

# Chapter 1

## **Integrating Buddhist teachings and Western psychotherapies**

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*'...the practice of Buddhism has infiltrated my own clinical work...the Buddha's teachings...effectively complement, inform, or energize the practice of contemporary psychotherapy...many of today's most important clinical psychotherapists have been, often unknowingly, knocking on Buddha's door.'*

Mark Epstein<sup>1</sup>

Buddhism and psychotherapy heal the mind. Though stemming from very different historical backgrounds, these two therapeutic paths share a concern with the suffering of a fractured mind, and a hope that healing is possible through care, understanding, and effort.

Psychotherapy is a relatively young discipline, which in the past century has developed an extensive range of approaches to dealing with mental disturbance and promoting mental health. It provides an understanding of psychological development and mental illness that is far more detailed than anything found in Buddhism, yet it lacks the depth and meaning of life that a true spiritual path can provide.

Buddhism offers a sense of wholeness and belonging, a vision of humanity's place in the scheme of things, and in this way it is like any other religion. Unlike other religions, however, it focuses not on belief, but on awareness. Buddhist teachings include a

sophisticated and time-tested array of contemplative methods to alleviate mental suffering and develop a clear, healthy, and happy mind.

However, psychological wholeness is only the beginning for the Buddhist practitioner. Even the states of higher consciousness, whose existence was unsuspected by the early psychologists, are not the final goal of Buddhism, but are merely a means to the end – freedom from all suffering.

This is the backbone of the most fundamental Buddhist teaching, the four noble truths: suffering, its origin, its ending, and the path to its ending. It's no coincidence that this looks like an effective therapeutic tool, for it was patterned by the Buddha after the diagnostic method in ancient Indian medicine: diagnose the affliction, identify the cause, identify the state of health that is aimed at, and put in place a system of treatment that will lead to health.

This therapeutic basis makes the four noble truths easily adaptable to a Western psychotherapeutic model. Those who are seeking therapy have obviously experienced suffering and wish to alleviate it; and the very fact that they have presented, shows that they accept some responsibility for their condition. In this teaching, which underlies all schools of Buddhism and psychotherapy, we can discern a shared pattern of concern and practical application with of psychological truths to alleviate the suffering of the human condition.

In this introductory chapter, we will examine the growth of psychology and Buddhism in the modern era, looking at the course of their mutual influences. We will look at some foundational aspects of Buddhist teachings, and at how these have been adopted and applied in a contemporary therapeutic context. Finally, we will offer some reflections as to

the benefits that we see in the mutual study of these two fields. First, though, a few words on the process of integration itself.

## **Why integrate?**

To integrate is to make whole, to remove barriers that separate. True integration is the outcome of healthy communication. In psychology, integration means that different, contradictory or contrary aspects of the psyche are not strangers. They talk to each other and more importantly, listen to each other.

Integration is a feature of psychological growth as a whole; and part of that process is the integration of theoretical models. This is merely a starting point, but we should approach it with care and respect. We must first assimilate the models as they are, challenging our preconceptions and extending our thinking as we take the new into account. It is just as important to acknowledge the divergences and differences as it is to find common ground. If we start with the assumption, 'Buddhism and psychotherapy are really the same', then we will tend to ignore or explain away any genuine differences we may discover.

Let differences thrive, and they will surprise and delight us with unexpected convergences. We need assume only that a mutual investigation into Buddhism and psychotherapy will be beneficial. Listen to the teachings of both disciplines as a therapist listens to a client: with compassionate, nonjudgmental understanding. In time, the integration coalesces, contradictions become complements, a confusion of details becomes a wealth of resources, and all things take on a wider significance.

Growth is like this, a recurring process of differentiation and integration. At each new stage of growth, the former integration must dissolve to a degree, to allow a broader, more

complex integration to take shape. At this point we must let go of our former beliefs and assumptions – and often enough, we learn for the first time what our beliefs and assumptions really are.

In approaching subtle topics like Buddhism and psychotherapy, a clear analytical approach is essential to differentiate the various aspects of each discipline, or cluster of disciplines, for neither Buddhism nor psychotherapy is by any means a unitary phenomenon.

But analysis alone is not enough. An overly critical approach risks leaving nothing behind but scorched earth. Integration itself is largely a function of love, which heals and unites the psyche. Compassion is the great reconciler; and Buddhism and psychotherapy are fundamentally compassionate disciplines, taking their formative impulse from the wish to alleviate or eliminate suffering.

## **The birth of psychology and Buddhist modernism**

The complex relationship between Buddhism and psychotherapy can be seen in light of this very process of differentiation and integration. Psychology emerged in the cracks that formed as religion declined in the West. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, everything from mystical experience to the belief in an afterlife, to sexuality, to possession by spirits, was unceremoniously stripped from religion and taken over by the psychologists, to the extent that Sigmund Freud was able to comment, 'Religion is an illusion and it derives its strength from the fact that it falls in with our instinctual desires'.<sup>ii</sup> For Freud, the fact that religion accorded with human needs was compelling evidence that it was nothing more than a projection of those same needs – a reductionist argument that is still heard today.

This was the age of scepticism. Nietzsche openly questioned whether God was dead,

Darwinian evolution dispensed with Creation, and Marx argued that the elimination of religion was an essential precondition for human happiness. Freud's anti-theistic psychology explained religious phenomena as manifestations of our defences, the unconscious and, all too often, the pathological. Small wonder that some religious people become defensive when psychology is in the air.

But there was a counter-current to this seemingly inevitable process. Freud's sometime colleague Carl Jung recognised the singular significance of religion in the psychic growth of humanity, asserting, 'I have treated many hundreds of patients. Among those in the second half of life – that is to say, over 35 – there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life.'<sup>iii</sup> Jung rejected the reductionist leanings of Freud, insisting that the domain of psychology was not to determine whether religious beliefs are true or not, but to examine how they affect our psychological wellbeing. Earlier theorists had found that the primal human urges were the desire for pleasure or for power. Jung, while not dismissing the importance of these, discerned a more fundamental force – the desire to become conscious.

This emphasis on religious *experience* rather than doctrine was the keynote of that other great founder of modern psychology, William James. His magnum opus, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, details the extraordinarily wide range of subjective experiences that are associated with 'religion'. In many ways, he laid the groundwork for our modern, subjective, anti-doctrinal approach to religion. While earlier Western theorists of mind tended to treat the mind as a given, a tabula rasa on which the events of life are inscribed, James was perhaps the first to appreciate the fluidity of the mind, which he called a 'stream of consciousness'.<sup>iv</sup> Two thousand five hundred years earlier, the Buddha used the exact same phrase (in Pali, *vinnanasota*<sup>v</sup>) when he spoke of the 'flow' of consciousness that

streams through life, and from one life to the next.

