

enough to focus the heart and mind where it needs to be focused; the causes of suffering and the way out of suffering. With that comes the development of the innate human capacity to see clearly, and to act skillfully, with wise the discernment of wisdom and compassion.

Vol. 94, No. 4

February 2020

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Master of Mind

Marco Pallis

The Story

From a lecture given at
The Buddhist Society

Alexander Maitland

'Chère mère, c'est en ton nom
l'heure que tu avais attendue

(Thopaga: from Milarepa by Alexander Maitland)

I am Milarepa, great in fame ...
(Milarepa: from the Gururong)

In his French version [of Milarepa's biography], M. Bacot very plausibly suggests that the prefix 'Mila!' to be an ancient and local interjection denoting fright or surprise. By extension, one who has been frightened and so exorcized evil spirits. The suffix 'repa' refers to a thin, conical cap worn by Kargyutpa yogis, emblematic of spiritual intellect.

'The value of music is in the joy it brings, which like every true joy is self-enhancing'. (Robert Donington, *Music*, volume II, number 1, J. Curwen). Marco Pallis's opera is still a work in progress. It has never been performed and the orchestral and vocal parts have never been recorded. At present, the manuscript of the opera is still in the hands of the composer.

The lecture divides in three parts: first, a sketch of Marco Pallis's life and work; second, Milarepa's remarkable attainment of enlightenment; third, a brief history of the opera, from its inception until the present day.

It seems natural, indeed almost inevitable, that Marco Pallis should have written an opera based on episodes in the life of Milarepa, the eleventh-century Tibetan Buddhist, who lived, me

About the Author

Jeff Shore is Professor of Zen in the Modern World at Hanazono University in Kyoto, Japan. He completed his Zen Training with Keido Fukushima, a successor of Zenkei Shibayama, at Tokufu-ji in Kyoto. This lineage has played an important role in introducing Rinzai Zen to the West, a tradition he is continuing and deepening as he guides students from a retreat centre, Rōkoan Hermitage, in Kyoto and leads retreats worldwide.

VENERABLE MYOKUN
Shobo-an Zen Training Temple, London

PSYCHOTHERAPY, MINDFULNESS AND BUDDHIST MEDITATION by Prof. Tullio Giraldi, Publisher: Palgrave Macmillan 2019; ISBN-10: 3030290026 ISBN-13: 978-3030290023, pp.238 pages, Hardcover £79.99, Kindle; £75.99.

Prof. Tullio Giraldi offers a historical review of the unfolding and growth of Mindfulness in the West, based on the best evidence available in the specialist literature.

The Author teaches neuro-psychopharmacology at the University of Trieste, Italy, where he is an Eminent Scholar at the Faculty of Medicine.

The book highlights how Mindfulness has been plucked from its rich and complex Buddhist context and isolated from a range of other traditional spiritual practices which it had been designed to work in conjunction with. It has since developed into a cure-all intervention for relieving the stress resulting from the complex interactions and many demands of modern day life. Mindfulness has been defined by Jon Kabat-Zinn as 'paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.' That amounts to a reductionist approach when compared to the original practice and techniques as encompassed by the word '*sati*' (Pali)

Mindfulness has had an astonishing diffusion and adoption for the treatment of mental disorders of all kinds, for the preservation and maintenance of well-being, for the improvement of overall performance in sports, business, productivity in industrial settings, teaching, and even combat situations, to name just a few.

Besides giving rise to related fields of intervention (e.g. Mindfulness based Cognitive Therapy, Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction, etc), it has been generating an impressive variety of Training and Professional Development courses, and eventually digital Tools and Applications. It is estimated that in the US alone it is now generating a business of more than one billion dollars a year.

In the UK, to quote from the Mindfulness Initiative website (<https://www.themindfulnessinitiative.org>):

'Published on behalf of the UK Mindfulness All-Party Parliamentary Group in October 2015, the Mindful Nation UK report was the first policy document of its kind, seeking to address mental and physical health concerns in the areas of education, health, the workplace and the criminal justice system through the application of Mindfulness-based interventions. It was produced following a 12-month inquiry involving eight hearing events in the British Parliament, supported by The Mindfulness Initiative.

The recommendations in this report are evidence-based, sourced directly from scientists and experienced implementers, who report notable success in their respective fields and urge policymakers to invest resources in further pilot studies and increased public access to qualified teachers. A note of caution is offered in relation to the standard of some research in the field and the variability in quality of Mindfulness training provision'.

The Author charts the history of Mindfulness, how it found application in Biological Psychiatry and Cognitive Psychotherapy and its eventual adoption as a treatment for mild mood disorders of an existential nature. As Wikipedia puts it;

'Bio-psychiatry aims to understand mental disorder in terms of the biological function of the nervous system. It is interdisciplinary in its approach and draws on sciences such as neuroscience, psychopharmacology, biochemistry, genetics, epigenetics and physiology to investigate the biological bases of behaviour and psychopathology. Bio-psychiatry is that branch / speciality of medicine which deals with the study of biological function of the nervous system in mental disorders'

The Author points out that bio-psychiatry has been widely criticized for having a rather mechanistic, reductionist approach in comparison to the alternatives offered by the richer psychodynamic and phenomenological perspectives. Moreover it has also been chastised for having developed diagnostic criteria that do not distinguish pathological conditions from healthy reactions to life events. Similar criticisms have been raised with regards to the criteria used for instigating the development of new drugs and evaluating their effects on the target populations, resulting in the pharmaceutical industry substantially reducing their involvement the field of psychiatric drugs.

