

# Mindfulness in Cultural Context

Recent years have seen the enthusiastic embrace of mindfulness meditation and other techniques drawn from Buddhism as therapeutic interventions in psychiatry. In much of this work, Buddhism is portrayed as a psychology closely akin to cognitive psychology. However, in the societies where it originated, Buddhism is a system of practice that has strong ethical and moral dimensions. Does extracting techniques like meditation from the social context in which they originate change the nature and effects of the practice? What is the relationship of these practices to everyday Buddhism as lived in Asian countries or by migrants to the West? How has the Westernization and psychologization of Buddhism and other contemplative traditions altered their meaning? What does contemporary cognitive neuroscience tell us about the nature of mindfulness, meditation and allied techniques? What are the implications of a cultural and contextual view of mindfulness for continued dialogue between Buddhist thought and psychiatry?

Sessions will address:

- the varieties of mindfulness and their location in Buddhist philosophy and other contemplative traditions;

- cognitive neuroscientific research on meditation and mindfulness;
- the meanings of mindfulness, meditation and Buddhist practice in cultural contexts both globally and in migrant populations; and
- the uses of mindfulness as therapeutic intervention in contemporary psychiatry and psychology.

The format will be a one-day public conference for mental health practitioners (Monday, June 3) followed by a two-day intensive workshop (Tuesday & Wednesday, June 4 & 5) for researchers actively involved in the area. The aim of the workshop is to critically address the cultural embedding of mindfulness practices to guide future research and clinical applications.



## conference program

All sessions will be held in the auditorium of the **Institute of Community & Family Psychiatry** 4333 Côte Ste-Catherine Rd., Montreal, QC

Monday, June 3, 2013, 9:00-20:30

**8:00-9:00 registration**

**9:00-9:30**

*Welcome and Introduction*  
**Laurence J. Kirmayer**

### **Session 1. Varieties of Mindfulness and their Location in Buddhist Philosophy and Psychology**

**9:30-10:00**

*Mindfulness or Mindlessness: Traditional and Modern Buddhist Critiques of "Bare Awareness"*

**Robert H. Sharf**

University of California, Berkeley

**10:00-10:30**

*The Relevance of Non-Self in Pre-Modern Asia to the Contemporary Mindfulness Movement*

**Geoffrey Samuel**

Cardiff University

**10:30-10:45 break**

### **Session 2. Meanings of Mindfulness in Global and Local Cultural Contexts**

**10:45-11:15**

*"The Best Dharma for Today": Mindfulness, Meditation and Modernity in Contemporary Nepal*

**Lauren G. Leve**

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

**11:15-12:30 panel: Thupten Jinpa, Lauren Leve, Geoffrey Samuel, Robert Sharf**

**12:30-14:00 lunch**

### **Session 3. Cognitive Neuroscientific Research on Mindfulness and Meditation**

**14:00-14:30**

*Lessons from a Multi-Disciplinary Study of Intensive Meditation for the Transcultural Examination of Meditation*

**Baljinder K. Sahdra**

University of Western Sydney

**Clifford Saron**

University of California, Davis

**14:30-15:00**

*Mindful Embodiment and the Senses: Touch, Vision, and Song*

**Anne Carolyn Klein**

Rice University

**15:00-15:30 panel: Suparna Choudhury, Anne Klein, Amir Raz, Baljinder Sahdra, Clifford Saron, Evan Thompson**

**15:30-16:00 break**

### **Session 4. Clinical Implications and Applications of Mindfulness**

**16:00-16:30**

*Mindfulness of the Kindness of Others: Naikan Therapy, Social Selves and Suicide in Japan*

**Chikako Ozawa-de Silva**

Emory University

**16:30-17:00**

*Paying Attention to the Contents of Mindfulness: Meditation within the Context of Secular Ethics*

**Brendan Ozawa-de Silva**

Life University

**17:00-17:30**

*Ties That Bind/Ties That Free: A Cross-Cultural Conversation between Buddhism and Modern Psychotherapy on Attachment, Mindfulness, and Self-Reflection (Mentalizing)*

**Harvey B. Aronson**

Huston

**17:30-18:00 panel: Chikako Ozawa-de Silva, Brendan Ozawa-de Silva, Harvey Aronson**

**18:00-19:00 reception and poster session**

**19:00-20:30 film screening: Justice and Healing in Cambodia (2012, 30 min)**

**Inger Agger**

Nordic Institute for Asian Studies

**panel: Jaswant Guzder, Thupten Jinpa, Cécile Rousseau, Allan Young**

Register for the 2013 ASI online (<http://www.mcgill.ca/tcpsych/training/advanced/2013>), or complete this form and mail with your cheque for \$100.00 (\$25.00 for full-time students) payable to **McGill University**:

**Summer Program/ASI 2013**  
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Name: .....

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Tel.: ..... e-mail: .....

For online registration or to submit a poster see:

<http://www.mcgill.ca/tcpsych/training/advanced/2013> (Submission deadline: April 30, 2013)



### **Justice and Healing in Cambodia (2012, 30 min)**

**Inger Agger** (Director),  
Documentary, 30 minutes, 2012.  
Supported by the Danish Research Council for Independent Research (FKK).

*During fieldwork in Cambodia in 2011, the Danish psychologist and researcher, Inger Agger, asked survivors of the Khmer Rouge regime how they experienced the ongoing justice process of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal (ECCC). The film approaches this question from three main perspectives: survivors' personal experience of the transitional justice process; self-healing processes initiated by survivors; and the role of the researcher and her Cambodian colleague in establishing an open and intimate dialogue concerning these issues.*