# Chapter 16
# Pristine Mindfulness: Heartfulness and Beyond

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## 16.1 Introduction

This chapter expands my work on Relational Buddhism which comprises Karma Transformation: conversations and meditations. It offers an alternative practice and view on "mindfulness meditation" in the context of a remodeled Buddhist teaching which is founded on ancient Greek Buddhism and pan-Buddhism whose basic tenets are congruent with what the Buddha (sixth century BCE), Nagarjuna (second century), and Asanga/Vasubandhu (fourth century) had taught. Relational Buddhism may differ from traditional accounts as it radically discards all other-worldly/metaphysical views. Thus, Relational Buddhism eschews ideas on the Buddha's divinity, deification, omniscience, transcendentalism, mysticism, authoritarianism, worship, dogma, creed, belief, magic, miracles (except the "miracle of education"), and views any such allusion as metaphoric (Kwee 2010; McWilliams 2014). It is not my intent to eliminate the long-standing traditions but bring into focus a more promising demystified alternative which suits twenty-first-century rational beings and secular societies. The objective of this chapter is to delineate the practice and theory of pristine mindfulness or "heartfulness," which follows eight states/steps. Pristine mindfulness is also called heartfulness because the experience is in essence a love affair of "me" and "self" which leads to a vanishing of the lover and the beloved.

Western fascination for *sati* by psychologists already began with William James (1842–1910), founding father of American psychology. He broke new ground by addressing the functional value of *sati* that operates in the space of "pure" (preconceptual) perception. It seems that James (1890) was aware that Buddhist meditation is not to be isolated from the whole teaching of Buddhism as he had Anagarika Dharmapala teach during one of his lectures at Harvard in 1904, on which occasion he allegedly said to the man from Sri Lanka "to take his chair." After the lecture

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(apparently on the modalities), James declared that this is the psychology everybody will be studying 25 years from then on (Sangharakshita 1964). Although this prediction did not pay off, the basic elements for a Buddhist psychology "on cognitive behavioral lines" were initiated in the vanguard work of three clinical psychologists in the past decades: Mikulas (1978), De Silva (1984), and Kwee (1990). A congress in Gothenburg, Sweden, confluencing Buddhism and cognitive behavior therapy embedded a conferential series of eight symposia was convened by this author in 2005. This event was likely the historical milestone James was talking about one century ago (Kwee et al. 2006).

Nowadays, mindfulness meditation is enjoying mushrooming interest after its inception in the medical setting in 1979 through the work of J. Kabat-Zinn in the USA. Since his introduction of an eight-week outpatient program, called mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), other mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) followed suit. Having entered the field of health care, the meditation has become a hot topic among psychologists and therapists as well as among the public at large. Kabat-Zinn (1994, p. 4) defined mindfulness as, "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally." He further emphasized that his take of mindfulness is just a human capacity, thus seemingly excluding the Buddhist wisdom inherent in the practice by framing mindfulness by the Hippocratic oath (Kabat-Zinn 2009a, b) instead, rather than fairly declaring allegiance to Buddhism. Psychologists with a Buddhist background have harshly criticized this Buddhist-lite rendition at various conferences as these programs deny the undeniable Buddhist roots of mindfulness meditation (e.g., Kwee 2010, 2012a, b, 2013a, b, c; Kwee et al. 2006). Most importantly, the mindfulness-based mindfulness (e.g., Segal et al. 2002; Shapiro and Carlson 2009) isolates the training from the "12 Buddhist meditations" that embeds the Four Ennobling Realities and the Eightfold Balancing Practice. Discarding eurocentric and (post)colonial views on Buddhism, we rather speak about realities than truths. Realities in and of itself cannot be noble; nobility, like becoming an earl or a duchess, is not at stake. Viewing life and its vicissitudes via these four "Buddhist realities" ennobles/purifies the heart. Likewise, balancing and practice are more appropriate as the path is rather an equilibrating training toward a noble heart. Moreover, as a psychological approach Relational Buddhism avoids religious wording as used by the early Christian translators of Buddhism, because this will inevitably lead to a "Wittgensteinian language game" of religion. The use of secular wording provides a common ground of Relational Buddhism with the mindfulness in the MBI offering; the only difference is that in the latter case, Buddhism was (seemingly) taken out altogether prompting Buddhist watchers think of a *chutzpah*.

Fully Buddhist is pristine mindfulness, which refers to meditation training, a practice of self-compassion, love, and healing integrated in a pan-Buddhist context and which makes use of the best of all Buddhist teachings down the centuries, hence pan-Buddhism. This mindfulness, called heartfulness, is a core process for clearing the mind and a springboard to practice a family of 12 meditations (themes of awareness and attention) that include: (1) Breathing (of air passing the nostrils as an anchor for concentration); (2) Behaviors (the four dignities of sitting, standing, walking, lying, and their varieties); (3) Repulsiveness (the body is a skin bag enveloping

organs, liquids, and digested food); (4) Elements (dis-identifying from disintegrating body of water, fire, earth, and wind); (5) Decomposing (the body eventually rots, stinks, and turns into bones and dust); (6) Feelings (can be positive, negative, or neutral and skin deep or heartfelt); (7) Hindrances (human pleasures, ill will, sloth, torpor, agitation, and worry); (8) Modalities (or BASIC-I *skandhas* of clinging, an acronym of Behavior–Affect–Sensation–Imagery–Cognition–Interactions); (9) Senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin, and the mind's eye); (10) Awakening (includes being analytical, forbearing, serene, enthusiastic, focused, even minded and aware); (11) the Four Ennobling Realities (there is emotional suffering which is dependently originated through greed and hatred; craving for and grasping/clinging to these states require eradication by countering ignorance and traversing a balancing path, an eightfold practice clearing ignorance, delusions, and illusions); and (12) the Eightfold Balancing Practice which aims at attaining Nirvana (extinction of disturbing emotional arousal).

This practice, comprising awareness and attention (i.e., heartfulness), forms an inseparable part of one's: (1) views (how the mind/emotions work); (2) intentions (discerning its wholesomeness vs. unwholesomeness); (3) speech (meaningful talk and self-talk); (4) actions (karmic intentional conduct and its consequences); (5) living (constructive daily life); (6) efforts (zeal, diligence, forbearance); (7) awareness (witnessing one's own sensing/feeling, thought, and action); and (8) attention (focused concentration). The self-quest investigates: Is there a balance in our "view-understanding, intention-thought, speech-communication, action-behavior, living-habitude, effort-commitment, attention-concentration, awareness-introspection?"

To be sure, heartfulness is embedded in a holistic framework, not only of the 12 meditations, but also of pan-Buddhism (comprising 15 principles endorsed in all schools and denominations of Buddhism), an effort to move toward one basic Buddhism. As an overarching process, heartfulness constitutes both the general and central factor for clearing the mind to practice these meditations, which the Buddha offered humanity as a gift of compassion some 2600 years ago. Ingrained in the Eightfold Balancing Practice, *sati* (Pali) or *smriti* (Sanskrit), the proper terms for heartfulness (and mindfulness for that matter), is a scaffold for a meditative *modus vivendi* implying the balancing of attention–concentration (meta-perception of the mind's eye) and awareness–introspection (bare attention from now to now).

