

Review Article

Open Access

How do Buddhists Handle Coronavirus: Meditate for your Telomere?

Ven Dr. Sumedh Thero^{1*}, Jitendra Morya² and Kataria HB³

¹Sumedh Bhoomi Buddha Vihar, Dr Ambedkar Park, Jhansipura, Lalitpur, India

²Medical College Datia MP, India

³Doctor without Boundaries

*Corresponding author

Sumedh Thero, Sumedh Bhoomi Buddha Vihar, Dr Ambedkar Park, Jhansipura, Lalitpur-284403 India. Tel: 919415945895.

E-mail: vensumedh12@gmail.com

Received: August 12, 2022; **Accepted:** August 22, 2022; **Published:** August 27, 2022

Since the emergence of COVID-19, the Dalai Lama, other senior monks and Buddhist organizations in Asia and worldwide have emphasized that this pandemic calls for meditation, compassion, generosity and gratitude. Such messages reinforce a common view in the West of Buddhism as more philosophy than religion—a spiritual, perhaps, but secular practice associated with mindfulness, happiness and stress reduction. But for many people around the world Buddhism is a religion – a belief system that includes strong faith in supernatural powers. As such, Buddhism has a large repertoire of healing rituals that go well beyond meditation. There are three main schools of traditional Buddhism: Theravāda, practiced in most of Southeast Asia; Mahāyāna, the form most prevalent in East Asia; and Vajrayāna, commonly associated with Tibet and the Himalayan region. In Buddhist-majority places, the official COVID-19 pandemic response includes conventional emergency health and sanitation measures like recommending face masks, hand-washing and stay-at-home orders. But within religious communities, Buddhist leaders also are using a range of ritual apotropaics – magical protection rites – to protect against disease.



Apotropaic magic (from Greek *αποτρέπειν* "to ward off") or protective magic is a type of magic intended to turn away harm or evil influences, as in deflecting misfortune or averting the evil eye. Apotropaic observances may also be practiced out of vague superstition or out of tradition, as in good luck charms (perhaps some token on a charm bracelet), amulets, or gestures such as crossed fingers or knocking on wood. The Greeks made offerings to the "averting gods" (*ἀποτροπαίοι θεοί*, *apotropaioi theoi*), chthonic deities and heroes who grant safety and deflect evil (Gilleland, 2008). Ashkenazi Jews' apotropaic names were often given not at birth but during serious illness. An example is Nekras (*Некрас*, "not handsome" in Russian), with the hope the child would be handsome, *Alexander Beider* (2009) [1]. and Yiddish names Alter and Alte ("old") *Alexander* 2015 [2].

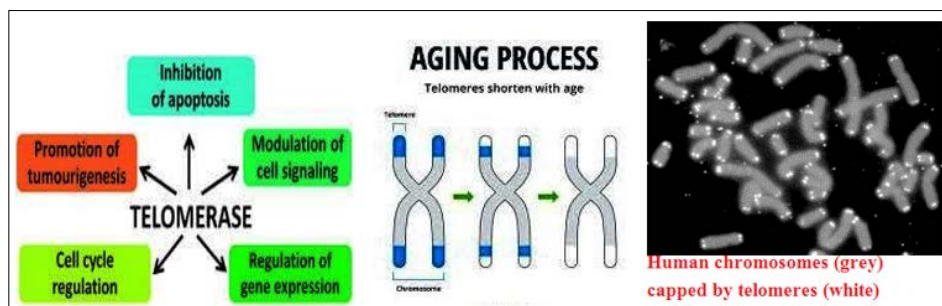
Among Serbian names are many apotropaic names (*zaštitna imena*, "protective names"), such as Vuk ("wolf") (and its many derivatives) and Staniša [19] ("stone"). Historical Chinese given names sometimes had apotropaic meanings, such as in the case of Huo Qubing ("Qubing" meaning "away with illness"), or Xin Qiji ("Qiji" meaning "abandoning disease"). Some traditional Taiwanese names referenced domestic animals such as "buffalo" (水牛) and "dog" (狗, 犬), or humble elements of the landscape such as "soil" and "water" (土, 水). They conveyed contentment with a peaceful and low-profile life.