The use of the term 'stream of consciousness' by both the Buddha and James is an impressive parallel, but it is far from the only one. A recent essay by David Scott has detailed multiple lines of connection between the two, noting that it was in the period from the 1890s to the early 1900s, when James was producing his most influential work, that Buddhism was emerging as a major force in the American academic scene.<sup>vi</sup> James refers to several Buddhist books in *Varieties*, and helped set up an American lecture series for Thomas Rhys Davids, the English Buddhist scholar. James invoked Buddhism in his consideration of what 'religion' meant, noting that a non-theistic system like Buddhism grappled with the same questions of highest meaning as do theistic religions like Christianity. He approved of the teaching on karma, the clear acknowledgement of suffering, the moderation implicit in the Buddhist 'middle way', and the significance of heightened states of consciousness (*samadhi*). He included a lengthy anecdote in *Varieties* of a man who, on hearing the Buddhist teaching that anger and worry were unnecessary and that one could abandon them, found that these 'cancer spots' simply vanished, leaving him amazed at the increased energy, strength, and 'disposition to love and appreciate everything' that remained.<sup>vii</sup>

The connections between his work and the Buddha's teaching were not lost on James. One day, so the story goes, he was greeted with the unusual sight of Anagarika Dharmapala, a Buddhist ascetic in his ochre robes, sitting in on one of his lectures at Harvard.<sup>viii</sup> James said to him, 'Take my chair, and I shall sit with my students. You are better equipped to lecture on psychology than I am.' Dharmapala spoke briefly on the Buddhist teachings on the mind, to which James responded, 'Yours is the psychology everyone will be studying 25 years from now.' This story is of uncertain provenance, and its frequent retelling in the Buddhist community speaks of how important it is for modern Buddhists to find Western

validation.<sup>ix</sup> It's retold in Buddhist circles as a sign that Western psychology is moving towards Buddhism. And this is doubtless true, even if James' time frame was a little ambitious – the delay can perhaps be blamed on the advent of behaviourism. But notice also that the opposite is true; Dharmapala was interested enough in Western psychology that he attended James' lecture. From these first days, the interaction between Buddhism and psychology has been a two-way street.

The essentially psychological nature of Buddhist teachings was also apparent to the early generations of Western Indologists. In 1900, only a couple of years before James met Dharmapala, the leading Pali scholar Caroline Rhys Davids published a translation of the first book of the *Theravada Abhidhamma*, the *Dhamma-sangani*. The Abhidhamma is a scholarly tradition within Buddhism that studies and analyses the teachings using a sophisticated and systematic methodology. She titled her translation *Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics*, writing in her introduction that, 'Buddhists were, in a way, more advanced in the psychology of their ethics than Aristotle – in a way, that is, which would now be called scientific... Buddhism, from a quite early stage of its development, set itself to analyse and classify mental processes with remarkable insight and sagacity'.<sup>x</sup>

Similarly, her husband Thomas Rhys Davids noted of a particularly insightful passage on dependent arising that it 'contained a great part of modern psychology in the germ state'.<sup>xi</sup> The connection between Abhidhamma and psychology was enthusiastically adopted by modernist Buddhist teachers, and there are countless subsequent references to Abhidhamma as 'Buddhist psychology'.

Thomas Rhys Davids was perhaps the most important figure in introducing Buddhism to the West. He founded the Pali Text Society, which edited, published and translated almost

the entire corpus of Pali Buddhist texts. In addition, he wrote numerous essays and books introducing Buddhism from a historical perspective to his audience of European intellectuals. Despite not being a meditator himself, in a stroke of inspiration he coined the rendering 'mindfulness' for the Buddhist term *sati*, a term that has come to define the essence of Buddhist practice in the West.<sup>xii</sup>

But Rhys Davids was no mere linguist or translator. He was fully engaged in the currents of European thought of his time. Whereas some intellectuals saw the dissolution of conventional religious values and the incursion of oriental thought as a dire threat to civilisation, Rhys Davids argued that the Buddha's example showed the way forward for Western society. From the 'chaos' of polytheism and the 'inconsistent answers' of the theologians there has evolved, at several points in history, a new way 'in which man was to work out here, on earth, his own salvation'. This new approach did not arise because of interaction or mutual conditioning, but because of similar, though independent, responses to similar circumstances. In a strikingly Indic turn of thought, he saw the intellectual and cultural ferment of his own time as the replaying of an almost inevitable cycle:

It is their place in the progress of thought that helps us to understand how it is that there is so much in common between the Agnostic philosopher of India [the Buddha], the Stoics of Greece and Rome, and some of the newest schools in France and Germany and among ourselves.<sup>xiii</sup>

He was also significant in another way. For 2500 years, Buddhism had been propagated almost entirely by Buddhists, who approached their topic with an astonishing degree of awe and reverence. Rhys Davids, on the other hand, was a sceptic and a lay scholar, who nevertheless found a unique value in Buddhist teachings. Unlike his



contemporaries Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky, he never converted to Buddhism.<sup>xiv</sup>

And yet he said

Buddhist or not Buddhist, I have examined every one of the great religious systems of the world, and in none of them have I found anything to surpass, in beauty and comprehensiveness, the Noble Eightfold Path and the Four Noble Truths of the Buddha. I am content to shape my life according to that path.<sup>xv</sup>

Here is the leitmotif of modernist Buddhism: it is immaterial whether or not you consider yourself a Buddhist; Buddhism is essentially a way of living, and the chief teachings are the noble eightfold path and the four noble truths. Buddhism is not a religion of worship or creed, but of practical application of the essential teachings. The Four Noble Truths – suffering, its origin, its ending, and the path to its ending – describe our existential situation and what to do about it. We will now consider these central teachings and their relevance for the therapist.

## **The four noble truths**

### ***1. Suffering***

The basic problem that the four noble truths describe is suffering in its broadest sense, including physical suffering such as sickness and death, and psychological suffering such as the ending of relationships. But at its deepest level, suffering is existential, bound up with the nature of the human condition. This is the first noble truth.

The nature of suffering is more narrowly conceived in psychology. Rather than liberation from all suffering, psychotherapies have the more humble aim of ameliorating the

symptoms and maturing the mind. Freud said that therapy holds the promise of transforming 'hysterical misery' into 'common unhappiness' so that we are better equipped to cope.<sup>xvi</sup> This aim, limited though it is, still falls in with the compassionate ethos of medicine: 'To cure sometimes, to relieve often, to comfort always.'<sup>xvii</sup>

## ***2. The origin of suffering***

The second noble truth is that the cause of suffering is inside oneself. External conditions play a role, but in the final analysis it is we who must be responsible for how we play the hand that life has dealt us. The Buddha identified three primary drives in human motivation: the desire for pleasure, the desire for life, and the desire for annihilation.<sup>xviii</sup>

## ***3. The ending of suffering***

Recognising the affliction is the beginning of a cure, which is the third noble truth. The Buddha taught that by letting go of these desires, we realise freedom, which he called nirvana.<sup>xix</sup> Nirvana seemed to early generations of Europeans to be a disturbingly nihilistic goal, as the Buddha depicted it in ontologically negative terms: the unborn, the uncreated, the unconditioned. Psychologically, on the other hand, nirvana is always positive: 'ultimate bliss', a safe harbour, a refuge, a place of peace, an island in a rising flood. For practising Buddhists, nirvana offers hope, an essential ingredient in all therapies.

## ***4. The way of practice that leads to the end of suffering***

The vast majority of Buddhist teachings relate to the fourth noble truth – the noble eightfold path. This is the middle way between the extremes of self-indulgence and self-torment. Let us look at each factor of this path, starting with the traditional Buddhist definition and then moving to its application to psychology.

# **The noble eightfold path**

## ***1. Right view***

This is, to start with, the theoretical understanding of the four noble truths – our sufferings are caused from within, and we have the responsibility and the capacity to overcome them. Right view is developed through study, discussion, reflection and meditation. It guides the development of the path as a whole, and as the path develops, the theory of right view deepens into experiential wisdom. Ultimately, it cuts through the attachments that bind us to suffering.

Western psychology shares the same view of self-responsibility, and similarly guides the client to an understanding of his or her own condition. Dynamic/analytic therapies, in particular, emphasise the client's intuitive understanding of his or her own condition as the source of healing.

## ***2. Right motivation***

The emotional foundations for healthy development are compassion, letting go, and loving kindness.

A therapist brings unconditional compassion to their relationship with the client. Regardless of the theoretical model used as framework, it is this compassion that underlies the healing process. To be with another human being in their grief, confusion and trauma is one of the most loving acts possible. This compassion needs to extend to therapists themselves; through their own healing they set an example for their client. Letting go, or renunciation, is an interesting area in our modern culture. There is such an emphasis on

getting happiness through material possessions that significant stress arises because of excessive spending, overwork to pay for the spending, debt, or the more toxic manifestations in gambling addictions and the like. Encouraging clients to be more aware of that which has true value to them can help to relieve the cycle of desire-and-disappointment.

