

MIND BRAKES

THE SEASONAL NEWSLETTER FOR BUDDHISTS ON THE INSIDE

OCT. 2021, ISSUE 1



THE MIND NEEDS BRAKES!

BY ANNA CARMODY

We have to stop the endless chatter.

We are always engaging in conversations about this and that. About whether we like it or not, whether it's the same as last time. Is it good enough? Are we good enough?

All this chatter distracts us from what is really going on. This is called the gross mind. It blocks our own good sense. It blocks our intuition and the essential goodness of the mind. The mind knows what to do and what is right. We have to learn to trust this. All the stuff on the gross mind is changeable and in fact removable. We have limitless potential.

Put a brake on the chatter and gain access to this potential. We are better than we think.

OTHER GREAT READS INSIDE:

EMOTIONAL DETOX

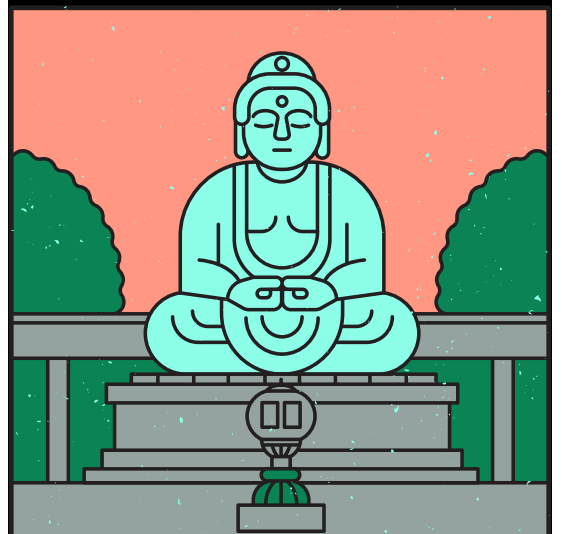
MEDITATION TIPS

WHAT IS A STUPA?

HOW TO MEDITATE THIS
SUMMER

DORJE DHENPA RINPOCHE

MUCH MORE



WOW!

Emotional Detox

BY DANIEL TROYAK

We should know when our emotions have had enough.

Too often we find ourselves in situations where emotions are off the scale and we say and do things we later regret. We should have a clearly defined line in the sand. And the person to never cross that line is you.

If you are in the presence of someone who you find annoying and the annoyance is too much – if you find the person so repulsive that you cannot be in their presence, it might be better to exit.

It takes courage to look at yourself, and to form a habit of assessing your emotional state and then taking responsibility for it.

You should know yourself.

We expect and demand that everyone will make us happy. And when they don't, our emotions go into overdrive and we behave badly.

Managing emotions by knowing what triggers you is important. If you are set off by loud noises, it makes no sense to sit by a highway. Doing so harms your wellbeing and happiness. Knowing yourself means you avoid the stuff you can't handle and then reflect on why it triggers you so much.

Imagine if we use that approach in our relationships!

To be happy, the important thing is to try to promote the positive and useful aspects in each of us and to try to reduce the negative. Positive acts always bring us inner strength.

We need to reinterpret the way we look at the world and this includes the people who trigger us. The way we do this is to see every person that is an obstacle to our happiness as our teacher. By now you are scratching your head, but read on...

When someone triggers emotions that you can't stand you should first remember, that person is teaching me something about myself. Something I didn't know, something I may not want to know and probably something I don't want to experience.

Continued on the next page.



Vajrasattva is the purifier of negative actions

EMOTIONAL DETOX:

WE SHOULD NEVER CROSS THE
EMOTIONAL LINE

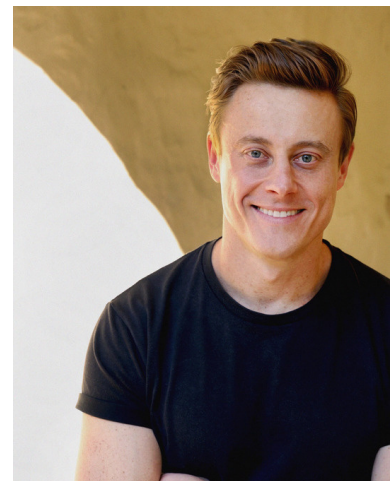
IT TAKES COURAGE TO LOOK AT
YOURSELF

TRIGGERED EMOTIONS ARE AN
OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

WE ARE EMOTIONAL BEINGS

OBSTACLES ARE VALUABLE

EVERYTHING IN LIFE IS THE
TEACHER



Chaplain Daniel Troyak

Emotional Detox

Seeing everyone as our teacher doesn't mean we subject ourselves to suffering, instead we recognise when to exit before it becomes unbearable. Only then can we reflect on what just happened and try to make sense of it.