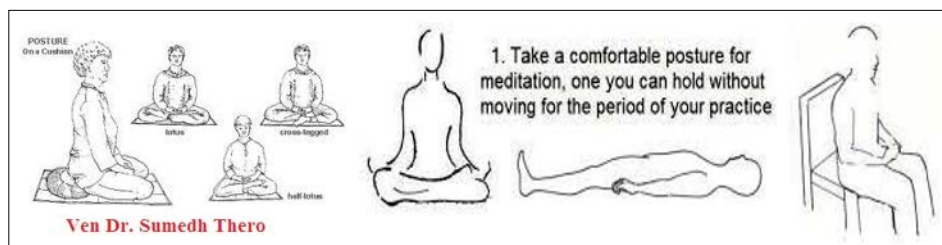
In Thailand, for example, Theravāda temples are handing out "yant," talismans bearing images of spirits, sacred syllables and Buddhist symbols. These blessed orange papers are a common ritual object among Buddhists in Southeast Asia who see crises such as epidemic illnesses as a sign that demonic forces are on the rise. Theravāda amulets and charms trace their magical powers to repel evil spirits not only to the Buddha but also to beneficial nature spirits, demigods, charismatic monks and wizards. Now, these blessed objects are being specifically formulated with the intention of protecting people from contracting the coronavirus. Mahāyāna Buddhists use similar sacred objects, but they also pray to a whole pantheon of buddhas and bodhisattvas – another class of enlightened beings – for protection. In Japan, for example, Buddhist organizations have been conducting expulsion rites that call on Buddhist deities to help rid the land of the coronavirus. Mahāyāna practitioners have faith that the blessings bestowed by these deities can be transmitted through statues or images. In a modern twist on this ancient belief, a priest affiliated with the Tōdaiji temple in Nara, Japan, in April tweeted a photo of the great Vairocana Buddha. He said the image would protect all who lay eyes upon it.

Since the height of the colonial period in the 19th century, "Buddhist modernists" have carefully constructed an international image of

Buddhism as a philosophy or a psychology. In emphasizing its compatibility with empiricism and scientific objectivity they have ensured Buddhism's place in the modern world and paved the way for its popularity outside of Asia. Many of these secular-minded Buddhists have dismissed rituals and other aspects of traditional Buddhism as "hocus pocus" lurking on the fringes of the tradition. To date, there is no known way to prevent COVID-19 other than staying home to avoid contagion, and no miracle cure. But for millions worldwide, Buddhist talismans, prayers and protective rituals offer a meaningful way to confront the anxieties of the global coronavirus pandemic, providing comfort and relief. And in a difficult time when both are in short supply, that's nothing to discredit.



Telomere length and telomerase expression appear to be linked in many, but not all studied species (sea urchins are one exception). While it is generally true that telomeres shorten with age, and that shortened telomeres tend to “push” a cell towards senescence prior to apoptosis (cell death), it is important to keep in mind that some people start with longer telomeres than others. The gene that regulates telomerase expression is “silenced” in healthy cells. Some anti-aging clinicians hold that telomeres can be lengthened—and by logical extension, cellular aging delayed—by “switching on” telomerase activity by administration of certain compounds. Extracts of the herb Astragalus are one example. When practicing vipasyana meditation the chemical telomere get increase and helpful to shorten the age. Thus lay meditators or Buddhist monks could get appearance and glow as young rather than the others. Vipassana Meditation Process has high importance to get orient the human being with better physique, psycho-social state that helps them to become good professional with focused managerial aptitude in all respect. More awareness to be made on this subject to business schools so that institutions can bridge the gap between 'what society wants and what educational institutions now providing'. Thus Mind is the super power in all these activities = This can be control by self respect.



Expressed emotions and adaptive functions

Expressed emotion	Initial physiological function	Evolved communicative function
<u>Fear</u>	Increased visual field and speed of eye movement from widened eyes	Warning of potential threats. Appeasement to aggressor.
<u>Surprise</u>	Increased visual field from widened eyes	More research needed
<u>Disgust</u>	Constriction of face openings reduce dangerous inhalations	Warning of dangerous foods, behaviors, and ideas
<u>Happiness</u>	More research needed	Absence of threat
<u>Sadness</u>	More research needed	Vision handicapped by tears to show appeasement. Gain sympathy.
<u>Anger</u>	More research needed	Warning of impending threats. Signals dominance.
<u>Pride</u>	Increased lung volume in preparation for encountering challengers	Increased social status.
<u>Shame/Embarrassment</u>	Reduces and hides vulnerable body areas from potential attacks	Decreased social status. Wish for appeasement.



Breathing at Altitude

Effects of High Altitude on Humans:

The Mind-Consciousness now takes the Patibhaga-Nimitta and prepares it for the first stage of Jhāna. In turn we get Upacāra (Access) and Anuloma, which is called Adaptation consciousness. Then comes Gotrabhū, where the thought-moment transcends the sensuous plane. The former lineage has been cut off and the Mind evolves the lineage of the Form Plane. This is immediately followed by Appanā-Samādhi, which is Ecstatic Concentration. This is First Jhāna, otherwise called Rūpa-Jhāna. Atmospheric pressure decreases with the height above sea level (altitude) and since the alveoli are open to the outside air through the open airways, the pressure in the lungs also decreases at the same rate with altitude. At altitude, a pressure differential is still required to drive air into and out of the lungs as it is at sea level.

