



*Virginia B. Foulmin*  
**FOUNDATION**

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APRIL 24<sup>TH</sup> - APRIL 27<sup>TH</sup>

**WORLD MENTAL HEALTH  
 CONFERENCE & RETREAT**

**2025**

Better mental health, Better well-being, Better World



**THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF BANGKOK GREEN VALLEY**

PRESENTED BY:  
 THE MINDFULNESS ACADEMY OF ASIA &  
 THE HARTANTO GUNAWAN FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

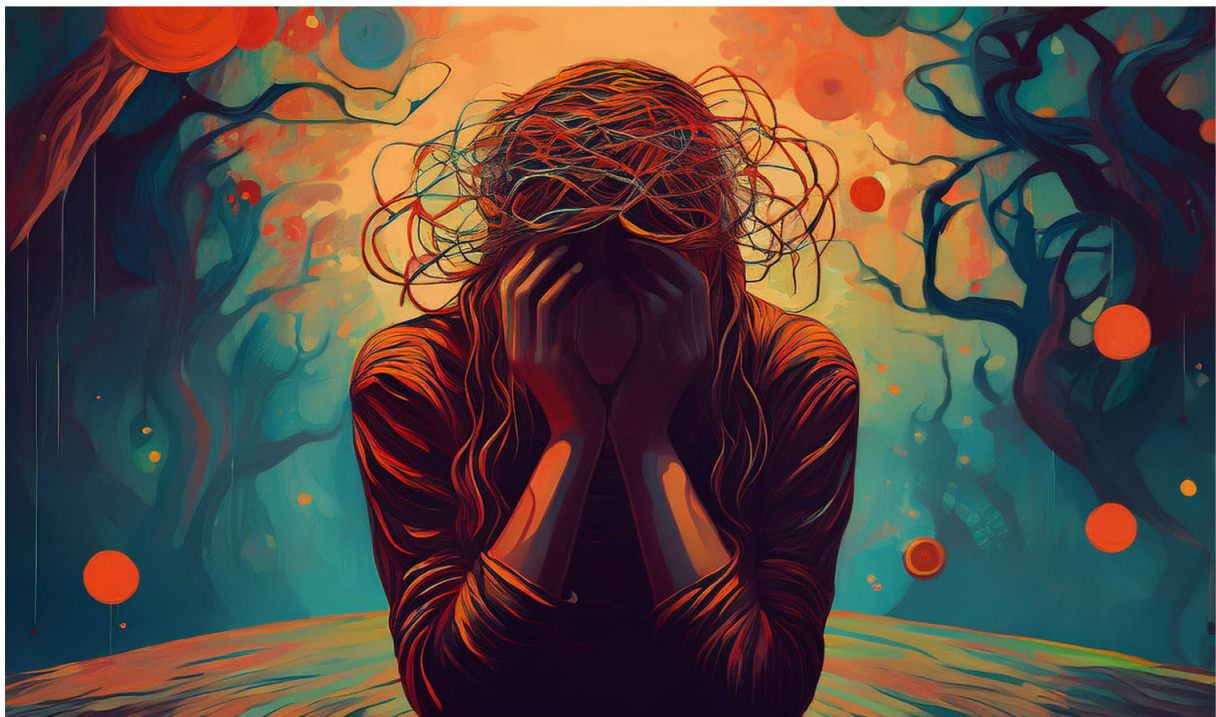


## BACKGROUND

In the midst of confusion, the current world we are living in has become more and more difficult to navigate due to crime, poverty, social media drug, alcohol addiction, war, and hatred. Family members abuse, rape, and kill each other recklessly. Teenagers commit homicide in public. Mass shootings in schools and hospitals are on the rise. Racism in causes more death and separation between different races. The era of Covid-19 is probably one of the most unprecedented times that had caused physical, emotional and especially, mental sufferings for people around the world. Having to constantly live in fear of losing our loved ones, being afraid to be diagnosed with Covid-19, worrying about losing our income and children's education while living under quarantine have caused excruciating pain and mental suffering.

In today's world, people are living with stress, anxiety, fear and all other mental vulnerabilities caused by the past, present, or future. A lot of people are addicted to social media, alcohol and drugs because they are unsatisfied or unhappy with their present lives. Vulnerable minds are so easy to be caught with algorithms that will keep their minds busy with information that was presented. This way, they do not have to feel the pain of living. Whether it be, feeling belittled or not having enough, not being good enough, not being strong enough, and not smart or skillful enough seems to keep escalating. When is enough enough? Our mind will never feel enough if we do not start to train the mind itself.

