



February 2011

dharmavision

Buddhist Community News

A publication by Buddhist Library and Meditation Centre, Camperdown, Sydney.

Donation \$5

HM the King of Cambodia Norodom Sihamoni praises the Buddhist Library's Cambodia Project



Left to right. Heather May Keys Volunteer English Teacher, Dr. Kim Yon Dentist, Paget Sayers CEO, HM the King, Seila Hort Country Manager.



His Majesty was completely charming, kind and generous and delighted with all aspects of the project.

Having been appraised by his staff, the King said that nothing was more important than the education and health of his children. He made a donation to the project and we will establish a computer class in his name.

The meeting with HM Norodom Sihamoni was covered by the National Television of Cambodia.

Inside Story : Top School for 2010: Page 2

Top School for 2010

Thanks to the dedication of the principal and staff, Rolos Secondary and Primary scored top marks for 2010. Every student had a bottle, all buckets in classrooms were full. The Project built tanks and toilets, since children were drinking water. On their own initiative the school dug a well, bought a hand pump, built two small gravity tanks to pipe water to the toilets and hand washing basins. This was funded by the local community in appreciation of our building of tanks and toilets. The school established a vegetable garden, and established a lending library, the first we have seen in the Province.



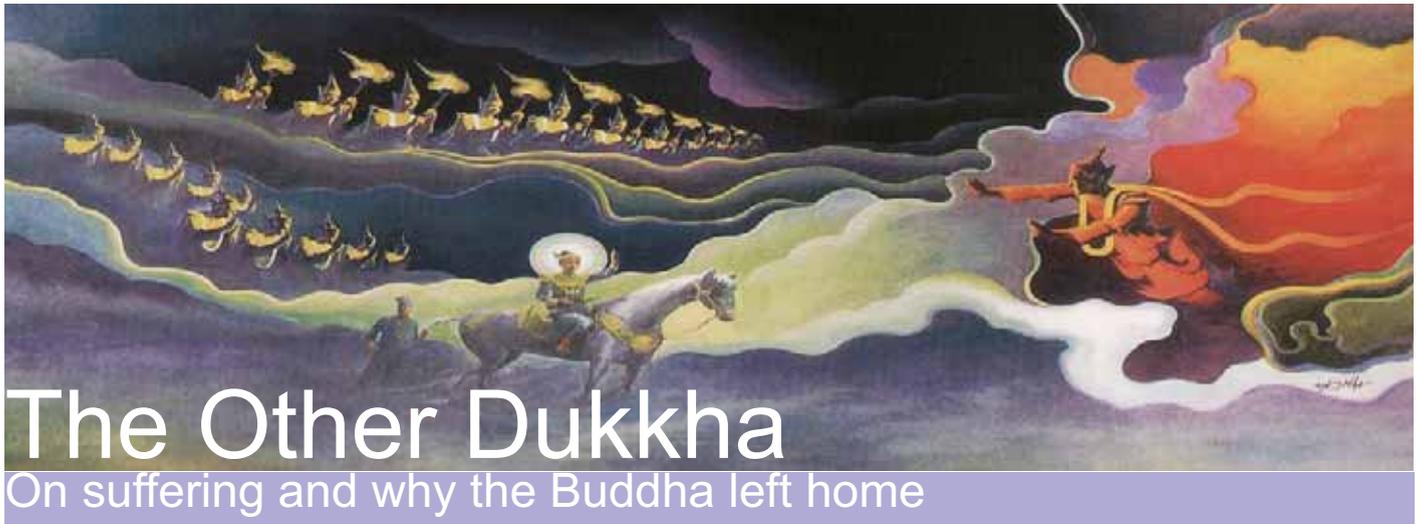
In view of their great work we offered to connect electricity to the school. They pointed out the cost was the problem; remember teachers earn less than \$80 a month. We handed over the required \$150, and they had the power connected the same day. This involved them supplying the necessary 10 wooden poles.



