MaMa Charitable Foundation Symposium
“Buddhist Counselling - Instigating Insight into the Healing Process”
on 8 & 9 December 2018 at The University of Hong Kong

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(The schedule and the presentation topics are subject to change without prior notice.)
Lecture abstract and speakers’ biography

(arranged in the order of presentation)

Keynote speech

Mindfulness-based Pain Management & Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
— Professor Padmasiri de Silva

Abstract

Mindfulness is a non-judgmental, non-reactive and accepting attitude that helps us to look at pain in a detached way. There has been a radical transformation of the Western psychological tradition which has during modern times, accepted the Buddha’s perennial insight that the severity of human suffering depends largely on our attitude towards it. Our relationship to emotional pain is a key factor in how much we suffer. The latest wave of cognitive behaviour therapy (MBCT) understands that trying to directly change our thoughts is less effective than creating a wide, openhearted space for our experience—a less resistant, less avoidant relationship to our thoughts and feelings. MBCT says: ‘thoughts are not facts but thoughts’. The second strand is acceptance: curiosity, tolerance, willingness and the ability to embrace pain with friendship. Here what is emphasised is the danger of experiential avoidance—acceptance is not a heavy thing but an active vital embrace. Thirdly, the Buddhist perspective emphasises capacities like attention, compassion and empathy, befriending painful feelings with self-compassion. These three points lie at the heart of the Buddhist Satipatthana (the Buddhist charter for mindfulness practice). Contemplation of the mind does not involve active measures to oppose unwholesome states like anger or lust but receptively be aware of the state of the mind; be aware of states like subliminal/unconscious anger or deceptions where you hide your real feelings. A fourth point is not to consider anger/aversion as a negative emotion to be destroyed, but the Buddha advocates a hermeneutical role; in the arising and passing away of a feeling, see the law impermanence as impersonal process. Venerable Nyanaponika the German monk says with a little magic what is apparently negative may be transformed. In neurological terms we replace REACTIVITY with RESILLIENCE. Thus the Buddhist path and MBCT are twin paths to emotional healing. The monk says thus you develop positive qualities of patience and forgiveness to oneself.

Theory of Pain Management. Traditional neurophysiology was influenced by Cartesian body mind dualism: the body detects and perceives pathological bodily processes passively—they looked at the body and mind as separate entities. According to the current view pain is subjective and physical pain is invariably tied to our emotions. PURE PAIN IS NEVER DIRECTED AS AN ISOLATED SENSATION BUT IS ALWAYS ACCOMPANIED BY EMOTION. There is a difference between primary pain and secondary pain. Secondary pain is beyond mere physical...
pain and this second layer may be described as STRESS, as when we are physically stressed we add to the muscle spasms at the site of pain. When we become hyper-vigilant always looking for pain we sensitize the pain circuits of the brain, and mindfulness helps to reduce the emotional reactivity of chronic pain. The Buddha is in fact saying, rather than being driven solely by the desire to eliminate suffering, the wise person learns to change the relationship to suffering. The celebrated Sallaka Sutta says that the man who is reacting to pain is struck by two arrows, the physical and the emotional and the man who is not reacting is struck by only one arrow—the physical.

This presentation will also include the contributions of three icons of pain management: Jon Kabat-Zinn, Vidyamala Burch and Risa Kaparo. My new book is dedicated to these thee icons of pain management:


About the speaker

Padmasiri de Silva graduated from the University of Ceylon with a Honours Degree in Philosophy, and also obtained the M.A. & Ph.D in Comparative Philosophy (University of Hawaii). He was the Professor & Head of Philosophy & Psychology Department, University of Peradeniya (1980-89). Subsequently he was appointed Senior Teaching Fellow at NUS Singapore. He has also held visiting positions in the University of Pittsburgh and the ISLE program in USA and the University of Waikato in New Zealand. He also functioned as the coordinator of the IRC Program on “Environment, Ethics and Education” in Singapore, organising four international conferences and was nominated for the Green Leaf Award. Based on this experience he published, “Environmental Philosophy & Ethics in Buddhism” (Macmillan, 1998). He has been active in developing the field of Buddhist Psychology over the years and is the author of the books, An Introduction to Buddhist Psychology and Counselling (Macmillan-Palgrave, 2014). In 2006 he was awarded the Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Counselling and practiced as a professional counsellor at the Springvale community center. His most recent works include Pathways of Somatic Intelligence, published by Palgrave-Macmillan and Springer is due to be released by November 2016; Emotions and the Body in Buddhist Contemplative Practice and Mindfulness-Based Therapy, Palgrave Macmillan./Springer; (2017) Buddhist Psychology of Conflict Studies, Palgrave Macmillan/Springer -2018 January.
Invited presentations