We are emotional beings and we feel stuff. Emotions are an indicator and not a dictator. Emotions point to something that is unresolved and something that requires more attention. No one likes horrible feelings, so investigating them means we can let go of them.

Obstacles should be seen as a valuable opportunity to improve our mind. It's an opportunity to deepen our understanding of ourselves. With triggered experiences, we can strive to gradually become more aware; that is, we can develop genuine self-awareness and the awareness of others. As a result, our serenity and inner strength increases.

If we have the bold heartedness to transform everything in our life as the teacher, our life becomes the teaching, resulting in lasting happiness.

What Is a Stupa?

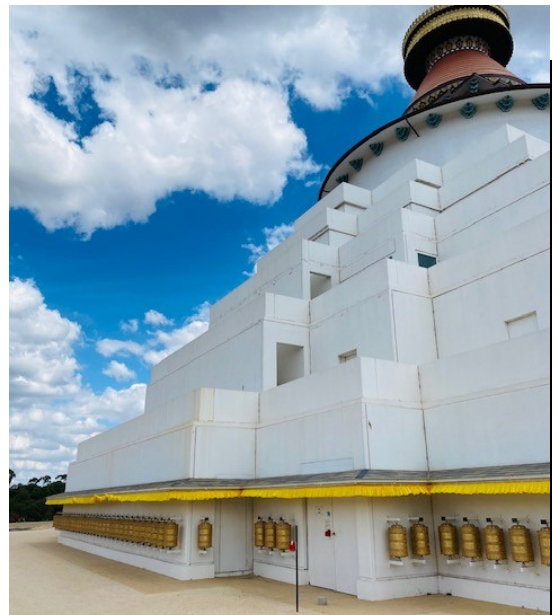
Learn the meaning behind these famous Buddhist monuments

Stupas are one of the most recognisable forms of Buddhist architecture, dotting the landscape in all Buddhist countries. Like Buddhist temples, their style differs from culture to culture, but the basic structure remains the same.

At its simplest, a stupa is a dirt burial mound faced with stone, often containing relics or religious objects and used as a place of meditation. The Great Stupa in Sanchi, India, is the earliest known stupa, dating back to the fourth century BCE. The largest stupa in the world is Borobudur in Indonesia.

There are five types of stupas: the relic stupa, containing the remains of the Buddha and his disciples; the object stupa, containing objects that belonged to the Buddha or his disciples; the commemorative stupa, marking an event in the Buddha's life; the symbolic stupa, representing aspects of Buddhist teachings; and the votive stupa, erected to make a dedication or to accumulate merit.

To build a stupa, transmissions from a qualified Buddhist teacher are necessary. When visiting a stupa, practitioners circumambulate it clockwise as a meditation practice, focusing on the endless cycle of rebirth (samsara) and the eightfold path that leads to freedom from suffering.



FAMOUS STUPAS:

GREAT STUPA OF UNIVERSAL
COMPASSION, BENDIGO

THE BOUDHANATH STUPA,
KATHMANDU,

THE PHRA PATHOMMACHEDI
STUPA OF THAILAND



THE GOOD HEART

By Anna Carmody

What does it feel like to know that people who are not in jail have been and are still subject to rules and restrictions they're not used to?

Did you wonder if they could cope?

What advice could you give them?

Were you able to help anyone outside?

Perhaps there is something you have learnt from your time inside.

What about the people you live with now?

The word heart comes from the French for courage. A good heart is useful anywhere. We all have one.

We can train and develop our good qualities. The Buddha taught how.

THE GOOD HEART

IN THIS CENTURY WE MUST
COMBINE A GOOD BRAIN WITH
A GOOD HEART

A KIND HEART AND
COMPASSION ARE THE REAL
SOURCES OF PEACE AND
HAPPINESS

WE MUST CARE FOR EACH
OTHER

WE MUST CARE FOR
OURSELVES

HELPING OTHERS IS A PRACTICE



Chaplain Anna Carmody and
Chaplain Daniel Troyak

LISTEN TO THE TEACHINGS

Furthermore, when you explain or hear the teachings, if your mind and the teachings remain separate, then whatever is explained will be inconsequential*. Hence, listen in such a way that you determine how these teachings apply to your mind. For example, when you want to find out whether or not there is some smudge, dirt, or whatever, on your face, you look in a mirror and then remove whatever is there. Similarly, when you listen to the teachings, your faults such as misconduct and attachment appear in the mirror of the teachings. At that time, you regret that your mind has become like this, and then you work to clear away those faults and establish good qualities. Hence you must train in the teachings.