We decided to reward them with a visit from our mobile dental clinic that treated 53 kids the next day. This was covered by National TV, One of our tank maintenance men Mr. Ty was kindly persuaded into service to take details of each patient.

Not only did the connection of electricity permit the dental clinic to operate but it allowed evening English classes to start. We will provide a teacher and also a computer class using funds donated by His Majesty the King. We supplied an electric water pump, another plus. *continued to Page 6*





The Other Dukkha

On suffering and why the Buddha left home

One of the more difficult parts of the Buddha's story to reconcile with modern sensibilities is the fact that he left home, abandoning his wife and newborn son, to wander forth into the wilderness as a spiritual seeker. The interpretation of this action among the general public can be that it was a selfish act, insofar as it was oriented toward his own personal emancipation from the bonds of the human condition.

I would like to offer an alternative perspective of the matter, one suggested by Ashvaghosha's treatment of the episode in his marvelous later Sanskrit poem, the *Buddhacarita*. He seems to identify the Buddha's motivation as growing from a heightened sensitivity to the situation of others, and I think in doing so he lays out a basis upon which modern Engaged Buddhism can be solidly built. Here are two stanzas of the poem (In Olivelle's translation, published in the Clay Sanskrit Library Series, NYU Press, 2008) that set the tone:

But When man happens to see
 someone who is old, sick, or dead
 And remains as ease, unperturbed,
 he's the same as a senseless man [4.60]
 For when the tree is stripped
 of its flowers or fruits;
 Or when it's cut down or falls,
 another tree does not grieve. [4.61]

To be sentient, suggests Ashvaghosha, is to be moved by the misfortune of others. From this point of view it could be seen as selfish of Siddhartha to remain embedded in a life of luxury, and an act of heroism for him to sacrifice that comfort to wander forth seeking a cure to suffering that could then be shared with all. The critical shift from narcissism to altruism comes from regarding the prince as not so much terrified of his own impending doom as responding sympathetically to the suffering he saw others encountering.

In contemporary dialogue the First Noble Truth - the truth of suffering - is usually interpreted to mean that each of us individually must experience the disappointment of not getting what we want or of having to contend with what we don't want. Suffering also refers to the existential bummer

of having to endure old age, illness and death, but again the emphasis is on how this impinges on our own personal happiness. But I think dukkha has always referred to at least equally (and possibly even mostly) to the suffering our action inflict upon others.

When a resource I consume runs out and I am left wanting more, there is indeed some moment of personal psychological disappointment before I successfully grasp for another helping. But there is also a price being somewhere -unseen by me- by someone struggling to provide that resource, and he or she may not be doing so freely, safely, or fairly. And when I turn away from reports of others in pain or need, because paying attention to the details of their situation is a source of unpleasant feelings for me, there is a moment of being uncomfortable before I am able to fasten my mind upon something more pleasant. But the suffering of the other remains, and likely deepens from my inattention.

The cause of suffering is desire, manifesting in its two opposite forms of greed and hatred. Each of these are mental states that flash briefly, though repeatedly, through the mind as one makes decisions and then acts on those decisions. The actions rooted in greed and hatred then reverberate out through a vast network of cause and effect, and I think the Noble Truth of suffering is broad enough to include the harm these deeds can do to others.

The prince Siddhartha awoke to the realization that he was living in a bubble, and possible also to the fact that the bubble was being carried on the back of other living creatures who were suffering as a result. The spark of this awakening was empathy towards others, for example as he watched a plowman at work:

Clumps of grass dug up by plow littered the earth,
 Covered with tiny dead creatures, insects and worms;
 As he beheld the earth with all these strewn about,
 He grieved greatly, as if a kinsman had been killed. [5.5]
 Seeing the men plowing the fields, their bodies dis-
 coloured
 By the wind, the dust, the scorching rays of sun,
 Oxen wearied by the toil of pulling the plows,
 Great compassion overwhelmed that great noble man.
 [5.6]

