

About this Book

The Buddha's pivotal insight is that the human predicament of suffering is relational and rooted in these *3-Poisons*: greed, hatred, and ignorance, particularly ignorance regarding the illusion of self or soul and the delusion of the existence of god(s). This social vision is as valid today as it was 2600 years ago, since it is undeniable that greed is the root cause of global financial crises and hatred is the root cause of terrorism in the world. The end result is *Duhkha* (fear, anger, sadness, depression, and premature death) unless we know how to modify these interactive relational performances with savvy and wisdom. Arising from relationships, Karma defined as intentional action concurs with "meaningful-thought-and-relational-performance" whose malfeasance is transformable by collaborative action and interpersonal practice. During his time the Buddha called himself a *Kammavadin*, someone who deals with Karma and its transformation through discourse and dialogue. Dealing with meaningful scenarios by detecting and changing its cognitive, behavioural, volitional, and motivational causes in co-action, "Buddhist appreciative inquiry" mobilizes people to eradicate unwholesome anti-social affect by exercising wholesomeness through embodying pro-social *Sukha* (bliss) in equanimity via the social meditations of loving kindness, empathic compassion, and shared joy. The collaborative practice of "Karma Transformation" systematically integrates the Buddha's teachings (Dharma), the co-arrangement of evidence-based interventions, and the meta-psychology of Social Construction from a "new" Buddhist Psychology perspective.

The Buddha summoned those who travel in his footsteps not to follow him blindly, but to be "a light onto oneself". Firmly embedded in the path is the Buddha's gift that he offered humanity: a family of *12-Meditations* wherein mindfulness constitutes the groundwork for "awakening" and which is viewed here as a process of de-construction toward "not-self". A non-foundational "empty self" is not a goal in itself but a reset point for the social re-construction of *Relational Interbeing* (which we already are). In the past three decades a form of mindfulness which has been de-contextualized from the Dharma has become fashionable amongst health professionals, corporate coaches, and mentors/teachers in the West. Mindfulness-based interventions cleverly foster attention, awareness, and concentration, but conspicuously disregard the cultivation of judgmental insights in the karmic interpersonal virtues within the framework of the *4-Ennobling Realities*. These social realities inhere in the Buddha's causality hypothesis of interconnectedness (Dependent Origination) whose heartfelt understanding might lead to liberating emptiness. Entwined in the *8-Fold Balanced Practice*, mindfulness is more than bare attention to what arises in the here-now, clarity, and focus. It also requires an insightful introspection of Karma's relational impact and an interactional balancing whilst expanding the social meditations. Advocating a wholistic mindfulness, Asian Buddhist psychologists do not belittle the mindfulness-based outcome research but rebut the somehow Dharma-alienated, reductionist, and fragmented "Buddhist-Lite" approaches (grossly neglecting the Dharma's heart-core: Dependent Origination and Karma) as a western expropriation of some kind. Notwithstanding, as Padmasiri de Silva, a doyen of Buddhist Psychology, observed: "Converting mindfulness to the status of a pill to get rid of a headache is harmless, but building a psychological system around Buddhist practice is a serious mission."

Indeed, it is the latter which is aimed at by this edition, a testimony of collaborative practice, encompassing 24 essays by 20 seasoned authors who are *au courant* and *au fait* in their

area of expertise. The contributors to this sumptuous volume are clinicians, coaches, and teachers who are well-versed in the Buddhist literature and are of the highest caliber. This volume's golden thread and cohering element can be found in each of the chapter's deepening of Buddhist Psychology by highlighting the scriptures relevant for psychology and by using concepts grounded in the rudimentary psychology of the *Abhidharma*. Upholding the Dharma as a pro-social way of life, all authors endorse a pan-Buddhist Psychology characterized by a secular form and demythologizing content. This Buddhist Psychology refutes craving projections which view the pristine Buddha as an omniscient saviour who performs magic miracles or who promises Nirvana as a palpable paradise or a heaven in a beyond to transmigrate to *post-mortem*. Spanning 2600 years of history, Buddhist Psychology is classified into four periods: archaic, classic, modern, and post-modern. After delving into the "old" Buddhist Psychology, a New Buddhist Psychology is formulated and defined as an integrated social-clinical-neuro-psychology of Body/Speech/Mind which embraces Social Construction, a meta-vision discarding "Transcendental Truths". This marks a major move away from religion and highlights an ongoing paradigm shift towards involving psychology as an efficient vehicle to disseminate the Dharma in the 21st century. By blending commonalities, pinpointing parallels, and confirming differences, this work is a critical appraisal of current trends in Buddhist Psychology. It also accommodates a comprehensive roadmap to deal with the existential suffering of everyday life by a relational *modus vivendi* in line with what the Buddha had taught. This book culminates in a postmodern rendition called *Relational Buddhism* which also provides the framework of this anthology.