### ***3. Right speech***

Right speech means communications that are honest, kind, and that promote wisdom. Speech is a foundation of the path, as it is through the words of another that we are opened up to the possibilities of transformation.

In the talking therapies, there is considerable teaching of the art and science of therapeutic speech. The how, when and why of the therapist's speech is examined during supervision. Buddhism and psychotherapy also share an appreciation of silence; at the right time, this is more powerful than any speech.

### ***4. Right action***

Right action is ethical conduct that is harmless and trustworthy, and manifests compassion for all living beings. It is usually summarised as three central precepts: to avoid killing, stealing, and sexual betrayal. These three precepts are no more than a summary of essential ethical principles, and they are not meant to be a full description of an ethical life. Indeed, the scriptures emphasise how each is to be interpreted in a positive way. The precept against killing, for example, exhorts one to 'tremble with compassion for all living beings'.<sup>xx</sup>

It is essential that the client trusts the therapist's ethical integrity. The therapist must keep the principle of non-harming uppermost in mind at all times. Any suspicion of misbehaviour on the part of the therapist can destroy the progress that has been made and,

worse, can make the client cynical as to the chance of any real help. The most critical area is, of course, sexuality. In the early Buddhist texts, to use one's position as a teacher or mentor to gain sexual favours is regarded as one of the worst of all possible offences.<sup>xxi</sup>

The ethical conduct of the client, on the other hand, is a delicate area for therapists. Unlike Buddhist teachers, therapists are not expected to provide moral guidelines. Nevertheless, poor ethical choices are a major cause of psychological distress. It would, ironically, be unethical to do nothing to help a client whose distress is caused by unethical behaviour. A therapist's role in such a case is to guide the person towards greater self-understanding, so that they will realise the effects of their actions and make the necessary changes. Some approaches, such as behaviour therapies, offer skills and techniques to correct maladaptive behaviours.

This approach to ethics is similar to that of the Buddha, as he never issued moral 'commandments', but would advise people to reflect on their conduct and to consciously undertake ethical precepts when they realised their benefits. An example of this is the Buddhist fable of the god of the dead, Yama. Unlike more conventional death gods, Yama neither judges nor punishes. He merely inquires, holding a mirror to a person's life for them to see for themselves whether they have heeded life's lessons.<sup>xxii</sup>

## ***5. Right livelihood***

Right livelihood is a manner of earning a living that benefits self and others. Traditional examples of wrong livelihoods include arms trafficking, drug dealing, and trading in slaves, animals and meat.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Psychotherapists are privileged to be in the helping professions, which are regarded

as among the best forms of livelihood. It is important for therapists to remind themselves of this, for any dissatisfaction with their own work will communicate itself to the client.

Many clients come to therapy because of stress and other afflictions that are ultimately work-related. It might be simply overwork, or a sense of meaninglessness, or anxiety from having to make uncomfortable choices. A therapist's role is not to tell a person what they should or should not do, but to help clients understand how their work-life is affecting them, and to help them move towards a positive relationship with their work.

## ***6. Right energy***

Right energy refers to the effort to abandon unhealthy or unskilful thoughts and actions, and to positively develop healthy ones.

In psychotherapeutic work, the therapist has to put in the right effort to skilfully assist the client. But, as in the Buddhist notion of 'effortless effort', they can't be seen as trying too hard. 'Right effort' is always balanced, sustained and relaxed. The client, of course, is the one who does the most work.

## ***7. Right mindfulness***

Right mindfulness is the practice of awareness and comprehension of one's body, feelings, mind, and the Dhamma itself. This is done through daily activities, and especially in meditation. Right mindfulness is the foundation for all deeper states of consciousness and liberation.<sup>xxiv</sup>

Mindfulness is an integrative quality: it brings the mind and body together in the present moment. In recent years, mindfulness therapies have seen a massive growth in

therapeutic applications. Today there are many mindfulness-based therapies for psychological, physical and relationship problems.

## ***8. Right unification***

Unification translates the Pali term *samadhi*, which refers to states of purified consciousness, an experience of profound stillness and oneness. In Buddhism, such states emerge due to the correct practice of the path as a whole, and they result in an intuitive wisdom and, ultimately, in freedom from all suffering.<sup>xxv</sup>

Western psychotherapies are concerned with the messages conveyed by our conscious and unconscious minds rather than the direct transformation of consciousness itself. There are relaxation therapies and hypnotherapies, but no further and deeper cultivation of states of awareness that lead to a total understanding of the mind and, ultimately, enlightenment. A new generation of Buddhist-influenced therapists could look more closely at such transcendent consciousness and expand the possibilities of healing.<sup>xxvi</sup>

## **On the Buddha and his teachings**

When we consider the Buddha's teachings, we are looking through a long historical lens at matters that are both very subtle and very far away. There are, of course, widely varying claims as to what the Buddha 'really' taught, and it is no easy matter to navigate the stormy waters of opinion. However, following the pioneering research of Thomas Rhys Davids and others, modern scholars agree that the most reliable guides to the Buddha's teachings are found in two main collections, known today as the *Suttas* and the *Vinaya*. The *Vinaya* deals with monastic conduct. The *Suttas*, which contain the bulk of his teachings, are preserved mainly in the *Nikayas* of the Pali tradition and the *Agamas* in Chinese translation.<sup>xxvii</sup> While

these texts show many signs of redaction and alteration over time, they show a remarkable consistency in the key teachings, which attests to the care and fidelity of the process of transmission.<sup>xxviii</sup>

Not everything in the *Suttas* was spoken by the Buddha; but it's probably true to say that all extant sayings of the Buddha are found in the *Suttas* (and to a lesser extent, the *Vinaya*). That is to say, it's unlikely that any other texts record teachings of the historical Buddha, except where these are derived from the *Suttas*. It is hardly possible to overestimate the importance of the teachings for the entire Buddhist tradition. They underlie all modern schools of Buddhism, despite the many apparent differences on the surface.<sup>xxix</sup>

Even a casual consideration of the early Buddhist teachings shows a number of remarkable aspects. Perhaps the most extraordinary thing is what is lacking – no ritual, no metaphysics, no sacrifices, no beseeching of gods, no hierarchies. The Buddha simply ignored the familiar trappings of religion. What is left is an empirical and balanced program for spiritual development. Each factor is immediately recognisable, and 2500 years later we easily see how each one contributes in an essential way to genuine spiritual growth. The noble eightfold path includes rational (right view) and emotional (right motivation) aspects; it integrates the psychological with the ethical; it sets a high standard, without judgments or threats of punishments; it acknowledges the centrality of our everyday choices; and it includes a specialised contemplative dimension. For all these reasons, it is uniquely suited to application in a modern, secular context.

If we were to summarise the Buddha's psychology in one phrase, a line from *Potthapada Sutta* comes to mind: 'It is by means of training that certain perceptions arise, and by means of training that certain perceptions cease.'<sup>xxx</sup> The notion of training is



fundamental: our minds cannot be controlled or altered by a mere act of will and are not subject to the grace or punishment of a god, but neither are they fixed and unchangeable. We are creatures of habit, and our minds follow paths that they are used to. If we do nothing, our minds will tend to follow the path to short-term pleasure, which often ends up leading to suffering in the long term. Our spiritual journey begins when we recognise this fact, and determine to do something about it. We cannot simply stop our destructive tendencies. But each moment, we can choose how to respond. Each moment, we can go down the path of harm or of compassion. And the more we choose wisdom and compassion, the easier it gets. Our minds become accustomed to thinking positively and realistically. But right view is only the start of the path. In meditation, we can transform our perceptions on a far more profound level. Rather than being victims of circumstance, we become free from conditions.