Ontological Addiction Theory: A New Psychological Model of Human Functioning
— Professor Edo SHONIN

Abstract
Ontological addiction theory (OAT) is a novel metaphysical model of psychopathology and posits that human beings are prone to forming implausible beliefs concerning the way they think they exist, and that these beliefs can become addictive leading to functional impairments and mental illness. The theoretical underpinnings of OAT derive from the Buddhist philosophical perspective that all phenomena, including the self, do not manifest inherently or independently. This talk will outline the theoretical foundations of OAT along with supportive empirical evidence from the author’s studies evaluating non-attachment, emptiness, compassion, loving-kindness, and an intervention known as Meditation Awareness Training. The talk will also discuss how recent empirical findings and ancient Buddhist teachings collectively indicate that addiction to selfhood can be overcome by a treatment process involving phases of: (i) becoming aware of the imputed self, (ii) deconstructing the imputed self, and (iii) reconstructing a dynamic and non-dual self.

About the speaker
Dr Edo Shonin is a Chartered Psychologist and was a Buddhist monk for 30 years. He is Co-Founder of the Awake to Wisdom Centre for Meditation and Mindfulness Research, based in Italy. While welcoming diversity and respecting the obvious differences between Buddhist traditions, Edo believes that there are core practice and theoretical principles that apply to all authentic Buddhist traditions. Accordingly, he received monastic ordinations in different Buddhist schools, including the higher ordination within the Theravada Buddhist tradition. Edo sits on the editorial board for numerous academic journals including Mindfulness, Mindfulness and Compassion, and the International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction. He is internationally recognised as a leading authority in the research and practice of Buddhist meditation. Edo has over 100 academic publications relating to mindfulness and Buddhist meditation, including in some of the world’s leading refereed medical and psychology journals. Edo has published 3 books including two academic volumes published by Springer Publications: (i) Mindfulness and Buddhist-derived Approaches in Mental Health and Addiction, and (ii) The Buddhist Foundations of Mindfulness. Edo regularly receives invitations to give keynote speeches, lectures, retreats and workshops at a range of academic and non-academic venues all over the world.
Invited presentations

Mindfulness-based interventions for psychological suffering
— Professor Samuel Yeung-shan WONG

Abstract
Mindfulness-based interventions such as mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT), has become a mainstream psychological intervention for mental health problems. With accumulating evidence demonstrating its effectiveness for adults with recurrent depression and other mental health problems, the use of MBCT in mental health settings for treating a variety of mental health problems has expanded over the last few decades. The concept of “mindfulness” comes from Buddhist teaching although the 8-week mindfulness training itself is non-secular and does not mention or include any explicit Buddhist teaching. In this presentation, potential mechanisms from the scientific literature on how MBCT training may have improved mental well-being among people with mental health problems will be presented with similarities drawn between the aims of using MBCT to relieve human suffering (depression) when compared to the learning of Buddhism to achieve the “cessation of suffering”.

About the speaker
Professor Samuel Wong is Professor and Head, Division of Family Medicine and Primary Healthcare of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He is trained both as a family doctor as well as a public health doctor and has joined the Chinese University for 15 years. His research interests include evaluating and developing mental health interventions for common health problems in primary care, with a special interest in evaluating mindfulness-based interventions for common health problems including chronic pain, chronic stress, insomnia, generalized anxiety disorder, menopausal symptoms, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and mild depression in primary care.
Invited presentations

The Psychotherapeutic Applications of Buddhist Emptiness Principles
— Dr. William Van GORDON

Abstract
Wisdom-based Buddhist-derived practices (BDPs) are concerned with transmuting suffering by cultivating insight into the ultimate nature of both the self and reality. Arguably the most important wisdom-based BDP is emptiness (Sanskrit: śūnyatā) that implies that although phenomena are perceptible to the human mind, they do not intrinsically exist. Despite its significance in Buddhism, emptiness has received little empirical attention. Advancing scientific understanding of emptiness is important as it may yield novel insights not only into the nature of mind and reality, but also in terms of helping human beings realise more of their capacity for wisdom and wellbeing. This lecture will discuss insights from the author’s research relating to formulating a blueprint of emptiness based on a rigorous assessment of advanced Buddhist meditators’ experiences. The lecture will also discuss the author’s empirical research findings relating to integrating emptiness principles into psychotherapeutic interventions in a range of population settings.