## 16.2 On the Smallest Units of Experience (*dhammas*)

The first step in the Buddhist discipline of meditation training is the taming of the restless mind toward tranquilizing by first relaxing the body by sitting. This can be done in any position as long as the back is held in an upright posture, not slouched forward. Psychophysiological research findings suggest that holding the back and head straight strengthens confidence in the emitted thoughts, whether negative or positive (Brinol et al. 2009), and that this posture boosts positive mood, while a doubtful posture invites or worsens a dejected mood (Haruki et al. 2001). In the Buddhist discipline, this sitting is called *Jhāna*. It uses breathing as an anchor, which

aims at sharpening concentration leading to immersion–absorption *(Jhāna)* in four steps (the four *jhāna*s). These steps are first *Jhāna* (one pointedness/pleasure–joy), second *Jhāna* (one pointedness/joy–happiness), third *Jhāna* (one pointedness/contentment), and fourth *Jhāna* (one pointedness/equanimity–stillness). One-pointed concentration is a run up to fully developed *sati* and to awakening in emptiness: An experience prompted by the insight and understanding that the ever-changing nature of impermanence regarding the experience of things, persons, and self implies a pervasive and omnipresent emptiness at the ultimate level of reality.

Pristine mindfulness fine-tunes attention–concentration (to discipline a wandering mind) and awareness–introspection (to understand karma as intentional action and not-self). It operates through the mind's eye in sensorium and refers to the process and outcome, and it is a tool that enables seeing and experiencing emptiness as an ultimate reality and inner liberation. The mind's eye is the sixth perceptual organ discerned by the Buddha which is inferred here as the neuroplastic brain with infinite synaptic interconnections which is able to perceive and integrate internal stimuli. Pristine mindfulness can be a process (perceiving and observing) or an outcome (being consciously aware). It is an inward or outward concentration of attention (swiftly changeable foreground presence) and introspective awareness (slowly changeable backdrop presence), which illuminate consciousness (constant backdrop presence in wakeful states) and enable the alert monitoring and luminous comprehending of *dhammas,* a technical term which refers to the smallest units of BASIC-I experience, that is, the arising and subsiding of emotion, cognition, and action in dependent origination *(pratitycasamutpada).*

A major factor in the Buddhist training toward awakening to karma, emptiness, and not-self, the Buddha ascribed *sati* a central place in his *dhamma* as designated in the *Mahasatipatthana Sutta* and the *Satipatthana Sutta* on the four frames of reference of *sati.* These frames are (1) the body (i.e., action and feelings: sensations and emotions), (2) the body's behaviors (i.e., motions of internal/external physique), (3) the mind (i.e., thinking: visualizing imagery and conceiving cognition, and (4) the mind's behaviors (i.e., motions of images and cognition). The first six meditations refer to mindfulness of the body and bodily feelings and the second six to mindfulness of the mind and brainy thoughts. Inseparably belonging to the Buddha's liberating system of ceasing *duhkha,* these exercises comprise the 12 themes summarized previously. There are many more meditations. Well known are the *Brahmaviharas:* contemplations on loving kindness, empathic compassion, sympathetic joy, and relational equanimity. Because the Buddhist teachings imply a *modus vivendi,* life is preferably spent in a meditative way. Informal meditative exercises can be done on all simple daily experiencing, like looking, watching, laughing, smiling, singing, drinking, eating, chewing, savoring, or silencing.

The body/speech/mind connection requires some explanation. The Buddha had a tripartite view, which includes life's social aspect—speech; thus, body/speech/mind. Put in this order, it reflects that the mind is constructed through speech and inter-mind, which was prior to the individual mind. The Buddhist proposition is that mind's activity involves speech through language in talk with others and that it emits self-speech or self-talk. The mind's voices are in a continuing dialogue with significant others even though these persons are not physically present. Viewed this

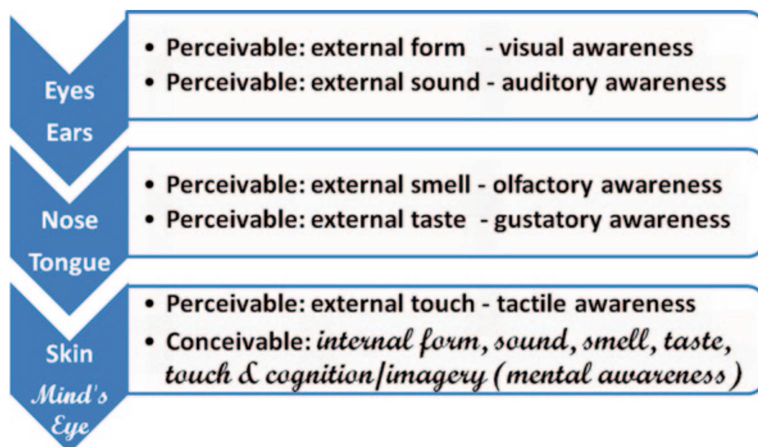


**Fig. 16.1** The Buddha's sixth sense or the mind's eye able to be aware and attentive to anything conceivable based on what is perceived (externally and internally)

way, one is never alone and indeed constantly together with self in conversation internally with others. Hence, the term inter-mind (or inter-self) rather than (the single) mind is used here to emphasize the psychology of mind's interconnectedness in life. Inter-mind leaves the meaning of mind as in the perceptual function of the mind's eye unimpeded as inter-mind includes the single minds of individuals.

In order to fully understand pristine mindfulness, it is imperative to comprehend the mind's eye with the brain as the "eye organ" (see Fig. 16.1). The mind's eye is able to apperceive what takes place in a split of a second, post-perceptual but preconceptual. Thus, apperception is a preconceptual perception that excludes preconceived ideas, which are by definition conceptual and judgmental. Nonetheless puzzling, this sixth sense, usually translated as "mind" is not something metaphysical as it functions within the sensory modality. Still, mind sounds "airy" and does not parallel the other "fleshy" organs: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin. Nowhere in the literature can an account for this sense be found (Austin 2010).

What is the mind's eye? Could the Buddha's sixth sense be the brain as an organ able to scan *dharmas*, which come about in dependent origination of body/speech/mind, that is, the modalities of feeling (sensation–affect/emotion), thinking (cognition–imagery/thinking), and doing (behavior/conduct–action) in interaction with others? Thus, the acronym BASIC-I of clinging is formed. The mind's eye notices what is experienced, which encompasses what is innovatively called "perceivables" varying from neutral sensations to charged emotions. They comprise the visualization of perceived external input and the immediate experience in body/feelings linked to the object (*nimitta*; Kuan 2012) in combination with knowables, like conceivables or thinkables. These are internal events comprising the cognitions, which are covert and appear in the mind and experienced as thinking (*sanna*; Kuan 2012). Indeed, gray matter is able to integrate perceptions of external as well as internal stimuli that might contain everything that is conceivable or thinkable and imaginable, which include memories, dreams, illusions, and delusions. In essence, pristine

mindfulness aims at differentiating, evaluating, and judging unwholesome versus wholesome *dharmas* in the pursuit of karmic happiness or the end of emotional suffering. According to the Buddha, the human predicament of suffering is relational and rooted in the three poisons of greed, hatred, and ignorance/delusions–illusions regarding how the mind functions *(Sedaka Sutta).* Wisdom detoxifies by healing speech (including self-dialogue and interpersonal performance) and by being heedful of inter-mind as located beyond the brain in-between people.

The history of views on *dharmas* is interesting as this reflects the scholarly development of Buddhism (Kwee 2010, 2012a, b). The advancement of Buddhist thought starts with the Buddha who expounded in his discourses (throughout the *Nikayas*) that *dharmas* are neither empty nor not empty. In his non-theistic middle way, subjectivity and objectivity are neither real nor unreal and not-self is basic and complementary to self. The second Buddha, Nagarjuna approached the emptiness of *dharmas* as something that is empty of emptiness: ever-changing impermanence implies emptiness. Subjectivity and objectivity are both unreal due to the total emptiness of self. Thus, he spoke about nonself of everything rather than the not-self of persons. His comments on the perfection of wisdom sutras *(Prajnaparamita Sutras)* is a *via negativa* which negates the selfness of things ad infinitum. Nonetheless, one might consider his philosophical "emptiness of emptiness of emptiness" as still somethingness. This insight was taken up by Vasubandhu who countered with a *via positiva,* an antithesis which views *dharmas* as empty of duality, thus as non-dual experiences. Subjective inner experiences are real, but empty, while objective things are considered to be unreal and also empty. It is therefore sanctioned to fill them with empty projections. His commentaries on the Buddha Womb sutras *(Samdhinirmocana Sutras)* make the proliferation of Mahayana cosmology, which is basically empty, understandable as skillful means *(upayakaushalya)* of Buddhism's reaching out to cater the masses and quench their thirst for the beyond. The reverse is now happening in the contemporary world where a call for secularity and scientific evidence can be loudly heard.