Lama Tsong Kapa, Great Stages of the Path, Vol 1, p62

*Inconsequential means; characterised by a lack of sequence in thought, speech or action. Not following; irrelevant.

BUDDHIST CHAPLAINS IN NSW CORRECTIONS



Inmates in NSW Corrections can contact chaplains of many different traditions including Christian, Muslim and Hindu. There are 7 chaplains working in the Buddhist tradition. If you want to contact one, put it on an inmate request form.

All the different religious faiths, despite their philosophical differences, have a similar objective. Every religion emphasises human improvement, love, respect for others, sharing other peoples suffering. On these lines every religion has more or less the same viewpoint or goal.

Dalai Lama

MEET CHAPLAIN VENERABLE AILEEN

Can you tell me why you decided to become a Buddhist nun?

It didn't feel like a choice. I'd been following Buddhism for some time, had met monastics — I was interested in the idea. It was only when I let go of the idea that I became a nun.

I am hesitant about advising anyone to become a monastic. What was right for me may not suit someone else. You can be a good Buddhist, you can deepen your practice, without becoming a monastic. Becoming a monk or nun can be a fantasy, that your commitment will go deeper. In the West there are robes, but no place. No support. This is not always the case and I'm talking about Buddhism here, but usually you have to have your own means.

Do you have any advice you can offer?

You're talking about a prison system. We're all in the prison of our mind, trusting our own innate goodness. Negativities arise out of default states of mind. Don't be afraid of your own mind. It's okay to not be okay.

Who can we look to for inspiration?

There are many examples: His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Christian saints. They are awake beings, reflecting our own potential.

Anything else?

Develop awareness: the ability to stay present. We can trust the awareness that arises out of goodness and compassion.

We can strive to be authentic.



Venerable Aileen



HOW TO MEDITATE THIS SUMMER!

By Daniel Troyak

Here are five reasons to meditate:

1. To understand your suffering
2. Lower your stress
3. Connect better with others
4. Improve focus
5. Reduce brain chatter

1) **Take a seat**

Find a place to sit that feels calm and quiet to you.

2) **Set a time limit**

If you're just beginning, it can help to choose a short time, such as five or 10 minutes.

3) **Notice your body**

You can sit in a chair with your feet on the floor; you can sit loosely cross-legged. Just make sure you are stable and in a position you can stay in for a while.

4) **Feel your breath**

Follow the sensation of your breath as it goes in and as it goes out.

5) **Notice when your mind has wandered**

Inevitably, your attention will leave the breath and wander to other places. When you get around to noticing that your mind has wandered—in a few seconds, a minute, five minutes—simply return your attention to the breath.

6) **Be kind to your wandering mind**

Don't judge yourself or obsess over the content of the thoughts you find yourself lost in. Just come back.

7) **Close with kindness**

When you're ready, gently lift your gaze. (If your eyes are closed, open them.) Take a moment and notice any sounds in the environment. Notice how your body feels right now. Notice your thoughts and emotions.

That's it! That's the practice. You go away, you come back, and you try to do it as kindly as possible.



MEDITATION TIPS

By Daniel Troyak

His Eminence Avikrita Vajra Rinpoche of the Sakya lineage is one of the new generation of Tibetan Buddhism. He has taught Dharma and meditation to students all over the world.

Rinpoche is my guru and teacher. Having attended his teachings in India, Seattle, Indonesia and Nepal, he taught me the traditional Seven-Point Posture of Vairocana.

This is what Rinpoche said about meditation practice: *We try our best to maintain this posture when we do any sitting meditation.*

Step 1: Sit with the weight of the body spread evenly.

Step 2: Have your right hand over the left and thumbs joined, at the level of the abdomen

Step 3: The lower abdomen should be a little firm to support the upright posture. The upper abdomen is relaxed to allow free movement of tranquil breathing

Step 4: The spine must be totally upright and straight but not rigid. Maintain the back's natural contours.

Step 5: The chin is slightly tilted downwards, but not jutting the neck forward.