About the speaker
Dr William Van Gordon is a Chartered Psychologist who lectures and conducts research in psychology at the University of Derby (UK). He is recognised as an international expert in the research and practice of Buddhist meditation. William sits on the editorial board for various academic journals, including Mindfulness. In addition to 3 books, William has 100+ academic publications relating to the scientific study of Buddhist meditation – including in journals such as the British Medical Journal, British Journal of General Practice, British Journal of Health Psychology, Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, Frontiers in Psychiatry, and Mindfulness. Prior to joining academia, William was a Buddhist monk for ten years and he has previously worked in senior management roles for Marconi Plc, PepsiCo International and Aldi Stores Ltd. William regularly travels all over the world to give keynote speeches, lectures and workshops on Buddhist meditation.
Invited presentations

Citta Psychotherapy: A Theoretical Orientation based on Early Buddhist Teachings
— Professor TIEN Liang & Dr. George K.C. LEE

Abstract
Psychotherapy, in its most ideal form, is culturally congruent. Cultural congruency, at the surface level, may include multicultural diversity sensitivity. At a systems level, cultural congruency may include awareness of client’s social context and those power and privilege dynamics between the psychotherapist and the client at play in the treatment room. At its deepest level, cultural congruence requires the use of a psychological theoretical orientation that is developed from within the culture of the client. For the 50% of the world populations who either live or have ancestry from Buddhist based cultures, there is no such psychological theoretical orientation.

There has been a proliferation of Mindfulness-based psychotherapeutic interventions. These are at the psychotherapeutic intervention level aimed at treatment of certain diagnostic categories, primarily depression and anxiety. While Buddhist based, these do not completely encamps Mainstream Buddhism nor are they framed in a theoretical orientation. Citta Psychotherapy translates the three characteristics of the phenomenon into the framework of a psychological theory that aims to help individuals to ‘see things as it exists’. These three philosophical givens are 1) temporality of all things [dependent origination/paccaya], 2) actions of body/speech/mind effects others, as other’s actions of body/speech/mind effects oneself [kamma], and 3) the mine/I/me, or the self, is constructed [or non-self/anatta]. Citta psychotherapy was developed for applying connections between psychology and Buddhism.

A small group of psychologists has used portions of Citta psychotherapy approach with good results in their own practice with those patients who had not previously responded to either CBT or psychodynamic theoretical orientation approaches. These psychologists have found that the organization of the material and the blending of the two distinct knowledge bases of the authors made Citta Psychotherapy congruent to Buddhism and to psychology, resulting in a unique theoretical orientation.

This presentation will introduce Citta Psychotherapy as a theoretical orientation through three components: (1) a basic introduction to the theoretical assumptions, (2) an overview of the treatment approach and techniques, and (3) a case demonstration to illustration the application of Citta psychotherapy.

About the speaker

Professor TIEN Liang
Dr. Tien is an Honorary Professor of the Centre of Buddhist Studies, The University of Hong Kong. She is a licensed psychologist at the Washington State and certified by American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP) with a specialty in Couples and Family. She served on the Washington State Psychological Association’s Ethics Committee as a member for 7 years and as chair of the committee for 3
years. She is the corresponding author of *Ethics for Psychologists: A Casebook Approach* which has been adopted as a professional ethics textbook for many doctoral programs in clinical psychology. She received her doctorate from the University of Denver and has engaged in study of Buddhism and her own active practice for the last 10 years.

**Dr. George K.C. Lee**

Dr. Kin Cheung (George) Lee is an honorary assistant professor in Buddhist counseling at The Centre of Buddhist Studies, The University of Hong Kong as well as a licensed clinical psychologist in the state of California (PSY28022). He received his Ph.D. and M.A. in Clinical Psychology from Alliant International University-Los Angeles, M.A. in Marriage and Family Therapy from the University of Southern California, and M.A. in Buddhist Studies from The University of Hong Kong. Dr. Lee has a number of publications on the areas of Buddhist mindfulness practices, application of Buddhist practices to psychotherapy, acculturation and family conflicts, and international student psychology. His current research interests include applied Buddhism for professional psychology, interpretation of Early Buddhist teachings for mental health professionals, and Buddhist counseling.
Invited presentations

The gift of grief and sorrow: Bringing wisdom and compassion to death and dying
— Professor Elizabeth LOBB

Abstract
Palliative care can be seen as compassionate care, which exemplifies the type of care that addresses the physical, spiritual, psychological and social pain and suffering of dying people and caregivers. It can teach us gratitude for what we have been given, even suffering.