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What made him unique was his inability to acquiesce to his own personal comfort when surrounded by others who were suffering. As the prince says to a friend trying to talk him into remaining in the palace:

O how steady and strong your mind must be
that you see substance in fleeing pleasures,
That, seeing these creatures on the path of death,
you are attached to sensual pleasures
in the midst of the most frightful dangers. [4.97]
I, however, am timid, much perturbed,
as I think of the dangers
of old age, sickness and death;
I find no peace or content, much less joy,
seeing the world with fire as if ablaze. [4.98]

Dukkha does not only mean that we feel unhappy some of the time. It also means that many of the things we do cause other people to suffer. When actions (or inactions) are tainted with various shades of greed, hatred, and delusion, they cause real harm. In a thoroughly interdependent world, one's own happiness can not be built successfully upon the suffering of others. This is the realization that turned the prince away from his own gratification to face in a new direction, and it may well be the insight that launches the new Buddhism in an untraditionally outward trajectory.

From the beginning Buddhists have had concern for the welfare of others, a concern that accelerated with the later impulse of grounding all practice in the vow to benefit all sentient beings. Yet this seemed to have more to do with purifying the front end of action, its motivation or intention, rather than engaging directly with the back end of action, the harm already inflicted upon the world by the three toxins of greed, hatred and delusion. In our time Buddhists are increasingly interested in alleviating suffering more directly, moving toward a sustained practice of engaged activity in service to others.

It is entirely appropriate to examine in our own moment-to-moment experience how craving and aversion manifest in personal psychological suffering. It is also important to follow that strand out through the interdependent karmic relationships in which each such moment is entangled, to see how our desire is affecting everyone and everything around us. We thereby practice the full range of the Second Noble Truth. And to practice both aspects of the Third Noble Truth, we must work to extinguish not only the internal source of the craving in our own minds, but also the external consequences of that craving in the world we have created.

Andrew Olendzki, Ph.D., is the executive director and senior scholar at the Barr Center for Buddhist Studies, in Barr, Massachusetts, and the editor of *Insight Journal*. He is the author of *Unlimiting Mind*

Courtesy of Tricycle 2011 Fall

Interview with Heather May Keys

interviewed by Paget Sayers



Just back from yet another long trip to volunteer at the Buddhist Library's Cambodia project, we managed to catch up with Heather May Keys and asked her a few questions.

Paget: Do you remember how you found out about the project?

Front page "Seniors" newspaper article on "Paget Sayers and Cambodia Project in 2008", I think.

Paget How many trips have you racked up as now?

This is my third to Kampot and hopefully and certainly not my last.

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Paget: You started off on your first trip doing English conversation, helping the teachers as well as kids. Now you have branched into being a key player doing computer and internet classes and assessing the quality of teaching. What are your favourite activities and Why? Do you see improvements in the children's learning and health?

My computer knowledge is only just adequate, I am a late comer to the technological age, but with the help of a couple of bright students manage to instruct other students (and English Teachers) at least on accessing web sites and opening their own email address.

My training is teaching English to migrants in Australia through AMES and a more extensive TESOL course - Teaching English as a second language - which has now become my passion. I do not have a degree in Education.

I certainly see improvements in the children's health. I have seen marked signs of improvement in learning for those children who have been in previous classes. They are very eager to learn and very conscientious.

There has also been a vast improvement in the teacher's pronunciation and I have always been impressed by their knowledge of English grammar. A few teachers need extra encouragement as it is not easy for those who are out of tourist areas to communicate with native English speakers.

I have been very lucky in being able to travel to outlying schools almost on a daily basis (on the pillion of KP's trusty Suzuki Viva), with the Dental Clinic and also tagging along for tank inspections, seeing parts of the countryside where tourists would not normally visit.

I spent a week in the Takeo district and was the only foreigner in the village for the whole time.