In addition, the trend has led to the psychologization and medicalization of our natural responses to daily life and related existential problems, casting the rich variety of our healthy emotional responses and states into negative and positive categories, the former to be avoided or controlled, the latter to be pursued.

From the social perspective, Mindfulness can all too easily become a convenient tool for pushing back onto the individual the ownership of and responsibility for resolving a number of issues that arises from our increasingly consumeristic and profit oriented society, the roles we are asked to play in the production and delivery of the goods and services, and the erosion of personal and family space and time, as a result of the demands and pressures we feel increasingly subjected to.

Moreover, Giraldi points out that serious concerns are growing for the loss of the moral, communitarian and compassionate dimensions of Buddhism when '*sati*' is reduced to out-of-context 'Mindfulness': the former brings to light the interdependence and interconnectedness of all life, alongside the characteristics of insubstantiality and not-self (lack of agency) of our experience; the latter is designed to boost our self-image in the face of adversity, and as a by-product, possibly increases the sense of separation and even alienation from the wholeness of life.

Based on the meta-analyses of data from a now large number of clinical trials in a variety of settings, the Author does not question the likely effectiveness of

THE MIDDLE WAY

Mindfulness interventions on the whole, and does recognize that the protocols of clinical *randomized controlled trials* (RCT) were extensively used. Nevertheless he raises concerns about the methodology employed to show efficacy and safety. He points out that the protocols are somewhat incomplete and/or insufficient: No placebo treatment is employed, and when a control intervention is used, it is not blinded to the patients and the evaluators. Moreover, the criteria for diagnosis and evaluation of outcomes for mental disorders are those employed by biological psychiatry, which have been largely criticized for inadequacy when evaluating mild existential conditions.

To conclude, an interesting and thorough study of the use and misuse of 'Mindfulness' in our contemporary society, that will appeal both to the academics, the professional and the spiritual practitioners, as well as to those more politically minded amongst us.

Being an academic publication, the price is somewhat beyond the reasonable expectations of most individuals, and as a minor remark, the editing could have been a bit more polished.

That said, I would definitely recommend it. **MARIANO MARCIGAGLIA**

Lay Buddhist Chaplain at the Buddhist Society

BOOKS RECEIVED

(The listing of a book under this head does not rule out its subsequent full review.)

MYANMAR'S BUDDHIST-MUSLIM CRISIS: Rohingya, Arakanese, and Burmese Narratives of Siege and Fear, **John Clifford Holt** Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019, pp.324, Hardcover £89.50, Paperback £31.50, Kindle Edition £27.32

An inquiry into the reasons and rationalizations behind the violence in Myanmar, especially the oppression of the Rohingya Muslims by the army in 2016 and 2017. Based on over three years of research, including sustained conversations with prominent and articulate participants and observers, what emerges is a series of compelling portraits revealing both deep insights and entrenched misunderstandings

CREATING THE CULTURE OF PEACE: A Clarion Call for Individual and Collective Transformation, **Anwarul K. Chowdhury** and **Daisaku Ikeda**, Publisher: I.B. Tauris Publication, February 20, 2020, ISBN-10: 1788313275, ISBN-13: 978-1788313278 ISBN-10: 1788313275 ISBN-13: 978-1788313278, pp.272, Hardback £24.50, Paperback £12.99, Kindle Edition £12.34.

The culture of peace and non-violence is essential to human existence, development and progress. In 1999, the United Nations General Assembly adopted by consensus the norm-setting, forward-looking 'Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace'. Governments, institutions, NGOs, other civil society entities and, in particular, individuals – all are encouraged therein to contribute to the global movement for the culture of peace.

OBITUARY

Hiroko Sato

1928–2014

Hiroko Sato, Good Nun
Wonderful Seed. An
Appreciation of her life.

In the early hours of 8 December 2014 Mrs Hiroko Sato attained birth to the Pure Land in peaceful tranquility and silence after a sudden illness. In the near 25 years she spent alongside Sato in charge of Three Wheels, a Buddhist temple, Hiroko-san took not only absolute responsibility for the running of the temple but for the spiritual life through its doors through her unconditional generosity of spirit which touched thousands. Hiroko-san was devoted to establishing a traditional form of Buddhist community where temple followers seek the truth of life through teachings together often in close community.

Mrs Hiroko Sato was born into the Pure Land in Osaka University of Law in March 1969. This period included her time at Lufthansa Airlines based in their Japan office. Hiroko-san was a fluent speaker of Japanese. On 14 February 1971 and through him she met Meeting Dharma-mother Ekai, the 13th Buddhist Sangha, and Venerable Chimyo Takahashi. This was the great spiritual turning point in her life. She listened to the teaching of Shin Buddhism and had two children Akira and Yukiko who lived a very hard living within the Shogyoji temple.

In January 1995 Hiroko-san joined the Buddhist community and established Three Wheels and set about working to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere for all who came not only from all parts of the world.