In grief counselling, as in meditation, we attend with a calm mind. We cultivate metta, wishing peace and a sense of ease for the client, compassion, in the face of suffering and the acceptance of suffering, joy, in a way that the client is deeply valued and equanimity, a radiant calm that enables us to be fully present with the changing experiences of our clients.

Roshi Joan Halifax has said “when we move through the terrible transformation of the elements of loss and grief, we may discover the truth of the impermanence of everything in our life, and of course, of this very life itself. From here we learn to swim in the stream of universal sorrow. And in that stream, we may even find joy”.

This presentation will explore how the Four Immeasurables of Metta, Compassion, Mudita and Equanimity can guide us as we care for dying people and those who give care, including family members and ourselves as professional caregivers.

About the speaker
Professor Liz Lobb is Professor of Palliative Care (Allied Health) based at Calvary Health Care and Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Notre Dame, Sydney, and the Faculty of Health, University of Technology, Sydney, Australia. Professor Lobb obtained her PhD in Psychological Medicine from the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Sydney and has worked clinically as a bereavement counsellor and educator for 24 years. She is a graduate of the Australian Association of Buddhist Psychotherapists & Counsellors Training Course and a former member of the management committee. She has been working on her meditation practice for 20 years.
Invited presentations

A Mahayana Buddhist Teaching-based Intervention, Awareness Training Program: its Theoretical Model and Effectiveness

— Venerable SIK Hin Hung & Ms. Bonnie W.Y. WU

Awareness Training Program (ATP) is a novel Mahayana Buddhist teaching-based intervention pioneered by the presenters. ATP is developed in response to the growing concern that some of the mindfulness-based interventions have been developed in an “out of context” manner and the rising need to address the psychological suffering in modern societies, particularly in Hong Kong. By adopting a textually aligned approach, ATP is formulated systematically so that its theory and praxis are coherent. The theoretical foundation of ATP is rooted in the Mahayana Buddhist text of the Sandhinirmochana Sūtra, which is one of the most important texts of the Yogācāra tradition. ATP aims to enhance a person’s ability to deal with suffering by developing one’s compassion and wisdom in the form of nonattachment, which are two of Mahayana Buddhism’s fundamental practices. This presentation will outline why we regard “Mahayana Buddhist teaching,” “textually aligned” and “coherent theory and praxis” as important components to consider when formulating a Buddhist teaching-based intervention. The theoretical foundations of ATP as well as its empirical findings will also be presented.

About the speaker

Venerable SIK Hin Hung

Venerable Sik Hin Hung, MA (London), is a Buddhist monk ordained under the Mahayana tradition. He is also the 45th generation lineage holder of LingJi (臨濟宗) and the 10th generation lineage holder of Gui-yang (溈仰宗) Schools of Ch’an. His main interest is in ‘repackaging’ the Teachings of Buddhism so that it could become more ‘user friendly’ for people in today’s world. He was the Director and one of the Founding Fellows of the Centre of Buddhist Studies of The University of Hong Kong. He is currently the Senior Advisor of the Centre where he is also teaching as a Visiting Assistant Professor. Ven. Hin Hung is also the Chairman of Master of Buddhist Counselling Programme of the Centre. He has published books and articles on Buddhism, psychotherapy, neuroscience of meditation, Buddhist education and personal growth. The motto of the Awareness Spiritual Growth Centre found by him is “Be mindful of your heart!” His current research projects include: “Awareness Training Program”, “Dharma Therapy”, “Guangdong Yuqie Yankou” etc.
Ms. Bonnie W.Y. WU

Bonnie Wu is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Centre of Buddhist Studies (CBS), The University of Hong Kong. Her Ph.D. research topic is related to a Mahayana Buddhist teaching-based intervention, namely, “Awareness Training Program” (ATP). She is part of the working team of Buddhism and Science Research Lab of the Centre. She has published articles on Buddhist-based interventions and neuroscience of meditation as well as books and manuals on Buddhist Life Education for primary and secondary schools. Bonnie Wu has been learning and practicing meditation for more than a decade. Currently, she is appointed as the facilitator of Tergar Asia. She is also a registered social worker in Hong Kong.
Invited presentations

CBCT®: The Healing Power of Compassion Training and Its Impact on Well-Being
— Professor Lobsang Tenzin NEGI

Abstract
This presentation will introduce CBCT® (Cognitively-Based Compassion Training), its relationship to Buddhist meditative practices, and recent research findings regarding its impact on health and well-being.