One might ask whether other approaches to the emptiness experience is possible. Social constructionism as championed by Gergen (2009a, b) posits that things are empty of transcendental truths as experiences are fed by meanings that are only valid in relational context, social groups, and communities. Subjective and objective experiences are only real as social constructions. Having discovered social constructionism, and its striking correspondence with the Dharma, a dilemma arises whether to take the bold step to involve it or not? The quest resulted in postulating a daring confluence of a traditional teaching and a postmodern psychology that was coined Relational Buddhism.

In effect, the merging of ideas meandered in a meta-vision which views reality from a relational perspective and which proposes *dharmas* as "ontologically-mute-social-constructions-empty-of-Transcendental-Truths." Moreover, thinking is a relational activity executed as covert–private verbalized/visualized speech. This relational stance has lead to the co-creation of inter-mind as *interdependent being in between selves* and of a non-foundational morality of collaborative action, which renders a team spirit for humanity with congenial bonds as lifeline. To paraphrase

Gergen (2009a, b), truth and morality can only be found within community; beyond community, there is silence. Thus, the practice of mindfulness toward emptiness is enriched by a fourth exercise, a postmodern provision which likely deepens the experience of *dharmas* as empty social constructions comprising empty perceivables and knowables and recognizes their illusory and delusional qualities. Entering the Western world, Buddhism is in dire need for scholarly innovation. Relational Buddhism functions as a nexus for integrating the views of Theravada, Mahayana, psychology/therapy, and social constructionism.

## 16.3 Heartfulness: Mindfulness in Relational Perspective

While *sati* has traditionally been viewed as individually bound, the present view transcends this understanding by adopting a relational perspective to this seemingly solipsistic exercise. Many practitioners' first encounter with meditation is to do it the *Bodhidharma* way by sitting in front of a wall. Grappling with the meaning of sitting alone (with self), the question arises whether this suggests that one cuts oneself off from the world in solitary confinement. Is total isolation feasible and desirable on the road to awakening (toward realizing not-self)?

From a Chinese Mahayana perspective, the term mindfulness as a translation of *sati,* feels like a misnomer as the "strifeless striving" is toward being "mind empty" and "full of heart" while remembering to be constantly watchful in full attention and awareness on whatever appears in the stream of body/speech/mind consciousness, in order to awaken. Although the term *sati* is preferred, the term mindfulness will be maintained because of its vested usage. For those who prefer to see the mind located in interconnected loving hearts (like in the Chinese term *nian*) heartfulness is a more appropriate designation to reflect the practice ("lovefulness" might be an alternative translation for it is about loving self via buddhanature toward a buddha-within/not-self). In the Buddhist languages of Asia, mind accounts for the emotional realm as affect feels like inhabiting the heart. The heart as a location of mind is not an outlandish idea if one considers how love and infatuation are experienced and depicted in European culture. Hence, heartfulness is an appealing alternative and the more so because it associates with a resonating heart rather than mind (*Vimalakirtinirdesa Sutra*). The notion that mind is located in the heart implies that it is "neither within nor without, nor is it to be apprehended between the two" (*Vimalakirtinirdesa Sutra*). As in the *Gandhavyuha Sutra,* mind is not locked up between the ears but operates as interdependent mind in-between people, which is equivalent to inter-mind, the main proposition of Relational Buddhism.

Heartfulness is a general factor sustaining meditation, including concentration and contemplation toward wholesome intentional action (karma), which at any initial time works like a metonym. This implies that there is no grand aim to pursue at the start of the exercise: What one does in the moment is means and goal at the same time. During heartfulness, one perceives sensory experience by an effortless effort of a beginner's mind with no aim and no gain. Thus, there is no way to mindfulness, mindfulness is the way, which is realizing that we are not going anywhere for we

are already there; therefore, nothing needs to be done: the grass will grow by itself. The relational practice of pristine mindfulness as heartfulness refers to cultivating (affective) memory not to forget to neutrally focus, observe, or note every moment to guard or protect against unwholesomeness, to introspect, to inquire intelligently, and to form wholesome karma in relational (intrapersonal and interpersonal) context (Kuan 2012; Kwee 2013c). The chapter title "Heartfulness and Beyond" refers to a karmic metaphorical "law of magic": Cause is effect and effect is cause in a chain of causality; thus, a seed accrues a tree and a tree ensues seeds. Hence, the advice abounds: If effect is cause, create the effect. In daily life: Be genuinely happy and luck will follow suit (Kwee 2013a).

Aiming no less than the accomplishment of *Buddhahood,* pristine mindfulness is presented here in contrast with the Buddhist-lite mindfulness, which has progressively imbued the psychological literature in the past decades. The present comprehension of heartfulness is constructed on the pillars erected by the Buddha, Nagarjuna, Vasubandhu, Chan/Zen, and Relational Buddhism. Based on these integrating views and grounded in almost a half century of exercise in encountering *dharmas*, I came to the following differentiation of two phases, four stages, and eight states of awareness and attention cultivation. The cyclical spans are based on psychological understanding and (relational) insights regarding heartfulness. Even though cycles suggest strict categories, the phases, stages, and states do have some overlap as they are not static terms, but fluid processes of discernible but inseparable stretches. Table 16.1 encapsulates the two phases (A and B), four stages (I–IV) and eight states (1–8) .

In Mahayana terms, phase A (stages I and II, states 1–4) is a gradual journey of absolute *bodhicitta,* the spirit of heartfelt diligence to awaken along introvert experiences which traverse a process of socially deconstructing self via insight and understanding (or aha experiences) while sitting in front of a wall in order to gain

**Table 16.1** Pristine mindfulness in four stages and eight states/steps

| Context: the Eightfold Balancing Practice | Attention<br>Verbal/speech<br>(description) | Awareness<br>Nonverbal/no speech<br>(acquaintance) |
|---|---|---|
| Stage I (gradual)<br>Heedfulness of a one-point concentration with zeal and diligence(*appamada* /vigilance) | 1<br>*Samatha* targets calm and tranquillizing<br>(serenity) | 2<br>*Samadhi* targets flame extinction: *Nirvana*<br>(flow) |
| Stage II (gradual)<br>Wise reflection: aims at wholesome karmic action (*yoniso manasikara/*focusing) | 3<br>*Vipassana:* insight in Dependent Origination<br>(The Buddha) | 4<br>*Sunyata* as wisdom of nonself/emptiness<br>(Nagarjuna) |
| Stage III (sudden)<br>Wisdom through an alert and clear comprehension (*sampajanna/*spying) | 5<br>*Non-duality* of subject–object/ emptiness–form<br>(Vasubandhu) | 6<br>*Kill the Buddha:* the last of hindrances<br>(Chan/Zen) |
| Stage IV (sudden)<br>Accomplishing benevolence of Inter-being (*antaratman/*inter-mind) | 7<br>*Brahmaviharas:* social meditations-in-action<br>(Mahayana) | 8<br>*dharmas*: empty social constructions (Relational Buddhism) |

full insight into self's emptiness (*anatman*). Balancing and fine-tuning heartfulness during stage I, the student, in watching and witnessing, develops the composure of self-control by calm tranquillizing and stress-free/undisturbed serenity amid adversity (*Samatha*), leading to Nirvana (the extinction of emotional arousal flames which is a momentary state that might become an enduring trait) via a stable/firm concentrative but gentle focus, receptive immersion/absorption of the object and non-suppressing quiescence during the activity which could be any. This state is also known as flow or the zone (*Samadhi*), being one with ever-changing impermanence and emptiness. Having thus tamed emotional afflictions, the practice advances into cleansing the doors of perception enabling the seeing of things as they are. This introspective insight comes about by remembering to be heedful regarding the unwholesomeness/wholesomeness of karma. Speech, thought, and self-dialogue arise toward insight in the dependent origination of body/speech/mind and karma (*Vipassana*) leading to the highest wisdom of *Sunyata* (not-self/emptiness), a state of luminous suchness or vast zeroness, a reset point in the total absence of emotional flames and the pinnacle of self-inquiry. The witness disappears in oblivion and emptiness.