The Buddha paid close attention to epistemology, being one of the first philosophers to critically examine the *way* we come to know things. He identified various means of knowledge that were used by his Indian contemporaries. Some were traditionalists, who believed that what was passed down in scripture was the truth. Then there were the rationalists, who used thinking and reasoning to arrive at the truth. Finally, there were the experientialists who believe truth to be found through personal experience. The Buddha identified himself with this last group. So while tradition and logic play a role, experience is the most important criterion.<sup>xxx</sup>

Like modern empiricists, the Buddha distinguished between the raw information of sense data, and the inferences that are necessary to fully understand the implications of that data.<sup>xxxii</sup> The Buddha emphasised that while inference is necessary, it must always be cautious, bound to the data, and subject to modification if the information changes.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

The Buddha encouraged continuous reflection on experience both in formal meditations and daily living.<sup>xxxiv</sup> This is very similar to the growing emphasis in Western psychotherapies on the role of self-reflection, self-reflexivity and mentalisation in the repair, growth and integrative processes of the mind. Self-reflection is the cognitive process in which one thinks about oneself as if from the outside. Self-reflexivity involves much more – it is the capacity to experience, observe and reflect on oneself as both a subject and an object (the significant other); it is both experiential and affective. Mentalisation is the capacity to reflect on feelings and thoughts built up through an intersubjective process between infant and parent.<sup>xxxv</sup> It is the process by which a baby develops its own mind and becomes a person.

The central role of the essentially personal and individual practice of self-reflection reminds us that, while frameworks such as the noble eightfold path are essential, the spiritual path can't be reduced to a fixed formula. Buddhist texts tell countless stories of the idiosyncratic and unpredictable search for the truth. We hear, for example, of how Venerable Ananda realised full awakening just as his head was about to hit the pillow.<sup>xxxvi</sup> Others became liberated as they turned out their lamp, or watched their foot-washing water slowly sink into the earth.<sup>xxxvii</sup> A memorable case was the nun who for 20 years could not find peace of mind 'even for as long as a finger-snap'. She took a rope in despair and tied it to the branch of a tree. As she stood there, on the verge of ending her life, all of a sudden she saw through her delusions and became free.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

It was the Buddha's skill in adapting his teaching in such personal and idiosyncratic cases that made him such a successful teacher, renowned for his ability to reach each person in the manner that they most needed. He rapidly gathered around him a community of spiritual seekers known as the sangha. His followers included both monastic and lay people,

and allowed for a remarkable degree of equality and independence for women; indeed, Buddhist texts include some of the oldest women's spiritual literature found anywhere in the world. Many of the Buddha's female followers were regarded as having reached the highest degree of awakening.<sup>xxxix</sup>

The Buddha was not solely a teacher of meditation and philosophy. He showed his practical wisdom in building communities, as evidenced by the fact that his sangha is still in existence today. The Buddha was also a great exponent of interfaith dialogue; most of the longer discourses are records of conversations he had with brahmins or religious figures of the day. He taught all strata of society, from kings, queens and wealthy businesspeople to farmers and tradespeople, and including outcasts, disabled people, children, prostitutes and even a serial killer. Since he spoke of relieving suffering, he inevitably encountered many people with emotional and mental disorders. His dialogues are full of wit and wisdom; he never lacked for a response, even in the face of belligerent and unjust accusations.

After 45 years of teaching, the Buddha quietly passed away in Kusinara, just north of the Ganges River.<sup>xl</sup>

## **Mutual flourishing – or cultural appropriation?**

Buddhism and psychology have been in a symbiotic relationship since the dawn of the modern era. Buddhist ideas were very much current in European intellectual circles in the days of Freud, Jung and James. And Western ideas were very much current in Buddhist lands, many of which were colonies, and all of which were forging new 'modernist' forms of Buddhism that enabled their ancient faith to find a new lease of life in this new and dangerous world. Much of what we consider today to be 'traditional Buddhism' in fact

emerged in the early 20th century, as Buddhists responded to Western critiques by developing rational, psychologised versions of ancient Buddhist practices.

The best known of these innovations is the so-called 'vipassana' meditation movement.<sup>xli</sup> This emerged as a secularisation of Buddhist practice. Stripped of ritual and superstition, meditation was henceforth to be a purely inner process of mindful nonjudgmental awareness.

While this practice has deep roots in the Buddhist teachings, it is important to appreciate the extent of innovation this required. As just one example, take the term 'nonjudgmental'. This is one of the most common phrases that qualifies modern mindfulness meditation, used by teachers from West and East alike. Yet it has no Pali or Sanskrit equivalent. While it is possible to find precedents for the idea of nonjudging in Buddhism,<sup>xlii</sup> its prominence in meditation vocabulary is a distinctly modern phenomenon. Being judgemental has never been a particular problem for Buddhism, but it was a major issue in Christianity, being one of the chief ideological shifts from the Old to New Testaments. It was, of course, an innovation of Freud's generation of psychologists that they listened to and treated their clients in a nonjudgmental manner, rather than condemning, say, sexual perversion. The use of the term in meditation circles, it seems, owes more to Biblical tensions in the Western psyche than to anything in Buddhism.

Modernity prompted an unprecedented reinvigoration of meditation, a practice that had previously been mostly ignored, or marginalised to the mystical experiences of dubious quasi-shamanic wild monks. This enabled meditation to flourish in 'value-free', secular contexts; to be widely adopted by other faiths; to be implemented in prisons and hospitals; and to be studied using the quantifiable methods of Western science.

But there is a nagging doubt—what has been left behind? Is traditional Buddhism to be stripped of its riches and left as a bland devotional cult while the cutting-edge is adopted by the secularists? Is a meditation technique, divorced of its context of ethics and philosophy, able to deliver the same transformation? While the vipassana movement has accomplished an astonishing feat in bringing meditation to the West, the task is still only beginning.

The reason why one tradition or practice is well known, while others are neglected, has as much to do with the accidents of history as it has to do with the value of the practices. While the focus of this book is on the therapeutic application of Buddhism in improving mental health, we should bear in mind that this is only one part of the picture. Buddhism is much larger than a therapy: it is a path to awakening, which gives a sense of meaning to one's whole life. Buddhism is exerting its influence on countless areas of modern life, and, true to the fundamental Buddhist principle of interdependence, Buddhism itself is being transformed by modernity.

As such, Western Buddhism is subject to the 'Orientalist' critique: we take what we want from an idealised 'mystical East' and leave out anything that is inconvenient.<sup>xliii</sup> Western Buddhism has, to a large degree, been abstracted from the cultures that gave its practices a broader meaning. This is not necessarily a bad thing; it opens up entirely new possibilities, such as the encounter between Buddhism and Western psychotherapies (and the very existence of this book, with its integration of the different Buddhist schools).

Indeed, it may well be in the adoption of meditation that the Orientalist tendency will undermine itself. In meditation, we are not adopting cultural or lifestyle trappings, but are transforming our innermost selves in the ways of the ancient East. For many practitioners, Buddhist meditation, while starting as an alternative to therapy or stress reduction, has

become much more than that. The real strength of Buddhism does not lie in the details of the contemplative techniques, but in the existential context within which these techniques become not merely a means for psychological coping or health, but the path to liberation from all suffering. Slowly, often imperceptibly, meditation does not just help us get what we want, but changes the nature of what we want; and ultimately, perhaps, leads us beyond all wanting.