Paget: How about after hours, How do you fill your spare time in Kampot town and how do you relate to you guest house friends? How about your weekly budget?

I meet interesting tourists at the guest house and around town and often eat with them or just hang out for a while.

Many of the students and teachers visit me and invite me to their homes. During Chinese new year I was welcomed into different Cambodian home on each of the five days.

I am also great reader and take advantage of the wonderful local area and occasionally take a trip out of town. I was invited to a teacher's wedding on my last visit and also have attended Buddhist ceremonies with some or all of the teachers.

When I am not required by the Buddhist Library project, I assist with another NGO who I have made contact with.

I am also attempting to learn the Khmer language but I am afraid am finding it a very slow process.

Now I have seen most of the sites of Kampot my budget is quite modest and, including accommodation at \$70 per week (not the cheapest in town but certainly not the most expensive) my weekly budget would be around \$150. This does not, of course, include visa renewals, shopping or gifts etc.

Paget: We hope you can keep up the great work. What would you say to others contemplating a visit as volunteers?

Keep an open mind, a sense of humour, be patient, no expectations and most importantly, respect the people and their culture. Kampot is an ideal place to experience Asia for the first time, or second or third for that matter. A bit of research on the country and its culture also helps but not absolutely necessary as the locals are always willing to advice and assist.

Also if you are not used to high humidity, pick the time to visit.

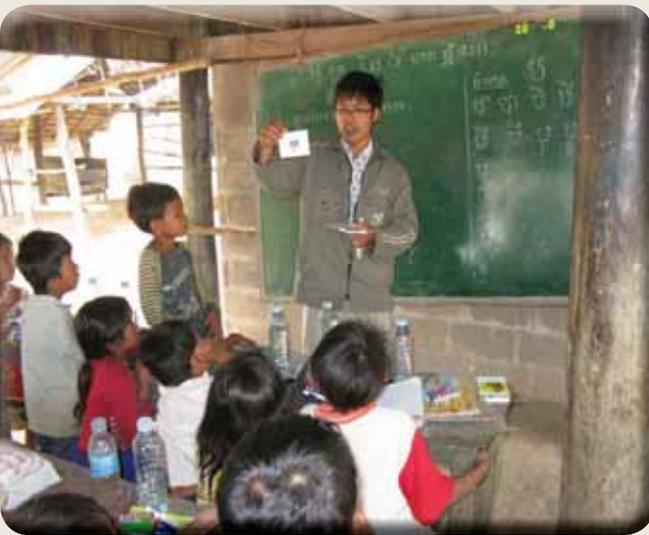
Not only is Heather a real asset to the Project identifying needs in our schools, but she contributed on behalf of her family, funds to connect our computer class to the internet, very exciting for our students opening up a new world in education .

Heather was included with the group invited to meet the King. She has the same birthday as His Majesty King Norodom Sihamoni.

Our sewing class made short pants for all the kids in this school who had long pants. Shorts are better and cheaper to buy and wash. They made 3 sizes, Large, Medium and Small



Oops, he got the wrong size. We changed .



Mr. Kin Pheap our Education coordinator tests a non formal class.



Substitute teacher !!



Country Manager Seila hands out washing soap at this very poor non formal school. This is the one and only school where we provide food which is contrary to our policy. We provide lunch at the school and weigh the kids monthly. Average weight 17kgs.



One of the non formal classes.



Khmer for Compassion



Some schools are tidy some not. No good telling kids to be tidy if there are no receptacles so Baskets are only \$2 each.



This English class started at 25 now grown to 60. We are splitting the class in two and providing a Honda Generator(\$200) for evening classes lighting. A 10 year old in this class is asking a companion questions in English. We invited the King to make a private visit to chat with this child among others. He will be so proud of their ability to pick up English as a second language.



We arranged a project with 12 villages who were short of water for washing, rinsing vegetables and drinking (after boiling first). It was agreed that if they dug the well we would then supply basic materials , concrete and pump (costing \$175 for each village).