The world's addiction, depression, suicidal rates, and violence are increasing. Recently, there has been an estimate that at least 10 million people in Thailand alone have depression. Teens' depression statistics in the United States are currently on the rise. Sadly enough, only a small percentage received treatment. When young people face difficult family situations, they feel hopeless and do self-harm or harm others. When young people feel unloved and misunderstood, they resort to cut themselves, claiming they wanted the physical pain to supersede their emotional pain.



The question is why do human beings have to go that far? Why do people hurt and harm themselves and others? Why do people experience no hope in life? Why do people kill each other with no conscience? The reason is because they lack the true understanding of the meaning of life and of things as they really are which resulted in mental suffering. Depression, panic attacks, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorders, suicidal thought, ADD, and ADHD are some examples of mental illnesses that are common in people who experience deep pain and excruciating experiences in life where their body and mind lose control and have no coping mechanisms.

According to World Health Organization, “More than 700,000 people die by suicide every year, which is one person every 40 seconds. Suicide is a global phenomenon and occurs throughout the lifespan. Effective and evidence-based interventions can be implemented at population, sub-population and individual levels to prevent suicide and suicide attempts. There are indications that for each adult who died by suicide there may have been more than 20 others attempting suicide.”

<https://www.who.int/teams/mental-health-and-substance-use/data-research/suicide-data>





## OBJECTIVES

The Mindfulness Academy of Asia and The Foundation for Human Development organize the World Mental Health Conference and Retreat 2025 with the mission to improve the mental health and well-being of adults and children worldwide. Through international education, foreign diplomacy, public health, and business sectors, we are committed to bring good mental health and well-being into our society, through our families, schools, offices, companies, organizations, institutions and government agencies.

While mental suffering is emerging in every form such as stress, anxiety, depression, addiction, rage and suicide, we realize how important it is to address these problems. We want to help society learn the benefits of practicing mindfulness and research meditation to restore good mental health and well-being. We want to make all human beings realize, to learn and to understand the importance of taking care of the mind in our daily lives in order to have a healthy mind and healthy mental health/mental well-being.



The Mindfulness Academy of Asia has implemented mindfulness for the past decade and witnessed great results of having children, teachers, health care professionals, government officers, and entrepreneurs reap the benefits of being aware of the present moment. The Foundation for Human Development, founded by Hartanto Gunawan, has rescued 400 young girls from human trafficking and restored their future by providing education for over two decades. Ajarn Hartanto Gunawan has taught students to meditate to heal from trauma and mental suffering and strengthen their minds, build self-confidence, and find empowerment in society. He has also taught NYPD (New York Police Department) in their Self-Care Programs for their Officers, as well as at institutions of higher learning across America and Europe, including Georgetown University, University of Richmond, Northwestern University, Central Florida University and Case Western Reserve University.



In order to celebrate our successes and continue the efforts of spreading awareness and understanding of the importance and benefits of mindfulness and research meditation, we are launching the project:

### **“WORLD MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE AND RETREAT 2025”**

Better Mental Health, Better Well-being, Better World

To educate parents, children, educators, professionals, and all people from all walks of life on how to apply mindfulness and research meditation techniques in schools, at home, in their workforce, in order to cope with their daily lives that are full of stress that can lead to anxiety, depression, anger, rage, sadness, and all other mental suffering.

To educate companies, government agencies, and businesses on how to practice mindful and research meditation in order to be mindful and wise leaders and to train their staffs and their employees to perform effectively and efficiently while coping with their stress. It is very costly for companies and businesses if their staffs end up in mental illnesses/suffering.

To educate social workers, doctors, nurses and health care professionals on how to apply mindfulness and research meditation for their own well-being and for their patients while preventing the children, students and patients from becoming mentally ill. Physical suffering, if we don't prevent it from spreading, it will affect the mind and create mental suffering which in turn, causing both physical and mental suffering.





BY AJARN HARTANTO GUNAWAN

## UNDERSTANDING CONCEPTS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Participants will learn and understand key ideas towards the understanding of mental health and well-being such as:

