

Work & Money: Why Work?

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Programme Six Outline

Asking the Questions

2 minutes

A kaleidoscope of images and questions introduces issues related to work and money. Young people comment through a series of soundbites.

The Buddhist teaching

The Noble Eightfold Path

2 minutes

Routine activities at Samye Ling Tibetan Centre are the setting for introducing the Noble Eightfold Path and its traditional guidance on work.

A member of the Western Buddhist Order working in a gift shop in the heart of Manchester explores the concept of **Right Livelihood** in the modern world.

At Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey, Reverend Master Daishin Morgan explains the importance of **work as spiritual practice** in the Zen tradition.

The Bodhisattva Ideal and the Six Perfections

4 minutes

The kitchen team working at the annual Buddhafield Festival provides the backdrop for an introduction to the Bodhisattva Ideal and an explanation of the practice of the **Six Perfections** of the Bodhisattva.

Buddhists Respond

13 minutes

Filmed in situ, practising Buddhists give their views on:

- **money**
- **work**

Contributors

Theravada - Most Venerable Vajiragnana **Tibetan tradition** - Gelongma Lhamo
Soto Zen - Brian Gay **Japanese Pure Land** - Reverend Professor Sato
Friends of the Western Buddhist Order - Dharmachari Alayavajra and
 Dharmacharini Maitrinandi

Background Information

Samye Ling Monastery and Tibetan Centre

The Samye Ling Monastery and Tibetan Centre were established in 1976 by two *rimpoches*, or teachers, who had fled from Tibet. Samye Ling is devoted to upholding the teaching of the Kagyu school of Buddhism and preserving Tibetan culture. It comprises a community of some 100 people (including monks, nuns and lay volunteers), a temple, retreat and study facilities, and the Tara College of Tibetan Medicine. Its Abbot and spiritual guide is Venerable Lama Yeshe.

Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey

Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey was established in 1972. Its founder was the Reverend Master Jiyu Kennett, an Englishwoman, who, after many years' training in the East was recognised as a *roshi*, or Zen master. Returning to the West, she established the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives, Throssel Hole Abbey, and Shasta Abbey in the USA. About 40 monks (men and women) are resident at Throssel Hole.

Evolution Manchester

Evolution Manchester is an FWBO team-based right livelihood business. It is one of a chain of gift shops run by Windhorse Trading, a Buddhist business based in Cambridge.

The Buddhafield Project

Through its vegetarian cafe and meditation teaching, the Buddhafield Project aims to introduce people to Buddhist principles at major events such as the Glastonbury Festival. In a drug- and alcohol-free environment, it offers meditation as well as activities such as dancing, drumming, t'ai chi, yoga, hot tubs, sweat lodges, earth skills, debates, and rituals of invocation. For more information see Contacts, p62.

Gelongma Lhamo is a nun in the **Tibetan** tradition (Karma Kagyu Lineage), based at the Samye Ling Monastery and Tibetan Centre. She is personal assistant to Venerable Lama Yeshe.

Most Venerable Vajragnana is Head Monk of the London Buddhist Vihara. He is one of the most senior monks in the **Theravada** school resident in Britain.

Reverend Professor Sato runs the Three Wheels Temple in West London, the first establishment of the Japanese True **Pure Land** (Jodo Shin Shu) school in Britain.

Brian Gay is a Lay Minister in the **Order of Buddhist Contemplatives**. He works in management consultancy.

Dharmacharini Maitrinandi (FWBO) is a Member of the **Western Buddhist Order**. She lives in a women's community and leads the team of the Evolution gift shop in Manchester.

Dharmachari Alayavajra (FWBO) is a Member of the **Western Buddhist Order**. He leads the Buddhafield team, and is based in Brighton during the winter months.