In addition as you see it also provided a Khmer version of a Jacuzzi for this one year old !

Services provided by Buddhist Library

While being the only library in Sydney with a large collection of Buddhist books, we provide number of other services for the benefit of the Buddhist community in Australia.

The Library has a collection of Buddhist (and related areas of interest) books other media for sale. For a listing of books please visit the Library or call / email. Many of the books for sale also are available for borrowing.

Free Books on Buddhism and meditation are available to everyone for distribution, including groups, libraries and schools. For the list of the free books please visit our website. We are happy to mail free books to your address. Donations to cover the cost of the postage are much appreciated. Please email your request to library@buddhistlibrary.org.au.

We have a hall which is available for hire to groups in the evening and during the weekend. It has a seating capacity of 100 people. Please contact us on 9519 6054 Monday to Friday (12:30pm - 5pm) with your request. Please note that we cannot accept tentative bookings - so you need to be certain about the date/s you wish to book a hall.



Meditation Stools and Cushions are available for sale. On request your order can be sent by post at cost.

Meditation Cushions : \$ 75

Meditation Stools : Folding \$85 , Fixed legs \$70.

Ask the Teachers

Still, retreats aren't right for every yogi. It's a good idea to speak to a teacher about it, because there are some practitioners who should be encouraged to do a retreat and others who should not.

Question:

At what point is it appropriate to consider doing a three-year retreat or very long-term isolated meditation? How can we be of greatest benefit to sentient beings? Is it by participating in everyday family and community life or by practicing as a hermit yogi?

Zenkei blanche Hartman:

I have no direct personal experience of long solo dharma retreats, as the Japanese Zen tradition in which I have trained puts great emphasis on training in close interaction within a group. I have spent many years practising in a residential sangha.

I do, however, have two friends whom I deeply respect who have trained in other traditions in which solo retreats are highly valued and they have shared with me some of their experience. First, they chose to do a solo retreat (months, but not years) because their teachers recommended it. Second, they planned ahead with their teachers a daily schedule of meditation, meals, work, study, and devotional activities (prostrations, chanting, etc.) which they followed meticulously. Both are now mature and respected dharma teachers and they both continue to do solo retreats.

As you suggest, motivation is a paramount consideration. I hope you continue to make choices in your life guided by your question, "How can we be of greatest benefit to sentient beings?" Each of us has different karmic tendencies and conditioning and circumstances, so there is no "one size fits all" answer to your question of whether participating in everyday family and community life or practising as a hermit yogi is of greater benefit.

Also, one might find that the most appropriate response to this or similar questions may change at different times in one's life. That is why it is helpful to make significant decisions in consultation with a teacher whom you respect and who knows you. If you have already made a commitment to family life, the whole family should be included in such a decision.

I am confident that if our vow is to live our life so as to benefit all beings, we will find a way to cultivate the wisdom and compassion necessary to do so wherever we may be practicing. And I think the three treasures of Buddha, dharma and sangha are invaluable supports in fulfilling our vow.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche: There is no question about the benefits of going into a three-year or long-term retreat. This has been traditionally done in many schools of Tibetan Buddhism, where there was much support from family, community, and the culture to do so. This support is necessary in addition to one's own preparation and knowledge.

In the West, while I have seen longer retreats benefit students, I have also seen times when this was not so, where someone entered a retreat driven by enthusiasm and excitement, which of course does not last even a few months. Perhaps one learns techniques and rituals, but the true purpose of the retreat - to ripen one's own mind - is not realized.

When you have been in the dharma long enough to know the ups and downs of your practice, and you have the full support of your teacher and your community, you may be ready to consider such a venture. A retreat can minimize the distractions of daily life, make our confusion more obvious, and afford the opportunity to connect directly with one's natural mind. The recognition of one's natural mind is wisdom, and it is only through wisdom that one is truly free of the poison of ignorance, the root of all suffering, and able to be a true guide for others. A longer retreat can provide the opportunity to mature one's familiarity with the natural mind.