Step 6: Our eyes are best focused on the tip of the nose. the eyelids are only slightly open with a relaxed gaze that is not distracted by external objects

Step 7: We slightly curl our tongue to the rest on the palate, which moderates the flow of saliva without contracting the jaw muscles.

MEDITATION TIPS

MAKE IT A HABIT, PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

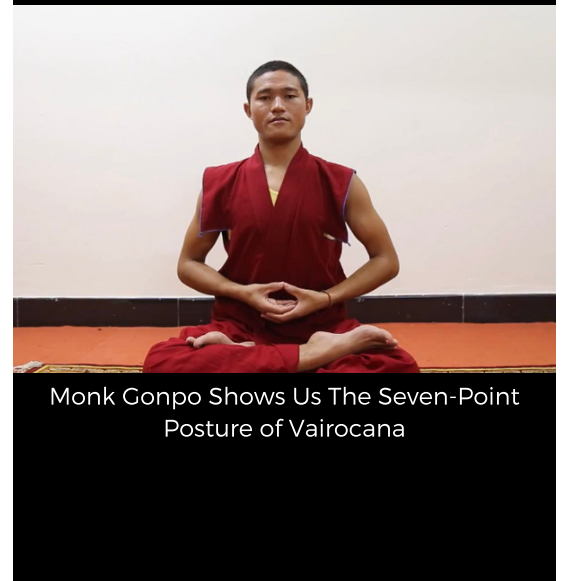
SHORT AND SWEET IN THE BEGINNING

MEDITATE WITH OTHERS

BREATHE NATURALLY

IF YOU GET SLEEPY, MORE FOCUS AND ATTENTION ON THE IN BREATH

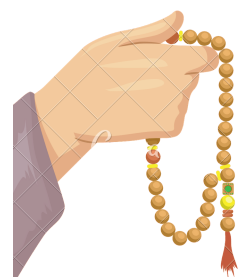
DON'T GIVE UP



HOW TO USE A MALA

The mala is for Buddhist practice. It is used to recite and count prayers, known as mantra.

1. Hold your mala with one hand.
2. Let it drape across your fingers so you can move it easily.
3. Then recite a mantra.
4. Move your fingers to the next bead, and repeat.
5. Finish at the guru bead to complete 108 prayers.



THIS IS MANTRA

HEALING SOUND

Literally *that which protects the mind*, a mantra is a series of Sanskrit syllables that evoke the energy of a particular buddha or bodhisattva. It works as a sacred sound that brings blessings to ourselves and others, and as a tool to transform our mind into one that is more compassionate and wise.

Try reciting these beautiful prayers before or after your meditation session.

1. The Shakyamuni Buddha Mantra

Om Muni Muni Mahamuni Shakyamuniye Svaha.

I invoke the Universal sound, Buddha nature and the wise one, wise one of the Shakyans, hail to thee!

This mantra pays respect to the Buddha himself. Siddhartha Gautama was the pure embodiment of Buddha nature, the recognition that enlightenment is attainable. By using the Shakyamuni mantra, Buddhists seek to encourage the development of their own Buddha nature.

2. The Medicine Buddha Mantra

Tayata Om Bekanze Bekanze Maha Bekanze Bekanze Radza Samudgate Soha.

This is pronounced:

Tie-ya-tar, om beck-and-zay beck-and-zay
ma-ha beck-and-zay beck-and-zay
run-zuh sum-oon-gut-eh
so-ha.

I now invoke the universal sound to release the pain of illness, release the pain and darkness of delusion, and to achieve supreme spiritual awakening. I offer this prayer to the Medicine Buddha.

This Buddhist mantra helps alleviate physical pains, encourage personal growth, and facilitate Enlightenment.

It is a common misconception that reciting mantras is an external and unnatural mental exercise, rather than an internal and spontaneous occurrence. Reciting a mantra, however, does not mean the mere vocal repetition of speech syllables. Many meditators know from experience that the act of reciting mantras transcends external sounds and words. It is more like listening to a subtle inner sound that has always inhabited our nervous system.

Lama Yeshe



THE 16 GUIDELINES FOR A HAPPY LIFE

The 16 Guidelines is a contemporary study of ethics from 7th century Tibet.

Everyone wants to be happy. You cannot do this without looking at the way you treat others. Harming others causes suffering, not only for the person you have harmed, but for yourself.

If you want to create the cause for happiness you have to train in how you treat yourself and others. This is essential.

The 16 Guidelines deal with such things as courage, inspiration, pleasure, kindness, financial integrity, balance, loyalty, respect, generosity and so much more.