- **Law of Nature** - Human beings have greed, lust, hatred, and an ignorant mind. By understanding the Law of Nature, we will have the ability to change the nature of our mind. It is the absolute law or the law of cause and effect. To understand the Law of Cause and Effect is to prevent bad consequences. It can be linear as if it is a chain reaction and can be multi-dimensional. The law of nature is the law of cause and effect, the law of action and reaction. There is a chain reaction to every action in the law of cause and effect. There is a ripple effect of a simple action.
- **Impermanence** - A ball is thrown up in the air and it surely falls back down. The law of gravity is the first step to understanding impermanence. Just as a falling ball's position and speed change every instant, all phenomena undergo perpetual change. The true characteristic of nature is impermanent. For example, cells divide, babies are born, new stars coalesce from celestial gasses as others explode in supernovae. Just as it is inevitable that the ball will fall back to Earth, so too is changing an inevitable fact of nature. Mental phenomena are not exempt from this "gravity" and impermanence. Memories, feelings, and perceptions arise and dissipate. Our sense of "I," as the protagonist of our own narrative, can be revealed to be merely the progression of impermanent mental processes. Understanding this is liberating. We are free to let go of anxieties and prior conceptions of ourselves. Understanding impermanence provides the basis for nonattachment and to understand deeper about life and understand things as they really are. Suffering results from clinging to phenomena that inexorably change. Peace of mind can be found in simply letting go.





- **Research Meditation** - mental discipline that helps human beings research and find out the causes of suffering and how to cease the suffering. This is a skill that can help patients who suffer from depression, suicidal thoughts, panic attacks, and obsessive compulsive behaviors reduce these symptoms or mental suffering. The Research Meditation is to research the Law of Nature and the Impermanence in order to understand them as they really are and use them as the tools for the mind to cope with all mental suffering/illnesses.



- **Mindful and Wise Leadership** - The ability to be aware of the present moment with a nonjudgmental perspective, be accountable for their duties and responsibilities, be strong leaders, empathize towards others, inhibit the expression of negative emotions and lead by examples; The ability to see things objectively as they really are. We learn to think, speak, and act based on the law of nature, respond wisely based on the law instead of reacting based on emotions, understand the true nature of things, and understand who "I" really am.

- **Various Mindfulness Disciplines** - Mindfulness can be practiced through many different ways. One can simply sit, walk, eat, stand and lie down. Practitioners will be taught fun mindfulness games in the classroom, total relaxation, mindful coloring, mindful movement, and etc. Participants will get tricks and tips on how to apply mindfulness in schools and in the workplace.

## PARTNERSHIPS

- Royal Thai Government
- The Ministry of Education of Thailand
- Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (Thailand)
- Ministry of Public Health (Thailand)
- The Embassy of The United States of America in Bangkok
- The Embassy of The Republic Indonesia in Bangkok
- The Embassy of Japan in Bangkok
- Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation of The United States
- New York Police Department
- World Health Organization
- The American School of Bangkok Green Valley
- Siam University
- University of Richmond
- Georgetown University
- Oklahoma State University
- Princ Hospital Suvarnabhumi
- Wellington College United Kingdom
- International School of Dhaka
- NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation)



*Virginia B. Toulmin*  
FOUNDATION



Georgetown  
University



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Empower. Inspire. Embrace.





## KEY PRESENTATIONS

### TITLE: REVOLUTIONIZING MENTAL HEALTH CURRICULUM IN EDUCATION

**Presenters:** Ajarn Hartanto Gunawan, Director, Foundation for Human Development

**Bio:** Ajarn Hartanto Gunawan is a former Buddhist monk in the Thai forest tradition, as well as a social worker who has received two awards: an Outstanding Person Award for Preventing and Suppressing Human Trafficking by the Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chanocha and the US Assistant Federal Award by the US State Department. Ajarn Hartanto's work has also earned international recognition from the governments of Japan, Indonesia, and the United Kingdom. He has rescued more than 400 young girls from human trafficking and domestic abuse/violence. He has taught the NYPD, Case Western Reserve University, Georgetown University, University of Richmond, public schools in Harlem and the Bronx, New York, and incarcerated persons in the Richmond City Jail, to help for their mental well-being. In addition, he also teaches families, individuals with suicidal thoughts, depression, and other mental illnesses/suffering.

**Abstract:** For more than 25 years of social work and dharma teaching, Ajarn Hartanto Gunawan had introduced Research Meditation, a unique style of meditation, that helped all of his students and practitioners overcome trauma and mental illnesses. Rescued victims, government officers, doctors, educators, wall street investors, and etc. have improved their mental well-being and strength, overcome their mental suffering and returned to school and workforce, with confidence and wisdom. The Research Meditation curriculum combines the principles that contribute to good mental health and well-being, beginning with the understanding of the Law of Nature which focuses on the Law of Cause and Effect, the Law of Action and Reaction, and the Impermanence.