The recent trend in Buddhist studies has been to rediscover the context within which the philosophies and practices were formed. As our new, global Buddhism matures, we will gradually expand and deepen our encounter with the various forms of Buddhism. Some of what was in the past will be lost; some will be preserved; and some entirely new things will emerge. We are living in an exciting, pivotal age, and Buddhism will play a decisive role in the path we choose.

## **A growing understanding**

The confluence of Buddhism and psychotherapy, which had been implicit for a century, rose to the surface as part of the great cultural changes sweeping the world in the mid-20th century.

In August 1957, a conference on Zen Buddhism and psychoanalysis was held under the auspices of the Autonomous National University of Mexico. The conference was attended by about 50 psychiatrists and psychologists from both Mexico and the United States. In 1960, Erich Fromm published a book based on the conference titled *Psychoanalysis and Zen Buddhism*.<sup>xliv</sup> In his foreword, Fromm acknowledged the surprise that he expected many would feel to see a group of eminent psychoanalysts not merely discussing Buddhism, but

learning creatively with the Zen master Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki.

In his final chapter, Fromm drew out the similarities in the psychoanalytic journey of 'de-repression' and the Buddhist spiritual quest for enlightenment. Fromm pointed out that many of Freud's criticisms of religion, such as the infantile reliance on a father figure, do not apply to Buddhism, with its insistence that a practitioner see the truth for themselves and be not dependent on any other.<sup>xlv</sup> This is not to say that relationship with a mentor is not important in Buddhism. It is just that the relationship must mature beyond simple dependence if one is to truly progress. In the Buddhist relationship between student and teacher, and in the therapeutic relationship between therapist and client, there is an acceptance of a preliminary state of dependence, which is skilfully used to bring the student to a state of independence.

Fromm pointed to a wider notion of psychological wellbeing than the mere removal of symptoms. He saw both Buddhism and psychoanalysis as extensions of awareness to successively broader and deeper spheres of what has hitherto been unconscious, with the final goal of a totality of awareness, or enlightenment.

Similarly, Alan Watts in his often-quoted *Psychotherapy East and West* highlighted the common ground between Western psychiatry and Eastern philosophies.<sup>xlvi</sup> He concluded that in varying ways and degrees, both Eastern philosophies (particularly Buddhism) and Western psychotherapy engage the individual in experiments that vividly reveal the fallacy of an isolated ego and show the way to a healthier sense of identity.

## **Psychology discovers meditation**

While Fromm and Watts offered detailed and incisive reflections on Buddhism from a

Western psychological perspective, their works emerged in an era before the systematic cultivation of meditation was known to the West. During the 1960s and especially the 1970s, growing numbers of Western students went to Asia, not just to experience the bells and gongs of the mystical Orient, but to dedicate themselves to the serious practice of meditation in highly disciplined environments, determined to realise for themselves the states of enlightenment that they had read about in the writings of authors such as Watts, Fromm and Suzuki. In Japan, Thailand, Burma and the Tibetan diaspora in India, they gravitated to those aspects of Buddhism that were direct, contemplative and rational – in other words, those aspects of Buddhism that were most like psychotherapy.

Popular forms of Buddhist practice for Westerners include Burmese *vipassana*, the natural approach to meditation of the Thai forest Ajahns, the equanimous 'just sitting' of Japanese *zazen*, or the Tibetan *mahamudra* with its six points of advice: don't recall, don't imagine, don't think, don't examine, don't control, rest.

While all of these practices are deeply based on ancient Buddhist teachings, emphasising the fundamental qualities of mindful awareness, the forms that they take and the manner in which they are taught are distinctively modern. The forms of Buddhism that we encounter have been shaped by the forces of history, and emerge from a specific post-colonial context. The meditation retreat, which was formerly known only among long-term monastic practitioners, emerged as the quintessential Western form of Buddhist practice: fast, intense, ambitious, and readily packagable into a franchise. A new generation of Western Buddhist teachers emerged, and the integration of Buddhist meditation with psychology became the norm.

In the 1970s, a promising psychologist, Daniel Goleman, who had been meditating



since his first years as a student, travelled to India where he encountered first-hand many of the world's great contemplative traditions. He compiled a comprehensive text covering the art and science of meditation from the world's great religions, titled, in direct homage to William James, *The Varieties of Meditative Experience*.<sup>xlvii</sup> The second half of the book deals mainly with Buddhist meditation. He described the Abhidhamma as an Eastern psychology, following the lead of the pioneering Indologists and subsequent generations of modernist Buddhists. In 1996, Goleman's paradigm-shifting *Emotional Intelligence*, drawing from his years of experience and study of Buddhist meditation, introduced a new era in how human intelligence was conceived.<sup>xlviii</sup>

Goleman has deepened his integration of Buddhist ideas through the 'Mind and Life' series of dialogues held with the Dalai Lama since 1987. In these meetings, the Dalai Lama has met with select groups of scientists to discuss bridges and interfaces between biology, cognitive science, neuroscience, psychology and philosophy—the disciplines of most immediate relevance to Buddhism. The third Mind and Life Conference between Buddhist teachers and Western scholars in 1990 concentrated on the question of how our mind could heal our body. These discussions were later published in the book *Healing Emotions: Conversations with the Dalai Lama on Mindfulness, Emotions, and Health*.<sup>xlix</sup> Following the tragedy of September 11 in 2001, the Mind and Life Institute published another book entitled *Destructive Emotions: How Can We Overcome Them? A Scientific Dialogue with the Dalai Lama*, exploring why seemingly rational, intelligent people commit acts of cruelty and violence, and examining the root causes of destructive behaviour.<sup>l</sup>

Perhaps the most direct application of Buddhist practice within conventional psychotherapy has been Jon Kabat-Zinn's mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR). A student of the Korean Seon (Zen) master Seung Sun, and founder of the Cambridge Zen

Center, Kabat-Zinn developed the MBSR program at the University of Massachusetts Medical Centre from 1979. He emphasises mindfulness as a sustained, nonjudgmental awareness of all contents of the mind. The program is consciously targeted for a non-religious audience and aims to reduce stress and enhance coping mechanisms. Kabat-Zinn's approach is described in his best-selling *Full Catastrophe Living*.<sup>ii</sup>

MBSR uses a group format, typically eight weekly, two-and-a-half-hour sessions. Homework includes 45 minutes of meditation per day, six days per week. The main practice is sitting meditation and mindful yoga. The program also includes a body scan meditation during which clients lie down and observe sensations throughout the body. As taught in Satipatthana Sutta (Establishments of Mindfulness), mindfulness is extended throughout the whole day, whether walking, standing, or eating. So far, an initial 12,000 clients have been studied over two years. During the program, the physical and psychological symptoms are reduced by approximately 40%. During a four-year follow up the improvements were maintained and 93% of the clients were still following part of the program.<sup>iii</sup>

These impressive results have encouraged other clinicians to include mindfulness training in their therapeutic armamentarium. Mindfulness meditation is now used to assist in a variety of medical conditions, including panic attacks, anxiety, depression and chronic pain. Mindfulness-based practices are taught to medical students early in their career to help them in their stressful occupation as well as to initiate them to the usefulness of meditation for their clients. Mindfulness meditation is firmly ensconced as an evidence-based scientific technique that can be applied to an increasing array of physical and psychological illnesses.

A number of other seminal works have influenced the integration of psychoanalysis,

psychotherapy and Buddhism. In 1993, Jack Kornfield's *A Path with Heart* – a guidebook dedicated to his Buddhist teachers from Tibet, Thailand, India and Burma – showed with humour and insight a way for Westerners to practice the universal teachings of Buddhism.<sup>liii</sup>

In 1996, New York psychoanalyst Jeffrey Rubin's *Psychotherapy and Buddhism – Towards an Integration* argued that psychoanalysis and Buddhism can be integrated so that the unique strengths and emancipatory potential of both can be realised.<sup>liv</sup>

A comprehensive understanding of mindfulness and its contemporary clinical applications is offered in *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy* (2005), written and edited by Christopher Germer and colleagues. This is essential for anyone interested in meditation and other scientifically grounded Buddhist approaches to augmenting psychotherapy.<sup>lv</sup>

Following the success of MBSR, several alternative therapies have been developed to integrate the Buddhist practice of mindfulness in the therapeutic environment.

Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) was developed by Segal and associates to prevent relapse of chronic depression.<sup>lvi</sup> It is a manualised treatment that teaches the mindfulness practices of MBSR, without the yoga. The 'three-minute breathing space' is taught as a core skill. The mindfulness aspect in MBCT is learning to see that 'thoughts are not facts' and that we can let them come and go, rather than trying to argue them out of existence, as we might do in traditional cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT).

Dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT) was conceived by Marsha Linehan to help clients with borderline personality disorder who have difficulty regulating emotions.<sup>lvii</sup> Mindfulness skills in DBT are considered core skills – they are taught over two or three group sessions and are derived from the Zen tradition and the practices of Thich Nhat Hanh.<sup>lviii</sup> They include counting the breath, adopting a serene, half-smile, focusing awareness on present activity,

labelling feelings, letting thoughts slip in and out, practising nonjudgment, doing one thing at a time, practising radical acceptance of feelings, and imagining that the mind is like a big sky through which thoughts and feelings pass like clouds. DBT focuses on helping clients improve their interpersonal relationships.

Hakomi is a body-centred psychotherapy formulated by Ron Kurtz.<sup>lix</sup> Its basic method is to create a relationship that allows the client to establish mindfulness, evoke experiences in that mindful state, and process the experiences evoked. First, the therapist creates a safe, healing relationship in order to enable mindfulness. The therapist and client then use mindfulness to enhance sensitivity. This sensitivity is needed in order to go deep, to evoke experiences of core emotional attitudes and beliefs. In processing, the therapist uses the experiences evoked to help the client to understand and change. Core material is not accessible through the intellect but through mindfulness and education.

Shoma Morita (1874-1938) was the founder of Morita Therapy, a treatment used in Japan that borrows heavily from Zen. According to Morita, clients' problems resulted from their being captives of their own 'subjectivity' and egocentricity. He drew on Zen to form his unique therapeutic approach, emphasising the mindful acceptance of and effective response to sufferings and difficulties, rather than the mere relief of symptoms.

Core process psychotherapy was founded by Maura Sills.<sup>lx</sup> Core process training is very much founded on the transformative nature of awareness. The Buddhist psychotherapist is engaged with and is available to the client. Core process psychotherapy includes fundamental Buddhist principles of interdependency and the three factors of existence – the unsatisfactoriness of life, impermanence, and the illusory nature of self. The core process Buddhist psychotherapist directly offers to journey with the client through their

psychological, developmental and spiritual experience. The therapist's compassion is emphasised as the most needed quality for this kind of work. This form of psychotherapy is based on the transformative power of the therapeutic relationship. Each therapeutic session is a practice, in the sense of a Buddhist practice, in the relationship between client and therapist.

## **Processes involved in integrating Buddhism and psychotherapy**

An integration of Eastern spiritual tradition and Western psychology and therapeutics is no simple matter. In the beginning, it may involve little more than introducing a therapeutic technique of mindfulness. As engagement deepens, one often finds that there are unexpected challenges in beliefs, values and life choices.

While Western psychology, for example, usually assumes we have a single lifespan, during which we find both the causes and the solutions for our problems, the Buddhist conception of life is as an continuously recurring cycle (*samsara*) until the end of rebirth in nirvana. There are obviously practical implications in such differing world views: is neurosis caused by childhood trauma or by karma in past lives? Or by both?

Buddhism never insists that one must dogmatically accept all the tenets of Buddhist philosophy, even if such a thing were possible. It is normal for people who are exploring new ways of being to gradually open up and question their background and beliefs. This happens in idiosyncratic and often irrational ways, and we need to be sensitive to the differing responses of individuals.

For some, an understanding of rebirth helps them to put their issues in perspective,

and to realise a hitherto-unsuspected depth of connection with all other sentient beings. For others, it appears simply as a hangover of animistic superstitions, and reminds them unpleasantly of the dogmatic insistence on unprovable 'truths' that they associate with 'religion'. A therapist should therefore be cautious before introducing any controversial ideas; some therapists prefer to wait for their clients to raise them.

While the extent to which Buddhist ideas should be introduced in therapy is a contextual and individual choice, there remains a breadth to the Buddhist vision that is sometimes lacking in psychology, with its focus on 'me and my problems'. Instead of living in the narrow confines of the psychological health of the individual or even a group of individuals, the Buddhist view of dependent arising invites us to embrace with compassion all sentient beings as part of our living environment. A therapist can encourage a client to move towards such a broader vision of life, whether or not this is explicitly associated with any religious viewpoint.

Indeed, the introduction of Buddhist (or other) doctrines is a matter of secondary importance in the process of healing. Of far greater significance is the mindful, calm presence of the therapist. Buddhist psychotherapists lead mindful lives as much as possible and practise meditation regularly, becoming centred and peaceful healers who naturally improve in their therapeutic capacity, healing themselves as they bring healing to others. The emergence of deeper compassion and wider loving kindness communicates itself to their clients with no special effort or technique required.

Not all the adaptations to Buddhism are matters of such profundity. There are also the outward behaviours, such as practices and rituals adopted as one integrates the two traditions. Learning the humility of bowing, or the grace of including a sacred shrine in one's

home can be a manifestation of a genuine spiritual shift. Many people adopt these forms quite naturally, but for some, particularly if they come from a religiously troubled background, they may be a great challenge, even an obstacle to their Buddhist path. It is of course a delicate matter for the therapist to recommend such things, or to display their Buddhist inclinations too overtly. But Buddha images have long graced the therapist's room; Freud had several in his office.

## **The best of both worlds**

For psychotherapists, the 'self' is a discrete entity. Western psychology has always emphasised the individual, and individuation is seen as part of maturing into a person who has fully realised their potential. For the seriously mentally ill, therapy repairs, rebuilds and strengthens the sense of self so that the individual can independently function in life. While conventional therapies aim for no more than merely removing symptoms, some developmental theorists and therapists have dealt with spiritual aspects in their writings.<sup>lxi</sup> In our opinion, however, this is all too little and too late in their careers.

Buddhist development goes beyond developing a strong and healthy sense of self, to seeing the very notion of a self as illusory and insubstantial. To be awakened is to realise that we have constructed a changeless self out of our ever-changing thoughts, feelings and sense-perceptions. Such a deep level of insight results in a freedom from attachment to a self of any sort.

These two perspectives are not contradictory, as the enlightened sage (*arahant*) in Buddhism is also said to have 'fully developed self' (*bhavitatta*).<sup>lxii</sup> To quote Jack Engler, 'we have to be a somebody before we can be a nobody'.<sup>lxiii</sup> The emotional and cognitive health

that is meant when Western therapies speak of the self is intrinsic to all Buddhist practice, even though the terminology may differ. Indeed, the Buddhist scriptures acknowledge that it can be traumatic and even dangerous to deconstruct the illusion of self when there is insufficient maturity and integration.<sup>lxiv</sup>

The strength of Western psychology lies in its developmental theories of mind, character and personality. It has described and categorised a whole range of psychological disorders, with specially-designed treatments for specific conditions. While this diversity is a tremendous resource, it remains the fact that large-scale reviews of research papers indicate that the efficacy of therapy depends largely on the client and secondly on the therapist, while the therapeutic modality itself has the least effect on outcomes.

