Exploring Mental Habits: Contemplative Practices and Interventions for Individual and Social Flourishing
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SUMMER RESEARCH INSTITUTE: U.S., June 7-13, 2020

VARELA GRANTS: Next deadline September 25, 2019
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Ubuntu: "I Am Because You Are"
ubuntudialogue.org

TOGETHER WE CREATE POSITIVE CHANGE

www.mindandlife.org
Welcome to the 16th annual Mind & Life Summer Research Institute!

You are among 120 individuals—scientists, scholars, contemplatives, students, and professionals—who have come together to participate in this signature program of the Mind & Life Institute. We thank you for joining us and are delighted you are here!

This year’s theme, “Exploring Mental Habits: Contemplative Practices and Interventions for Individual and Social Flourishing,” comes at a particularly salient moment when many of the most pressing issues that society currently faces—political schisms, racial and social conflicts, and epidemics of mental illness and addiction—are increasingly rooted in our most basic mental habits and biases. In response to this momentous theme, our faculty will offer their timely perspectives on a variety of topics. These include how to measure and change mental habits; how different cultures invite us to think differently about our inner mental and spiritual experiences; and how contemplative interventions can be applied at a personal and societal level to alleviate suffering and cultivate human flourishing.

In the true spirit of Mind & Life, we will explore this theme through a rich interdisciplinary lens. Our esteemed faculty includes psychologists, neuroscientists, social scientists, humanists, and contemplatives. Additionally, our participants come from 17 countries across six continents and represent 37 unique disciplinary fields from 107 institutions. We believe that fostering dialogue among individuals from diverse backgrounds and perspectives is essential to achieving deep-level understanding of complex issues and practical solutions to shared challenges.

Our heartfelt gratitude extends to the Hershey Family Foundation, whose generous support continues to make the work of Mind & Life possible not only at the Summer Research Institute, but across many of its programs and events. This includes providing scholarships to 34 attendees at the Summer Research Institute—18 from the United States and 16 from other countries. This reflects the priority that we have placed on expanding access to this unique program among outstanding investigators from international, culturally diverse, and historically underrepresented backgrounds.

The Summer Research Institute is the culmination of months of dedication and effort by many committed individuals. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to: the Program Planning Committee for designing a rich and thoughtful program; our faculty as well as our discussants and breakout and affinity group facilitators for sharing their profound insights and wisdom with us; the Mind & Life staff, for their care, professionalism, and attention to detail; the Mind & Life Board of Directors for their ongoing support and guidance; the Garrison Institute for creating a welcome space for contemplation and action; and, finally, our generous donors, without whom none of this would be possible.

I wish you all a transformational week that will stretch and inspire you in your good work in the world.

Warm wishes,

Susan Bauer-Wu, Ph.D.
President, Mind & Life Institute
The purpose of the Mind & Life Summer Research Institute is to advance collaborative research among scientists, scholars of the humanities, and contemplative practitioners, based on a process of inquiry and dialogue. With this unique program, we are nurturing a new generation of scientists interested in exploring the influence of contemplative practice on the human mind, behavior, brain function, and health, and we are fostering the development of nascent research fields collectively referred to as “contemplative sciences.”

The aims of contemplative sciences are to advance our understanding of the human mind and how training the mind through the use of contemplative practices can reduce suffering, enhance health, emotional well-being and cognitive functioning, and increase social connection. Work within contemplative sciences—deriving from Mind & Life Dialogues between the Dalai Lama and distinguished scientists, philosophers, and scholars—has integrated the rigorous methodologies of science with the philosophical and experiential insights into mind and mental training that were developed by contemplative wisdom traditions.

ABOUT MIND & LIFE

Mind & Life emerged in 1987 from a meeting of three visionaries: Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama—the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people and a global advocate for compassion; Adam Engle, a lawyer and entrepreneur; and Francisco Varela, a neuroscientist and philosopher. While the trio understood that science had become the dominant framework for investigating the nature of reality—and the modern source for knowledge that could help improve the lives of humans and the planet—the three regarded this approach as incomplete. Whereas science relies on empiricism, technology, “objective” observation, and analysis, the Dalai Lama, Engle,
and Varela were convinced that well-refined contemplative practices and introspective methods could, and should, be used as equal instruments of investigation—instruments that would not only make science itself more humane but also ensure its conclusions were far-reaching. The Mind & Life Institute was formed to bridge this divide and advance progress in human well-being. Find out more at our website: mindandlife.org.

Mind & Life Europe is our sister organization. We have a shared history and values, but we are independent and autonomous and cover different geographic regions. To find out more about Mind & Life Europe, visit their website: mindandlife-europe.org.

THE SPECIFIC GOALS OF THE SUMMER RESEARCH INSTITUTE ARE:

► TO CULTIVATE DIALOGUE between neuroscientists, clinical scientists, other scientists of mind and behavior, humanities scholars, and contemplative scholars/practitioners to develop new research collaborations that explore the mind from an integrative perspective, including first-, second-, and third-person approaches, and the effect of contemplative practices on mind, behavior, brain, and health.

► TO CREATE A CONTEXT for this dialogue that embodies a contemplative orientation via meditation and movement instruction, dedicated contemplative practice periods, and a closing celebration.

► TO FOSTER A NEW GENERATION of nascent scientists (undergraduates, graduate students, and postdocs) and contemplative scholars and practitioners interested in innovation and interdisciplinary research collaboration into contemplative practices.

► TO CATALYZE THE FIELD focusing on the study of how contemplative practices engender effects on the brain, mind, and behavior, and how these effects are conditioned by culture, history, and other contextual variables.

► TO TRAIN IN EMERGING METHODS and best practices, and examine future opportunities and challenges within the contemplative sciences.
Exploring Mental Habits: Contemplative Practices and Interventions for Individual and Social Flourishing

Political strife, immigration, cultural and racial conflict, environmental concerns, depression, and distraction—these issues and many more influence our daily lives as we struggle to find personal well-being and social harmony. How does the latest research on mental habits, contemplation, and compassion inform opportunities to create change for ourselves and others?