Participants will understand the profound impact that the Research Meditation has made on human development. Thus, it is very important to realize that mental education is an integral part of education, the most crucial ingredient that helps human beings navigate the complexity in today's world. In the past, all education in the whole world has put strong emphasis on taking care of the body in our daily lives. All schools up to universities, they all have Physical Education (PE) 101 and PE 102 in all their curriculum. However, there has never been any curriculum in all educational institutions that teach Mental Education (ME) 101 and ME 102 to balance with PE 101 and PE 102. A healthy life is not only having a healthy body; it must be all, having a healthy mind, body, and mental state. Therefore, Mental Education (ME) is equally important as PE and ought to be part of a mandatory curriculum.

If children receive proper education about how to cope with their mental states, it is an act of prevention to mental illnesses. Ultimately, if we implement mental education in schools and universities, our young generation will live life with wisdom. They will be taught to research and understand their mental states, how to overcome pain and fear, and to let go of negative thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and emotions of the past and future. They will enjoy living in the present moment with peace and happiness. One can experience the state of equanimity.



## KEYNOTE PRESENTATION DAY 1:

**Dr. Monti Datta**, Associate Professor of Political Science, at the University of Richmond

**Bio:** Raised in Los Angeles and educated at UC Berkeley and Georgetown University, Datta spent time teaching in South Korea and Japan before pursuing his PhD in political science at UC Davis. Since 2016, after meeting with Ajarn Hartanto, Monti has been active in developing a variety of meditation programs at the University of Richmond, helping students better understand their minds while pursuing a college education. He is passionate about travel, considers it soul-enriching, and is actively involved in promoting social justice awareness alongside students on campus.

**Abstract:** Participants will learn about different mindfulness initiatives Monti has grown and developed at the University of Richmond since 2016, in partnership with Ajarn Hartanto, seeking greater wellbeing on campus for college students and for community members in the Greater Richmond Virginia community. Monti will also speak about a course he developed, Mindful and Wise Leadership, which is aimed for first-year students as they learn the principles of research meditation and apply them to their academic curriculum.

**William Villafranco**, Trustee Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, Entrepreneur and Philanthropist

**Abstract:**

**NYPD, Officer**

**Abstract:**





## KEYNOTE PRESENTATION DAY 2:

**Title:** Happy and Wise Teachers Make a Better World

**Presenters:** Nisanart Dharmageisirattana, Director of The American School of Bangkok Green Valley and Mindfulness Academy of Asia

**Bio:** Gift earned her Bachelor's Degree in Film and Television from New York University (1998) and her Master's Degree in Education Administration in Public Education from Teachers College, Columbia University (2013). Currently, she serves The American School of Bangkok Green Valley as Director. She founded the Mindfulness Academy of Asia to help parents, students, and educators understand the importance of well-being in the schools. Among her trainees are international educators worldwide, university students, doctors and healthcare professionals. In 2018, she published her new mindfulness book, "The Mindful Way" to help teachers and administrators implement mindfulness in schools.

**Abstract:** Participants will learn how The American School of Bangkok Green Valley trains our teachers in various disciplines to foster well-being and happiness in our school community. The success of our practice has triggered interest from other educators and institutions, and we now have partnerships with; the Ministries of Education in Thailand and Indonesia, the International School of Dhaka, Oklahoma State University, Busan National University of Education, Principal Capital, Satit Pattana School, and the University of Richmond, USA. Find out how mindful practices in schools can impact, well-being, mental health, academic rigor, performing arts and performance in sports.

In this post pandemic era, institutions of every kind have found themselves struggling to navigate a range of new wellbeing challenges. At The American School of Bangkok, we have built a culture of mindfulness across school, helping our community deal with all kinds of challenges, ranging from finding focus in pressured sporting occasions to coping with diagnosed anxiety. The techniques we have developed draw from tried and tested by various disciplines, and our techniques have already been successfully introduced in a number of organizations with whom we have formed partnerships.









