



## Editor **XIANYANG CARL JEROME** claims that real happiness comes from the cushion, not from our thinking mind.

*Words! Words! Words! I'm so sick of words!  
I get words all day through;  
First from him, now from you!  
Is that all you blighters can do?*  
—Eliza in My Fair Lady

The answer to Eliza's question is "Yes, that's about the only thing anyone does."

In Buddhist philosophy, however, there is another answer: *meditate*. For only with meditation can we end our confusion and suffering. If words alone could do it, we would have done it long ago; if some intellectual understanding were all it took, we would have thought our way out of samsara eons ago. The discursive mind, however, is not enough.

To end our suffering, we must develop our meditation and the new awareness that arises from meditation. This new awareness, which arises from right concentration, is an awareness that experiences the world without producing dukkha. We are no longer manhandled and jerked around by every sensory perception, instead to walk a new path that is tranquil and peaceful. At last, we really see the mountain.

As the Buddha said on his deathbed, we should value every moment of this precious life, a life in which the development of wisdom is truly possible, and we should practice, practice, practice toward that end.

There are two aspects to Buddhist meditation: one is the calming aspect that occurs when we watch our breath; the other is the development of insight. The purpose of our practice, then, is to become calm enough to see clearly and to develop the insight necessary to liberate us from ignorance and craving.

And words alone cannot deliver us to freedom. For that, we need a daily meditation practice—meaning sitting for 40 minutes to an hour once or twice a day. Words can then be used to support the practice on the cushion in a way that furthers it, rather than hinders it. It would be silly, wouldn't it, not to use study and understanding to support our meditation practice?

We cannot hope to be successful on the cushion, however, if we are entrenched in our traditional patterns, like greed (seeking more of what we like and avoiding things we don't like), anger, pride, jealousy, and sensual pleasures. So we must try to reduce these in our everyday lives in support of our sitting. A metta practice can be beneficial in this, so can certain chanting practices, as well as certain contemplative practices.

Meditating in this way teaches us that real happiness comes from within, from the meditative mind. And once we understand this, we are inspired us to practice more and more diligently and with greater and greater effort, and our lives lighten and become joyful.

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