The 2019 Mind & Life Summer Research Institute addresses critical questions that are at the core of understanding contemplative practices and interventions, and how they can reduce suffering and cultivate individual and social flourishing. We define mental habits as perceptual, emotional, and cognitive processes that shape and bias how we perceive self, others, and the world. Here we focus on those habits that tend to support individual, cultural, and institutional behaviors that result in suffering and a lack of compassion and equity.

How do such mental habits impact behavior? How can we change such habits through individual and structural contemplative interventions? We will discuss sophisticated methods and measurement strategies for assessing mechanisms of change.

This theme extends the arc from the 2016, 2017, and 2018 programs that addressed contemplation in relation to context, social connectivity, intersubjectivity, cultural diversity, and pressing problems related to human health and well-being, social harmony and integration, and fair, just, and equitable societies.

Schedule and Format
The week provides an immersion into theoretical frameworks, networking, hands-on collaborative work, and contemplative practice. Participants engage in lectures and discussion that explore the theme, periods of guided contemplative practices (both formal sitting practice and movement practices, including yoga and tai chi), as well as facilitated small-group breakout sessions, affinity groups, and panels. On the second and fourth days of the program, we come together for dedicated periods of contemplative practice. During these times, contemplative faculty guide participants through practices that integrate their first-person knowledge with themes being explored, interspersing meditation sessions with free time for personal reflection. This weekly schedule is designed to foster a balance between the focused academic activity and direct engagement with contemplative practice.

Locations
All events are held in the Main Hall, except for the Breakout Sessions, which are held in the side rooms, the morning and evening Movement Practices, Poster Sessions, and Closing Celebration, which are held in the Lower Auditorium.
Pictured: Mycorrhizae, the symbiotic relationship that forms between fungi and plants.
PROGRAM SCHEDULE

DAY 1
SATURDAY, JUNE 8

2:00 – 6:00 PM  Arrival and Registration
6:00 – 7:00 PM  Dinner
7:30 – 8:30 PM  Welcome Session and Orientation
8:30 – 9:00 PM  Meditation | LARRY YANG & ALISA DENNIS
10:00 PM – 8:15 AM  Silence into breakfast

DAY 2
SUNDAY, JUNE 9

6:00 – 7:00 AM  Yoga | LAURA SCHMALZL
7:15 – 8:00 AM  Meditation | LARRY YANG & ALISA DENNIS
8:00 – 9:00 AM  Breakfast
9:15 AM – 12:00 PM  Contemplative Practices | LARRY YANG & ALISA DENNIS
   This half-day retreat is meant to integrate the objects of our research—contemplation, mindfulness, and cultivation of the mind and heart—with our conference experience. It will include guided meditations for those new to meditation practice as well as for more seasoned practitioners, and periods of sitting and walking meditation. The contemplative retreat will provide an opportunity to practice “what we study” and to observe and learn from our own first-person experience, which is no less important than the experience of those whom we study.

12:00 – 12:15 PM  Announcements
12:15 – 1:15 PM  Lunch
1:15 – 2:15 PM  Break
2:15 – 3:05 PM  The Quest for Serenity Among the Disenfranchised | ZENJU EARTHLYN MANUEL
   This talk explores the spiritual quest of those who are impacted by systemic oppression and the ways the quest focuses on personhood and the need to access true liberation and wellness. There has always been the call for human dignity by those who are dehumanized, which leads to a deep yearning to discover one’s own human beingness. This discovery often takes place through actions such as meditation, stillness, or deep contemplation. In essence, the spiritual quest is less about one’s religion and more about which path will lead to a sense of thriving despite the eruptions caused by prolonged mistreatment and the fire spewed upon certain groups of people in this world. Our lived experiences shape our spiritual quests.
3:05 – 3:25 PM  Q&A
3:25 – 3:35 PM  Break
3:35 – 4:25 PM  **Measuring, Understanding, and Changing Mental Habits**  | LAWRENCE BARSALOU
This presentation will first explore possible domains of mental habits, including personality, social interaction, identity, emotion, mind wandering, and contemplative practice. From the perspective of grounded cognition, the question will be raised as to how “mental” are mental habits, given that they appear to be strongly grounded in external situations (and conversely that physical habits typically have strong mental components). Then there will be a brief review of central themes from behavioral and neuroscience research on habits, including the constant interplay of intentions with conditioning and automaticity. Of particular interest will be how habits often override intentions and how intentions constantly modulate habits. The idea that habits are organized around the Situated Action Cycle, which integrates the environment, self-relevance, affect, action, and outcomes will be proposed. From this perspective, a new method for measuring, understanding, and predicting health behaviors—the Situated Assessment Method (SAM2)—that Barsalou and colleagues have used to study both physical habits (e.g., eating, trichotillomania) and mental habits (e.g., stress, mindfulness)—will be discussed. As will be shown, when habit measurement is situated, assessments of habits can differ considerably from when they’re unsituated, as in standard self-report instruments. To conclude, results of a neuroimaging experiment that addresses a brief mindfulness intervention on eating will be shared, which raise potentially interesting questions about how mindfulness habits develop.

4:25 – 4:45 PM  Q&A
4:45 – 5:00 PM  Break
5:00 – 6:00 PM  **Tai Chi**  | PETER WAYNE
6:00 – 7:00 PM  **Dinner**
7:15 – 8:30 PM  **Networking Night**
Come join us for an evening of structured networking during which participants will be able to meet, connect, and share their unique and diverse perspectives and experiences with each other.

