they share
with us their understanding of how we may discover the joy of becoming —
as Tsokyi Rinpoche puts it in his book, Open Heart: Open Mind — a "state of
being in the art of living.

Indeed, the intimacy among us who lived and died with grace are
deservedly admired.

The Irish poet and Nobel laureate Seamus Heaney, who died earlier this
year at age 74, was asked a few years ago if he could pick something from
his life’s work that would do for his epitaph. After some thought, he quoted
from his translation of Sophocles’ Ode at Cnidus, which plays the part of
Messenger’s character, telling of the elderly’s death: “Wherever that man
went, he went greatly.”

At Heaney’s funeral service, his son told the gathering that the poet’s final
words, minutes before he passed away, were to his wife of almost 50
years: “He wrote her a text message that read, in Latin, “Nulla times” — ‘Don’t
be afraid.’

Don’t be afraid. How would you choose to meet death?
不了起的母親

當我少年時，父親決定全家搬到加拿大。我告訴他，自己不想離開香港。

他與母親爭吵著，最終我還是跟他去了加拿大。

母親在父親的影響下，開始學習加拿大文化。她在新的環境中變得更加開放，更加樂於接受新的事物。

母親在父親的影響下，開始學習加拿大文化。她在新的環境中變得更加開放，更加樂於接受新的事物。
NO RAIN WITHOUT CLOUDS

The death of a loved one is hard to bear, but allow grief to harden us and we may miss the gift it brings.

My good friend Terence Ho lost his sister to a motorcycle accident in 1991. She was 26 years old and had just graduated from a university in Taiwan. She was killed while travelling to a graduation party on the back of a motorcycle. The instructor had no licence. The instructor survived the accident while Terence’s sister died. I remember thinking that, in Terence’s place, I would run away with the driver! But my friend remained calm when he met the young man at the hospital.

“She was in shock when she came to me. She asked me and my brother if we’d like any compensation,” Terence recalls. “I thought of my father at the time. There’s nothing you can do to make her live again.” So I made just one request: ‘Get a licence,’ I told him, ‘don’t let this happen to another person again.’”

With time, Terence has come to feel the presence of destiny in matters of life and death. “Her death made me feel for the first time what it means to lose someone — forever. The loss brought the burning siblings closer together, in a bond of trust that remained steadfast.”

Death is not pleasant to talk about, even for those who have experienced it. But I believe there is value in discussing it, perhaps to help others make sense of their own loss.

In the beginning, I would visit Terence’s room with my fellow students, seeking to understand the toll that death can take. Some of us would share our own experiences, while others would listen, offering comfort and support.

“Since she was born, I have always been close to my older sister,” Terence says, “she was my confidant in all matters of life and death. When she died, it was as if a part of me had died with her.”

Over the years, Terence has come to accept the loss of his sister, finding solace in the memories of their time together. “I miss her every day,” he says, “but I know she’s still with me.”

My own sister died in an accident when I was a teenager. The pain was unbearable, but I knew I had to keep going. Terence’s story is one I relate to, and I’ve learned that it’s okay to grieve and to allow that grief to shape who we become.

Terence’s experience has taught me that the death of a loved one is not just a personal loss, but a universal one. It’s a reminder that life is precious and that we should always cherish the time we have together. And when we lose someone we love, it’s okay to feel grief and to allow that grief to guide us through the pain.

In the end, Terence’s story is one of hope and resilience. He’s learned to live with his grief, and in doing so, he’s become a stronger person. We can learn from his example, and find the strength to face our own losses with courage and grace.

Text: Melb Sah
Photography: Hong Lam

This woman is amazing

I was only a teenager when my father decided to leave the family to live in Canada. I did not like his decision to leave Hong Kong, and I told him so. My father was angry with me, and he fell silent. I asked him, “You’re happy here now?” My father thought it was crazy and quite naturally he ignored my request. He knew. He didn’t know what I was talking about and that I had been spoiled. Ever since, I have been a different person.

As time passed, I was in Canada for 10 years. I was involved in the most amazing years of my life. I still had the chance to be close to Canada’s beautiful nature and culture. I opened a culture and liberal learning environment contributed to the person I am today. It all happened because of my father.

But it was not easy to see him through the years. I didn’t want to upset the person who loved me so much. One night while I was parking, I was passed by my mother who was singing a song in Mandarin – “The children use this song to us when we were children, about a sheep”.

Before I could say anything, she said to me, “One day, the children show me how to sing it, and I’ll teach you. I’m happy that my daughter knows what I want.” That made me cry even harder. She hugged me and asked him to give me a big warm hug.

Her support when I was younger made me heartbroken. I can’t help but imagine how it would be if she was here today. She didn’t stand away; I didn’t lose control; I didn’t give up. I can’t lose her. I can’t lose my mother.

I remember crying a lot at night, feeling a huge sense of emptiness and loneliness, with the single thought: my father is dying and there is nothing I can do. I began to have a recurring nightmare of two men trying to kill my father with a sharp knife.

It was in this fearful, hopeless state of mind that I began to “see” my mother.

Every morning, my mother would kiss her son’s cheek and call him “daddy, daddy,” as we children did. She would look at her face so often in a trance. She would find her son with both hands while talking to him, though he couldn’t utter a word back.

She would spend three hours finding him a simple breakfast because of his difficulty in swallowing. Sometimes the mother would bring him a song in Mandarin – “The children used to sing it to us when we were children, about a sheep.”
taking a shower, which I could never quite get the
meaning of.
I used to sit by my mother watching her take
care of dad. It was like watching a stranger, and I
thought to myself: “This woman is amazing and
she’s my mom.”