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The question of benefiting others, however, is not simply one of being a hermit versus being in the world. I know of a young man who did retreat after retreat. All the while he was having big problems with his mother. His mother would complain, "You have done so many retreats. Haven't you done enough? I'm getting old. Maybe it is time to help me?" This young man saw his mother as an obstacle to his practice. At one point after a disagreement he went to the mountains with a lama where he sat on his cushion in a beautiful crossed-legged posture, cultivating compassion by saying, "I generate a mind of compassion for all sentient beings, all who have been my mother." Yet how ironic that he could not stand to be with the only mother he has for even one hour!

While this example may sound exaggerated, it illuminates the split between the lofty ideals expressed in our dharma practice and the reality of the life we are actually living. This split is not uncommon. The real question becomes: Are we willing to recognize this split as it manifests, to recognize it as a manifestation of our own moving mind, and to bring it directly into our practice? Or are we using our practice to reject our challenges and to provide the temporary relief of avoiding them?

I lived a strict monastic life for fifteen years. I'm living a family life now. As a husband, father, and teacher, I do not live an isolated lifestyle. When I am with my family, it is my practice. When I am reaching, it is my practice. When you are willing to see all that occurs as your teacher, you have a constant mirror in those around you and your practice can progress rapidly.

If you are able to make the connection between the challenges of your life and the openness of your practice, whether you go into retreat or live in the world, you will be of benefit to others and your dharma practice will be fruitful.

Narayan Liebenson Grady: I have an enormous love for retreats of any length, so I am answering from the perspective of this joy in the contemplative life. My first encounter with Buddhism was in meeting a friend who had just returned from a three-month retreat. I was so happy to find out that this was possible, even for lay practitioners.

Still, retreats aren't right for every yogi. It's a good idea to speak to a teacher about it, because there are some practitioners who should be encouraged to do a retreat and others who should not. As for timing, a good time to go on a long retreat is when you don't have many responsibilities. Few of us are able to sit three-year retreats in the midst of family life. Shorter retreats ranging from three months to a week-end are more the norm in the insight meditation tradition.

As for your question about what brings the greatest benefit to others, it depends on how you are in your everyday life and how you practice as a hermit yogi. In family, work, and community life, are you dedicated to openheartedness? Are you committed to being mindful and aware in the midst of your life? If you are sitting a retreat, are you sitting a self-retreat or a not-self retreat? By this I mean, is your intent to try to get something, or is it to learn more about letting go? What's key is whether you're living your life with awareness and non grasping - regardless of whether you're alone on retreat or with others in community.

Although Buddhist communities generally stress the value of retreats, if you are not able to do retreats - perhaps because of physical or emotional vulnerabilities or because of responsibilities to others - it's essential not to view this as a problem, and to embrace your life as it is. Attending to what is happening right now is the key to transformation. I'd like to stress this point because I come in contact with so many yogis who suffer from self-doubt because they are no longer able to sit retreats due to chronic illness. There are many ways to attain the kind of understanding that liberates the heart; it is not confined to any particular form, such as a retreat.

Beginning practitioners sometimes ask me if it's selfish to go on retreat. This strikes me as curious given that daily life activities such as watching television, playing video games, and spending hours on Facebook are not normally questioned. As with all things, it's important to examine your motivation. Ask yourself why you want to do a retreat.