8:30 – 9:00 PM  **Meditation**  | LARRY YANG & ALISA DENNIS
10:00 PM – 8:15 AM  **Silence into breakfast**
**Mental Habits, Prediction Machines, and Controlled Hallucinations** | ANIL SETH

Just as behavioral habits define our behavioral lives, mental habits define our psychological lives. Mental habits can be thought of as the perceptual, emotional, and cognitive processes that shape and bias how we perceive self, others, and the world. This talk will describe a view of mental habits from the perspective of cognitive neuroscience, focusing on the idea that the brain is a “prediction machine” designed by evolution to help the body stay alive. In this view, our perceptions of the world around us, and of ourselves within it, emerge as kinds of “controlled hallucination” in which the brain’s best guesses—perceptual inferences—are constrained by sensory signals coming from the world and the body. We don’t passively perceive things, we actively construct our perceptions of self and world, and the way in which we do this constitutes and reflects our mental habits. Such habits, while necessary for perception and cognition, can also be maladaptive in many ways. However, habits can change, and a precondition for such change is recognizing mental habits for what they are—active processes of perceptual construction. Revealing the mechanisms of habit formation can lay new foundations for repairing our interactions with each other and with the world around us.

**How Thinking About Thinking Shapes the Human Experience of Spirit** | TANYA LUHRMANN

This talk makes the argument that the way people think about their minds shapes the way they come to know spirit. This is done by looking at the kinds of people who have more vivid spiritual experiences (they are more likely to get absorbed in their inner worlds), the way prayers train attention to inner experience, and above all at the way that different cultures invite people to think differently about inner life. This points to a paradox: the more a culture imagines an inner world as separate from an outer world, the less vividly they experience gods and spirits and invisible others in general. When you look at people in similar churches across many cultures, Americans report less spiritual experience than most others—and this talk argues that we can trace this to the way they think about thinking. Why does this matter? The evidence seems clear that those who are able to create vivid and positive imagined others are better off (gods; imaginary friends; pets). This is a different kind of insight than the benefits of meditation. This talk argues that being able to create a positive relationship with one’s actively imagined inner interactions (we might call this “spirit” or even “voices” broadly conceived) enhances human well-being.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 – 12:15PM</td>
<td><strong>Poster Data Blitz I</strong>&lt;br&gt;Hear short “data blitzes” of the projects being presented at the evening poster session. Each presenter will have 24 seconds to rapidly describe their poster topic followed by a 7 word recap.</td>
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<td>12:15 – 1:15PM</td>
<td><strong>Lunch</strong></td>
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<td>1:15 – 3:00PM</td>
<td><strong>Break + Affinity Group Time</strong></td>
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<td>3:00 – 3:50PM</td>
<td><strong>Breakouts Session I</strong>&lt;br&gt;Please see the Breakout and Poster Session booklet for titles, abstracts, and locations.</td>
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<td>4:00 – 4:50PM</td>
<td><strong>Breakouts Session II</strong>&lt;br&gt;Please see the Breakout and Poster Session booklet for titles, abstracts, and locations.</td>
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<td>4:50 – 5:00PM</td>
<td><strong>Break</strong></td>
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<td>5:00 – 6:00PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 PM – 8:15 AM</td>
<td><strong>Silence into breakfast</strong></td>
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TUESDAY, JUNE 11

6:00 – 7:00 AM  Yoga | LAURA SCHMALZL
7:15 – 8:00 AM  Meditation | LARRY YANG & ALISA DENNIS
8:00 – 9:00 AM  Breakfast

9:15 AM – 12:00 PM  Contemplative Practices | LARRY YANG & ALISA DENNIS
This half-day retreat is meant to integrate the objects of our research—contemplation, mindfulness, and cultivation of the mind and heart—with our conference experience. It will include guided meditations for those new to meditation practice as well as for more seasoned practitioners, and periods of sitting and walking meditation. The contemplative retreat will provide an opportunity to practice “what we study” and to observe and learn from our own first-person experience, which is no less important than the experience of those whom we study.

12:00 – 12:15 PM  Announcements
12:15 – 1:15 PM  Lunch
1:15 – 3:00 PM  Break + Affinity Group Time
3:00 – 3:50 PM  Breakouts Session I
Please see the Breakout and Poster Session booklet for titles, abstracts, and locations.

4:00 – 4:50 PM  Breakouts Session II
Please see the Breakout and Poster Session booklet for titles, abstracts, and locations.

4:50 – 5:00 PM  Break
5:00 – 6:00 PM  Tai Chi | PETER WAYNE
6:00 – 7:00 PM  Dinner
7:00 – 8:30 PM  Mind & Life Grant Presentations
8:30 – 9:00 PM  Meditation | LARRY YANG & ALISA DENNIS
10:00 PM – 8:15 AM  Silence into breakfast
**DAY 5**

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12**

6:00 – 7:00 AM  **Yoga** | LAURA SCHMALZL

7:15 – 8:00 AM  **Meditation** | LARRY YANG & ALISA DENNIS

8:00 – 9:00 AM  **Breakfast**

9:15 – 9:30 AM  **Announcements**

9:30 – 10:20 AM  **From Looking Out to Looking In: Re-Thinking How We Study and Train Attention in Mental Health** | AMIT BERNSTEIN

Mindfulness is practiced and cultivated through the training of attention. Not coincidentally, across thought traditions, attention and its (dys)regulation has long been theorized to underlie various mental habits and biases, common forms of suffering, and well-being. Yet, despite this compelling theory, empirical data supporting these foundational ideas about the nature and function of attention are surprisingly modest. Accordingly, this talk will reflect on Bernstein’s lab group’s efforts to develop novel methodological approaches to the study of the forms and expressions of attention that may be of importance for suffering, flourishing, and mindful awareness. First, this lab’s work to conceptualize, measure, study, and (re)train (dys)regulation of attention as a dynamic process in time will be shared. Second, a novel approach—the Simulated Thoughts Paradigm—to experimentally measure, study, and train internal attentional processing of one’s thoughts will be shared. Third, a novel behavioral and phenomenological methodology—the Mindful Awareness Task—to measure the objects and temporal dynamics of present moment attention and awareness to internal experience during mindfulness meditation will be shared. Finally, promising translational therapeutic implications of this work, such as the development of the Mindful Trauma Recovery for Refugees program—a mindfulness-based intervention, socioculturally and clinically adapted to promote trauma recovery and well-being among forcibly displaced refugees—will be briefly discussed.