Spiritual development, however, does not have to wait for psychological development. Both can occur simultaneously and, to some degree, independently. Our intelligence and emotional quotients grow alongside our spiritual quotient, if we can speak of such a thing. Even some young children have a spiritual wisdom beyond their years, a fact that can make sense in view of the Buddhist belief in rebirth. However, with age, the dissatisfactions inherent in life grow clearer, and spiritual interest grows as death comes closer.

The skills offered by the psychotherapies combined with the practical teachings of the Buddha, in particular the practice of mindfulness and loving kindness meditation, allow us to move beyond mere removal of symptoms. We can do better. We can begin to envisage the possibility of genuine mental health; not just getting by with 'ordinary neurosis', but living a truly abundant and fulfilled life.

We have within us the thirst to experience deeper and deeper levels of consciousness. Meditation is the key to a genuine, direct and intentional expansion of consciousness. When



we take responsibility for the growth of our own awareness, many things become possible that were formerly considered as dreams.

Jung said that 'all religions are therapies for the sorrows and disorders of the soul'.<sup>lxv</sup> Psychotherapy brings about a redistribution of psychic energies, of recognising and living with our symptoms, whereas religion gives us our proper place in the order of the universe. The Buddha said that if a sincere person were to practice his teaching, that person would abandon those things that lead to suffering, and 'those things that lead to purification will flourish, until one can realise for themselves here and now, with one's own insight, the fullness and abundance of wisdom.'<sup>lxvi</sup> In the Buddha's path, one is never a victim, never trapped in the past. Though our lot may be suffering and trials, it is in our response that we find our true measure.

Mind is the forerunner of all things

Mind is their chief, they are made by mind.

If one acts with a clear mind

Happiness will follow, like a shadow that never leaves.

(Dhammapada, verse 2).

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<sup>i</sup> Epstein M. *Thoughts without a Thinker: Psychotherapy from a Buddhist Perspective*. New York: Basic Books, 1995.

<sup>ii</sup> Freud S. *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. New York: WW Norton & Company, 1933.

<sup>iii</sup> Jung CG. *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*. London: Routledge, 2001: 234. (First published 1933.)

<sup>iv</sup> James W. *Psychology, Briefer Course. The Works of William James*. (Abridged edition of *Principles of Psychology*.) Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984: 139-158.

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<sup>v</sup> Sampasadaniya Sutta, Dagma Nikhya 28.7. Pali is the canonical language of Theravada Buddhism. Some Buddhist technical terms in this book are given in Pali, others in Sanskrit. A full list is provided in the Glossary.

<sup>vi</sup> Scott D. William James and Buddhism: American Pragmatism and the Orient. *Religion* 2000; 30(4): 333-352.

<sup>vii</sup> James W. *Varieties of Religious Experience*. London, Bombay: Longmans, Green, & Co, 1902: 181.

<sup>viii</sup> Anagarika Dharmapala was one of the foremost figures in establishing Buddhist modernism, especially with the revival of Buddhism in Sri Lanka and India. Despite his robes, he was, as his title suggests, a 'homeless one', a dedicated lay ascetic, rather than an ordained monk. This encounter is said to have taken place between 1902 and 1904, after the Parliament of World Religions at which Dharmapala made a great impression, and a few years before James's retirement.

<sup>ix</sup> The source of this anecdote is hard to pin down. It was published in Maha Sthavira Sangharakshita's *Anagarika Dharmapala: A Biographical Sketch*, in the Diamond Jubilee Souvenir of the Maha Bodhi Society in 1952. The essay was later reprinted as part of Sangharakshita's *Flame in Darkness: the Life and Sayings of Anagarika Dharmapala*. India: Tiratana Grantha Mala, 1980 (<http://www.sangharakshita.org/books/Flame%20in%20Darkness.pdf>). In its acknowledgements, the latter work attributes the historical details of Dharmapala's life to materials including Dharmapala's personal diaries, supplied by Shri Valisinha, the then General Secretary of the Maha Bodhi Society. Presumably this was Sangharakshita's source for the anecdote, although he is not clear on this point; his essay reads as hagiography rather than historical account. Dharmapala set up the Maha Bodhi Society as part of his program to reinvigorate Buddhism in India and Sri Lanka. His aim of freeing Buddhists from the Western oppressor would have been well served by such an anecdote, although we are not aware of whether he himself ever published the story, or whether it appeared in print at all before Sangharakshita's account. Despite its dubious origin, it has been frequently requoted, notably in Fields R. *How the Swans Came to the Lake: A Narrative History of Buddhism in America*. Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala, 1981: 135.

<sup>x</sup> Rhys Davids CAF (trans). *Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics*. Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1900: xvi-xvii.

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<sup>xi</sup> Rhys Davids TW (trans). *Dialogues of the Buddha*. Vol 2. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910: 61, note 2. Dependent origination is the Buddha's famous system of 12 links that show how craving and attachments generate suffering in the round of endless rebirths.

<sup>xii</sup> Rhys Davids TW (trans). *Buddhist Suttas*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1881: 107. Rhys Davids's justification for his rendering is as follows: 'sati is literally "memory", but is used with reference to the constantly repeated phrase "mindful and thoughtful" (*sato sampajano*); and means that activity of mind and constant presence of mind which is one of the duties most frequently inculcated on the good Buddhist. Gogerly's rendering of the term [as "meditation"] should have been reserved for the last division (*samma-samadhi*), that prolonged meditation on the deep mysteries of life'. In these remarks we can hear Rhys Davids struggling to both understand and express in English idiom these ideas that were so fundamental to Buddhist praxis, without the benefit of personal experience of meditation.

<sup>xiii</sup> Rhys Davids TW. The foundation of the kingdom of righteousness (translation of the Dhamma Kakka Ppavattana Sutta). In: *Buddhist Sutras*. Vol 2. Sacred Books of the East. Oxford: Clarendon, 1881; reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980: introduction. Quoted and discussed in: Snodgrass J. Defining Modern Buddhism: Mr and Mrs Rhys Davids and the Pali Text Society. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 2007: 27: 192.

<sup>xiv</sup> Colonel Henry Steel Olcott and Madame Helena Blavatsky were European aristocrats and prominent members of the Theosophical Society. They became the first European Buddhists in modern times when they publicly 'converted' to Buddhism by taking the three refuges in Sri Lanka on 25 May 1880. There were, however, Western Buddhists in ancient times; one of the prominent leaders of the Sangha in the time of King Ashoka (c. 200 BCE\*\*\*does this refer to Before Common Era and is it consistent with footnote xxvii below, where the term CE is used\*\*\*), and probable founder of the Dharmaguptaka school, was known as 'Greek Dhammarakkhita'.

<sup>xv</sup> Quoted in Dhammananda KS. *Buddhism in the Eyes of Intellectuals*. Kuala Lumpur: Buddhist Missionary Library, 1992 (<http://enlight.lib.ntu.edu.tw/FULLTEXT/JR-AN/an140841.pdf>). This quote is widely repeated, but no source is given. While the statement does sound like Rhys Davids, it has not yet been traced in any of his (voluminous) writings on Buddhism.

<sup>xvi</sup> Freud S, Breuer J. *Studies on Hysteria*. Standard Edition. Vol 2. New York: Basic Books, 1895: 305.

<sup>xvii</sup> Various attributed to Hippocrates, Edward Livingston Trudeau, or that most prolific of

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writers, anonymous.

<sup>xviii</sup> Freud S. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. London, Vienna: International Psycho-analytical, 1922. Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (6.20) spoke of the 'the antithesis between the life and death instincts'. In the same work he refers to the death instinct as 'the Nirvana principle'. (6.22.) Freud and others equated nirvana with annihilation, but the fact that, for the Buddha, the desire for annihilation (*vibhavatanha*) is one of the basic causes of suffering should be enough to dispel this idea.