I was starting to learn what the Zen Buddhist
teachers Thich Nhat Hanh meant when he said,
“When you love a person, for instance someone
beloved, look deeply. Don’t wait to do that only
after the person has died. Look at [her] now.” I was
finally learning to look deeply at my mother.

“When we look deeply enough, we will see
the cells in our body working together, they flow
as a river,” he once said. “We will see a river of
senses and feelings, move after another. We will see
the river of consciousness. And we will see the river
of our mind, the river of consciousness.”

A love without fear
Growing up, I felt close to my father but not so
too much to my mother. I admired my father’s many
talents; I loved the poet’s letters he wrote me
in his beautiful Chinese handwriting. I liked to
watch him read the newspaper and write in his
diary in the study room, so quietly. This image of
him inspired me to take an interest in writing and
later to become a journalist. I was proud to be his
daughter.

But my mother was “just a housewife”,
and our personal lives were very different. She
is a sensitive person who can make friends with
strangers she just met on the street—an ability I
find quite hard to understand. She enjoys talking
with her high-pitched voice you could hear her
street away.

Now I’m full of admiration for this woman.
Even now, I don’t know how she did it. I cried so
much on my visits each year, how many tears did
she shed watching her husband deteriorate every
day?

In her I saw the kind of love that has no fear—not
even of death.

A decade after my father’s death, my mother
and I still talk about him and laugh about his
jokes and funny talk. Sometimes I think the love
I couldn’t return to my father now gives to my
mother—having finally learned how to love her.

I didn’t understand why my father had to die
and in that horrible way. And I don’t pretend that
I get it now.

If I had a choice, I would want to go back
in time, to make another decision—to stay in
Canada and spend more time with my father.

But in return, would I have given up the
opportunity to know and love my mother better?
Perhaps, to understand death, we have to
understand life. Maybe it’s more important to
“see” the people who are living around you.

I like the attitude of my friend Tanaka, who
is still troubled sometimes by the “why” of his
sister’s death.

“I don’t know why she had to die but I don’t
want to approach it by reasoning,” he says. “I think
there’s no reason for a lot of things in life, like
suffering. I see death as a phase leading to
something else in life. Without death, life doesn’t
move on. And the presence of death makes me
want to live the life I have by contributing to
making others happy.”

A gift to the world
The week when I was writing this article, a lot of
stories about death came to my attention, including
an NHK documentary on the 2011 tsunami and
earthquake in northwestern Japan. Called “Healing
Words: Tanaka in Tohoku,” the documentary featured
1,007 Japanese tanka poems written by people all
over the country in remembrance of those who
died in the disaster.

The poems express the grief of loss and hopes
for the future, such as this one by a 91-year-old
survivor of the tsunami.

As 91 came the third tsunami in my life. I’ve
lived long and seen tragedies in the world.

Unlike many others, this woman lost her
family and home and has been living alone in a
temporary house, ten years after the disaster. She
took the report to a big oak tree in the town. It
had been there since her childhood, and was still
standing after the tsunami. Paving beneath the
oak tree, she said “I need to be strong.”

After the earthquake, I visited Tokyo to see
friends. Though they didn’t lose their homes, like
those who lived near the sea, they experienced
the frightening moments when the tsunami hit,
and the long nights of blockade when the traffic
system broke down and few could get home.

During my visit that year, my friend Tomoko
showed me a photo of her flat on her phone. It
was a messy scene—the cupboards and shelves
had fallen apart, and there was a lot of debris.

I listened to her talk, and the house and money
in her voice. With the nuclear meltdown
seemingly getting worse every day, the future
seemed bleak and some people chose to leave
the country. I asked her if she wanted to leave too.

“Where can I go? This is my home,” she said.

Thinking back on our conversation, I think
Tomoko was quite right. Where can we go to
avoid accidents and danger? Where can we go to
avoid death? Where could the 91-year-old woman
in Japan go before, and after the tsunami? Where
could my father go to avoid the diseases that killed
him? Where could Tanaka’s sister go to be safe
from all harms?

Wherever we are, we will all die one day,
whether we live or not.

And when we do, we will leave behind much
more than grief for our loved ones, says Thich
Nhat Hanh. “Look at an orange tree and you
will see the beauty of its green leaves, its lovely
fragrant flowers and sweet fruit. This is the tree’s
gift to the world. It’s the same for a person. In our
daily life, we think, we speak, we act. Our way of
thinking can be beautiful, compassionate and full
of love. Our words can be kind and encouraging,
filled with love and understanding. Our actions too
can be compassionate, we can protect and heal.”

Our thoughts, words and actions live on long
after our mind and body fall apart. Look closely at
death, and we find life.

It was certainly that way with my father. The
nightmare had him stoped after a few years.

Much later, I had a dream of my father again. This
time I dreamed that we were walking together.
He wasn’t in a wheelchair and could walk with
a stick. I had my arm around him, I could feel his
weight leaning towards me, I felt able to take care of him.