Shifting to phase B (stages III and IV, states 5–8), a deepening of phase I, one is ready for sudden insight when travelling in relative *bodhicitta*, the dedication to awaken along extravert or joyful haha experiences which reflect a process of (re) constructing inter-mind via delightful affect while fully functioning in the marketplace. Inter-mind is depicted as Indra's net in the *Gandavyuha Sutra;* this is a jewel net with a gem at each crossing which reflects every other gem mirroring infinite interpenetration. Emptiness is deepened by practicing and experiencing the silencing state of non-duality (i.e., *mahamudra*) which transcends and eradicates Yin–Yang dualities created by speech, language, and inhering concepts (Dunne 2011). Thus, cause = effect, emptiness = form, beginning = end, left = right, up = down, heaven = hell, beautiful = ugly, good = bad, yes = no, and so on, which usually culminates in a mind-expanding humor.

In this non-dual spirit, *Kill the Buddha* is a Chan anarchistic practical instruction of the genius Lin-chi (died 866) who eradicated awakening–hindering concepts like "the Buddha" and progress-impeding dependency. The Buddha often used Brahmanistic terms like *Brahmaviharas* to which he alluded a different meaning. Thus, for Buddhists the term is a metaphor for sublime places of benevolent dwelling in one's heart that embodies kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity. Many more exercises boosting positive affect can be practiced, for example, mirth-laughing, joy-smiling, delight-singing, savoring-eating, and so on. These meditations in action are applied most solidly post emptiness. Lastly, there is the experiencing of *dharmas* as neither empty nor not empty, empty of emptiness, empty non-duality, and as ontologically mute social constructions empty of Transcendental Truths. Thus, telescoping and encountering *dharmas* in inner galaxies, insight dawns that things and thoughts are empty on the ultimate level and socially constructed on the provisional level. The whole process is a track of social deconstruction. Point zero of emptiness is not a goal in itself. A blank mind is a resetting or rebooting point and a scaffold for jumpstarting the collaborative practice of social reconstruction via

joyful experience while fully functioning in the marketplace in the pivotal tenor of what we already are: inter-mind/inter-self. As Dogen (1200–1253) said:

> To study Buddhism is to study the self, to study the self is to forget the self, to forget the self is to be one with others and be able to help others.

Each stage requires a particular mental investment. The four phases and eight states require in stage I of gradual progress during the heartfulness states 1 and 2: heedfulness of a one-point concentration with zeal, diligence, and vigilance (*appamada*) while training toward Nirvana (emotional flame extinction). Note that states 1 and 2 parallel the four *jhāna*s discussed earlier as these *jhāna*s also result in immersion and absorption, thus to Nirvana; they are equivalent to the Buddhist-lite mindfulness-based approaches. Understandably and as a matter of course, heartfulness continues in the remaining stages II, III, and IV. Stage II of gradual progress during states 3 and 4 requires wise reflection on karma and dependent origination (including the functional links of BASIC-I, i.e., *pathanas*), while focusing (*yoniso manasikara*) toward the highest wisdom: the emptiness of self. Stage III provides sudden experiences of insight during states 5 and 6: an alert and clear comprehension while working toward autonomy (freedom of dependency) by non-clinging to the last hindrance, the Buddha concept by spying (*sampajanna*) or witnessing and by understanding the *dharma's* Tao of Yin–Yang, the non-dual nature of things and thoughts. Stage IV provides sudden experiences of insight during states 7 and 8 by accomplishing benevolence toward understanding inter-mind, mind in-between selves (*antaratman*), while exercising and applying kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity, based on a deep understanding of the empty nature of *dharma's* reality as a social construction (Kwee 2013a, b, c).

The eight states or steps specify as follows:

1. *Samatha*: a stress-free serenity amid adversity state subsequent to the 12 meditations and preceded by concentration and immersion of the *jhāna*s, and consecutive calming as a basis for serenity during sensing, perceiving, and metacognizing. Apex is absorption (neither perception nor non-perception), taught to the Bodhisattva Gautama by gurus Kalama and Ramaputta at the start of his quest.
2. *Samadhi*: a deep concentrative awareness state quenching all flames of emotional arousal, that is, Nirvana, experienced in firm focus/receptive absorption (also in action, for instance, when painting, making music, or writing) called flow in psychology (Csikszentmihalyi 1990). As a child, Siddharta spontaneously slipped into a state of flow while focusing on a plow pulled by an ox.
3. *Vipasanna*: a state of insight on emotions. The mind and karma works in dependent origination, a process which refers to body/speech/mind: feeling, thinking, behaving, and interacting, BASIC-I modalities of karmic clinging which arise/subside in conjunction, while feeling greed (or underlying fear of loss or sadness of the lost) or hatred (or underlying other-hate/aggression or self-hate/depression).
4. *Sunyata*: a state of emptiness, a reset/reboot point after discerning–cleansing unwholesomeness and constituting the highest wisdom as opposed to believing

in a god, metaphysics or supernatural powers, which would imply the end of seeking self and self-inquiry, and missing the Buddhist wisdom on emptiness, not-self, and the nonself nature of things.
5. *Yogacara's* non-duality (*advaya*) is a state requiring heartfulness of speech and self-speech, which inheres in dualities as a trap. The practice transcends cyclical (*samsaric*) suffering and Nirvana.
6. "If you meet The Buddha on the road, kill him" is an expression by Chan master Lin-chi whose anarchistic/iconoclastic genius is still impressive for those who are eradicating binding concepts in favor of the freedom of emptiness by insight and understanding. As the Buddha is already dead, liquidation alludes to the hampering, progress-impeding psychological dependency on a guru.
7. *Brahmaviharas*: This refers to values that the Buddha and Buddhists revere. It does not mean a residence where the gods dwell literally, thus not some other-worldly place, but a this-worldly heartfelt heaven or paradise inhabited by the affect of loving kindness, empathic compassion, shared joy, and meditative equanimity. These metaphoric sublime feelings are to be immeasurably multiplied.
8. The *dharmas: dharma* is a scholastic term for the smallest unit of experience and is conceivable as neither empty nor not empty (the Buddha), empty of emptiness (Nagarjuna), and empty non-duality (Vasubandhu). It is here now fathomed as ontologically mute social construction empty of transcendental truths (Relational Buddhism).

Transitional conditions or feeling states might transform over time into relative stable personality traits. Note that the mindfulness-based Buddhist-lite approach only covers the first two states, which do not deal with self/not-self and preserves the illusion of self, which pristine mindfulness aims to dispel.