# SCHEDULE OF THE CONFERENCE

DURATION : APRIL 24 <sup>TH</sup> - APRIL 27 <sup>TH</sup> 2025			
APRIL 24 <sup>TH</sup>	APRIL 25 <sup>TH</sup>	APRIL 26 <sup>TH</sup>	APRIL 27 <sup>TH</sup>
8:00 - 9:00 a.m.	9:30 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.
<b>Registration:</b>	<b>Keynote Presentation 2:</b>	Research Meditation	Research Meditation
9:00 - 10:30 a.m.	Mindfulness Boosts High Performance in School	<b>"Law Of Nature"</b>	<b>"What is Life"</b>
<b>Grand Opening:</b>	10:30 - 10:45 a.m.	10:30 - 10:45 a.m.	10:30 - 10:45 a.m.
Opening Remarks by Special Guest Speaker	<b>Break</b>	<b>Break</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>Keynote Presentation 1:</b>	10:45 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	10:45 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	10:45 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Revolutionizing Mental Health Curriculum in Education	<b>Panel Discussion:</b>	Mindful Walking	Mindful Walking
10:30 - 10:45 a.m.	Improving Mental Health in Education	Mindful Movement	Mindful Movement
<b>Break</b>	12:00 - 1:00 p.m.	Mindful Listening	Mindful Listening
10:45 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	<b>Lunch</b>	12:00 - 1:00 p.m.	12:00 - 1:00 p.m.
<b>Lunch Break</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
12:00 p.m.	1:00 - 2:30 p.m.	1:00 - 2:30 p.m.	1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
Mindful and Wise Leadership at University of Richmond	<b>Student and Adult Led - Conferences:</b>	Discussion: <b>"Well-being in the Workplace"</b>	Reflection / Closing
Virginia B. Toulmin Scholarship	Pressure from High Academic Achievements	2:30 p.m.	
NYPD	Mindfulness in Sports Psychology	Mindfulness in Movement	
12:00 p.m.	Mental Well-being for Teens	Mindfulness in the Arts	
<b>Lunch Break</b>	Overcoming Family Pressure	3:30 p.m.	
1:00 p.m.	2:30 p.m.	<b>Day Ends</b>	
<b>Student and Adult Led - Conferences:</b>	Mindfulness in Movement		
Various topics for delegates to attend	Mindfulness in the Arts		
2:30 p.m.	3:30 p.m.		
Mindfulness in Golf	<b>Day Ends</b>		
Mindfulness in Basketball			
3:30 p.m.			
<b>Day Ends</b>			

## ABOUT US

### **Biography of Hartanto Gunawan:**

Co-Chair of World Mental Health Conference and Retreat 2025

Ajarn Hartanto Gunawan is the Director and Founder of the Foundation of Human Development. With the support of the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation in the United States of America, the Foundation provides room, board, education, and job opportunities for at-risk youth, and victims of human trafficking and domestic abuse/violence. Collaborating with the Thai Ministry of Education, Siam University, and local hospitals, the Foundation equips students with the skills needed to become qualified nurses and nursing assistants. Drawing from his unique background as a former CEO turned Buddhist monk, Hartanto leverages mindfulness and contemplative training to develop resilient students, empowering them to pursue successful careers and in turn contribute to their communities.

Originally from Indonesia, Hartanto previously held the role of CEO of a multi-industry holding company in Jakarta. Despite his professional success, living a life of luxury, and socializing with industrial and political figures, he felt a profound sense of disarray. His high-pressure lifestyle resulted in significant health challenges, including stress, high blood pressure, fits of temper (rages) and migraines. Reflecting on his former self, a stark contrast to the calm demeanor he exhibits today, he recalls, "If someone honked their horn (in traffic) I would get out and scold him," adding "At that time, I didn't know..."

In 1997, amid financial difficulties faced by his family, Hartanto's mother sought the guidance of two well-reputed monks named Phra Somchai and Phra Somnuk in Singapore. Following Phra Somchai's advice she encouraged one of her five sons to ordain as a monk for two years. On September 4, 1997, she presented this proposal to her five sons. Hartanto alone volunteered, viewing it as an opportunity to atone for his actions toward his mother in the past. Ever the decisive CEO at heart, he departed for Bangkok just two days later, on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 1997, embarking on a transformative journey that would shape his life and work.





Hartanto arrived at Bangkok's renowned Wat Arun, only to discover that his mother's acquaintance, the venerable Somnuk, was not in Bangkok but in Sakon Nakhon, a rural province in northeastern Thailand, hours away from the capital. Undeterred, he traveled to Sakon Nakhon that same day, where he met Venerable Somnuk and was ordained the following day. Shortly thereafter, Venerable Somnuk brought him to Donsawan, a remote island in Lake Nong Han. Hartanto arrived on the island with nothing but the orange robes of a monk, an alms bowl, a prayer book, a flashlight, a lighter, candles, an umbrella, and a mosquito net. He had no money, mobile phone, luggage, or other possessions. As he stood on the desolate island, surrounded by thick jungle and devoid of buildings, electricity, food, or inhabitants, Venerable monk Somnuk simply instructed "Just wait here, I'll send your mother back." With that, the monk departed, leaving Hartanto alone. As night fell, the jungle came alive with the movements of snakes, scorpions, and spiders. Hours went by and still no one arrived. Consumed by fear, loneliness, and despair, Hartanto wrapped himself in his robes and wept in the darkness.