It was a comforting feeling.
好生，就有好死
——和諧順應的對處

接：活著的人都不应在生命結束時，懼懼地離去。善待生命，是善待香港譚公像中的一位導師，他在我們分享準備死亡的重要性

問：不能接受死亡是生命中不可避免的一部分，我們該如何面對？
答：我們活著的生命，正是為了要準備面對死亡。如果我們不能接受死亡是生命中不可避免的一部分，我們就會在生命中失去很多，因為我們會害怕死亡，害怕失去自己所愛的人，害怕失去生命。因此，我們應該善待生命，接受死亡是生命中的重要一部分，這樣我們才能真正地活在生活當中。

問：你認為死亡是生命的結束，還是另一個開始？
答：死亡是生命的結束，同時也是另一個開始。我們在生命的最後一刻，會看到生命中的一切，會理解到生命的重要，會明白到生命的有限。在生命的最後一刻，我們會感受到生命的無限，會理解到生命的重要性，會明白到生命的意义。在生命的最後一刻，我們會看到生命中的美好，會理解到生命的可貴，會明白到生命的價值。在生命的最後一刻，我們會感受到生命的無限，會理解到生命的重要性，會明白到生命的意义。

問：你認為死亡是生命的結束，還是另一個開始？
答：死亡是生命的結束，同時也是另一個開始。我們在生命的最後一刻，會看到生命中的一切，會理解到生命的重要，會明白到生命的有限。在生命的最後一刻，我們會感受到生命的無限，會理解到生命的重要性，會明白到生命的意义。在生命的最後一刻，我們會看到生命中的美好，會理解到生命的可貴，會明白到生命的價值。在生命的最後一刻，我們會感受到生命的無限，會理解到生命的重要性，會明白到生命的意义。
GRACE IN GRAVITY

A conversation with Lama Yadie

Translated from the Chinese

Grace Ng

Photography: Hong Lam

Nobody wants to die with regrets. Lama Yadie, a teacher at the Tergar Meditation Centre in Hong Kong, tells us about the importance of preparing for death.

Q: Different religions have different views of death. Regardless of what our ideals may be about consciousness after death, how can we hold a more positive attitude towards death?

A: Like it or not, death is something you have to face. Not just you, but all living beings have to face it. Most people consider death too horrible a topic for discussion. But all of us have to face it whether we talk about it or not. According to the Buddhist point of view, we have to prepare for death so that when that moment arrives, we can leave with a peaceful mind. Tibetan Buddhism tells us that we go through a state of transition after death and before our next life, known as the bardo state. It teaches the importance of preparing for death, whether we are still in6ain or on the path of liberation. Without preparation for that moment, great terror and regret will arise within our mind.

Q: How do we prepare for that moment?

A: According to Buddhist drama practices, every good deed we perform is a kind of preparation for death. In Tibetan Buddhism, the bardo teachings, or The Tibetan Book of the Dead, are instructions on how to die with death when it comes. These teachings inform us of what will happen when you are dying, laying out all the signs of dying that you will meet.

Q: That’s helpful if you’re Buddhist, but how do non-Buddhists prepare for death in their daily lives?

A: Do good. But when doing good, it’s not just the act that counts – you have to do it with good motivation. You may not be a Buddhist, but you don’t have to be one to perform good deeds. Being kind in this way will help you when the moment of death arrives.

Q: How can we tell if we’re doing good with good motivation?

A: For example, you have offered me some great help today. You do this with the intention of helping someone to solve a problem. That’s it. When it’s over, you just leave and do not expect me to pay you back. In the future, you will be in great service, and some may cry out and say, “Don’t leave us.” We can console them by telling them this is not helping the dying person but in fact causing them pain. We can help the family to let go, so the person may die peacefully. When a person is dying, he or she will already have facing many struggles. By holding on too tightly, family members will make the dying process even more fraught; this doesn’t help at all. So we can help by consoling the bereaved.

Q: Bardo is a state of transition. In many traditional cultures, a transitional state is a time of instability, being two life stages that are somewhere in between. However, according to Tibetan Buddhism, the bardo stage refers to more than the transition between death and the next life. In fact, all stages in our lives can be called bardo, which makes every stage of our life an inherently unstable transition. Why is that?

A: That’s because from a Buddhist point of view, not a moment in life is stable. To believe there is a time of stability in our lives is to hold a mistaken view – an absolutely wrong view. This is how in Buddhist teachings on “attachment.” Buddhists hold that everything is impermanent. Those who say that some things in this world are permanent have the 84,000 teachings of the Buddha say otherwise.

Impermanence can be divided into two categories: gross and subtle impermanence. Gross impermanence is something we can see. For instance, the house next door was fine yesterday, but it might collapse today. Or my friend was fine yesterday and we even had a nice chat together. However, today’s news comes the news of his death. We witness, from existence to non-existence.

Subtle impermanence is something we don’t see. Change begins from the moment of entering the mother’s womb. You keep changing from that moment onwards and won’t stop even for a second. According to Buddhist teachings, in one foot of the fingers, 60 billion times called a “samsara” would have passed. And change won’t even stop for a “samsara.” We don’t recognize such changes. If change doesn’t happen, none of us would be. Nothing can remain in a solid, unchanging state, either long or non-longing times. The only difference is whether we can recognize such changes or not.

Q: How do we prepare for the death of our loved ones?

A: If you have received the teachings of The Tibetan Book of the Dead, use the teachings to help them.

Q: Some people believe in ghosts and are afraid of death. What are your views?

A: Many Chinese believe people can come to the dead, such as in cemeteries. This is a cultural belief or a concept in traditional thinking. According to Buddhist beliefs, the spirit of the dead cannot come to earth because it is bound to a new life form 49 days after death. Tibetans also have a fear of the dead. We’ll carve mantas on stones and put them in locations for city burial, and chant them. People do feel scared about those places. This is a very human ideology.
JOY OF LIVING ● A STUDENT’S SCRAPBOOK

Thoughts, stories, quotations and more

THE ART OF LIVING

全心全意，讓生活更豐富

生活的藝術

「攝影眼」人人有足，只是我們沒有發現罷了。常聽俗語說，出家為僧者，常聽法師是為人的一種。”

