

Lecture Series:
Comparative Studies on Buddhism in Taiwan and Mainland China

**Mindfulness in Chan Buddhism - Contemporary Experiences
in the Chan Monastic Life of Taiwan and Mainland China**

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Universität Hamburg, Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1, Room 121 ESA Ost (East Wing)

The presented study is devoted to understanding mindfulness in Chinese Chan Buddhism, in particular focusing on how it is perceived and actually engaged in the context of contemporary Chan monasteries. Here, the notion of mindfulness in a Chan living tradition is discussed as a local knowledge through the self-representation of Chan masters' rhetorical preaching as well as Chan masters' lively spiritual embodiments. The experiential and personal dimensions of mindfulness practices in monastic life are analysed from three aspects drawing on the traditional threefold Buddhist cultivation framework: Sila (morality), Samadhi (meditation), and Prajna (insights). By drawing on autoethnography and fieldwork, it examines the ways that mindfulness functions and intersects with full ordination ceremonies, Chan meditation retreats, and monastic ordinary daily activities like eating or physical labors. 'Mindfulness' at the heart of Buddhism offers a window on impermanent and permanent worlds of a living tradition, which connects and contrasts the modern Chung Tai Chan Monastery in Taiwan and the traditional Yunmen Dajue Chan Monastery in Mainland China within the same lineage.



Such an insight offered by Chan Buddhism could broaden the current perception on mindfulness and provide valuable comparison and contrast with the contemporary secular mindfulness.

Ven. Jian Cheng is a doctoral candidate in religious studies at Lancaster University, England. Her research focuses on religious practices in contemporary Chan monastic traditions. Her doctoral thesis contributes to the under-studied 'mindfulness' in Chan tradition and is the first study in English to offer a systematic introduction to the lived reality of Chung Tai Chan Monastery, one of the most influential Chan monasteries in Taiwan. She has been a Buddhist nun since 2002.