10:20 – 10:40 AM  **Q&A**

10:40 – 10:50 AM  **Break**

10:50 – 11:40 AM  **Breaking Habits: Self-Transcendence and Health Behavior Change** | YOONA KANG

What promotes adaptive attitude and behavior change? In this talk, it will be proposed that self-transcendence, or the drive to care for the well-being of others beyond self-interests, is key to increasing receptivity to change. Psychological and neurocognitive mechanisms of self-transcendence that help make people more open to change in the domains of social attitudes and health behavior will be presented. In the social domain, shifting attention from the self to the well-being of others can help overcome deeply rooted self-focused biases that damage social bonds. In the health domain, interventions that allow people to think beyond themselves can help decrease self-focused defensiveness that gets in the way of accepting health advice and changing behavior. Across these domains, a set of neuroscience investigations relevant to self-transcendence helps develop mechanistic explanations about the nature of real-world social and health behavior change. Specifically, improvements in social and physical health may rely on dynamic integration of neural systems that support self-, other-, and reward-related cognitions within and between brains.

11:40 AM – 12:00 PM  **Q&A**
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12

12:00 – 12:15 PM  **Poster Data Blitz II**
Hear short “data blitzes” of the projects being presented at the evening poster session. Each presenter will have 24 seconds to rapidly describe their poster topic followed by a 7 word recap.

12:15 – 1:15 PM  **Lunch**

1:15 – 3:00 PM  **Break + Affinity Group Time**

3:00 – 4:45 PM  **Interdisciplinary Panel: Translating Neuroscience** | LAWRENCE BARSALOU, NORMAN FARB, YOONA KANG, CLIFFORD SARON, ANIL SETH, DANIEL SIEGEL
The “Translating Neuroscience” panel will explore how to accurately and accessibly convey to the non-scientific public the discoveries of scientific research around contemplative practice while maintaining the integrity and accuracy of the research. Specifically, we will focus on the promises and challenges of communicating complex ideas from neuroscience and cognitive science about the nature of the brain and cognition to lay or non-specialist audiences.

4:45 – 5:00 PM  **Break**

5:00 – 6:00 PM  **Tai Chi** | PETER WAYNE

6:00 – 7:00 PM  **Dinner**

7:00 – 8:30 PM  **Poster Session II**
Please see the Breakout and Poster Session booklet for titles and abstracts for this session.

8:30 – 9:00 PM  **Meditation** | LARRY YANG & ALISA DENNIS

10:00 PM – 8:15 AM  **Silence into breakfast**
THURSDAY, JUNE 13

6:00 – 7:00 AM Yoga | LAURA SCHMALZL
7:15 – 8:00 AM Meditation | LARRY YANG & ALISA DENNIS
8:00 – 9:00 AM Breakfast
9:15 – 9:30 AM Announcements
9:30 – 10:20 AM Dismantling Oppression from the Inside Out | DORIS F. CHANG

From the presenter’s vantage point as a therapist of color, a teacher of courses on race, and a researcher in multicultural psychology, she has been privileged to bear witness to the human struggle to make sense of oneself in a racialized and gendered world. As old narratives are directly challenged by evidence of structural oppression and unearned privileges that perpetuate inequities across every domain of life, the discomfort for many is often unbearable. A host of defensive maneuvers often arise that bear a striking resemblance to the stages of grief—denial, anger, bargaining, and sadness—before arriving, finally at acceptance. In this talk, there will be discussion on how contemplative practices such as mindfulness may improve individuals’ capacity to tolerate the pain, grief, and discomfort that often accompany trainings in cultural competence, anti-racism, and other diversity-related initiatives. To illustrate, preliminary findings from Year 1 of the presenter’s Mind & Life PEACE grant-funded project to develop and test a mindfulness-based critical consciousness-training program for K-5 teachers working in racially diverse schools in New York City will be discussed. This project examines the effect of integrating mindfulness into a packaged critical consciousness-training program that trains teachers to think critically about inequitable social conditions as they shape educational processes and outcomes and to take action to change them. In Year 1, they begin by comparing changes in multicultural teaching competence and implicit racial bias in the two control conditions: critical consciousness training alone and mindfulness training alone. Qualitative review of training sessions and stakeholder input are informing the development of the hybrid approach, which will be tested in Year 2.

10:20 – 10:40 AM Q&A
10:40 – 10:50 AM Break
10:50 – 11:40 AM Othering and Belonging | JOHN A. POWELL

Othering and Belonging is the problem of the 21st century. In this talk, the presenter will describe how the changes in the world are creating deep stress and anxiety. This process is likely to increase for the foreseeable future. This stress is both biological and ontological. The way we respond is social. The underlying issue is who are we and what is our relationship to the Other. One response is the Other is a threat to be feared and contained. The other response is the Other is access to a larger we and to a deep aspect of ourselves. This issue defines politics and nations today. At another level, these issues are deeply spiritual and pose questions about the nature of the self and the relationship to others. The anxiety that is built into the claim for a separate and permanent self already has an underlying anxiety that calls for both separation and power over all that is considered separate. But this approach can never satisfy. Always calling for the need for greater and greater domination and empty fulfillment. There is a need for a spiritual ground that is about deep belonging within and between others, animals, and the earth that helps us live with the unknown, diversity, and death. Such a spiritual practice must be reflected in our stories, practices, and structures.
THURSDAY, JUNE 13

11:40 AM – 12:00 PM  Q&A
12:00 – 12:15 PM  Break
12:15 – 1:15 PM  Lunch
1:15 – 3:00 PM  Break + Affinity Group Time
3:00 – 4:45 PM  Town Hall
Participants and faculty will come together for a time of open discussion to reflect on learnings and challenges from the week, and to consider future avenues of research moving forward.
4:45 – 5:00 PM  Break
5:00 – 6:00 PM  Tai Chi | PETER WAYNE
6:00 – 7:00 PM  Dinner
7:00 – 8:30 PM  Dessert Reception, Closing Remarks, and Celebration
8:30 – 9:00 PM  Meditation
10:00 PM – 8:15 AM  Silence into breakfast
DAY 7
FRIDAY, JUNE 14

6:00 – 7:00 AM  Yoga  |  LAURA SCHMALZL
7:15 – 8:00 AM  Meditation  |  ALISA DENNIS
8:00 – 9:00 AM  Breakfast
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM  Departure

“Mind & Life and the Varela Grant have been crucial to my development as a scholar—receiving the award sparked my career in mindfulness research. Through the resulting efforts and experiences, Mind & Life has positively impacted the lives of thousands of suffering individuals.”