「攝影眼」是常見於我們生活的藝術。它不僅能讓人保持平靜的心態，還能讓人變得更有創意。

攝影師從生活中發覺美，並將其捕捉在鏡頭中。這就是攝影的魅力。

「攝影眼」不僅能讓人更好地了解世界，還能讓人更好地感受到生活的美妙。

All of us have an eye for photography that is waiting to be discovered, says Venerable Changlin. This September, he led students of the Joy of Living meditation programme on an interesting journey to see the world through our "photographer's eye".
Photography: Laurence Wong

Photography: Pat Lam
我的朋友，恐慌

有些日子，心情仿佛被装上了弹簧，一触即发，难以平息。

在这样复杂的情感波动中，我们往往难以自拔。恐慌，这个伴随着我们成长的伙伴，既是我们心中的阴影，也是我们前行的动力。

从这一天开始，我们不再害怕恐慌，而是学会了与它共处。在恐慌中，我们找到了自我，也找到了方向。

让我们一起，勇敢面对，共同成长。
强说与假说

强说：我/remove假说为自己辩护的，是老师为我
假说：一位是老师，一位是假说。数论和哲学

讨论继续（Drap): Mama fofon): 另

外一位在场者是巴基斯坦人（Sawag Koga), 他假说有些"强者"并特别想到，他

是一位无名氏的智者，他师从他己

多时者，身上有无应力。至今我脑

中的仍可以看见他手拿纸笔，另一手

接一纸，能将一切"洗破"，但假说却一

无所有。将古代的智慧特别组成起来成

为新文章，"假说"，一般也是作为辩解的相

他推崇伟大的仁慈和耐心，我便写写他作为第二位，"假说"，对象是需要。
As a child, Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche suffered debilitating panic attacks. Here he talks about his struggles growing up, and how he found a way to turn problem into practice.

As an extremely sensitive child, I was at the mercy of my emotions. My mood swung dramatically in response to external situations. If someone smiled at me or said something nice, I would be happy for days. The slightest problem — if I failed a test, for example, or if someone scolded me — I wanted to disappear, I was especially tormented around strangers. I’d start to shake, my throat would close up, and I’d get dizzy.

The unpleasant situations for unembellished, the pietistic ones, and for most of my early life the only way I could find was to run away into the hills surrounding my home and sit by myself in one of the many caves there. These caves were very special places where generations of Buddhist practitioners had sat for long periods in meditative retreats. I could almost feel their presence and the sense of mental calmness they achieved.

I’d sit in the posture I’d seen my father—Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche, a great meditation master—and his students adopt, and I’d try to meditate. I’d had no formal training as yet, but just sitting there, feeling the presence of these older masters, a sense of stillness would sweep over me. Time seemed to stop. Then, of course, I’d come down from the caves and my grandmother would scold me for disappearing. Whatever calmness I’d begun to feel would instantly evaporate.

There got a little better around the age of nine, when I started training formally with my father. But — and this is a little embarrassing to admit for someone who travels the world teaching meditation — what I liked the idea of meditation and the promise it represented, I really didn’t like the practice. I’d hide my, my back would hurt, my legs would go numb. So many thoughts buzzed through my mind that I found impossible to focus. I’d be distracted by wondering, ‘What will happen? If there was an earthquake, or a storm? I was especially afraid of the storms that swept through the region, which were quite dramatic, full of lightning and thunder and blowing snow, but much, much more intense than the storms I was used to. I was very aware of the sense of control that I had never practiced or never practiced.

A good meditation teacher — and my father was one of the best — would usually ask his or her students about their meditation experiences. This was one of the ways a master gauges a student’s development. It’s very hard to hide the truth from a teacher skilled in reading the signs of progress, and even harder when that teacher is your own father. So, even though I felt I was disappointing him, I really didn’t have any choice except to tell him the truth.

As it turned out, being honest was the best choice I could have made. Experienced teachers have, themselves, usually passed through most of the difficult stages of practice. It’s very rare for someone to achieve perfect stability the first time he or she sits down to meditate.

I’m forever grateful for the kind way my father responded to my confession that was on hopeless, half-cooked, halfway to distractions that I couldn’t follow even the simplest meditation instructions, like focusing on a visual object. First, he told me not to worry, distractions were normal; he said, especially in the beginning. When people first start to practice meditation all kinds of things pop up in their minds, like bags carried along by a rushing river.

The ‘bags’ might be physical sensations, emotions, memories, pains, even thoughts like I can’t meditate. So it was only natural to be carried away by these things; to get caught up, for instance, in wondering, Why can’t I meditate? What’s wrong with me? Everyone walks in the room seems to be able to follow the instructions, why is it so hard for me? They explained that whatever was passing through my mind at any given moment was exactly the right thing to focus on, because that was where my attention was anyway. It’s just a matter of noticing, my father explained, that gradually slows the rushing river in a way that would allow me to experience a little bit of space between what I was noticing and the simple awareness of looking. With practice, that space would grow longer and longer. Gradually, I’d stop identifying with the thoughts, emotions, sensations I was experiencing and begin to identify with the pure awareness of experience.

So I can say that my life was immediately transformed by these instructions, but I found great comfort in them. I didn’t have to run away from distractions or let distractions run away with me. I could, or so I thought, ‘run in place,’ using whatever came up — thoughts, feelings, sensations — as opportunities to become acquainted with my mind.

‘Hello, fear! How are you?’

The Tibetan word for meditation is gom, which, roughly translated, means ‘to become familiar with.’ By this definition, meditation in the Buddhist tradition may perhaps be best understood as a process of getting to know your mind. It’s actually very simple, like meeting someone at a party. Introductions are made — ‘Hello, my name is…’ Then you see if there’s a common point of interest. Why are you here? Who invited you? All this while, though you’re looking at this other person, thinking about the color of his or her hair, the shape of the face, whether he or she is tall or short, and so on.