The following morning, to his immense relief, the droning sound of an approaching skiff broke the silence. He was transported to a nearby village to beg for alms. The stark contrast between his previous life as a CEO living in luxury and his new monastic existence was overwhelming, and the psychological strain of the adjustment was immense. It took several months for him to acclimate and accept his new circumstances.

Initially, Hartanto struggled with bouts of anger and depression. However, through persistent meditation and self-reflection, he experienced a profound psychological transformation. He observed that "the snakes are calm, the scorpions are calm, the forest is calm." He realized that the turmoil he felt resided solely within his own mind. With only a chanting book as his guide, he began to contemplate the Buddha's teachings, which ultimately led him to develop a meditation technique he termed Research Meditation, rooted in the principles of Vipassana. Through this practice, he came to understand the laws of nature, the "self," and eventually cultivated equanimity. Over time, he was able to relinquish his anger, hatred, greed, and lust, alleviating his mental suffering, and learned to embrace the tranquility of life as a forest monk.

Two years later, Hartanto returned to Wat Arun to formally conclude his monastic term. However, upon re-entering urban life with its noise and chaos, he found himself once again grappling with anger. Recognizing he was not yet ready to leave the monkhood, he informed his mother of his decision to extend his ordination. He spent an additional two years at Wat Arun, engaging in research meditation and introspection to uncover the root causes of mental suffering.

After the Lasikka ceremony, which marked his formal exit from the monkhood, Hartanto realized he could not return to the life of a CEO. He felt the calling to contribute to humanity, he resolved to share the knowledge and insights he had gained during his monastic years. Profoundly moved by the plight of human trafficking victims, whose suffering he deemed even greater than his own, he decided to take action, though uncertain about the exact path forward. Embracing a new purpose, he remarked, "I set out to make merit, rather than money." His first step in this new journey was to take a position as a driver for a tour company, embarking on a mission to serve others and make a meaningful difference in the world.





Having learned frugality and patience in the monkhood, Hartanto saved his earnings from the tip money and started teaching meditation inside the pagoda of Wat Arun or The Temple of Dawn. Soon he developed a personal connection with an American client of the tour company who wanted to adopt two Thai orphans. He was able to help them with the adoption, so the client invited him to spend time at their house in Naples, Florida and asked what he really wished to do. Hartanto explained his vision to rescue victims of human trafficking and to share and spread his knowledge and experiences to mankind. Feeling thankful for the adoption, the client provided the necessary funds to establish the Community Learning Center.

Hartanto's administrative skills reemerged as he organized the center. With the funds from the American client, he was able to build classrooms. He crafted the center's learning program, based on the principle that morality, discipline, and wisdom are fundamental to human life's successes and happiness. He organized a rigorous curriculum and daily routine which includes hours of mindfulness training and discipline and along with classes to learn IT, English and traditional handicrafts. Liasing with the Thai Ministry of Education and with hospitals around the country, he organized nursing internships for all his students. The Center and its students thrived. Since its inception, several hundred students have passed through the program with many graduates finding employment in Bangkok's top hospitals. Many students have also completed four-year university programs. The Community Learning Center has achieved the degree of highest success based on the survey.

Hartanto stated that "giving money and scholarships, does not equal teaching research meditation which gives birth to the wisdom to take care of one's mind." The contemplative practices taught at the center are essential to its success. Students graduate with both discipline and wisdom. Having overcome poverty and difficult circumstances, the graduates are inspirational to others in their villages. Younger students follow in their footsteps, and those returning home often build houses for their families and provide critical assistance to others in need.

Since the establishment of the foundation, Hartanto has gone on to teach mindfulness and Research Meditation at reputable organizations such as the University of Richmond, Georgetown University, New York Police Department, Case Western Reserve University, Center of Excellence for Breast Cancer Mount Sinai Hospital (New York), The Ministry Education of Thailand, Siam University, and The American School of Bangkok Green Valley. His deeply impactful work has been recognized by the United States, Indonesian, Japanese, and British governments and charitable organizations such as the Virginia B Toulmin Foundation.

Through 27 years of hard work, perseverance, dedication, and achievement for humanity, Hartanto Gunawan has been revered by his students, colleagues, friends, and practitioners as Ajarn Hartanto Gunawan, where "Ajarn" is a Thai word referring to someone who has achieved mastery in their skills and highest teaching abilities.







### **Biography of Nisanart Dharmageisirattana:**

Co-Chair of World Mental Health Conference and Retreat 2025

Nisanart Dharmageisirattana has always been referred as Gift, a nickname that was given by her parents since her birth was her father's graduation present when he earned his PhD in Political Science from the University of Nebraska in 1976.