—Eric Garland
Varela Grantee
Mind & Life 1440 Grantee
The Mind & Life Varela Grants were established in 2004 as a companion program to the Mind & Life Summer Research Institute and have been a critical element in the growth of contemplative sciences. The Varela Grants support new research proposals, many developed through collaboration at the MLSRI, which often do not qualify for traditional streams of funding. Projects emphasize interdisciplinary examinations of contemplative techniques with the ultimate goal that findings will provide greater insight into the mechanisms of contemplative practice and its application for reducing human suffering.

Since 2004, Mind & Life has distributed more than $2.5 million in funding to support over 170 junior scholars engaged in contemplative research. As a result of the Varela Grants, more than 200 scholarly articles have been published, and hundreds of scientific presentations have been given at conferences and special lectures. Further, these relatively small grants have been leveraged into more than $62 million in follow-on funding for grantees.

To be eligible for a Varela Grant, researchers must be graduate students, postdocs, or junior faculty up to their fifth year of appointment, who have attended the Summer Research Institute within five years of their application. Grants are awarded through a competitive process with preference given to rigorous, interdisciplinary proposals that incorporate first-person contemplative methods into traditional cognitive, behavioral, physiological, clinical, or sociocultural research.

To find out more about the Varela Grants and previous grant recipients, please visit mindandlife.org/varela-grants/.

### CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2018 Varela Grant Recipients

**Nuño Aguirre de Cárcer** | UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, SOUTH AFRICA  
*Mindfulness for well-being and enhanced teaching in academia: A mindfulness-based program in South African higher education*

**Thomas Anderson** | UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
*Measuring meta-awareness in the present moment*

**Quinn Conklin** | UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS  
*Can meditation practice ameliorate the consequences of early life adversity on telomere regulation?*

**Samantha Davis** | TEMPLE UNIVERSITY  
*Exploring the uptake and potential efficacy of brief mindfulness meditation for underserved female tobacco smokers*

**Ekaterina Denkova** | UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI  
*Assessing dynamic brain connectivity patterns and the phenomenology of autobiographical remembering as a function of specificity and perspective taking manipulations*

**Erin Maresh** | UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
*Overcoming the self: A multimethod investigation of trait mindfulness, self-other overlap, and egocentricity in romantic relationships*

**Hadley Rahrig** | VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY  
*Mindfulness training to enhance emotion regulation in a polarizing political context: A multimethod investigation*

**Amanda Shallcross** | NYU SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
*Mindfulness for the masses: Understanding the approachability of mindfulness-based interventions and measurement of mindfulness among understudied diverse communities*

**Sasha Sommerfeldt** | UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN, MADISON  
*Is knowing the body knowing the mind? Mind-body coherence, interoception, and contemplative training*

**Vanessa Somohano** | PACIFIC UNIVERSITY  
*Long-term sustainability of mindfulness practice and treatment gains in women with co-occurring substance use disorder and posttraumatic stress disorder following a mindfulness-based relapse prevention program*

**Rémi Thériault** | UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À MONTRÉAL  
*Transforming habits from the heart: From good intentions to reliable prosocial response*
SUMMER RESEARCH INSTITUTE

FACULTY

Lawrence Barsalou, Ph.D.
UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

Lawrence Barsalou is professor of psychology at the University of Glasgow in the Institute of Neuroscience and Psychology. He received a B.A. in psychology from the University of California, San Diego, in 1977 and a Ph.D. in cognitive psychology from Stanford University in 1981. Since then, Barsalou has held faculty positions at Emory University, the Georgia Institute of Technology, and the University of Chicago, joining the University of Glasgow in 2015. Barsalou’s research addresses the nature of human conceptual processing and its roles in perception, memory, language, thought, social interaction, health cognition, and contemplative processes. A central theme of his research is that the cognition is grounded in multimodal simulation, situated action, and embodiment. His current research focuses on understanding health behaviors from the perspective of grounded cognition, including habits, stress, and eating.

Amit Bernstein, Ph.D.
UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA

Born in Israel, Amit Bernstein grew up in the U.S. He studied at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, the University of Vermont, the Palo Alto VA, and the Stanford University School of Medicine. Today, he is a professor of psychology at the University of Haifa. With his students in the Observing Minds Lab, he studies how well-being and suffering are shaped by the ways in which we process, experience, and respond to our internal states. His lab is currently focused on the nature and function of attention and awareness in mental health, the salutary and curative properties of mindfulness, and the therapeutic translation of this work for vulnerable populations such as refugees and asylum seekers. In his most important and rewarding job, he is Yonatan’s, Noga’s, and Mia’s father.

Doris F. Chang, Ph.D.
NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

Doris F. Chang is director of clinical training and associate professor of psychology at the New School for Social Research, and a research scientist at the Center of Excellence for Cultural Competence, New York State Psychiatric Institute. Her research seeks to improve the well-being of racial and ethnic minorities by a) clarifying the role of race, ethnicity, and culture in shaping interpersonal dynamics, b) identifying strategies for improving relational processes and outcomes in interracial and intercultural contexts, and c) developing inclusive, culturally grounded interventions for clinical and educational contexts that integrate mindfulness and other contemplative traditions. In 2018, she was awarded a PEACE grant from the Mind & Life Institute to develop and pilot a mindfulness-based critical consciousness training program for K-5 teachers in New York City. She is on the editorial boards of the “Asian American Journal of Psychology,” Psychotherapy Research, and Frontiers in Psychology (Cultural Psychology section). Dr. Chang is a recipient of The New School Award for Outstanding Achievements in Diversity and Social Justice Teaching and is a Fellow of the Asian American Psychological Association. A licensed clinical psychologist, Dr. Chang is a graduate of the Nalanda Institute’s Certificate Program in Contemplative Psychotherapy. She maintains a private practice in New York City.