Meditation, getting to know your mind, is like that in the beginning: an introduction to a stranger. That may sound like a lot at first, since most of us tend to feel that we already know what’s going on in our minds. Typically, however, we’ve become accustomed to the flow of thoughts, emotions, and sensations that rarely stop to look at them individually — to each other, with the openness we would offer a stranger. More often than not, our experience passes through our awareness more or less as mental, emotional, and sensory aggregates — a collection of details that appear as a singular, independent whole.

To use a very simple example, suppose you’re driving along on the way to work and suddenly encounter a traffic jam. Although your mind registers the event as ‘traffic jam,’ actually, a lot of things are occurring. You decrease the pressure of your foot on the gas pedal and increase pressure on the brake. You observe the cars ahead, behind, and on either side of you to slow down and stop. The nerves in your hands register the sensation of holding on to the steering wheel while the noises in your back and legs register the sensation of being pushed with the seat. Perhaps the noise of car horns generates your annoyance.

At the same time, you might be thinking, ‘Oh, no, I’m going to be late for my morning meeting,’ and in a flash you start running through a kind of mental ‘script’ associated with being late. Your boss might be angry, you might miss important information, or maybe you were supposed to give a presentation to your coworkers. Your heart starts beating a little faster and maybe you start to sweat. You might find yourself getting angry with the drivers ahead and start tapping the horn in frustration. Yet even though so many processes physical, mental, emotional — occur simultaneously, they all appear to the conscious mind as a single, cohesive experience.

According to the cognitive scientists I’ve spoken with, this tendency to link different strands of experience into a single package represents the normal operation of the human mind. Our brains are constantly processing multiple streams of information through our senses organs, evaluating them against past experience, and generating the body to respond in certain ways.

For the most part, these processes occur spontaneously, beyond the range of ordinary consciousness. Less than 1 percent of the information our brains receive through the senses actually reaches our awareness. The brain compiles for immediate responses of attention, filtering out what it judges unnecessary and bringing in what appears to be important. In general, this is quite a useful arrangement. The disadvantage of this arrangement, however, lies in the fact that we end up missing a very small fraction of our moment-by-moment experience for the whole. This can cause problems when we’re faced with an uncertain situation or a strong emotion. Our attention fixes on the most intense aspect of whatever we’re experiencing—physical pain, the fear of being late, the embarrassment of failing an exam, the grief of losing a friend.

In general, our minds spin in one of two directions when faced with such situations. We try to escape or we become overwhelmed. Our experience appears to us as either an enemy or by completely taking over our thoughts and manipulating our emotions, a ‘beast.’

Even few to manage to temporarily escape whatever is bothering us — turning on the TV, reading a book, or surfing the Internet — the problem just goes underground for a little while, secretly generating more power because now that become mixed with the fear of failing it again later on.

My father’s advice to me, when I felt in the middle of the trouble I was having practicing meditation, offered a middle way between these two extremes. Instead of trying to block distractions or give in to them, I could welcome them as friends. ‘Hello, fear! Hello! How are you? Why don’t you stick around awhile so we can get to know each other?’

The chatter in our minds

This practice of gently welcoming thoughts, emotions, and sensations is commonly referred to as mindfulness — a rough translation of the Tibetan term, damtse, to become conscious. What we’re becoming conscious of are all the subtle processes of mind and body that ordinarily escape our notice because we’re focused on the big picture, the dominant aspect of experience that kicks our attention, overwhelming us or provoking an urge to escape. Adapting a mindful approach gradually breaks down the big picture into smaller, more manageable pieces, which flash in and out of awareness with amazing rapidity.

It’s a bit astonishing, in fact, to discover how the mind becomes when you offer it to more friends with it. Thoughts and feelings that seemed so powerful and vivid vanish almost as soon as they appear like pills of smoke blown away by a strong wind. Like many people who begin to practice mindfulness, I found it quite difficult to observe even a breath of what was passing through my mind. Gradually, though, the rash of impressions began very naturally to slow down, and as it did, I noticed several things.

First, I began to see that the sense of solidity and permanence I’d attached to disturbing emotions or disturbing sensations was actually an illusion. A split-second barrier of fear was replaced by the beginning of an itch, which lasted only an instant before the sight of a bird outside the window caught my attention; now maybe someone would cough, or a question would pop up. ‘Is what we’re having for lunch?’ A second later, the fear would come back, the itch would get stronger, or the person sitting in front of me in my father’s meditation room would shift position.

Watching these impressions come and go became almost like a game, and as I grew more comfortable, I began to feel calmer and more confident. Without consciously intending it, I found myself becoming less scared of my thoughts and feelings, less troubled by distractions. Instead of a dark, controlling stranger, my mind was evolving into, if not precisely a friend, at least an interesting companion.

Of course, I could still get carried away by thoughts and daydreams or shifting between states of restlessness and dullness. Again, my father advised me not to worry too much about such circumstances. Sooner or later, I’d remember to return to the simple task of observing whatever was happening in the present moment. The important point was not to judge myself for these lapses of attention.

This proved to be an important lesson, because I often judged myself for drifting off. But here again, the instruction to simply observe my mind produced a startling realization. Most of
“I was, truth be told, the very model of the sincere practitioner who never practices.”

“Of bandits and bodyguards

The only moments of real comfort I experienced came during my private lessons with my tutors Dingo Laru Tothin, who taught me language, ritual, and philosophy, and Saliya Rupnicha, who instructed me in meditation practices. I felt an especially close connection with Saliya Rupnicha, a very wise lama with a squarish head and grey hair and, despite being in his eighties, a face almost unrecognizable by age.