Courtesy: @buddhadharma - Summer 2010 and The Budhusarana newspaper of Sri Lanka

Community Events

Mindfulness Meditation " For Stress and Self Care" With Buddhist Psychologist & Meditation Teacher John Barter

08 week course, Every Thursday (10.15 AM - 12.15PM) COST: \$200/\$150

24 th February - 14 April 2011 at the Buddhist Library, Camperdown

Bookings Essential Info 9519 6054 or E-mail: library@buddhistlibrary.org.au:

Introduction to Buddhism Course by Dr. Chien Hoong Gooi, Jim Teoh and panel of Teachers

Time: 7.00 pm - 9.00 pm at the Buddhist Library

This is a 3-part introductory course that explores key aspects of Buddhist teachings and is suited for anyone who wish to gain an overview of the Buddha's teachings. The course will be presented by a panel of lay Buddhist teachers. Each session will also include a short guided meditation session and time for all your questions on Buddhism.

Part 1 - 1st March 2011
Topic: The Buddha and His Key Message

Part 2 - 8th March 2011
Topic: Buddhist Meditation Practice: From tradition to modern science

Part 3 - 15th March 2011
Topic: Applying Buddhist Teachings in Daily Life

All Sessions by Donation

Mindful Relief - Workshop by Giles Barton - 06th March (Sunday) at the Buddhist Library

This workshop will provide information and techniques from a Buddhist perspective on how to engage with chronic physical difficulties in a manner that can help reduce one's own suffering.

By Donation

Vipassana Meditation Course by Grahame White

22, 29 March, 5th and 12th April (7.00 - 9.00pm) at the Buddhist Library

By Donation

Public Talk by Dr. Belinda Khong at the Buddhist Library

Mindfulness & Managing Stress
10th May (7.00 - 9.00pm)

Exploring Love, Compassion, Equanimity & Emphatic Joy (Brahma-Viharas) and its Near and Far Enemies
17th May (7.00 - 9.00pm)

By Donation

Regular Programmes at the Buddhist Library

Tuesday Night Meditation Class 7.00PM with Giles Barton, Grahame White, Dr. Chien Hoong Gooi and Jim Teoh.

Wednesday Evening Meditation Class - Lotus Buds Group 7.30 PM - 9.30PM
Info: www.lotusbudsangha.org **John Barclay** 9559 8805 **Khanh Le Van** 9543 2873

Zen Open Circle Friday Evenings with Susan Murphy. Starts at 5.30PM - Info: 0413 646 377 or info@zenopencircle.org.au

Yoga and Meditation Class with Giles Barton
10.00AM - 11.45AM Saturday Mornings

Library Opening Hours

Monday	12.30 - 5.00PM
Tuesday	12.30 - 7.00PM
(The library has extended hours for borrowing and browsing before the Tuesday Night Class)	
Wednesday	12.30 - 5.00PM
Thursday	12.30 - 5.00PM
Friday	12.30 - 5.00PM

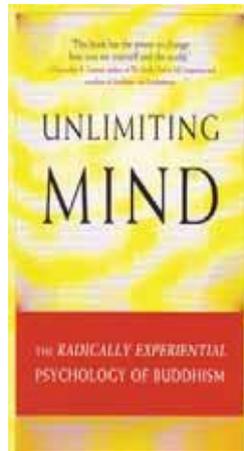
Address : 90 - 92 Church Street Camperdown
NSW 2050 Phone: (02) 9519 6054
Website: www.buddhistlibrary.org.au
Enq & Bookings: library@buddhistlibrary.org.au

New books at the Library



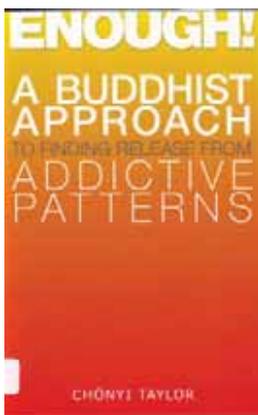
Beyond the Self Thich Nhat Hanh

Beyond the self is Thich Nhat Hanh's original translation of and commentary on one of Buddhism's central teachings, The Sutra in the middle way. With thoughtfulness and compassion, Nhat Hanh shows us how we can avoid extreme views and transcend dualistic thinking, and doing so transform the way we see the world.