## 16.4 Contrasting Buddhist-lite and Pristine Mindfulness

Reviewing the literature leads to the conclusion that the salubrious outcome evidence of the Buddhist-lite MBI approaches are limited to the four *jhāna*s and heartfulness: the first two states of stress-free serenity (*Shamatha*) and concentrative absorption (Samadhi) leading to a state of Nirvana. The *Bahiya Sutta* includes an instruction toward *Samadhi* by the Buddha in a seemingly urgent situation. Bahiya was a man who was stressed, hurried, and was apparently going to die. It reads as follows:

> Bahiya, in the seen, there is only the seen, in the heard, there is only the heard, in the sensed, there is only the sensed, in the cognized, there is only the cognized. Thus you should see that indeed there is no thing here; this Bahiya is how you should train yourself. Since Bahiya there is for you in the seen, only the seen, in the heard, only the heard, in the sensed, only the sensed, in the cognized, only the cognized, and you see that there is no thing here, you will therefore see that indeed there is no thing there. As you see that there is no thing there, you will see that you are therefore located neither in the world of this, nor in the world of that, nor in any place betwixt the two. This alone is the end of suffering. (Udāna, 1.10)

Compared to Buddhist-lite mindfulness, pristine mindfulness offers a practice that inherently includes a judgmental aspect *(vikappa)* by differentiating and cultivating beneficial karma. Pristine mindfulness offers a practice that explicitly includes judgment as an inherent part of the exercise by discerning wholesome and unwholesome karma and cultivating beneficial karma as an inseparable part of training. In a book from circa 150 BCE, the paracanonical *Milindapanha,* The Questions of King Menandros (an ancient Greek king of the Indo-Greek kingdom who reigned in 155–130 BCE), the rationale of *sati* is presented. This work reports on a Socratic dialogue between King Menandros and the Hermit Nagasena comprising 304 questions and answers. *Basileos Soteros Menandrou* of Taxila (stretching from Afghanistan to Northern Pakistan and India) was called Dharma follower. After him, 27 Indo-Greek kings were all (but one) Buddhist until the demise of the kingdom in about the year 0 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indo-Greek_Kingdom) at about the same time when ancient Greece in the West was taken over by the Romans. Take note of the following passage (as, e.g., in www.sacred-texts.com/bud/milinda.htm):

> What, Nagasena, is the characteristic mark of mindfulness? Noting and keeping in mind: as mindfulness springs up in the mind of the recluse, he repeatedly notes the wholesome and unwholesome, blameless and blameworthy, insignificant and important, dark and light qualities and those that resemble them thinking…
> How is keeping in mind a mark of mindfulness? As mindfulness springs up in the mind, he searches out the categories of good qualities and their opposites thinking, “Such and such qualities are beneficial and such are harmful.” Thus does he make what is unwholesome in himself disappear and maintain what is good (takes possession of it)…

Besides being part and parcel of the 12 meditations and the Eightfold Balancing Practice, *sati* was also pointed at as a factor, out of seven factors, which are conducive for awakening (*bojjhanga*). This practice is indicated as a chord holding awareness and attention in place, that is, it corrects distraction and guards against the intrusion of unwholesome thoughts. This involves a distinctive capacity of what is wholesome and unwholesome, and the retention of what is beneficial and what is not in the pursuit of salubrious karma. The purpose is then to remove the unhelpful thoughts/feelings/actions and to retain the helpful thoughts/feelings/actions. Although *sati* starts in bare attention (Gunaratana 1992) and with a choiceless of awareness (Krishnamurti, 1895–1986) as in the first two states of pristine mindfulness, it is clearly not nonjudgmental. A choiceless awareness implies that there is no prejudice, sympathy, or antipathy for what appears in the spaces of body/speech/mind while apperceiving *dharmas*. Being nonjudgmental is confined initially when the trainee learns to respond rather than react automatically. The key is that one learns to see a thought or feeling as a thought or feeling, which is a distancing and dis-attaching leading to, for example, stopping to believe in the content of self-sabotaging thoughts (e.g., Segal et al. 2002). From a Buddhist perspective, these arguments make Kabat-Zinn’s (2003a, p. 145) phrase “the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience, moment to moment” a training comprising “attention,” “on purpose,” “present moment,” and “nonjudgmentally” a constrained exercise, that is, partly valid and incomplete vis-à-vis *sati*. Besides, the Buddhist

purpose of *sati* is the end of suffering by awakening to emptiness; however, it is not clear what “on purpose” exactly means in Kabat-Zinn’s phrase. It does seem to refer to the purpose of health and healing, but not to awakening and not-self/nonself in the Buddhist sense. For Buddhist practitioners who aim for the end of suffering by *sati* and a complete understanding of the *dharma,* the Buddhist-lite definition seems ill-founded.

Contrasting Buddhist-lite and pristine mindfulness further, the latter practice does not forget to be judgmental as the training in presence of mind, that is, not being absentminded, regards the most central notion of Buddhism: the formation of karmic intentional action. Body/speech/mind is judged vis-à-vis virtuousness in present and future intentions and actions. The grappling question what is meant by nonjudgmental in the MBI was also noted by Gethin (2011, p. 273), who aptly remarked: “Yet…an unqualified emphasis on mindfulness as ‘non-judgmental’ might be seen as implying that being nonjudgmental is an end in itself and that all states of mind are somehow of equal value, that greed is as good as non-attachment, or anger as friendliness.” Furthermore, he surmised: “Yet…by saying that although—or precisely because—the aim is to rid ourselves of greed, hatred and delusion, getting angry with and hating our own greed, hatred and delusion when they arise, or conversely, becoming pleased with and attached to our own nonattachment, friendliness and wisdom when they arise, is clearly something of a trap. And it is perhaps precisely this kind of practical approach that…[is] intended to highlight by characterizing mindfulness as ‘non-judgmental’” (p. 274).

However, this conjecture seems far-fetched as many aspects of the full-fledged Buddhist mindfulness/heartfulness effort as reviewed above are neglected or purposefully not included for political reasons to get it accepted in a non-receptive world of physicians where it was initially presented. Reinstalling the full meaning of *sati* seems to be a logical step now that the times are changing. Mind that Buddhist-lite mindfulness does not cover insight in the dependent origination of karma, neither does it include an understanding of not-self/emptiness. Kabat-Zinn (2011, p. 19) noted that, “Non-judgmental does not mean to imply to the novice practitioner that there is some ideal state in which judgments no longer arise. Rather, it points out that there will be many many judgments and opinions arising from moment to moment, but that we do not have to judge or evaluate or react to any of what arises, other than perhaps recognizing it in the moment of arising as pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral…”

Moreover, the Buddhist-lite MBIs do not take a relational perspective into account. Ever since the Buddha’s time, there have been several conceptualizations of and approaches to the practice of *sati*. According to the *Sedaka Sutta,* the Buddha expounded a relational perspective on *sati* that evolved onto a Mahayana variant of realizing inter-mind (*Gandhavyuha Sutra*). This discourse addresses the relational aspect of mindfulness by narrating a simile on two balancing acrobats: a master acrobat and his young female apprentice. Their act is that the man holds a bamboo pole on which the girl climbs via his shoulder. While she climbs the man says: “you watch me, while I watch you, and thus we will both be safe.” Her response: “No, master it is better if I watch myself and you watch you and by watching ourselves

we protect each other; that's the safest way to show our act." The clue of this story is that we practice *sati* in order to protect each other and that being older or a master or famous does not necessarily mean being wise. Analayo (2003) corroborated the point that *sati* is a way to protect oneself and protect others. This reciprocal process will eventually be beneficial for human relationships and the society at large.