In my mind’s eye, I can still see him with his prayer wheel in one hand and his mala—a set of beads used to count repetitions of mantras, special combinations of ancient syllables that form a sort of prayer or mantra, which generally can be used as a support for meditation—in the other. His kindness and patience were so great that I came to view him almost as a second father to whom I could bring problems both great and small. He responded immediately, usually with a profound lesson. For instance, one morning while waiting for the lama, a little boy of seven or eight dropped two little bronze medallions in my lap. I tried to find them, but the lama had already come and begun his signal. He held the child by his robes and told him, “If you lose things, I, your teacher, will help you find them.”

Of bandits and bodyguards

The only moments of real comfort I experienced came during my private lessons with my tutors Dingo Laru Tothin, who taught me language, ritual, and philosophy, and Saliya Rupnicha, who instructed me in meditation practices. I felt an especially close connection with Saliya Rupnicha, a very wise lama with a squarish head and grey hair and, despite being in his eighties, a face almost unrecognizable by age.

In my mind’s eye, I can still see him with his prayer wheel in one hand and his mala—a set of beads used to count repetitions of mantras, special combinations of ancient syllables that form a sort of prayer or mantra, which generally can be used as a support for meditation—in the other. His kindness and patience were so great that I came to view him almost as a second father to whom I could bring problems both great and small. He responded immediately, usually with a profound lesson. For instance, one morning while waiting for the lama, a little boy of seven or eight dropped two little bronze medallions in my lap. I tried to find them, but the lama had already come and begun his signal. He held the child by his robes and told him, “If you lose things, I, your teacher, will help you find them.”

I was, truth be told, the very model of the sincere practitioner who never practices. But it’s a bit astonishing, in fact, to discover how shy the mind becomes when you offer to make friends with it.”

“Of bandits and bodyguards

The only moments of real comfort I experienced came during my private lessons with my tutors Dingo Laru Tothin, who taught me language, ritual, and philosophy, and Saliya Rupnicha, who instructed me in meditation practices. I felt an especially close connection with Saliya Rupnicha, a very wise lama with a squarish head and grey hair and, despite being in his eighties, a face almost unrecognizable by age.

In my mind’s eye, I can still see him with his prayer wheel in one hand and his mala—a set of beads used to count repetitions of mantras, special combinations of ancient syllables that form a sort of prayer or mantra, which generally can be used as a support for meditation—in the other. His kindness and patience were so great that I came to view him almost as a second father to whom I could bring problems both great and small. He responded immediately, usually with a profound lesson. For instance, one morning while waiting for the lama, a little boy of seven or eight dropped two little bronze medallions in my lap. I tried to find them, but the lama had already come and begun his signal. He held the child by his robes and told him, “If you lose things, I, your teacher, will help you find them.”

Of bandits and bodyguards

The only moments of real comfort I experienced came during my private lessons with my tutors Dinio Laru Tothin, who taught me language, ritual, and philosophy, and Saliya Rupnicha, who instructed me in meditation practices. I felt an especially close connection with Saliya Rupnicha, a very wise lama with a squarish head and grey hair and, despite being in his eighties, a face almost unrecognizable by age.

In my mind’s eye, I can still see him with his prayer wheel in one hand and his mala—a set of beads used to count repetitions of mantras, special combinations of ancient syllables that form a sort of prayer or mantra, which generally can be used as a support for meditation—in the other. His kindness and patience were so great that I came to view him almost as a second father to whom I could bring problems both great and small. He responded immediately, usually with a profound lesson. For instance, one morning while waiting for the lama, a little boy of seven or eight dropped two little bronze medallions in my lap. I tried to find them, but the lama had already come and begun his signal. He held the child by his robes and told him, “If you lose things, I, your teacher, will help you find them.”

Of bandits and bodyguards

The only moments of real comfort I experienced came during my private lessons with my tutors Dinio Laru Tothin, who taught me language, ritual, and philosophy, and Saliya Rupnicha, who instructed me in meditation practices. I felt an especially close connection with Saliya Rupnicha, a very wise lama with a squarish head and grey hair and, despite being in his eighties, a face almost unrecognizable by age.

In my mind’s eye, I can still see him with his prayer wheel in one hand and his mala—a set of beads used to count repetitions of mantras, special combinations of ancient syllables that form a sort of prayer or mantra, which generally can be used as a support for meditation—in the other. His kindness and patience were so great that I came to view him almost as a second father to whom I could bring problems both great and small. He responded immediately, usually with a profound lesson. For instance, one morning while waiting for the lama, a little boy of seven or eight dropped two little bronze medallions in my lap. I tried to find them, but the lama had already come and begun his signal. He held the child by his robes and told him, “If you lose things, I, your teacher, will help you find them.”

Of bandits and bodyguards

The only moments of real comfort I experienced came during my private lessons with my tutors Dinio Laru Tothin, who taught me language, ritual, and philosophy, and Saliya Rupnicha, who instructed me in meditation practices. I felt an especially close connection with Saliya Rupnicha, a very wise lama with a squarish head and grey hair and, despite being in his eighties, a face almost unrecognizable by age.

In my mind’s eye, I can still see him with his prayer wheel in one hand and his mala—a set of beads used to count repetitions of mantras, special combinations of ancient syllables that form a sort of prayer or mantra, which generally can be used as a support for meditation—in the other. His kindness and patience were so great that I came to view him almost as a second father to whom I could bring problems both great and small. He responded immediately, usually with a profound lesson. For instance, one morning while waiting for the lama, a little boy of seven or eight dropped two little bronze medallions in my lap. I tried to find them, but the lama had already come and begun his signal. He held the child by his robes and told him, “If you lose things, I, your teacher, will help you find them.”