Yoona Kang, Ph.D.
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Yoona Kang’s research investigates psychological and neural mechanisms that support the development and changes in social cognition, emotions, and health outcomes. Her main research interests are in 1) linking social cognitive and affective processing in the brain to health outcomes across various developmental stages, and 2)
designing intervention strategies that guide adaptive changes in social processing to promote emotional and physical well-being. Yoona’s work draws conceptual and methodological tools from psychology, cognitive neuroscience, contemplative science, and health communication. She examines converging evidence across a wide range of tools, including first-person reports, implicit measures, behavioral outcomes, and neuroimaging data (fMRI, fNIRS, EEG). Yoona received her B.A. in psychology from UCLA and Ph.D. in psychology from Yale University.

Tanya Luhrmann, Ph.D.
STANFORD UNIVERSITY
Tanya Marie Luhrmann is the Watkins University Professor at Stanford University, in the Stanford Anthropology Department. Her work focuses on the edge of experience: voices, visions, the world of the supernatural, and the world of psychosis. She was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2003 and received a John Guggenheim Fellowship award in 2007. “When God Talks Back” was named a “New York Times” Notable Book of the Year and a “Kirkus Reviews” Best Book of the Year. It was awarded the $100,000 Gr deemeyer Prize for Religion. She has published over 30 op-eds in “The New York Times,” and her work has been featured in “The New Yorker,” “The New York Review of Books,” “The Times Literary Supplement,” “Science News,” and many other publications. Her new book, “Our Most Troubling Madness: Schizophrenia and Culture,” was published by the University of California Press in October 2016.

Zenju Earthlyn Manuel, Ph.D.
Zenju Earthlyn Manuel is an author and ordained Zen priest. The essence of all her transmissions come together in her teachings including these books, “Sanctuary: A Meditation on Home, Homelessness, and Belonging,” “The Way of Tenderness: Awakening Through Race, Sexuality, and Gender” (print and audio), and “Black Angel Cards: 36 Oracles and Messages for Divining Your Life.” She is a contributing author to many anthologies, including “Dharma, Color, Culture: New Voices in Western Buddhism” and “Hidden Lamp: Stories from Twenty-Five Centuries of Awakened Women.” Her work has been featured in “Essence,” CNN, CBS News, “Buddhadharma,” and “Lion’s Roar.” She holds an M.A. from UCLA and a Ph.D. in transformative learning from the California Institute of Integral Studies.

John a. powell, J.D.
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
John a. powell is director of the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society and professor of law, African American studies, and ethnic studies at the University of California, Berkeley. He was previously the executive director at the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at the Ohio State University and the Institute for Race and Poverty at the University of Minnesota. Prior to that John was the national legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union. He is a co-founder of the Poverty & Race Research Action Council and serves on the boards of several national and international organizations. John led the development of an “opportunity-based” model that connects affordable housing to education, health, health care, and employment, and is well-known for his work developing the frameworks of “targeted universalism” and “othering and belonging” to effect equity-based interventions. John has taught at numerous law schools, including Harvard University and Columbia University. His latest book is “Racing to Justice: Transforming our Concepts of Self and Other to Build an Inclusive Society.”
Anil Seth, Ph.D.
UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

Anil Seth is professor of cognitive and computational neuroscience at the University of Sussex and founding co-director of the Sackler Centre for Consciousness Science. His research group investigates the biological basis of consciousness by bringing together research across neuroscience, mathematics, artificial intelligence, computer science, psychology, philosophy, and psychiatry. He is specifically interested in how conscious perceptions of the world and of the self can be understood through the lens of the "predictive brain." He has published over 150 academic papers and edited the best-selling popular science book “30 Second Brain.” Anil is editor-in-chief of the journal "Neuroscience of Consciousness" (Oxford University Press), a Senior Fellow of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, and a Wellcome Trust Engagement Fellow. He was the 2017 president of the British Science Association (Psychology Section), and his 2017 TED talk has been viewed over 6.5 million times.

CONTEMPLATIVE FACULTY

Alisa Dennis, Ph.D.
SPIRIT ROCK

Alisa Dennis discovered meditation through her study of metaphysics and ancient Christian mystical traditions. She practiced within the S.N. Goenka tradition of Vipassana, then studied mindfulness through the Mindful Awareness Research Center at UCLA. She completed a multiyear, Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction training related to integrating contemplative practices into psychotherapy. Alisa also completed residential training in the Zen Soto tradition. Alisa values the unifying and integrating power of Insight practice and its capacity to reconnect us to our natural capacity to meet the moments of our lives with kindness, openness, and flexibility. Alisa is a licensed clinical psychologist in private practice in the Los Angeles area. She offers mindfulness and self-compassion trainings at corporations and community-based organizations. She is in the current Spirit Rock Teacher Training Program and both assists and leads residential retreats and daylong programs. Alisa has explored many other spiritual traditions. Her work with indigenous shamans has supported her development of a multidimensional consciousness and has deepened and broadened the matrices through which she understands the nature of human existence.

Laura Schmalzl, Ph.D.
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Laura Schmalzl is an associate professor at Southern California University of Health Sciences, where she teaches neuroscience, research methods, and yoga foundations for healthcare professionals. Laura initially trained as a clinical neuropsychologist before completing a Ph.D. in cognitive science and post-doctoral work in cognitive neuroscience as well as behavioral medicine. Alongside her academic work, she is also a dedicated yoga practitioner and longtime yoga instructor. Much of Laura’s research over the past years evolved around the development and scientific evaluation of yoga interventions for both clinical and healthy populations. Broadly speaking, her research interests lie in furthering our understanding of the mechanisms through which yoga-based practices can impact cognitive functioning, body awareness, and emotional self-regulation. Laura is also editor in chief of the “International Journal of Yoga Therapy.”

