



Sasana Abhiwurdhi Wardhana Society

BUDDHIST MAHA VIHARA  
BRICKFIELDS KUALA LUMPUR

CONFERENCE

# Developing Mindful Living and Environmental Sustainability through Contemplative Practices



SATURDAY

22

AUGUST  
2026

TIME

9 A.M. - 4 P.M.

VENUE

Buddhist Maha Vihara, Kuala Lumpur

9.15-10.15

## Plenary 1

### Sustainable Living through Contemplative Practices

*Prof Erandi Lokupitiya explores how mindfulness reduces overconsumption and fosters responsible use of natural resources at personal and community levels.*



#### Prof Erandi Lokupitiya - University of Colombo

Professor Erandathie Lokupitiya holds a BSc Honors degree from the Dept of Zoology, University of Colombo, an MSc from the University of Wyoming, and a Ph.D. from Colorado State University, USA. Currently, she is serving as a Professor in Environmental Science at the Department of Zoology and Environment Sciences of the University of Colombo. Her areas of expertise include Environmental Science, climate change, and carbon cycle research. She has served as the National Expert for the preparation of the greenhouse gas Inventory of Sri Lanka, and she has served on several national-level committees, including the National Expert Committee on Climate Change Mitigation. She was the Founding Director of the Center for Environmental Initiatives of the University of Colombo. She has been coordinating the MSc in Climate Change and Environmental Management offered by the University of Colombo as well. She has been involved in the activities conducted by the Center for Meditation Research (CMR) of the University of Colombo as a resource person in meditation programmes and conferences, supervisor of postgraduate research, and a Board Member of the Center.

10.30-11.30

## Plenary 2

### Mindfulness and Flow Theory: Ancient Wisdom for Contemporary Living

*Dr. Shamala Ramasamy explores scientific support in positive psychology, particularly through Flow theory, which demonstrates that total absorption in the present moment is the primary driver of optimal experience and peak performance.*



#### Dr Shamala Ramasamy - IMU University

Dr. Shamala Ramasamy is a Senior Lecturer at IMU University with over 28 years of academic experience in higher education. She holds qualifications in the fields of psychology and education. She previously served as Head of Department and Programme Director for the Psychology programme. Dr. Shamala is a member of the American Psychological Association and an international affiliate of the Society for Industrial & Organizational Psychology (SIOP), USA. Her research interests include mental health, digital health behaviour, educational psychology, critical thinking, informal reasoning fallacies, and industrial & organizational psychology. She has secured national research grants, published extensively, supervised undergraduate and postgraduate students, and actively contributes to social initiatives through NGO, refugee, and university CSR work.

## Symposium

### Cultivating Mindfulness through Contemplative Practices

*Three eminent speakers and seasoned practitioners of different contemplative practices (meditation, qigong, yoga) highlight how mindfulness and mental and spiritual well-being are cultivated through their respective practices.*

**Moderated by Associate Professor Dr Lim Chooi Ling**



#### Meditation and mindfulness

**Prof Wasantha Gunathunga** - University of Colombo

Professor Wasantha Gunathunga is a Professor of Community Medicine at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, and an Advisor to the Centre for Meditation Research. He has a longstanding academic and research interest in exploring meditation as a tool for promoting physical and mental health. Bridging modern medicine with public health and contemplative practices, he has been a prominent contributor to the emerging dialogue on how training the mind through mindfulness meditation leads to sustainable mental wellbeing, positive behavioural change and healthier communities.



#### Qi Gong and mindfulness

**Dr Sara Low** - University of Western Sydney

Sara Low is a Registered Chinese Medicine Practitioner in Malaysia and Australia, a Certified Public Accountant, educator, researcher, and experienced Qigong practitioner with over 20 years of experience. Her work focuses on promoting holistic wellness by integrating traditional Eastern wisdom with modern knowledge, using Qigong to support physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. She has conducted research and published on Qigong, including its application in supporting people with cancer-related symptoms, and has shared her expertise through workshops and community programmes. She is passionate about empowering individuals and communities to enhance health, resilience, self-care, and quality of life through integrative wellness practices.



#### Yoga and mindfulness

**Master Manisekaran Ponnusamy** - MAYI Yoga Academy

Master Manisekaran is the Founder of the Malaysian Yoga Society (MYS) and the Malaysian Association of Yoga Instructors (MAYI), and Master Trainer at MAYI Yoga Academy. With over 35 years of experience in yoga, he is an accomplished teacher and advocate of integrating traditional yogic wisdom with contemporary approaches to managing the demands of modern life and enhancing holistic well-being. His teaching places particular emphasis on yogic philosophy, psychology, breath and mind practices, and cultivating self-awareness, conscious breathing, mental clarity, and the mind-body connection. He has represented the country at international yoga forums and is also the recipient of the National Outstanding Educator Award (Yoga Education) in 2016.