Gift earned her Bachelor's Degree in Film and Television from New York University (1998) and her Master's Degree in Education Administration in Public Education from Teachers College, Columbia University (2013). From 1990 to 2004, she hosted and produced a series of documentaries, various TV shows that were aired on Thailand's national television channels. Currently, she serves The American School of Bangkok Green Valley as Director. Trained at Columbia University, Yale University, India, Thailand, and France on various mindfulness disciplines, she introduced and implemented the Mindfulness in Education program which was well received by all stakeholders at The American School of Bangkok Green Valley. She is certified in .b, a UK based mindfulness curriculum.

Her skills cover all the aspects of basic mindfulness skills: the ability to be aware of the present moment with a nonjudgmental attitude, the ability to understand, differentiate and regulate positive mental formation, the ability to inhibit negative actions and reactions. Her students learn how to be in touch with their chakras, the energy points in the body to strengthen the sixth sense, love and compassion, communication skills, and the recomposition of the emotions. This can easily be applied in all areas of learning. As the human mind becomes alert and focused, it is easy to recall and retrieve information, a skill very useful for examination.

She has delivered mindfulness presentations at EARCOS Leadership Conference in Malaysia and at Asia Pacific International School Conference in Hong Kong. In addition, she also taught mindfulness in education at the ECIS Leadership Conferences in Portugal, Luxembourg, and London. She founded the Mindfulness Academy of Asia and serves the International School Association of Thailand to provide professional development for international teachers. In 2018, she published her new mindfulness book, "The Mindful Way" to help teachers and administrators implement mindfulness in schools. Among her trainees in mindfulness techniques are multibilliondollar enterprise Amata Nakorn, Axa Insurance Company, Bumrungrad Hospital, Princ Hospital, professional golfers, executives, doctorate and masters degree students from Thammasat University.

Between 2018 to 2024, she was mentored by Hartanto Gunawan who has taught her research meditation, and it elevated the mindfulness program to be more than just developing focus and concentration for students. Research meditation trains human minds to cope with mental sufferings which has led her to provide counseling for students and adults with trauma, stress, anxiety and depression. Under Ajarn Hartanto's guidance, she provides mentorship for parents, students, staff and teachers at ASBGV. The school witnessed great results in adult and students mental well-being.

Gift has also taught mindfulness and research meditation for basketball teams and young golfers who undergo tough mental pressure in the competition. Athletes are able to aim their targets in competitive sports through blocking out fear of losing the game. Her students found strategies to cope with problems at home and achieved academic successes by being admitted to reputable universities such as University of California Los Angeles, Columbia University, Northwestern University, etc. The total amount of scholarships earned by the 2025 graduating class at ASBGV equates to \$40 million US. The level of success has enabled Gift to teach mindfulness to Rajaprajanugroh schools under the Royal Patronage, The Ministry of Education of Thailand, Cesar Ritz College (Switzerland), International School of Dhaka, Satit Pattana School, and Siam University.





BY AJARN HARTANTO GUNAWAN

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT (FOOD FOR THE MIND)

**In our daily life, everything we do is to take care of the body since we are born until we die:**

1. Shower to clean the body
2. Breakfast, lunch and dinner to feed the body so the body has energy and strong
3. Exercise for a healthy body
4. Taking vitamins for a healthy body

**Questions:**

1. Have we done the same for the mind everyday?
2. Do we shower or clean our minds everyday?
3. Have we fed the mind everyday?
4. Have we exercised the mind everyday for a healthy mind?
5. Have we given vitamins for the mind everyday for a healthy mind?

If the answer is "no", then, we'd better start taking care of our mind daily lives. We all human beings take care of our body everyday.

**Please keep in mind:**

1. Without the mind, this body will not move at all; it is the mind that orders this body to get up, walk, run, jump, etc..
2. Guns don't kill - we put a gun in a locker for 100 years and the gun will not hurt or kill anyone. However, in the hand of an evil mind, sick mind, or dirty mind, then, a gun is used as a tool for the mind to fulfill its desire. So, the real killer is the mind, not any weapon.
3. Bomb does not and will not explode without the mind.
4. All actions that wholesome and unwholesome, good or evil are caused by the mind and carried out by the mind.

**The right meditation is the only way to:**

1. Shower/clean the mind
2. Feed the mind
3. Exercise and vitamin the mind

A healthy life is having both a healthy mind and body. In a healthy mind there is a guarantee of a healthy body and a healthy mental health; but in a healthy body, there is NO guarantee of a healthy mind and healthy mental health.