<sup>xix</sup> Sanskrit, nirvana; Pali, nibbana.

<sup>xx</sup> This is a stock passage, found for example in *Samannaphala Sutta*, DN 2.43.

<sup>xxi</sup> This is covered in *sanghadisesa 4* of the monastic code (Pali Vinaya 4.131-134). A monk seeking sexual favours says to a lady, 'This kind of service is the highest form of devotion to a virtuous, refined spiritual person such as myself.'

<sup>xxii</sup> *Anguttara Nikaya* 3.35.

<sup>xxiii</sup> AN 5.177.

<sup>xxiv</sup> For a detailed study, see Sujato B. *A History of Mindfulness*. Santipada, 2012.

<sup>xxv</sup> The Pali term is *samma samadhi*, which is more commonly translated as 'right concentration'. However, to 'concentrate' is to *make* oneself pay attention to something. *Samadhi*, on the other hand, refers to a profound centering of the mind in oneness and stillness. It arises from contentment and bliss, not from forcing attention on to an object. For a lucid practical explanation of *samadhi* and how to attain it, see Ajahn Brahm. *Mindfulness, Bliss, and Beyond: A Meditator's Handbook*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2006.

<sup>xxvi</sup> The most systematic project to integrate Western psychology with advanced stages of meditative consciousness is the integral psychology of Ken Wilber.

<sup>xxvii</sup> See Sujato B. What the Buddha *Really* Taught. (<http://santifm.org/santipada/2010/what-the-buddha-really-taught>). These collections were compiled by the early Buddhist schools based on the shared tradition of oral teachings stemming from the Buddha's time. The Chinese Agama collections are translations made mostly around 400-450 CE in China based on texts brought by pilgrims from India. A comprehensive database of Suttas in all languages, including modern translations, is at <http://suttacentral.net>. The best translations of the Pali Suttas are the Wisdom Publications editions, especially those of Bhikkhu Bodhi. Many translations (of varying

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quality) are online at [www.accesstoinsight.org](http://www.accesstoinsight.org). Very few of the Suttas have been translated from Chinese into English.

<sup>xxviii</sup> See Analayo B. *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima-nikaya*. (Dharma Drum Buddhist College Research Series.) Taipei: Dharma Drum Publishing Corporation, 2011 (2 vols).

<sup>xxix</sup> The modern school of Theravada claims to be identical with the original teachings of the historical Buddha, but as practised it includes many later developments. The historical religion as founded by the Buddha and practised in the years following his passing is usually known simply as 'early Buddhism'. Note that these early Suttas are quite different from the Mahayana Sutras. While the Mahayana Sutras are traditionally believed to stem from the Buddha, modern scholars are unanimous in ascribing them to a later period. The earliest Mahayana Sutras were composed some 500 years after the Buddha's passing away, although the teachings of the early Suttas still underlie them.

<sup>xxx</sup> Potthapada Sutta, DN 9.11.

<sup>xxxi</sup> The epistemology of early Buddhism was studied in Jayatilleke KN. *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1963.

<sup>xxxii</sup> See, for example, Samyutta Nikaya 12.33.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> While the most popular epistemological discourse is Kalama Sutta, AN 3.65, the theme recurs many times, for example, in Majjhima Nikaya 27 and 95.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Pali has a rich vocabulary of psychological terms for aspects of reflexive awareness. Some examples are *paccavekkhana*, which literally means 'looking back down', and is used in the sense of 'reviewing' one's posture, acts, mind states, and so on. *Anupassana* expresses another nuance: 'sustained watching'. Another common term is *patisankha*: literally, 'reflective evaluation'.

<sup>xxxv</sup> Fonagy P, Gergely G, Jurist EL, Target M. *Affect Regulation, Mentalization and the Development of the Self*. New York: Other Press, 2002. Also see Fonagy P. *Attachment Theory and Psychoanalysis*. New York: Other Press, 2001.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Pali Vinaya 2.286.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> For example, Therigatha 112-116. Several such accounts are found in the Pali Theragatha and Therigatha, which are early collections of inspired poetry from awakened monks and nuns. Norman KR (trans.) *Elders' Verses*. Bristol: Pali Text Society, 1971 (2 vols).

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xxxviii Therigatha 77-81.

xxxix The poems of Awakening of Buddhist nuns are recorded in the Pali *Therigatha*. Their spiritual attainments are recorded in AN 1.235-1.247.

xl Mahaparinibbana Sutta, DN 16.5.1.

xli Sanskrit, *vipasyana*; Pali, *vipassana*; literally, 'clear seeing' or 'discernment'. Sometimes the alternative *vidarsana* is found. In the Suttas, *vipassana* refers to the understanding of impermanence that arises through meditation. In modern times *vipassana* has come to refer to certain meditation methods and the schools based on those methods.

xlii For example, the Sutta on Yama the deathgod, AN 3.35.

xliii See discussion and survey in Quli NE. Western Self, Asian Other: Modernity, Authenticity, and Nostalgia for 'Tradition' in Buddhist Studies. *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 2009; 16: 1-38.

xliv Fromm E. *Psychoanalysis and Zen Buddhism*. London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1986. Originally published in: Suzuki DT, Fromm E, De Martino R. *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1960.

xlv For example, Kaccanagotta Sutta, SN 12.15.

xlvi Watts A. *Psychotherapy East and West*. New York: Vintage Books, 1975 (originally published by Pantheon Books, 1961).

xlvii Goleman D. *The Meditative Mind: The Varieties of Meditative Experience*. Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher Incorporated, 1988. Most content was originally published as *The Varieties of Meditative Experience*. New York: Irvington Publishers, 1977.

xlviii Goleman D. *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. New York: Bantam Books, 1996.

xlix Goleman D (ed). *Healing Emotions: Conversations with the Dalai Lama on Mindfulness, Emotions, and Health*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1997.

l Goleman D. *Destructive Emotions: How Can We Overcome Them? A Scientific Dialogue with the Dalai Lama*. New York: Bantam Dell, 2003.

li Kabat-Zinn J. *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain and Illness*. New York: Dell, 1990.

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- <sup>lii</sup> Miller J, Fletcher K, Kabat-Zinn J. Three-year Follow-up and Clinical Implications of a Mindfulness Meditation-Based Stress Reduction Intervention in the Treatment of Anxiety disorders. *Mind/Body Medicine* 1997; 2: 101-109.
- <sup>liii</sup> Kornfield J. *A Path with Heart: A Guide Through the Perils and Promises of Spiritual Life*. New York: Bantam Books, 1993.
- <sup>liv</sup> Rubin JB. *Psychotherapy and Buddhism – Towards an Integration*. New York: Plenum Press, 1996.
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- <sup>lx</sup> Sills M. Licking honey from the razor’s edge. In: Watson G, Batchelor S, Clepton G (eds). *The Psychology of Awakening*. London: Rider Books, 1999.
- <sup>lxi</sup> Examples include Wilfred Bion, Abraham Maslow, Carl Jung and Ken Wilber.
- <sup>lxii</sup> For example, Sutta Nipata, verse 325, AN 7.29.
- <sup>lxiii</sup> Engler qualified and discussed this idea in an interview for EnlightenNext magazine, Spring–Summer 2000 (<http://www.enlightennext.org/magazine/j17/engler.asp?page=2>). The Thai meditation master Ajahn Lee Dhammadharo is reported to have said, ‘To know impermanence, you must first know permanence; to know suffering you must first know happiness; and to know not-self you must first know the self’.
- <sup>lxiv</sup> For example, Alaggadupama Sutta, MN 22.20.
- <sup>lxv</sup> Jung CG. *Alchemical Studies*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, Bollingen Series, 1967: 48.