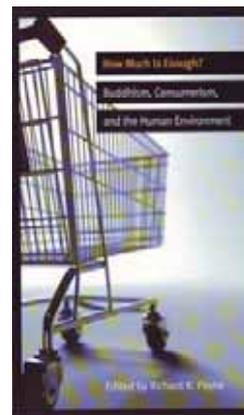
Unlimiting Mind Andrew Olendzki

This book has the power to change how you see yourself and the world. Andrew Olendzki has declassified the radical psychological insights of the Buddha and made them accessible to us all in a series of short, deftly-illuminating essays. It's a remarkable read for anyone interested in the human condition



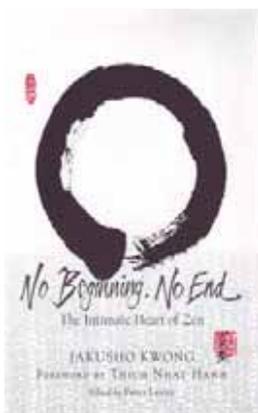
Enough Chonyi Taylor

Enough! is a hands-on guide to help put an end to the patterns that sabotage the potential for a true and satisfying happiness. All of us are caught up in addictions- big or small. *Enough!* presents a practical path that releases us from the grip of negative habits and addictions that block a full and meaningful life.



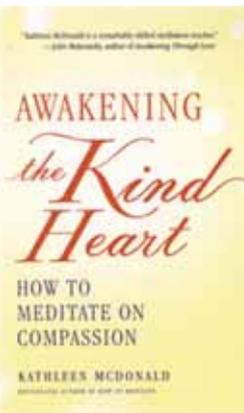
How much is Enough Richard K Payne

In this time of global environmental and economic crisis, Buddhism and ecology-Buddhist Economics- have become topics of major interest. This outstanding collection of essays makes an important contribution to our normative and historical understanding of both areas.



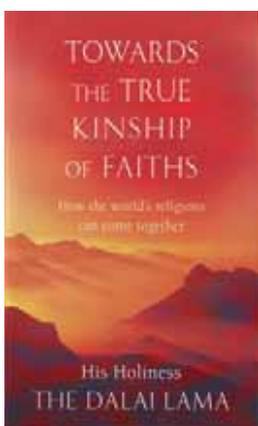
No Beginning, No End Jakusho Kwong

In No Beginning, No End, Zen master Jakusho Kwongroshi shows us how to treasure the ordinary activities of our daily lives through an understanding of simple Buddhist practices and ideas. The author's spontaneous, poetic and pragmatic teachings - so reminiscent of his spiritual predecessor Shunryu Suzuki - transport us on an exciting journey into the heart of Zen.



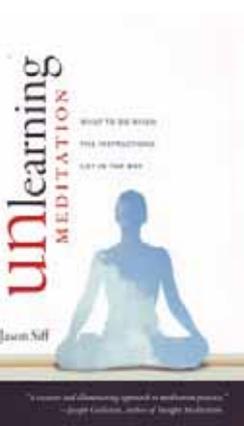
Awakening the Kind Heart Kathleen McDonald

Through clear explanations, straightforward practices, and basic goodheartedness, this book explains how to navigate the path to love, even under very trying circumstances. Truly, there is nothing more needed at this time- our very future may depend upon it.



Towards the True Kinship of Faiths - Dalai Lama

In this book the Dalai Lama shows how in our globalized world, nations, cultures and individuals can find opportunities to connect. All faiths turn to compassion as a guiding principle for living a good life. It is the responsibility of all people with an aspiration to spiritual perfection to help develop a deep recognition of the value of other faiths.



Unlearning Meditation Jason Siff

When we meditate, our minds often want to do something other than the meditation instructions we've been taught. When that happens repeatedly, we may feel frustrated to the point of abandoning meditation altogether. Jason Siff invites us to approach meditation in a new way, one that honors part of us that doesn't want to do the instructions.