Peter Wayne, Ph.D.
HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL

Peter Wayne is a researcher and practitioner in the field of integrative and mind-body medicine. Dr. Wayne is an associate professor of medicine at Harvard
Medical School (HMS) and director of research for the Osher Center for Integrative Medicine, a collaboration between HMS and Brigham and Women’s Hospital. He is also the founding director at the Tree of Life Tai Chi Center in Boston. The primary focus of Dr. Wayne’s research is evaluating how mind-body and related integrative medicine practices clinically impact aging and chronic health conditions, and understanding the physiological and psychological mechanisms underlying observed therapeutic effects. He has served as a principal or co-investigator on more than 25 NIH-funded studies. His research has evaluated the impact of therapies such as tai chi, qigong, acupuncture, and chiropractic on diverse medical issues, including balance disorders, Parkinson’s disease, heart failure, cancer, back pain, migraines, and healthy aging. Dr. Wayne has more than 40 years of training experience in tai chi and qigong and is an internationally recognized teacher of these practices. He is author of “The Harvard Medical School Guide to Tai Chi,” which received an Award of Excellence in Medical Communication by the American Medical Writers Association.

Larry Yang teaches mindfulness and loving kindness retreats nationally and has a special interest in creating access to the dharma for diverse multicultural communities. Larry has practiced meditation for almost 30 years, with extensive time in Burma and Thailand, and a six-month period of ordination as a Buddhist monastic. Larry is on the Teachers Council of Spirit Rock Meditation Center, is one of the founding teachers of both East Bay Meditation Center (Oakland) and Insight Community of the Desert (Palm Springs). Larry was honored for his work in racial justice by being selected as the community’s choice for Grand Marshal in the 2016 San Francisco LGBTIQ Pride Parade, whose theme that year was “For Racial and Economic Justice.” He has been part of the coordinating team developing future diverse community meditation teachers in Spirit Rock’s Community Dharma Leadership Programs for 10 years. Larry is one of the core trainers for the current Spirit Rock Dharma Teacher Training Program to develop the participation from multicultural communities as fully empowered dharma teachers. His new book is “Awakening Together: the Spiritual Practice of Inclusivity and Community” (Wisdom Publications).

DISCUSSANTS AND BREAKOUT & AFFINITY GROUP FACILITATORS

Norman Farb, Ph.D.
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO MISSISSAUGA

Norman Farb is an assistant professor in psychology at the University of Toronto Mississauga, where he directs the Regulatory and Affective Dynamics laboratory (www.radlab.zone). A Fellow at the Mind & Life Institute, he studies the social neuroscience of the self and human emotion, with a focus on how biases in self-representation shape emotions to determine well-being. Dr. Farb’s work employs varied measures, including self-report, behavioral tasks, physiology, and brain activity. Dr. Farb is particularly interested in how training practices such as meditation and yoga foster resilience against stress, reducing vulnerability to disorders such as depression.

Chris Kaplan, M.A.
CANTICLE FARM

Chris Kaplan received his M.A. in the social sciences from the University of Chicago, where he researched politically engaged Buddhism and the global justice movement. Since then, he has been involved in the field of contemplative research and education in a number of capacities, including as a visiting researcher at Brown University, a visiting scholar and research associate with the Mind & Life Institute, a mentor for Inward Bound Mindfulness Education, and various other...
ongoing collaborations. He locates his work at the intersection of embodied contemplative practice, social justice, and collective transformation through nature connection, communal healing, and cultural repair.

Dominique A. Malebranche, Ph.D.
THE TRAUMA CENTER
Dominique A. Malebranche served as a member of the International Symposium for Contemplative Research (ISCR) 2018 Program Planning Committee for the Mind & Life Institute and was a participant of the Summer Research Institute (SRI) 2018. Counseling psychologist by training, she is a graduate of University of Missouri where she also studied multicultural psychology and education, and actively develops anti-oppressive frameworks for building cultural competencies in clinical and organizational systems. She is currently completing a postdoctoral fellowship at the Trauma Center in Brookline, Massachusetts, and provides training, consultation, and clinical specialization in mind-body interventions for individuals with complex psychological trauma exposure. Dr. Malebranche has participated in integrative mind-body clinical research and interpersonal violence prevention and cross-cultural scholarship including complex trauma interventions for survivors of human trafficking, Black feminist conceptual frameworks, sexual and behavioral health for men, boys, and LGBT populations, and racial justice healing groups. She is also a practitioner of meditation and embodiment practices, certified Vinyasa yoga teacher, trauma-sensitive yoga facilitator (TCTSY-F), and community member of Black Lotus Collective in Boston.

Kirat Randhawa
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
Kirat is a student at Columbia University studying how psychology and contemplative practices can be used as instruments for individual and societal transformation. She is completing research at The Contemplative Sciences Center at the University of Virginia to identify and deconstruct the multilayered conditioning that prohibits human flourishing. Kirat aims to integrate Tibetan Buddhist philosophy into a traditional psychotherapeutic framework to support others on their path toward self-actualization.

Juan Santoyo
UNIVERSIDAD DE ANTIOQUIA, MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Juan is an early-career researcher from Colombia who works in neuroscience and contemplative research. His training has focused on studying the neurophysiological dynamics underlying meditation training and sensory perception in humans, and neural mechanisms that underlie innate behaviors in mice. Through this, he has been involved in the development of strategies for neurophenomenological research, as well as genetic techniques for mapping and manipulating neural circuits in mice. In addition to his experience as a researcher, Juan has worked to co-develop spaces where contemplative practice can be used to ground the work of challenging systems of oppression, and creating contemplative communities where people with marginalized identities feel safe, seen, and celebrated. Bringing these different threads of work together, he is currently working in Medellín, Colombia, to develop, implement, and test a meditation-based program to help FARC ex-combatants with the psychological experience of reintegration as part of Colombia’s ongoing peacebuilding process.