Much different from Buddhist-lite mindfulness, confined to an individual view, pristine mindfulness' relational perspective encompasses a social psychology. Buddhism not only deals with processes of how people perceive, imagine, conceive, feel, emote, behave, but equally so with how we relate and live with each other. Unlike most psychologies which consider the mind located and confined in the brain, pristine mindfulness endorses a psychology of Relational Buddhism which views mind as originated in-between people, that is, as located outside rather than inside the skull. It deals with karma as intentional interactivity and with inter-mind/inter-self rather than with mind/self. Based on the psychology of social construction, Relational Buddhism states that mind is not only lurking behind the eyeballs and locked up between the ears, but operates foremost between people. The basic idea of Relational Buddhism is that human beings live in an ocean of relationships from the cradle to the grave. Born into a space of linguistic meanings in-between selves, inter-mind denounces the delusion of sinful souls and the illusion of bounded self cut off from others. Post parental lustful intercourse (*kamadathu*), sensing–emoting/thinking–talking capability is embodied. Speech is formed by the syllable (*mantra*) during meaning-making exchange (*rupadathu*). As "languaging" progresses, formless thoughts transform into fickle mind (*arupadathu*) and self-organize illusory independent self that fails to see inseparable selves spaced in-between people embedded in culture (*Gandavyuha Sutra*).

In order to cultivate gluing relationships in-between minds, it is helpful to apprehend the Buddha's view that everyone is embedded in a network of interconnected relationships (*Sigalovada Sutta*). Using a compass metaphor, there are six relational types each of which requires specific responsibilities and complementary conduct (kids/parents-East, siblings/friends-North, partner/spouse-West, teacher/student-South, disciple/guru-Upward, employee/employer-Downward). This template offers guidance to find the way in defining stances in relationships whose balance and harmony depend on *how* you say things rather than *what*. It is therefore pivotal to soak speech in vernacular reflecting interpersonal significance of "binding we" in full understanding of our human condition which is "relational being in dependent origination" (cf. Gergen 2009b). As a Buddhist practice, pristine mindfulness also deals with the three poisons that arise in interpersonal context. The human predicament is rooted in greed, hatred, and ignorance on how the mind works. Its realization corrects the illusion of self/soul and cures the delusion of the metaphysics of god(s) and the supernatural. The psychology of greed inheres in the fear/anxiety about losing a loved object and the sadness/grief for having lost a loved object. The psychology of hatred inheres in the anger toward oneself leading to depression and the anger toward someone that might lead to aggression. By lifting the karmic causes of these self-sabotaging emotions, one is liberated to freely move toward the *Brahmaviharas* (*Brahmavihara Sutta*).

Thus, seven relational scenarios of basic emotions are discerned: depression, fear, anger, sadness, joy, love, and silence–serenity–emptiness. In effect, "I am linked, therefore I am" (Gergen): to be is to be related or inter-be and to act is to interact. Intelligible thinking is relational activity executed as covert verbalized or visualized speech much in the same vein that emotions are relational scenarios according to the culture one lives by. Thus, the karmic result of intentional action, which usually appears unbeknownst, affects body/speech/mind. Embedded in a web of interpersonal relationships, the individual's psychological malaise cannot but inhere in relational meaning. *Duhkha,* the whole gamut of emotional suffering and dissatisfaction linked to birth, aging, illness, and death is interpersonal. They are relational performances of affect, creative scenarios expressing sociocultural meaning. Meaning is anchored in speech, a prime interest in Relational Buddhism and pristine mindfulness. Speech is the shared common ground in the pursuit of the real, the rational, and the good. It submits that anything conceivable is an interpretation emanating from a particular social group or community that owes intelligibility to sociocultural values. In other words: There is no reality unless the majority agrees on its truthfulness.

In search for meaning, Relational Buddhism leans on Wittgenstein's heritage regarding the relationship between speech/language and reality. Referring to metaphysical questions, Wittgenstein (1922, p. 90) came up with the proposition, "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent," which sounds Buddhist. In the human sciences, where absolute synonymy between words and objects does not exist, reality can only be approached, not exacted. Therefore, there are no unilateral definitions of rationality or goodness. A definition is only valid in a particular context and in certain circumstances and societies. Speech reflects interconnectedness and is effective whenever people of the same language group understand each other. In order to secure sane interaction and healthy interrelatedness, one is heedful of intelligible speech. Meaning and reality are social constructions that come about through communal use.

If pristine mindfulness is a psychological experience, Nirvana is not a paradise beyond, a destiny for reincarnation of the soul, but a psychological (re)birth of liberation on the level of affect after extinguishing negative emotions. To arrive at this level, one empties from self by un-defiling, un-afflicting, and un-fermenting unwholesome karma of I–me–mine/self or ego. The psychological inference of karma as intentional interaction reflects a secular view that does not refer to retribution or tallying good and evil deeds. Rather than using ethical terms like god or devil, which mold the user into a religious blueprint, the terms wholesome and unwholesome, which might differ from person to person, are preferred to qualify and judge the type of karma pursued in *sati*. What is more, karma is considered not located in the head separated from others but as embodied action born in relationship and in dependent origination with thought/reason, feeling/emotion, and volition/motivation. Few are prepared for such wrenching dislocation, but for the practitioner of pristine mindfulness the horizons are exciting. The acumen of pristine mindfulness depends on clinical and relational experience based on a demystified and metaphorical but secular interpretation of Buddhism.

## 16.5 Mindfulness-Based Approaches: A Critical–Constructive Review

MBIs have become a hot topic among health-care workers who base their work on empirical evidence (Didonna 2009). The prototype is MBSR, an 8-week outpatient intensive course, comprising body scan visualization, hatha yoga, sitting, walking, CD-guided homework, and self-monitored practice. This practice has sparked hype among adherents who have developed similar programs like mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT), mindfulness-based relapse prevention, and mindfulness-based eating awareness training. For instance, MBCT is effective in preventing relapse into depression for up to 60 weeks for those who have suffered three or more depressive episodes (Kenny and Williams 2007; Ma and Teasdale 2004) and could reduce the use of antidepressant maintenance medication (Kuyken et al. 2008). Shown to be more effective than a waiting list or treatment as usual control group in heterogeneous samples, MBIs meet the American Psychological Association's designation as probably efficacious (Baer 2003; Grossman et al. 2004; Shigaki et al. 2006) and the National Institute for Clinical Excellence approval for its use in the National Health Service in the UK. Since 2004, it is indicated by the British National Health Service for depression and as a prophylaxis against stress, anxiety, and depression.

Studies of what might be the mechanisms of action of mindfulness-based mindfulness have mushroomed. Despite promising results, suggesting the intervention is beneficial for treating psychological and physical disorders, the findings are inconclusive. For example, in a review of 15 controlled studies, Toneatto and Nguyen (2007) found that MBSR does not have a reliable effect on clinical symptoms of anxiety and depression. It seems to me that the state of the art of MBIs is statistically efficacious rather than clinically effective. The jury is still out.

One systematic review and meta-analysis of the effects of MBCT was based on six randomized controlled trials, with a total of 593 participants (Piet and Hougaard 2011). Compared to treatment as usual or placebo controls, MBCT significantly reduced the risk of relapse with a risk ratio of 0.66, corresponding to a relative risk reduction of 34 %. Participants with three or more previous episodes had a relative risk reduction of 43 %. There was no risk reduction for participants with only two episodes. In two studies, the intervention was at least as effective as maintenance antidepressant medication. Thus, the results indicated that MBCT is an effective intervention for relapse prevention in patients with recurrent major depressive disorders in remission with three or more previous depressive episodes. This finding was substantiated in a more recent meta-analysis by Khoury et al. (2013) who reported that MBIs are effective for a variety of psychological problems and especially for reducing anxiety, depression, and stress.

In the most recent meta-analysis of 47 MBI studies (Goyal et al. 2014), randomized clinical trials with active controls for placebo effects were graded in terms of the strength of evidence based on effect sizes. MBIs had moderate evidence of improved anxiety (effect size = 0.38 at 8 weeks; 0.22 at 3–6 months), depression

(0.30 at 8 weeks and 0.23 at 3–6 months), and pain (0.33), with low evidence of improved stress and mental health-related quality of life. There was low evidence (no effect or insufficient evidence of any effect) of these programs on mood, attention, substance use, eating habits, sleep, and weight. The authors conclude that there was "insufficient evidence of any effect of meditation programs on positive mood, attention, substance use, eating habits, sleep, and weight…no evidence that meditation programs were better than any active treatment (i.e., drugs, exercise, and other behavioral therapies)…[they]… result in small to moderate reductions of multiple negative dimensions of psychological stress" (p. 357).