Chaplain Anna Carmody specialises in teaching The 16 Guidelines For A Happy Life.

I can
& I will

WHY COMPASSION?

By Daniel Troyak

Deep listening is the kind of listening that can help relieve the suffering of another person. You can call it compassionate listening. You listen with only one purpose: to help him or her to empty his heart.

Thich Nhat Hanh

We can practice cultivating understanding, love, and compassion by looking deeply, first for ourselves and then for others. Once we love and take care of ourselves, we can be much more helpful to others.

In the Mahayana Buddhist traditions, compassion (*karuna*) is one of the primary qualities a practitioner should cultivate.

To love is first of all to accept ourselves as we actually are. That is why in loving kindness meditation, *metta*, *know thyself*, is the first practice of love. When we practice this we see the conditions that have caused us to be the way we are. This makes it easy for us to accept ourselves, including our suffering and our happiness.

Practitioners begin by imagining how they feel towards a loved one, then turning that love towards themselves. They then turn their attention to family and friends, after that, strangers and enemies. Finally they focus on love towards all beings.

This meditation can be difficult and sometimes leads to resistance. We are not used to this level of giving and receiving love. Practice makes perfect.

Try loving kindness meditation for yourself and for others.



YOUR LOCAL BUDDHIST CENTRE

VAJRAYANA INSTITUTE

Vajrayana institute offers authentic teachers and teachings in the tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.

The Institute is a non-profit that is affiliated with the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT), a grouping of over 150 meditation centres worldwide. FPMT was established in the 1970s by Lama Yeshe and the current spiritual director, Lama Zopa Rinpoche. Their teachings are in accordance with the philosophy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Regular classes and events include:

- Guided meditation for beginners and more experienced meditators.
- Half day workshops
- Special events and retreats

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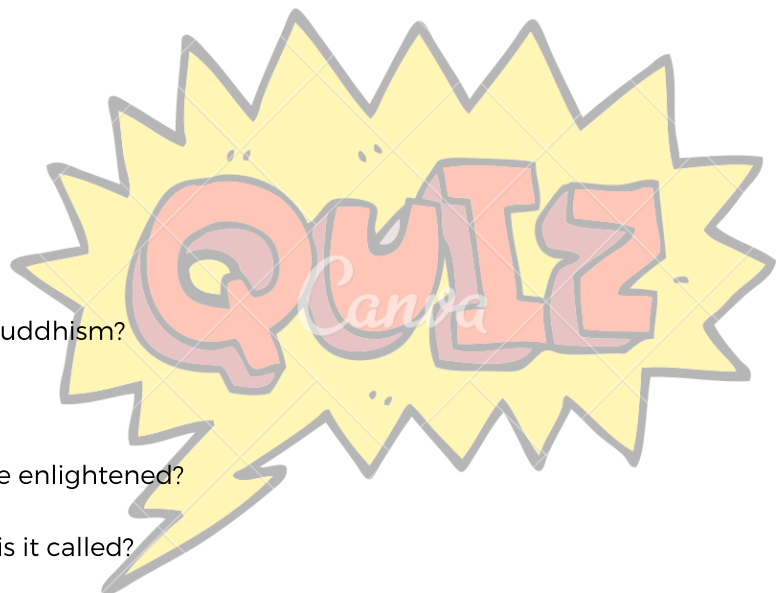
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DHARMA QUIZ

Answers on the last page

- Q1. Name the 3 major branches of Buddhism.
- Q2. Where was the Buddha born?
- Q3. The Dalai Lama is from what school of Tibetan Buddhism?
- Q4. Are all Buddhists vegetarian?
- Q5. What was the Buddha's name before he became enlightened?
- Q6. The Buddha gave a teaching on suffering. what is it called?



HIS EMINENCE DORJE DHENPA RINPOCHE

THE SAKYA MASTER

His Eminence Dorje Dhenpa Rinpoche, Tenzin Jampel Lungtok Namgyal, the current throneholder of the Dzongpa tradition of Sakya, was born in 1977 in India. Recognised as the reincarnation of the former throneholder he graduated from Sakya College in 1999 with both the Kachupa and Acharya degrees, equivalent to a Bachelor and Master of Arts. His Eminence then completed a year-long retreat.

In 2003 he was enthroned by His Holiness the Sakya Trinzin at the newly-built Gongkar Choede Monastery, the seat for Dzongpa in India. With the support of the abbot Khenpo Jampal Choddzin, His Eminence has taken full responsibility for the both the revival of the lineage and the running of the monastery. The monastery's sixty-one resident monks have all taken part in building the monastery.