2.00 – 4.00

## Workshop (Parallel Session 1)

### Listening Within: The Science of Inner Awareness

#### *Exploring Interoception and Brain-Body Connection*

*Discover how interoception- the ability to sense and interpret internal bodily signals – shapes emotions, stress responses, attention, and well-being. Through simple science and guided activities, you will experience how inner awareness can improve focus, emotional balance, and daily life.*

*Pre-register to book your slot in the workshop, as it is limited to the first 40 registrants!*

*Pre-Registration link: <https://form.jotform.com/262131643851453>*



**Dr Kumar Seluakumaran** (University of Malaya)

Dr Kumar specializes in applied neuroscience with over 18 years of academic experience. He integrates physiological monitoring with experiential training methods to explore how internal awareness shapes mental states and behaviour. His workshops translate complex neuroscience concepts into practical strategies for stress management, emotional resilience, and improved focus in academic and professional settings.



**Dr Kyaimon Myint** (SEGi University)

Dr Kyaimon specializes in human physiology and contemplative neuroscience with over 20 years of experience in mindfulness research and medical education. She is passionate about the intersection of mind-body science, self-awareness, and well-being. Her workshops translate evidence-based contemplative practices into practical strategies for emotional balance, resilience, and holistic wellness in educational and community settings.

Personal Narratives (Parallel Session 2)

Narrative Insights and Personal Journeys into Mindful Living through Contemplative Practices.

Selected speakers will share their lived experiences on how contemplative practices have shaped their personal growth, professional practice, or community engagement.



Finding Strength Within: A Journey of Mindfulness, Resilience, and Sustainable Living  
Dr. Lwin Mye Aye – IMU University

Dr Lwin Mie Aye is a Senior Lecturer in Public Health at IMU University. She is also a researcher and an advocate for mental health and wellbeing. Her academic and research work focuses on mental health, digital mental health interventions, and strengthening wellbeing among healthcare professionals. Her relationship with mindfulness began much earlier than her academic career. Growing up in an environment where mindfulness practice was deeply valued, she was exposed to conversations and practices around mindfulness from a young age. At 13, she attended her first meditation retreat, marking the beginning of a lifelong journey. During her early adulthood, she became a committed practitioner and participated in multiple extended meditation retreats under the guidance of experienced and respected meditation teachers. Through years of practice, mindfulness has become more than a personal practice for Dr Lwin—it has been an important source of resilience as she navigated challenges in her personal life, career, academic journey, and research. Her experience has also shaped her understanding of the connection between inner wellbeing, mental health, resilience, and how we relate to the world around us. Dr Lwin hopes to share her personal journey and reflections on how mindfulness can be cultivated as a way of living—supporting greater awareness, resilience, compassion, and a more conscious relationship with ourselves, others, and our environment.



From Banker to Fitness Entrepreneur — A Journey Back to Self  
Ms. Shantadevi a/p Palanee Maniam

From being a banker, Ms Shantadevi transitioned into becoming a fitness studio entrepreneur following a life-changing health experience. What began as a reset towards a better lifestyle soon became a deeper journey in search of herself. Her yoga practice has opened the door to learning far beyond the mat, shaping her self-awareness, her perspective, and, ultimately, the way she lives her life. She shares her personal journey with yoga and the lessons that have unfolded along the way.



Journey of Healing and Mindfulness  
Dr Mst Rubeyatul Jannat – IMU University

Dr. Mst Rubeyatul Jannat is a Lecturer in the Department of Pathology and Pharmacology, School of Medicine, International Medical University (IMU), with six years of experience in medical education and teaching. Her academic interests include pathology, student-centred learning, medical education, and research, with a growing interest in the connection between mindfulness, wellbeing, and holistic health. Beyond her professional role, she believes that healing is not limited to treating illness—it also involves nurturing the mind, body, emotions, relationships, and our connection with the environment. She is particularly interested in how simple contemplative and healing practices such as mindful breathing, meditation, reflection, gratitude, conscious living, and compassionate interactions can be integrated naturally into everyday life. For her, mindfulness is not simply a practice reserved for meditation sessions; it is a way of bringing awareness and intention into ordinary moments—while teaching, communicating with others, making choices, caring for oneself, and responding to life's challenges. She believes that when these practices become part of daily life, they can help us slow down, recognise our inner needs, manage stress, cultivate compassion, and create greater balance between our professional responsibilities and personal wellbeing.



Steady Hands: The Rosary, the Examen, and the Discipline of Staying Grounded  
Dr. Carolina Santiago A/P Robert – IMU University

Dr Carolina Santiago is a Senior Lecturer and Curriculum Coordinator at the School of Medicine, IMU University. Not conventionally religious, she has been exploring her own spirituality in recent years, drawing occasionally on contemplative practices from her Catholic background. This includes the Rosary and the Ignatian Examen as tools for grounding herself through hard decisions and difficult conversations in academic life. Outside work, she finds the same sense of grounding in art, poetry, and reading. Her ongoing goal is simple: to live gratefully, meaningfully, and in healthy relationship with the people around her.