One needs to bear in mind that the populations targeted in *sati,* Buddhist psychology/therapy and mindfulness-based mindfulness differ as their aims differ: awakening, personality change, coping with stress and other disorders. Quantitative outcome evidence endorsing Buddhist practice as a whole and pristine mindfulness/heartfulness in particular is lacking. The question is whether the qualitative evidence down the ages on the salubrious outcome of Buddhism suffices, that is, sufficiently corroborates Dharma's boon, considering its surviving the ravages of time during 2600 years and with hundreds of million people who claim its benefits. In this framework, the statistical evidence on mindfulness-based mindfulness, how little favorable it may be, contributes to pristine mindfulness' effectiveness even though Buddhist-lite mindfulness only covers calming serenity (*Samatha*) and concentrative absorption (*Samadhi*). Buddhism's mature state in human history asks for adjustment to the information age and psychological guidelines. Developments in this direction are already underway. Recently, Theravada Buddhist theory based on interpretations of the *Abhidhamma* (an abstraction of the Buddha's discourses) entered the space of mainstream psychology in a quest to account for the effectiveness of MBI (Grabovac et al. 2011).

The positive research data on MBIs are embraced as an important ingredient by clinicians in various treatments (Shapiro et al. 2006). This is in spite of the fact that the definition of the mindfulness-based mindfulness concept is a subject of continuous debate: What exactly constitutes this mindfulness? Which factors are involved? Kabat-Zinn's (1990) early definition includes: (1) nonjudging, (2) nonstriving, (3) acceptance, (4) patience, (5) trust, (6) openness, and (7) letting go. Kabat-Zinn (2003b) further added (8) compassion, (9) interest, (10) friendliness, and (11) openheartedness toward the experience observed regardless of its quality. Kabat-Zinn (2005) added (12) nonreactivity, and (13) intentionality. However, this intentionality does not seem to refer to karmic intentionality, but rather to mindfulness' deliberate and effortless practice. The most recent addition is (14) memory as "one natural function of present moment awareness [is] to remember the immediate past" (Kabat-Zinn 2011, p. 19). The rationale is that "the element of retention… did not seem either necessary or useful to feature in a working definition of mindfulness in the West, given how cognitive we tend to be already" (p. 19). Finally, Kabat-Zinn (2011, p. 20) added (15) non-duality as an element as well, "as per the teaching of the Heart Sutra"…"thus, on non-doing, non-striving, not-knowing, non-attachment to outcomes" which reflects a Chan/Zen influence. Others have added further characteristics, such as: gentleness, generosity, empathy, gratitude, loving

kindness (Shapiro et al. 1998); and self-regulation, values clarification, cognitive–emotional–behavioral flexibility, and exposure (Shapiro et al. 2006). Furthermore, Shapiro and colleagues postulated that "re-perceiving" is the meta-mechanism of change and that "on purpose" can be interpreted as "intentional", that is, a personal view why one practices (e.g., to reduce hypertension). Acknowledging intention as the investigative effort to observe thoughts and feelings, a consensus explanation emphasizes acceptance. Meanwhile, we may conclude that the term intention as used by these authors does not reflect the Dharma's meaning of intention as karmic willful activity meant to pursue a wholesome life. It is safe to state that there is no consensus about what exactly constitutes either mindfulness or intention in the MBI approaches.

A consensus panel proposed a two-component definition: "the self-regulation of attention so that it is maintained on immediate experience, thereby allowing for increased recognition of mental events in the present moment"and "adopting a particular orientation toward one's experiences in the present moment, an orientation that is characterized by curiosity, openness, and acceptance" (Bishop et al. 2004, p. 232). According to Siegel et al. (2008), nonjudgment, compassion, and acceptance are clinical expansions of the original meaning of *sati,* which only includes the basic elements of attention, awareness, and remembering. Therapists embrace the acceptance component as one needs first to be aware of the problem to be able to change it. Indeed, according to Mikulas (2011), most definitions of mindfulness formulated by Western authors refer to concentration rather than *insight*. This corroborates pristine mindfulness' proposition that the salutary outcome of Buddhist-lite mindfulness refers to *Samatha* and *Samadhi*. Most importantly, MBI mindfulness conspicuously lacks Buddhist psychology as a framework of its practice (DelMonte 2011; Kwee 2010; McWilliams 2011).

A review of questionnaires reveals the psychometric potential of five factors: (1) nonreactivity to experience, (2) observing inner experience, (3) acting with awareness, (4) describing with words, and (5) nonjudgmental about experience (Baer et al. 2006). Whether mindfulness is a state or trait, process or outcome, cure or care remains the subject of ongoing study. Mindfulness as conceived and dispensed in health care is floating adrift not only from *sati* from which it has been wrest but also from its avowed purpose as it is missing crucial Dharma basics. Mindfulness in the MBI approaches like dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) and acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), advertently exclude the Dharma as well. Although it is emphasized that mindfulness as intervention is not a quick fix, the Buddhist psychological underpinning is evidently absent. The question arises: Can MBIs be invoked without subscribing to the Dharma? Traditionally, *sati* is not a goal in itself, but a tool with an inextricable function in the Buddha's project to liberate humanity from *duhkha*. This is a larger aim than alleviating patients' stress. The tactics behind abating MBI's mindfulness from its Buddhist roots is to not burden clients with Buddhism and to not repel mainstream professionals (e.g., Grepmair et al. 2008). This leaves MBI professionals and clients with a procedure decontextualized from Dharma.

No one is obliged to master the Dharma and Buddhist psychology (e.g., Shapiro and Carlson 2009, p. 9), but is it justifiable to privilege "universal values" due to skittishness to embrace Buddhist values? As Kabat-Zinn (2003b) stated:

> [Dharma] is at its core truly universal, not exclusively Buddhist…*a coherent phenomenological description of the nature of mind, emotion, and suffering and its potential release*… mindfulness…being about attention, is also of necessity universal. There is nothing particularly Buddhist about it (italics added, p. 145)…. It is an inherent human capacity…received its most explicit and systematic articulation and development within the Buddhist tradition…although its essence lies at the heart of other ancient and contemporary…teachings as well (p. 146)…[Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction] needed to be free of the Buddhist origins…the objective was not to teach Buddhism…but to…experiment with…novel… methods…. At the same time, the program needed to remain faithful…to the universal dharma dimension alluded to, which…lies at the very core of…mindfulness. The task… is to translate the meditative challenges and context into…the lives of the participants, yet without denaturing the dharma dimension…. This requires…understanding of that dimension… through…personal engagement…meditation retreats at Buddhist centers…. (p. 149)

Thus, there is the bewildering impression that the Dharma is diluted to some universal lawfulness. Also Davidson and Kabat-Zinn (2004, pp. 150–152) dismiss Buddhist psychology by stating that mindfulness, defined as a moment-to-moment nonjudgmental awareness, "does not include Buddhist psychology"; it is an isomorphic translation "for greater awareness,self-knowledge, equanimity, and self-compassion" practiced "across all activities of daily living" aimed at "the cultivation of insight and understanding of self and self-in-relationship" "the cultivation of openhearted presence [has] nothing particularly Buddhist." Revisiting these issues, Kabat-Zinn (2009b, pp. xxviii–xxix) seemed to obfuscate the above by contriving that his use of the mindfulness concept is also:

> [A]n umbrella term that subsumes…the Eightfold Noble Path, and…the dharma itself…. We never limit our use of mindfulness to its most narrow technical sense…. I offered an *operational* definition…[which] leaves the full dimensionality and impact of mindfulness…implicit and available for ongoing inquiry…. [T]he word *mindfulness* does double-duty as a comprehensive but tacit umbrella term that included other essential aspects of dharma, [the choice] was made as a potential skilful means to facilitate introducing what Nyanaponika Thera referred to as *the heart of Buddhist meditation* into the mainstream of medicine…and the wider society in a wholly universal rather than Buddhist formulation and vocabulary…[His] inclusive and non-dual formulation offered both validation and permission to trust and act on my own direct experience of the meditation practice and the dharma…even if…it was glossing over…Buddhist psychology…that I felt could be differentiated and clarified later….