The monks also built the winding road leading to the monastery deep in a forest, and the small Tibetan community of Khera Goan. Incredibly hard-working, they grow organic fruit and vegetables as well as acting as firefighters to put out the occasional, and unfortunate, forest fire.

The main focus of course is the study and practice of the rituals, philosophy and meditation that form the backbone of Buddhist monastic life. The time has come to fully revive the actual practice of Dzongpa and focus wholeheartedly on the education and training of younger monks. His Eminence's long term vision is to extend the capacity of Gongkar Choede and establish a school for the higher study of Tibetan Buddhism.

Like a small candle that burns very brightly, so this small monastery has developed so well.

His Eminence Luding Khenchen Rinpoche, head of the Ngorpa Branch of the Sakya tradition.

In that same spirit, His Eminence Dorje Dhenpa Rinpoche has begun to accept invitations to bring the blessings of the lineage abroad. May you have the merit to be graced by Rinpoche's presence and receive pure Dharma teachings from him.



DORJE DHENPA RINPOCHE

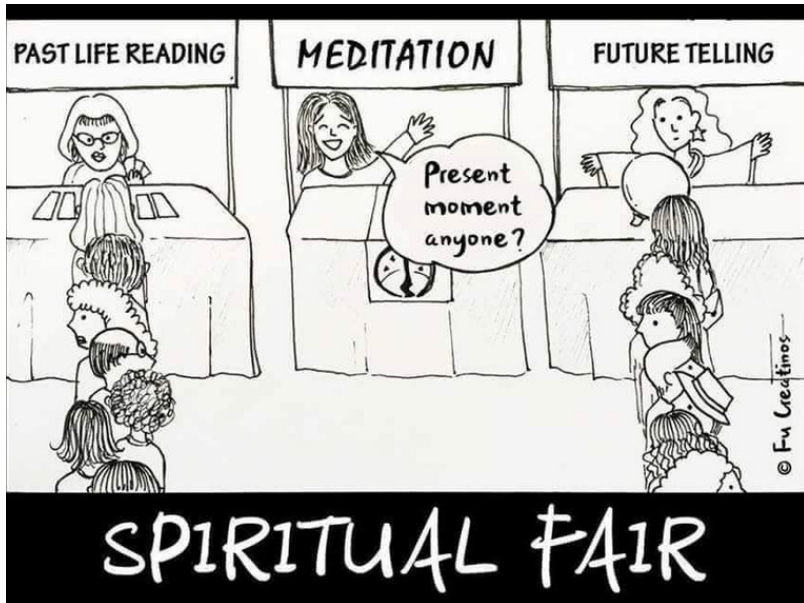
BORN IN INDIA IN 1977 MAKING
HIM 44 YEARS OLD

ENTHRONED IN 2003 BY H.H.
SAKYA TRIZEN

SAKYA MASTER OF RITUALS,
PHILOSOPHY AND MEDITATION

KIND, COMPASSIONATE, WISE,
SUPPORTIVE, LOVING AND
HILARIOUS

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THIS IS DHARMA

THE BUDDHA DHARMA IS THE TRUE SOURCE OF HAPPINESS FOR ALL SENTIENT BEINGS. ANYTHING TO DO WITH DHARMA SHOULD BE TREATED WITH CARE AND RESPECT.

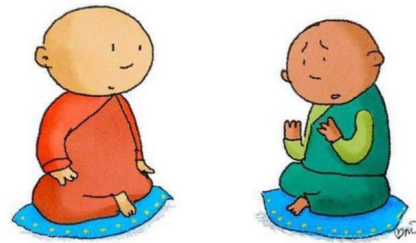
QUIZ ANSWERS

1. THERAVADA, MAHAYANA, VAJRAYANA
2. LUMBINI, NEPAL
3. GELUP
- 4 NO. IT'S A PERSONAL CHOICE
5. SIDDHARTHA GAUTAMA
6. THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS



Sentient beings are not the obstacle for our own Dharma practice. They are the field; they can help us to practice the Dharma teachings or Buddha's teachings.

H.H. the 42nd Sakya
Gonma Trizen



Listen to relieve suffering.

If you want to contribute short articles about your Buddhist journey, send your submissions to:

Internal Mail
Buddhist Chaplaincy
Long Bay Correction Centre

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