Of bandits and bodyguards

The only moments of real comfort I experienced came during my private lessons with my tutors Dinio Laru Tothin, who taught me language, ritual, and philosophy, and Saliya Rupnicha, who instructed me in meditation practices. I felt an especially close connection with Saliya Rupnicha, a very wise lama with a squarish head and grey hair and, despite being in his eighties, a face almost unrecognizable by age.

In my mind’s eye, I can still see him with his prayer wheel in one hand and his mala—a set of beads used to count repetitions of mantras, special combinations of ancient syllables that form a sort of prayer or mantra, which generally can be used as a support for meditation—in the other. His kindness and patience were so great that I came to view him almost as a second father to whom I could bring problems both great and small. He responded immediately, usually with a profound lesson. For instance, one morning while waiting for the lama, a little boy of seven or eight dropped two little bronze medallions in my lap. I tried to find them, but the lama had already come and begun his signal. He held the child by his robes and told him, “If you lose things, I, your teacher, will help you find them.”

Of bandits and bodyguards

The only moments of real comfort I experienced came during my private lessons with my tutors Dinio Laru Tothin, who taught me language, ritual, and philosophy, and Saliya Rupnicha, who instructed me in meditation practices. I felt an especially close connection with Saliya Rupnicha, a very wise lama with a squarish head and grey hair and, despite being in his eighties, a face almost unrecognizable by age.

In my mind’s eye, I can still see him with his prayer wheel in one hand and his mala—a set of beads used to count repetitions of mantras, special combinations of ancient syllables that form a sort of prayer or mantra, which generally can be used as a support for meditation—in the other. His kindness and patience were so great that I came to view him almost as a second father to whom I could bring problems both great and small. He responded immediately, usually with a profound lesson. For instance, one morning while waiting for the lama, a little boy of seven or eight dropped two little bronze medallions in my lap. I tried to find them, but the lama had already come and begun his signal. He held the child by his robes and told him, “If you lose things, I, your teacher, will help you find them.”

Of bandits and bodyguards

The only moments of real comfort I experienced came during my private lessons with my tutors Dinio Laru Tothin, who taught me language, ritual, and philosophy, and Saliya Rupnicha, who instructed me in meditation practices. I felt an especially close connection with Saliya Rupnicha, a very wise lama with a squarish head and grey hair and, despite being in his eighties, a face almost unrecognizable by age.

In my mind’s eye, I can still see him with his prayer wheel in one hand and his mala—a set of beads used to count repetitions of mantras, special combinations of ancient syllables that form a sort of prayer or mantra, which generally can be used as a support for meditation—in the other. His kindness and patience were so great that I came to view him almost as a second father to whom I could bring problems both great and small. He responded immediately, usually with a profound lesson. For instance, one morning while waiting for the lama, a little boy of seven or eight dropped two little bronze medallions in my lap. I tried to find them, but the lama had already come and begun his signal. He held the child by his robes and told him, “If you lose things, I, your teacher, will help you find them.”

Of bandits and bodyguards

The only moments of real comfort I experienced came during my private lessons with my tutors Dinio Laru Tothin, who taught me language, ritual, and philosophy, and Saliya Rupnicha, who instructed me in meditation practices. I felt an especially close connection with Saliya Rupnicha, a very wise lama with a squarish head and grey hair and, despite being in his eighties, a face almost unrecognizable by age.

In my mind’s eye, I can still see him with his prayer wheel in one hand and his mala—a set of beads used to count repetitions of mantras, special combinations of ancient syllables that form a sort of prayer or mantra, which generally can be used as a support for meditation—in the other. His kindness and patience were so great that I came to view him almost as a second father to whom I could bring problems both great and small. He responded immediately, usually with a profound lesson. For instance, one morning while waiting for the lama, a little boy of seven or eight dropped two little bronze medallions in my lap. I tried to find them, but the lama had already come and begun his signal. He held the child by his robes and told him, “If you lose things, I, your teacher, will help you find them.”
正念的空隙
——指名仁波切

指名仁波切在10月到訪香港，為他的中文版新書《正念，就係》以及藏傳佛教傳統中的中華教法，給予一系列精彩的教學。中華，一般指生命在死亡之後到下一生開始之前中間存在的情境。

藏傳佛教的典籍中詳細地描述了人在死亡後到下一生之間存在的意識狀態。

假如你受過恰當的修習，就有機會在中華狀態中吐儀轉換後獲得解脫。

或許你認為只有佛教徒纔會對中華教法產生興趣。

指名仁波切把這看似神妙深奧的內容帶回我們的生活層面，更表明了禪修的重要性。

他說，說和人性化的見解將現代生活息息相關，適合於任何探索內心世界和想悟道生潛能的人們。

這篇文章是基於他在香港第一堂的教學。

指名仁波切在第10月到訪香港，為他的中文版新書《正念，就係》以及藏傳佛教傳統中的中華教法，給予一系列精彩的教學。中華，一般指生命在死亡之後到下一生開始之前中間存在的情境。

藏傳佛教的典籍中詳細地描述了人在死亡後到下一生之間存在的意識狀態。

假如你受過恰當的修習，就有機會在中華狀態中吐儀轉換後獲得解脫。

或許你認為只有佛教徒纔會對中華教法產生興趣。

指名仁波切把這看似神妙深奧的內容帶回我們的生活層面，更表明了禪修的重要性。

他說，說和人性化的見解將現代生活息息相關，適合於任何探索內心世界和想悟道生潛能的人們。

這篇文章是基於他在香港第一堂的教學。

指名仁波切在第10月到訪香港，為他的中文版新書《正念，就係》以及藏傳佛教傳統中的中華教法，給予一系列精彩的教學。中華，一般指生命在死亡之後到下一生開始之前中間存在的情境。