Developed at Emory University in Atlanta, USA in 2004, CBCT® was originally created in response to two situations: a growing mental health crisis among undergraduate students, and the need for a secular protocol that would allow for a systematic and rigorous study of the effects of compassion training on the physiological, psychological and behavioral levels. Based on centuries old techniques from the Buddhist tradition intended to bring about “thought transformation,” the meditative practices employed are designed to expand and strengthen compassion for self and others while supporting critical insight into the ways that mindsets and behaviors can be modified to sustain personal resiliency and to intensify altruistic motivation.

Drawing on insights from evolutionary biology, psychology and neuroscience, research findings suggest that CBCT® may decrease loneliness and depressive symptoms, improve realistic hopefulness, increase empathic accuracy, moderate the effects of trauma, improve resiliency for those functioning in high stress environments, and even help with quality of sleep.

About the speaker
LOBSANG TENZIN NEGI, Ph.D. is the Executive Director of the Center for Contemplative Science and Compassion-Based Ethics at Emory University. He is also the co-founder and director of the Emory-Tibet Partnership, a unique multi-dimensional initiative founded at Emory University in 1998. In addition, Prof. Negi is a Professor of Practice in Emory University’s Department of Religion and the founder and spiritual director of Drepung Loseling Monastery, Inc., in Atlanta, GA.

In 2007, Prof. Negi developed CBCT® (Cognitively-Based Compassion Training), a secularized contemplative program based on Tibetan Buddhist mind training practices that deliberately and systematically works to cultivate compassion. He also oversees several other programs including SEE Learning™ (Social, Emotional and Ethical Learning), a program that develops and implements curricula for kindergarten through university level education for the education of heart and mind, and the Emory-Tibet Science Initiative, a program created at the invitation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to develop and implement a comprehensive modern science curriculum specifically for Tibetan monastics.

Prof. Negi was born in Kinnaur, a remote Himalayan region adjoining Tibet. A former monk, he began his
monastic training at The Institute of Buddhist Dialectics in Dharamasala, India and continued his education at Drepung Loseling Monastery in south India, where in 1994 he received the Geshe Lharampa degree. Prof. Negi completed his Ph.D. at Emory University in 1999; his interdisciplinary dissertation centered on traditional Buddhist and contemporary Western approaches to emotions and their impact on wellness. His current research focuses on the complementarity of modern science and contemplative practice.
Invited presentations

Dharma Therapy: a healing journey from suffering
— Venerable SIK Hin Hung & Dr. Jennifer Shui Wa YIM

Abstract
Life is impermanent and full of uncertainty and suffering. How could we handle and alleviate suffering amidst of all the distresses, frustrations and pains, which are inevitable parts of human existence? The development of counselling psychology after World War II become important to the modern world when more people suffer from mental problems. With the growing acceptance of Buddhist counselling practices and more people are suffering from mental and psychological problems, many therapists wanted to explore how Buddha’s teaching can be applied in counselling. Inspired by the Buddhist wisdom and teaching. Venerable Hin Hung Sik develops the concept of Dharma Therapy which applies the universal Dharma as the theoretical foundation while the Buddhist counselling team from the Tsz Shan Monastery applies the therapy in counselling process with the objectives to help people alleviate negative emotions, cultivate inner strengths, and to nurture equanimity by incorporating Buddhist wisdom and compassion into their daily living. The presentation will give an overview on the theoretical foundation of Dharma Therapy and its application on how it inspired the service users to transform suffering and to attain happiness in life.