Setting

Contributors

The Noble Eightfold Path



Key Points

The Noble Eightfold Path

- corresponds to the fourth Noble Truth, the way to the cessation of suffering
- is symbolised by the **dharmachakra**, an eight-spoked wheel which is also a symbol for Buddhism
- is a path of self transformation which Buddhists of all traditions and all walks of life try to follow
- has eight steps or limbs which together cover all aspects of life

Right View

Right Intention

Right Speech

Right Action

Right Livelihood

Right Effort

Right Mindfulness

Right Meditation

Right Livelihood

The fifth limb of the path provides guidance for Buddhists about work and earning a living. Practising Right Livelihood means

- avoiding work which causes harm to oneself or others
- doing work that is ethical and helpful to oneself and others

Traditionally prohibited work includes

- being a butcher or a soldier
- dealing in arms, drugs, alcohol or slaves

The Bodhisattva Ideal



Key Points

The Mahayana and Vajrayana schools of Buddhism emphasise that

- the principle of Enlightenment pervades the whole of existence
- all beings have within them the potential to become Enlightened
- the highest goal is to seek Enlightenment not for oneself alone, but for the sake of all beings; this is known as the **Bodhisattva Ideal**

The word Bodhisattva literally means Enlightenment Being. A Bodhisattva vows to free all beings from suffering and to help them gain Enlightenment for themselves.

Avalokiteshvara - the Bodhisattva of Compassion

The figure of Avalokiteshvara

- represents supreme compassion
- views the suffering of the world with the wisdom and compassion of Enlightenment
- is very popular in Mahayana Buddhist countries
- is known as **Chenrezig** in Tibet, **Kuan Yin** in China and **Kannon** in Japan
- in one of his many manifestations, Avalokiteshvara has 11 heads and 1,000 arms, enabling him to see and help all suffering beings

The Six Paramitas (Perfections)

Following the Bodhisattva Path means practising the **Six Perfections**.

- **Dana** - giving or generosity. An attitude of generosity, in thought, word and deed; ultimately extended to all beings without expecting anything in return
- **Shila** - morality or ethics. The practice of the Precepts, based on the principle of **ahimsa**, or non-harm, and a deep respect for all life
- **Virya** - energy. A natural, persistent effort to work for the benefit of all beings
- **Kshanti** - patience or forbearance. The confidence and composure to acknowledge people and things as they are
- **Samadhi** - meditation. The development of constant awareness, concentration and clarity of mind
- **Prajna** - Wisdom. Insight into the true nature of reality, and deep understanding of the interconnectedness of all things



Theravada

Most Venerable
Vajiragnana
Head Monk
London Buddhist Vihara

Interview Transcript

Money

We monks are supported by the lay people, in return for the service that we render them. Even the temple is supported and maintained by the lay people.

In Buddhist countries we go round collecting our almsfood. Here we can't do that because going round for almsfood is considered begging and begging is forbidden in this country. It is a most respectable livelihood for a monk in Buddhist countries, but it is not known to the people here and they take it as an offence, so we have had to abandon it.

As a monk I am not expected to handle money, but I have to: nobody gives me free bus or tube rides [as is common in Asian countries] so I have to buy a ticket. Whether or not to handle money is a dilemma, but in this modern situation I have to.

Work

In the Theravada tradition we have monks, nuns and lay people. The role of lay people is to support the monks, and the monks' role is to look after lay people's religious needs, especially by teaching the Dhamma and meditation. In return lay people provide the monks with food, clothing, dwelling and medicine - these are the four main traditional requisites.

Some additional material, taken from the original interview with the Most Venerable Vajiragnana but not used in the video, has been included in this transcript.

Buddhists Respond Work and Leisure

Money

As a fully ordained nun I have a vow not to handle money or objects of great value. But these vows were designed in the time of the Buddha, two and a half thousand years ago. Never to handle money would be wonderful, but a bit impractical, so I have a very small allowance, for trips to see family, or essentials such as toothpaste and soap.