藏傳佛教的典籍中詳細地描述了人在死亡後到下一生之間存在的意識狀態。

假如你受過恰當的修習，就有機會在中華狀態中吐儀轉換後獲得解脫。

或許你認為只有佛教徒纔會對中華教法產生興趣。

指名仁波切把這看似神妙深奧的內容帶回我們的生活層面，更表明了禪修的重要性。

他說，說和人性化的見解將現代生活息息相關，適合於任何探索內心世界和想悟道生潛能的人們。

這篇文章是基於他在香港第一堂的教學。
THE GAP OF EXPERIENCE
By Tsoknyi Rinpoche

The Tibetan Buddhist teacher and author Tsoknyi Rinpoche visited Hong Kong in October for the launch of the Chinese translation of his book, Open Heart, Open Mind, and to give a series of lectures on the Tibetan Buddhist teachings on bardo, which broadly refers to the state of intermediate existence between two lives. Tibetan Buddhist texts detail the experiences of human existence after death and before one’s next rebirth. For those who have been appropriately trained, they say, the bardo state during this time offers an opportunity for liberation from samsara.

While bardo meditation would seem to be a topic that interests only Buddhists who accept reincarnation as part of reality, Tsoknyi Rinpoche’s teaching in fact contained little that was esoteric or mystical. His sharp and humane insights into meditation are relevant to modern life, and will be of use to anyone who wishes to explore the workings of the mind and realize its full potential. This article is based on the first part of his teaching in Hong Kong.

There are two ways of viewing life. One is based on cognitive intellectual understanding, and one is based on practice, or experience, which is feeling-oriented. In the end, we need both. Cognitive understanding brings clarity about many things, but it might not change old, wrong habits. To change our habits, our feelings need to be involved, and we need to practice again and again until the new behaviour becomes automatic.

For example, once you have learned how to drive, you don’t really need to think about it, you just drive. Many of our habits are based on this sort of “automatic brain.” So we have to practice, like it or not, it’s going to happen. So why don’t we look into it? Life and death are both part of life.

Rush-hour thinking
Bardo means “in between.” There are four stages of bardo: the bardo of living, the bardo of dying or death, the bardo of shadow, and the bardo of becoming.

There’s a way we can be liberated from samsara during the bardo of death and the bardo of becoming. As he taught us, when past thoughts cease and future thoughts have not yet appeared— when we’re not clinging to the present moment—there lies the true nature of reality. Of course, that is easy to say.

Do you know about this gap between thoughts? You might know of the gap, but to experience it is another matter. Now you’re thinking about this gap, but the act of thinking about it blocks the gap—that is the problem.

On the other hand, you cannot find the gap if you don’t think about it. So what should we do? Some say, “Just stop our not-thinking thing.” But of course it doesn’t automatically stop when we tell it to stop. You may know that it’s a good idea to stop that not-thinking thing, but do you think your feelings will listen and obey?

In the morning you want to wake up, your mind says “wake up now,” but your feelings say “10 more minutes.”

Many things block us from recognizing that gap between thoughts. Our responsibilities, achievement, fear, stress, restlessness, speed, badness, illness, and not-thinking thoughts and not-feeling feelings—all rush to obscure the gap.

We are controlled by our habits. We think habits take over ever since we don’t have enough understanding, and that those habits will change once we understand that they should not behave in a certain way.

But actually it doesn’t happen that way. Nowadays we have too much information and understanding, but it does not touch our feelings. In this bardo of living, there are two subcategories—the bardo of meditation and the bardo of dreams.

Let’s talk about the bardo of meditation. Our normal mind is full of feelings, thoughts, concepts, which obscure the true nature of our mind. It’s like the late afternoon rush hour—too much activity, too many people. In this rush-hour thinking we cannot find the gap between thoughts, concepts, and feelings.

But through meditation, we can find those gaps, so that we can direct our efforts.

As Tsoknyi says, “Between thoughts, wisdom doesn’t.” As he taught us, when past thoughts cease and future thoughts have not yet appeared—when we’re not clinging to the present moment—there lies the true nature of reality. Of course, that is easy to say.

Do you know about this gap between thoughts? You might know of the gap, but to experience it is another matter. Now you’re thinking about this gap, but the act of thinking about it blocks the gap—that is the problem.

On the other hand, you cannot find the gap if you don’t think about it. So what should we do? Some say, “Just stop our not-thinking thing.” But of course it doesn’t automatically stop when we tell it to stop. You may know that it’s a good idea to stop that not-thinking thing, but do you think your feelings will listen and obey?

In the morning you want to wake up, your mind says “wake up now,” but your feelings say “10 more minutes.”

Many things block us from recognizing that gap between thoughts. Our responsibilities, achievement, fear, stress, restlessness, speed, badness, illness, and not-thinking thoughts and not-feeling feelings—all rush to obscure the gap.

We are controlled by our habits. We think habits take over ever since we don’t have enough understanding, and that those habits will change once we understand that they should not behave in a certain way.

But actually it doesn’t happen that way. Nowadays we have too much information and understanding, but it does not touch our feelings. In this bardo of living, there are two subcategories—the bardo of meditation and the bardo of dreams.

Let’s talk about the bardo of meditation. Our normal mind is full of feelings, thoughts, concepts, which obscure the true nature of our mind. It’s like the late afternoon rush hour—too much activity, too many people. In this rush-hour thinking we cannot find the gap between thoughts, concepts, and feelings.

But through meditation, we can find those gaps, so that we can direct our efforts.

As Tsoknyi says, “Between thoughts, wisdom doesn’t.”