About the speaker

Venerable SIK Hin Hung
Venerable Sik Hin Hung, MA (London), is a Buddhist monk ordained under the Mahayana tradition. He is also the 45th generation lineage holder of LingJi (臨濟宗) and the 10th generation lineage holder of Gui-yang (為仰宗) Schools of Ch’an. His main interest is in ‘repackaging’ the Teachings of Buddhism so that it could become more ‘user friendly’ for people in today’s world. He was the Director and one of the Founding Fellows of the Centre of Buddhist Studies of The University of Hong Kong. He is currently the Senior Advisor of the Centre where he is also teaching as a Visiting Assistant Professor. Ven. Hin Hung is also the Chairman of Master of Buddhist Counselling Programme of the Centre. He has published books and articles on Buddhism, psychotherapy, neuroscience of meditation, Buddhist education and personal growth. The motto of the Awareness Spiritual Growth Centre found by him is “Be mindful of your heart!” His current research projects include: “Awareness Training Program”, “Dharma Therapy”, “Guangdong Yuqie Yankou” etc.
Dr. Jennifer Shui Wa YIM
Dr. Jennifer Yim is the fellow; approved counselling supervisor; certified counsellor and council member of HKPCA. Registered Social Worker, HK mediator and Mental Health First Aid instructor for adult and youth. She has rich experiences in counselling, supervision and training, helping numerous youth; adults and families overcome their difficulties and release their suffering. Before joining the TSM Buddhist Spiritual Counselling Center as center in-charge, she has been working as Associate Master of a College, Head of Student Affairs, Education advisor for the Academy of Gifted Education, counsellor of several universities, family service social worker, mental health group instructor, supervisor of counselling and social work students, visiting lecturer for commercial companies and universities. She has published books and articles on counselling practices, mental health and training manuals on peer counselling.
Invited presentations

Hearing the Cries of the World: Buddhist Chaplaincy in the 21st Century
— Professor Elaine YUEN

Abstract
Our contemporary times allow suffering to be more evident than ever. At this time, we might ask how Buddhist perspectives may provide service and care that might address this pervasive suffering. Chaplaincy, a profession that supports grief and life transitions with religious/spiritual understandings and practices, is taught through a Buddhist inspired lens at Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado.

In the west, Buddhist practices, particularly mindfulness meditation, have become well-integrated into medical and other settings. The healthcare profession is by its nature person-intensive – and demands an interpersonal and human connection to those being cared for, as well as extensive professional knowledge. However, many health care professionals are candidates for compassion fatigue, which has increasingly been documented over the past decades. (Sabo, 2011) Compassion fatigue has been recognized as a stress response that may stem from caring for others without expected rewards, results, and often closure.

In this session we will review the understanding and use of Buddhist-inspired contemplative practices, such as mindfulness and compassion meditation, and explore how these principles may address stress response and moral injury within health care and other professions (Raab, 2014). We will also explore how contemplative exercises may help professionals to identify and work with stress, moral injury, and compassion fatigue.


About the speaker
Elaine Yuen, PhD, is Associate Professor in the Department of Wisdom Traditions at Naropa University, Boulder, Colorado, USA. Ordained as Upadhyaya (Buddhist Minister) within the Shambhala Buddhist tradition, she has a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Yuen is the program lead for the Master of Divinity program, where she supports students in developing a pastoral and theological identity. Her courses include contemplative communication, ritual and homiletics, and ethics and service learning. Graduates of the program go on to be professional chaplains, ministers, and leaders in their communities. Dr. Yuen also teaches Buddhist meditation courses where students learn to join their academic studies with mindfulness and awareness.
Invited presentations

Contemplative Care in the Tuen Mun Experience: Inspirations from the Diamond Sutra
— Venerable Dr. SIK Hin Yan

Abstract
The Diamond Sutra has been a primordial inspiration to us since we began our chaplaincy service in Tuen Mun Hospital in 2010. In this presentation, I would explore how the Diamond Sutra has inspired us in our work, and in particular, in the training of our visitation volunteers.

“Contemplative Care” is the art of providing spiritual, emotional, and pastoral support, in a way that is informed by a personal, consistent contemplative practice (Giles and Miller, 2012). Our service involves comforting patients, their family or friends, and also hospital staff in distress. This is to be done without preference or attachment, and like bodhisattvas, we too need to be people with resources and a determination to act: such resources may resemble Prajñā wisdom - we should learn to see things as manifestations of combined conditions which are inter-dependent on one another, and that they are empty in essence. This understanding thus form the motivation behind all acts of loving-kindness, however big or small.

The training of Buddhist visitation volunteers in Hong Kong is only in its infancy. We should hope to gather further expertise for Contemplative Care workers to develop inner strength and resilience, qualities which are essential for a caring presence.

About the speaker
Bhikkshuni Hin Yan SIK was ordained in Hong Kong as a Buddhist nun in 1996. Prior to her Ordination she was trained as a health psychologist, and she has a Ph.D. in Behavioural Sciences. She now works as a Buddhist hospital chaplain, serving mostly cancer patients, and has been very much involved in the training of Buddhist bedside visitation volunteers in Hong Kong. She also teaches Buddhist Counselling and Pastoral Care to post-graduate students in the University of Hong Kong, and gives talks on topics in Buddhism to the lay public regularly.