Daniel Siegel, Ph.D.
UCLA SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Dr. Siegel is a clinical professor of psychiatry at the UCLA School of Medicine and the founding co-director of the Mindful Awareness Research Center at UCLA. He is also the executive director of the Mindsight Institute, which
focuses on developing mindsight to teach insight, empathy, and integration in individuals, families, and communities. Dr. Siegel has published extensively for both the professional and lay audiences. His four “New York Times” best sellers are: “Mind: A Journey to the Heart of Being Human,” “Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain,” and “The Whole-Brain Child” and “No-Drama Discipline.” His other books include: “The Developing Mind” (2nd ed.), “Mindsight,” “The Mindful Brain,” “The Mindful Therapist,” “The Yes Brain” (also with Tina Payne Bryson), and his latest book, “Aware” (2018). Dr. Siegel also is the founding editor for the Norton Professional Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology, which contains over 60 textbooks.

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These contributions were made to the Mind & Life Catherine Kerr Award for Courageous and Compassionate Science, in memory of the late Cathy Kerr and her remarkable contributions to the field of contemplative sciences. These donations fund an academic award and lecture in her honor. Recipients of the award will exemplify the qualities and character that Cathy brought to her work, including bold innovation, imagination, courage, authenticity, and heartfulness. 100% of these donations will go directly to the Catherine Kerr Award for Courageous and Compassionate Science. For more information on ways to support this memorial fund, please contact the Mind & Life office of philanthropy at 434-339-0281.
Why I Give

I was delighted to be introduced to the Mind & Life Institute nearly 20 years ago. The meetings and conversations with renowned experts in the fields of neuroscience, philosophy, physics, psychology, and religious studies have enriched my life and provided important insights into my own meditation practice and how this work can benefit others. Through books, digital media, and other shared resources, Mind & Life makes this information available to all.

“It’s personally rewarding to support an organization with such reach and impact. Mind & Life is a welcoming community that offers new and hopeful perspectives toward the possibility of positive change for our world.”

Ann Down
Mind & Life supporter and community member
AGREEMENTS FOR ENGAGING & INTERACTING
Cultivating a Community of Trust and Inclusion

1. Try it on: Be willing to “try on” new ideas, or ways of doing things that might not be what you prefer or are familiar with.

2. Attend to and speak about your own experiences and responses:
   • Use “I” statements
   • Do not speak for a whole group or express assumptions about the experience of others

3. Understand the difference between intent and impact: Denying the impact of something said by focusing on intent is often more destructive than the initial interaction.

4. Practice “both/and”: When speaking, substitute “and” for “but.” This practice acknowledges and honors multiple realities.

5. Refrain from blaming or shaming self and others:
   • Practice giving skillful feedback
   • Describe your own feelings
   • It’s ok to agree to disagree

6. Move up/Move back:
   • Encourage full participation by all present
   • If you tend to speak often, consider “moving back” and vice versa
   • Be lean in expression

7. Practice mindful listening:
   • Try to avoid planning what you’ll say as you listen to others
   • Be willing to be surprised, to learn something new
   • Listen with your whole self

8. Strive to participate fully.

9. Use technology mindfully and minimally using your best judgement.

10. Honor confidentiality where applicable:
    • Take home learnings but don’t identify anyone other than yourself, now or later
    • If you want to follow up with anyone regarding something personal they said in a session, ask first and respect their wishes

11. Right to pass: You can say “I pass” if you don’t wish to speak.

12. Be aware of how you are contributing to the energy of the group.

13. Give the benefit of the doubt to others and yourself.

14. Call people into alignment with values and agreements to support mutual growth and understanding.
   • Initiate feedback directly with people involved rather than others
   • Speak from personal experience
   • Use clear examples

15. Validate each other’s unique experiences.

Adapted from the East Bay Meditation Center “Agreements for Multicultural Interactions at EBMC” document, which was adapted from Visions Inc., “Guidelines for Productive Work Sessions”
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### Schedule

#### Day One
- **YOGA** Laura Schmalzl  6:00–7:00AM
- **MEDITATION** Larry Yang & Alisa Dennis  7:15–8:00AM

#### Breakfast 8:00–9:00AM  Silent until 8:15 AM
- Announcements 9:15–9:30AM
- Contemplative Practices
  - Larry Yang & Alisa Dennis
  - 9:15AM–12:00PM
- Q&A 10:20–10:40AM
- Break
- Tanya Luhrmann
  - 10:50–11:40 AM
- Q&A 11:40AM–12:00PM

#### Lunch 12:15–1:15PM
- Break
- Zenju Earthlyn
  - Manuel
  - 2:15–3:05PM
- Q&A 3:05–3:25PM
- Break
- Lawrence Barsalou
  - 3:35–4:25PM
- Q&A 4:25–4:45PM

#### Breakouts 3:30–4:30PM
- Session 1: 3:30–3:50PM
- Session 2: 4:00PM–4:20PM

#### Interdisciplinary Panel: Translating Neuroscience 3:00–4:45PM
- Lawrence Barsalou
  - 3:35–4:25PM
  - Q&A 4:25–4:45PM

#### Town Hall 3:00–4:45PM
- Lawrence Barsalou
  - 3:35–4:25PM
  - Q&A 4:25–4:45PM

#### Tai Chi Peter Wayne  5:00–6:00PM

#### Dinner 6:00–7:00PM
- Networking Night 7:15–8:30PM
- Poster Session I 7:00–8:30PM
- Mind & Life Grant Presentations 7:00–8:30PM
- Poster Session II 7:00–8:30PM
- Dessert Reception, Closing Remarks, Celebration 7:00–8:30PM

#### Meditation Larry Yang & Alisa Dennis  8:30–9:00PM

#### Silence into Breakfast 10:00PM–8:15AM

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**Note:** The schedule is subject to change. Please check the Mind & Life website for the most up-to-date information.
### YOU MAKE THIS POSSIBLE

Thanks to our community, Mind & Life has accomplished much over the last three decades. Mind & Life’s work leads to transformation of society through positive change in health and well-being, education, and equity & inclusion. We invite you to join our community of supporters. To partner with us in this work to alleviate suffering and promote flourishing, please visit:

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