# MEDIA RECOGNITION



## LIFE, BUT BETTER - MINDFULNESS

### Learn how to meditate like a Buddhist monk in Bangkok

Joe Cummings, CNN • Updated 3rd November 2021


Hartanto Gunawan, the meditation center's director and instructor, hails from Indonesia, where he left a position as CEO of a multinational to live as a monk in northern Thailand.

He left the monkhood after four years to establish a nonprofit school at Wat Arun for disadvantaged girls vulnerable to human trafficking, with the meditation center as an adjunct to help deal with trauma.

People of all religions and meditation traditions are welcome to practice here and even to stay overnight without cost. Normal hours for the center are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily; unlike other Bangkok centers, this one has remained open during the pandemic.

Ajahn Hartanto speaks perfect English, and teaches what he calls "research meditation". Rather than simply concentrating or quietening the mind, he says we must use it for self-enquiry; to understand who we are and why we're here.


"A terrorist or criminal can have a concentrated mind and still pull the trigger," he explains. "So, a concentrated mind can still be very dangerous."



## The ex-monk and the Thai sex mafia: helping victims find another way

Human trafficking for enforced labour, the sex trade and coerced marriage engulfs an estimated 40 million victims world-wide, most of them women and children. Many, too, are destitute refugees and migrants. Every year, more risk being drawn into this illicit trade, a highly lucrative form of organized crime estimated at 150 billion USD a year. Operating out of a Buddhist monastery in Bangkok, Indonesian Hartanto Gunawan, a former businessman and monk, has dedicated the past 16 years to providing girls from northern Thailand with another option to selling their bodies.

By Edward Girardet - January 4, 2021 • 312





## Saved by the temple: the girls of Bangkok striving for a better life

Melanie Swan travels to Wat Arun to meet the young women working hard to lift themselves out of the dangerous cycle of human trafficking




The girls at Wat Arun with their teacher, Sasamon Wattanasangman for the National

Melanie Swan



## EX-MONK TAKES ON THE THAI SEX MAFIA



We have selected Hartanto Gunawan as one of our Global Genevans. These are inspired individuals whose work or legacies represent key issues ranging from human rights and



## Temple of Dawn offers a beacon of hope

Wat Arun's training center has become a symbol of support for the underprivileged, writes Achana Achayapachal




## Proof of Making a Difference

whichcountryfrom Asia Bangkok, Thailand, Travelling April 13, 2023 3 Minutes



When I stumbled upon the Research Meditation Center inside Was Arun, a Buddhist temple in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2018, I had no idea how much it would impact my life. As a student and instructor of meditation for the past 2 decades I was intrigued by the story of Hartanto Gunawan, the meditation teacher at this center. I've written about Hartanto on this blog [here](#). Former CEO, former Buddhist monk, meditation teacher




## Why I need YOUR help with MY New Year's Resolution

whichcountryfrom Asia, Bangkok, Thailand, Travelling January 1, 2020 5 Minutes

UPDATED: [Link to donate](#) - [click here](#).

I don't normally make resolutions for the new year. I usually just make adjustments and changes to my lifestyle on an ongoing basis. Knowing what needs to be done and doing it. But something significant happened on Monday. I opened my mouth and some words came out. I don't know where they came from, but I was somehow perfectly comfortable with it. After sitting with it for 24 hours I came to think of it as my New Year's Resolution. As of today, I have a new role, new title, new responsibilities. The story begins here.

Remember I wrote a blog post in March of 2018 about 3 remarkable and inspiring people I'd met during the first 4 months of our year-long journey? You can read it [here](#). For me, meeting those 3 people was the highlight of our trip. Yes, I had a great time travelling to 11 different countries. We met a lot of great people that we're still friends with. But meeting those 3 remarkable and inspiring people forced me to do some soul searching, digging deeper into what I've done with my life and how I've spent my 60 years on this planet. The self-study was



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MEDITATION IN BANGKOK

The deep-voice monk who reaches your heart and mind

"... if you wash your body every day why don't you wash your mind every day meditating"

Hartanto Gunawan is an Indonesian-born monk who left a stressful working life as a multinational executive to become a Buddhist monk.

He created a teaching center in 2007 located in the Wat Arun temple in Bangkok and since then he has trained almost 1000 nurses who leave there with work. The students are girls who come from poor villages in the mountains and are recruited by the mafias to prostitute them.






Meditating with Hartanto Gunawan

The teacher struggles and puts himself in danger to rescue them and give them a future, but as he says: "The fight and the risk are worth it, I would regret it if I didn't rescue them knowing that I can save them."

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