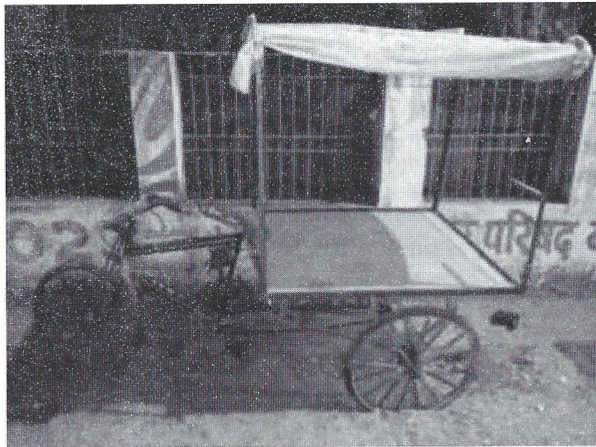


## In Buddha's Footsteps

Every human has the basic desire to be happy. Our modern world appears to suggest that Mr Google always has the required answer and his best friend, Mr Amazon, will deliver our latest must - have slice of happiness the next day. It could be said that Buddhism is far from this attempt at a modern world Utopia. Buddhism is not an intellectual study that simply requires the completion of a weekend course to dwell in a world of inner peace; it is a revealing of that which is already there. Before embarking on a journey into Buddhism, consideration of your current physical and mental health is a grounding that will highlight realisations. While our senses are gateways to inner peace, they can also be the origins of our disharmony.

Buddhism nurtures a mind to observe that which arises via the senses, slows down the constant chasing, and welcomes the results that seep in. With 84,000 teachings, Buddhism is like an enormous jigsaw that appears daunting when first introduced, yet by taking small, measured steps, the first hints of a picture begin to emerge. As a new piece of the Buddhist jigsaw presents itself, an understanding of the mind grows. By a process of bringing this understanding into your daily life, a training of the mind begins.

In a Christian country like the UK, the term karma may be unfamiliar to some. However, in predominantly Hindu countries like India and Nepal, karma is fully integrated. Whether good fortune or suffering is being experienced, this is accepted as one's karma. This may manifest in operating a cycle rickshaw to earn a living, while for others transporting scrap metal and discarded card via a cycle cart is your karma.



Buddha was born Prince Siddhartha, a Hindu, before becoming enlightened.

Meditation and karma are two simple Buddhist terms that are widely used. Mr Google will gladly assist in any questions you ask him of these two words. Countless articles, books, videos and courses will present for your

consideration. Overload and confusion soon become unexpected visitors. Assistance of the British military can be of great help with this – KISS (keep it simple stupid). The very word, meditation, can appear in itself to be complex. In simple terms just breathe. No special clothing is required, courses attended or music downloaded. Make yourself comfortable. Breathe. Merely observe the thoughts that arise (these are natural) but do not engage with them. Let the thoughts dissolve. Breathe, observe, dissolve ... Take a minute, take two minutes, enjoy longer, just be. Repeat as you desire. After a while, the observing will bring a slowing down of the constant chasing, and the slowing down will assist the observing. The observing and slowing down will seep into the essence of you.

Karma is a Buddhist word for actions and the future consequences of those actions. An action can be a physical action, spoken action or a mental action. Each action we take is a positive, neutral or negative action, and will create a future experience to reflect this. Karma may ripen in 2 minutes, two years, or in a future life. The previous actions we have taken will be ripening now.

Our meditations are training our mind to be filled with inner peace. Our positive actions create future positive results to ripen. What we did yesterday we cannot change, but we can start a new beginning immediately to the karma we want to create for the future. We do this by the way we respond to everything that happens in our life. If suffering arises, we are sometimes in a position to take some action but even then, we must accept the suffering, knowing that a past negative action is being released. If our suffering is a headache, we may take a paracetamol, but until this works, we must endure the suffering.

A Buddhist practice has two distinct aspects: understanding the mind and training the mind. For me, my Buddhist practice, which involves rising early, meditations, prayers, walking meditations and reading, could be considered understanding the mind. How this is put into practice, when I drive my car, eat food, and carry out my work, is the training of my mind. Understanding and training the mind are interdependent. Each aspect complements the other to bring together a jigsaw of the mind enhanced with inner peace. This inner peace that is found in simple meditation and positive actions, is not a stranger to us, it has always been there. Buddha nature is our essence.

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