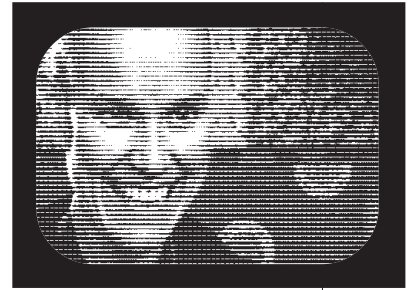
Work

I've been a nun for just over ten years. Before that I lived in a city and worked as a computer programmer. When I was first a Buddhist, I thought I needed to give up my work and spend all my time practising but it gradually dawned on me that there was a wealth of opportunity for training my mind in everyday life: getting on well with the people I worked with rather than giving in to anger, ambition or greed.

These opportunities also present themselves at Samye Ling. One of the main reasons we place so much emphasis on work is that we can learn so much through it. Though most of us think that it is an excellent thing to do to spend all our time meditating, most of us find that we are not really capable of it. We can daydream. Whereas if we are working with somebody who's telling us that really we're doing things wrongly we've got no choice but to look at the situation and try and come up with some kind of solution. It's a very useful method of spiritual development.

So in order to provide as many people as possible with a way of accessing the Dharma and benefiting from it, we spend large amounts of every day working. There are people who do building work, people who do office work, people who clean or cook: everything that needs to be done. And I work in the office mostly.

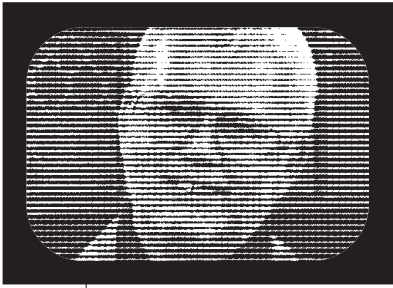
This transcript from the video interview has been edited, retaining the key points.



Tibetan Tradition

Gelongma Lhamo
Nun
Samye Ling Monastery
& Tibetan Centre

Interview Transcript



Soto Zen

Brian Gay
Lay Minister
Order of
Buddhist Contemplatives
Throssel Hole Abbey

Money

I don't think money is a problem. I think it's what you do with it that's the interesting thing!

Work

What's great about the Zen system is that we have a range of great stories of old Zen Masters. There's the classic one about an 80 year-old Zen Master who refused food because he'd been ill and he hadn't worked in the gardens and when they hammered on his door and said "Come on! You've got to have your food", he said, "A day without work is a day without food."

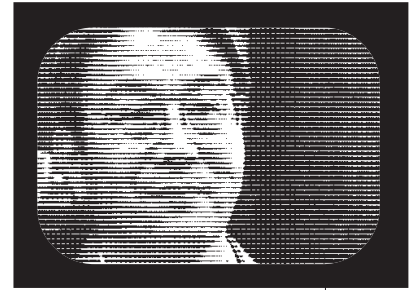
I've been coming to Throssel Hole since 1988 and I became a lay minister within the Order in 1993. The work I do is as a management consultant: some of my work is in London; some is local with voluntary organisations and it's around the area of management development, organisational development and one-to-one personal development.

Although the monks have in a sense renounced the world they do an awful lot of hard work. They actually built this place. OK, the lay people helped them, but they built it, they work in the gardens, they do the stonemasonry. They repair the tractor; they planted the trees. All this is work. So I see nothing strange in having a different form of practice as a lay person, which is centred upon work.

Right Livelihood is actually part of the practice and part of my work. That's because the practice is about helping individuals to realise who they really are and what their true nature is; and the work I'm involved with, at the individual level, is about helping individuals realise their true potential, to see situations differently, to find solutions to the problems that face them.

Some additional material, taken from the original interview with Brian Gay but not used in the video, has been included in this transcript.