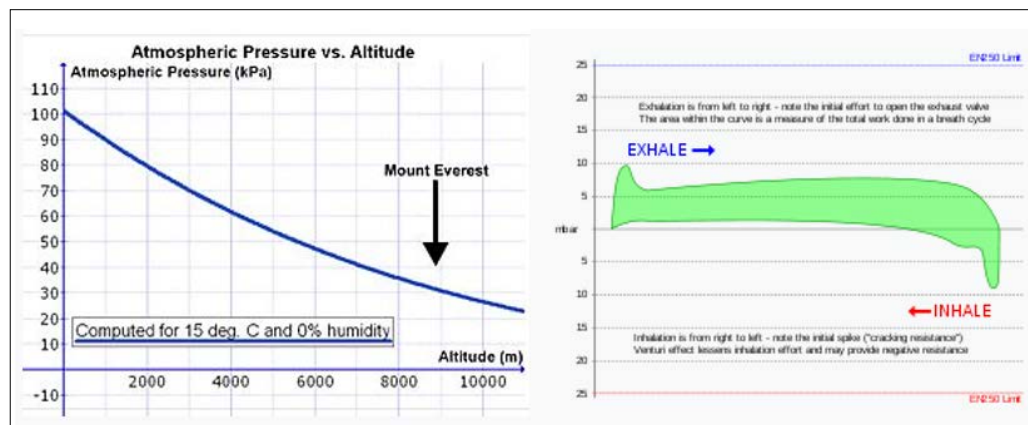


Figure: Atmospheric pressure

Vipassana Meditation Process has high importance to get orient the students with better physique, psycho-social state that helps them to become good professional with focused managerial aptitude. More awareness to be made on this subject to business schools so that institutions can bridge the gap between 'what industry wants and what institutions now providing'. It is the responsibility of the institutions to inculcate better attitude and behavior through holistic education process so that quality students can be supplied to industry. It is evident from the literature cited that practice of meditation brings about global changes. Many of these alterations in physiological functions have great similarities to the changes that are happening during sleep. It has been proposed that sleep is an autoregulatory global phenomenon [3]. It is also true that meditation influences sleep and its functions. It appears that various components of sleep generating mechanisms can be altered with meditation. Meditation, with its global effects on body and brain functions helps to establish a body and mind harmony. Thus meditation practices as an autoregulatory integrated global phenomenon, opens a wider scope for understanding the unique aspects of human sleep and consciousness [4-8].

Peptide hormones and neuropeptides that regulate feeding

Peptides that increase feeding behavior	Peptides that decrease feeding behavior
<u>Neuropeptide Y</u>	<u>(α, β, γ)-Melanocyte-stimulating hormones</u>
<u>Melanin-concentrating hormone</u>	<u>Cholecystokinin</u>
<u>Agouti-related peptide</u>	<u>Cocaine- and amphetamine-regulated transcript peptides</u>
<u>Orexins (A,B)</u>	<u>Corticotropin-releasing hormone</u>
	<u>Glucagon-like peptide 1</u>
<u>Galanin</u>	<u>Insulin</u>
<u>Ghrelin</u>	<u>Leptin</u>

References

1. Alexander Beider (2009) Handbook of Ashkenazic Given Names and Their Variants. Avotaynu. ISBN 978-1-886223-43-1.
2. Alexander Beider (2015) Origins of Yiddish Dialects. OUP Oxford 183.
3. Kumar VM (2010) Sleep is neither a passive nor an active phenomenon. Sleep Biol Rhythms 8: 163–169.
4. Cebolla A, Marcelo Demarzo, Patricia Martins, Joaquim Soler, Javier Garcia-Campayo (2017) Unwanted effects: Is there a negative side of meditation? A multicentre survey. PLoS One 12: e0183137.
5. Das I, Himani Anand (2020) Reducing stress of cancer patients through Vipassana meditation. Indian Social Work. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780429321818-12/reducing-stress-cancer-patients-vipassana-meditation-ira-das-himani-anand>.
6. Kakumanu RJ, Ajay Kumar Nair, Arun Sasidharan, John P John, Seema Mehrotra, et al. (2019). Chapter 5: State-trait influences of Vipassana meditation practice on P3 EEG dynamics. Progress in Brain Research 244: 115-136.
7. Saeed SA, KARLENE CUNNINGHAM, RICHARD M BLOCH (2019) Depression and anxiety disorders: Benefits of exercise, yoga, and meditation. Am Fam Physician 99: 620-627.
8. Shiah Y-J (2016) From self to nonself: The nonself theory. Front Psychol 7: 124.

Copyright: ©2022 Sumedh Thero, et al. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.