If this post hoc rationalization is acceptable, disgruntled Asian psychologists with a Buddhist background, who expressed their worry about Buddhist-lite mindfulness, cannot but feel relieved. Buddhist meditation without Buddhism is not a *chutzpah* after all?! (For instance at the Second Asian Cognitive Behaviour Therapy conference, Bangkok, 2008; reported in Kwee 2009.)

Mindfulness is indeed just a human quality, that is nothing new (Shapiro and Carlson 2009). Do something dangerous and *sati* will arise in a natural way. However, by excluding the Eightfold Balancing Practice, one deforms and cripples the Dharma from where mindfulness is taken. Besides, by making an appeal to the

Hippocratic oath (Kabat-Zinn 2009a) to call on ethics is a creative move, although most MBI practitioners are not MDs, but no guarantee to prevent mindfulness-based sniping and raping? What's more, substituting the Four Ennobling Realities by a universal Dharma is in a way disparaging and mind boggling. Is there more behind the move than the politics of getting mindfulness accepted in the medical ranks? As Gethin formulated (Williams and Kabat-Zinn 2011, p. 14; italics added):

> …the abstraction of mindfulness from its context within a broad range of Buddhist meditative practices might seem like an appropriation and distortion of traditional Buddhism that loses sight of the Buddhist goal of rooting out greed, hatred and delusion. From a different Buddhist perspective, it might seem to be an example of "skill in means"…it provides a way of giving beings the opportunity to make a first and important initial step on the path that leads to the cessation of suffering. From yet another perhaps still Buddhist perspective that might be characterized as "modernist," it strips Buddhism of some of its unnecessary historical and cultural baggage, focusing on what is essential and useful. A non-Buddhist perspective might regard the removal of the unnecessary historical and cultural baggage as finally revealing the useful essence that had hitherto been obscured by the Buddhist religion. *Finally we might regard the coming together of practices derived from Buddhism with the methods of modern western cognitive science as affording a true advance that supersedes and renders redundant the traditional Buddhist practices.*

Is it appropriation after all which will lead to pushing Buddhism into oblivion? One might think so, but in a laudable special issue of *Contemporary Buddhism* (2011) mindfulness is reinstalled in the larger Buddhist context by acknowledging its provenance. Williams and Kabat-Zinn (2011) declared that the introduction of mindfulness into mainstream medicine was a matter of politics to get the Trojan horse inside and conjecture that employing Buddhist traditional language would have led to its rejection by physicians and psychologists. Whether that would be the case remains obscure. After the fact, nobody knows how and what: was it appropriation, exploitation, fragmentation, decontextualization, or recontextualization? No MBI professional seems to be unappreciative toward Buddhism and one cannot but be struck by the openness the *Contemporary Buddhism* issue radiates considering its breadth and scope of bringing back mindfulness in the bosom of the Dharma. That anthology reinstalls and reinstates the Buddhist caliber of mindfulness. No doubt is left about the Buddhist roots of mindfulness in the MBI approaches.

## 16.6 Discussion

The "beyond" in this chapter's title is dealt with next. Mindfulness as in MBI has begun a march in Western culture initially as a healing panacea for various ills. It has reached not only seekers but also a whole gamut of people: therapists, patients, doctors, celebrities, executives, prisoners, soldiers, and politicians. Buddhists who have studied Buddhism and practiced *sati* will support the health and healing efforts of MBI, but do not certify the stealth Buddhist offering of a universal quality as Buddhist authentic (www.tricycle.com/blog/10-misconceptions-about-buddhism). The flip side is that the mushrooming courses heighten the risk of malignant practice. While it requires basic psychological knowledge and clinical experience as

well as sufficient personal training and Buddhist wisdom, most MBI trainers in the open market seem to lack proper education in these areas. Overclaiming the effects may lead to blindness for adverse side-effects. Considering the potential drawbacks (like psychosis, depersonalization, panic, headache, or trauma reliving) and the pseudo-competence of many providers, clients might become victimized. The self-occupation by taking a step back to only watch thoughts and feelings go by and keep a wandering mind focused requires hard work with an expert guide. Not surprisingly, even quacks show up in a booming business. Low or non-qualified teachers, like individuals who followed the program once, present themselves as an MBI expert for a quick fix. As among the courses' attendants are likely susceptible people with mental health problems, the training is advisably done by mental health workers. MBI is not a magic bullet: Will a register help prevent McCompassion?

The growing numbers of trainers and trainees makes mindfulness as in MBI a mainstream practice that is still frenzied and which is perhaps, according to Kabat-Zinn (2014; www.youtube.com/watch?v=5y8ARA6yDrA), making headway from revolution to movement to renaissance. It has "the potential to ignite a universal or global renaissance on this planet that would put even the European and Italian Renaissance into the shade…[and] may actually be the only promise the species and the planet have for making it through the next couple hundred years." The secret is science. Not so much the outcome studies as discussed above, but rather the neuroscientific data on the brain as a plastic organ of experience able to alter its structure and function, and shape skills. To date, reports were on the selective structural thickening (of the neocortex, hippocampus, and insula), the shrinking of the amygdale and the functional quieting of default mode networks (Davidson 2013). These findings seem to have impressed the public at large, even if the significance is yet unclear. In effect, mindfulness as in MBI is not a passing fad. From a Buddhist perspective Buddhist-lite mindfulness is not inadequate, but incomplete; thus, completion is recommended. Relational Buddhism's pristine mindfulness offers links, fills gaps, and recontextualizes. The art of heartfulness and the science behind the MBI do not bite each other. Pristine mindfulness' eight states are appealing to people who seek awakening, while people who participate in Buddhist-lite mindfulness target the alleviation of health problems by "nirvanic calming." It would be exciting to see hardwired studies on pristine mindfulness, Relational Buddhism, Buddhist psychology/therapy and Karma Transformation. To date, there is growing evidence that various "Buddhist-derived interventions" applied to mood spectrum disorders, substance use disorders, and schizophrenia accrue promising results (Shonin et al. 2014).

The heart of heartfulness is the emptiness experience, clearly described by the Buddha (*Maha Sunnata Sutta* and *Cula Sunnata Sutta*). Relational Buddhism is about relational living and heartfulness of speech based on a social constructioning perspective which reflects the spirit of Buddhist liberating emptiness and not-self. Aiming at merging Western psychology/therapy and Buddhism, Relational Buddhism proposes to be mindful of inter-mind. At the bottom, Relational Buddhism may be viewed as the "Fourth Turning of the Dharma Wheel" after the Buddha's first turning *(Dharmachakra),* Nagarjuna's "middle way" turning *(Madhyamaka)*

and Vasubandhu's "practice only" turning *(Yogacara)*. Indeed, Relational Buddhism's aspiration is realizing a fourth turning (www.taosinstitute.net/psychotherapy-kwee) by moving toward a paradigm shift to establish cutting-edge psychology/therapy as a vehicle for disseminating a twenty-first-century secular Dharma in a non-Buddhist world. This sounds like there is another current which synchronically works alongside the mindfulness movement toward realizing a renaissance: the renaissance of Buddhism as a Way *(Magga)* for humanity's serenity, contentment, and happiness http://relationalbuddhism.org).

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