Buddhists Respond
Work and Leisure



Pure Land
Reverend Professor
K.T. Sato
Head Priest
Three Wheels Temple

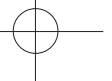
Money

Right Livelihood, the correct conduct of our lives, is part of our practice. Surrounded by good friends in our Sangha, we enjoy walking on the Noble Eightfold Path.

I am financially supported by our Sangha. The Temple is supported purely by donations from those followers who are happy to contribute financially, being involved in the Dharma movement of the Sangha.

We generate money to support our Sangha only by religious activities: firstly, holding regular meetings to help followers understand Buddhism; secondly, helping people solve their own problems through consultation and discussion; thirdly, holding memorial ceremonies that involve people in big religious events. What is important in this context is making people realise the truth of oneness of matter and mind as the core of Buddhist philosophy, and the essentiality of generosity, both spiritual and material, in our Buddhist lives.

This transcript from the video interview has been edited, retaining the key points.





FWBO

Dharmachari Alayavajra

Western Buddhist Order

Buddhafield Project

Money

Living and working with Buddhafield I don't need very much money. Most of my needs are met: certainly food and shelter but also more important needs like emotional support and communication, contact with people, cultural life.

Work

If you're alive you have to do something with your energy, so work is how you use your energy creatively right through the day. Ideally there would be no distinction between work and play. It depends on how you use your energy and how much you are engaged with what you're doing. If you're doing something you enjoy, you have more energy available, so we're trying to create working situations where people are being stretched: they're growing but they're also in good communication; they enjoy what they're doing and they're treated well by the people that they work with.

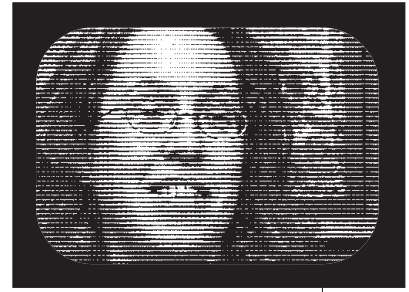
I don't like the idea of work much but I find within this context I'm very happy to use my energy creatively, and I want to move towards work. I think it's because the situation demands more of you - it actually develops you. Often it's at work that you come up against reality most immediately.

The Bodhisattva Ideal teaches that you can't just save yourself; you have to save all beings. By trying to improve this part of the world and welcoming people into a situation where they can practise and learn about Buddhism and develop, we hope we are changing the world. To me this is very much Bodhisattva activity. It's very idealistic. We are welcoming people who have high ideals and we're introducing them to the Bodhisattva Ideal.

A Buddhafield, or Pure Land, is where the influence of the Buddha is manifesting in the world. We're trying to manifest it here by trying to practise the Perfections - generosity, energy, patience, ethics and meditation - eventually, hopefully, leading to wisdom.

This transcript from the video interview has been edited, retaining the key points.

Buddhists Respond Work and Leisure



FWBO

Dharmacharini Maitrinandi

Western Buddhist Order
Evolution Gift Shop

Money

I think it's important to make money through the shop because I see money as opportunity. It's created the money for the Manchester Buddhist Centre: for people to be taught the Buddha's teachings and to learn how to meditate, and to create a quiet place in the middle of the city. Without the money from this shop, it would be very difficult for the Centre to operate.

Work

We don't just work in a gift shop. There's a much bigger perspective for the work we do: our work is our spiritual practice.

The principle that we work by is that we give what we can to the shop and take what we need. We try to live a simple life, taking the minimum from the shop's profits so that most of the money can be given away to the projects we support.

I want to work with other Buddhists, other women who choose to do the same things with their lives as I do, who want to live an ethical life and want to grow. I see the shop as a crucible, a place where all of us can be transformed.

Through working with a team of Buddhist women, we are able to face up to the Precepts on a moment-by-moment basis together. We are able to support each other, and sometimes even challenge each other, to live up to the Precepts.

I see the shop as a place where the public can meet Buddhists who are practising together and see how they relate to each other at work.

This transcript from the video interview has been edited, retaining the key points.