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## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION: Contemplative and Holistic Education as Inside-Out Work for Healing, Peace, Justice, and Equity


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## *Journal of Contemplative & Holistic Education*

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### **EDITORIAL: Contemplative and Holistic Education as Inside-Out Work for Healing, Peace, Justice, and Equity**

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We begin this Editorial with a Land Acknowledgment:

What does it mean to acknowledge Land in writing, and furthermore—in an open-access journal article that could conceivably be read anywhere and anytime? Importantly, as Khelsilem Tl'akwasik'an Sxwchálten (2014, n.p.) community leader and councillor of the Squamish nation, says “Talking about unceded territory does nothing to achieve justice or form restitution with the Indigenous peoples who are dispossessed from their land. Instead—actively live it.”

Still, to ground both ourselves and the work of this journal, we find it important to acknowledge the patches of land that we occupy and our positions within them. For Charles, Heesoon, and Cary – who find themselves in Vancouver, Canada—the traditional and unceded territories of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlifwətaʔl (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples, we may simply start by acknowledging the forms of colonial erasure around us (see Barman, 2007). For us, all we need to do is look up – towards “the sisters,” which became later “the lions” for colonial British Columbia– those majestic snowy, twin peaks visible from most of Vancouver proper. The Sisters (Ch'ich'iyúy Elxwíkn) for the local Squamish people symbolised a historic peace treaty that occurred between the Squamish and the northern Haida peoples after highly respected twin sisters married Haida twins. Acknowledging placenames and stories such as these alert us to what it means to be a part of settler society; to be, in this way, dim or blind to the land you inhabit. “If this is your land, where are your stories?” (Chamberlin, 2003).

For Jwalin, who is based in India where his ancestors found themselves at the other end of colonization, it is important to acknowledge the various freedom struggles that led to the independence of the people and the land. While land acknowledgements are fairly

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uncommon in cultures outside of Turtle Island (North America), people in India traditionally begin all their major activities with acknowledgement, appreciation, and gratitude for the mother Earth, the nature, and the larger universe that sustains and supports them. On a similar theme, Jwalin would like to express his gratitude for the trees, micro-organisms, insects, animals, birds, soil, mountains, rivers, oceans, air, sun, and other unobserved yet still interconnected aspects of the universe that brings all of us in the universe together today.

In acknowledging Land, we are acknowledging that it is more than just physical territory, or the soil beneath our feet. It is the water, the air; it includes all beings; it is, ultimately, the Cosmos and that which unites us all. Indigenous legal scholar John Borrows asserts “The law comes from land,” a universal declaration that evokes the concepts of *dharmā* common to Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhi, and Jainism, and the *Dao*, common to both Daoism and Confucianism. Acknowledgement of and attunement with the Land is a profound means, ultimately, of acknowledging each other, our situatedness, and our unity.

### Three Messages

It is with a great pleasure and excitement of anticipation that we the Special Issue’s Editors of the *Journal of Contemplative and Holistic Education* spread before you, Dear Readers, a feast of essays that address topical themes in the field of contemplative and holistic education. In creating this collection, we are taking a thematic and narrative approach: In other words, this is a curated collection. What stories does our curation tell? What messages are we sending out to the world?

The first message is that *relationship is everything; that our world is made up of relationships; that building and cultivating good—meaning, non-harming and supportive of mutual flourishing—relationships is what education is foremostly about; and that there are manifold dimensions of relationship: self-to-self (and to inner-self or soul), self-to-other beings (that includes non-human others), and self-to-the larger systems (including the biosystem, institutions, communities of any/all sorts, and the larger universe).*

Thus, consider this Special Issue as our invitation to you to build relationships with all of us at the journal, including editors, writers, readers, practitioners, and community-members. With this idea in mind, then, the very first piece in the collection, titled, “The Reconstructed Interview,” is an interview piece that introduces the reader to our entire editorial team, in which each member collectively shares and discusses their hopes and prospects for this journal.

With this interview of the editorial team, we at the *Journal of Contemplative and Holistic Education (JCHE)* wish the world to know *who* we are as a journal, our aspirations, and, concretely, *how* we understand our aims and missions for this new platform. By inviting colleagues who concretely exemplify values, views, aspirations of our journal, and sharing their work with the reader, we hope to create a richly generative space where researchers, practitioners, activists, and artists can all meet and converse, dialogue and debate, dream together, as well as take action together.

The second message is that *plurality and diversity exemplify a healthy ecology for any system, including thought systems.* Many of us are aware of the importance of diversity when it comes to systems like biosystems (biodiversity) as well as sociocultural systems, with different cultures, worldviews, and values. However, our academies, shaped by modern and colonial legacies, often do not practice the promotion of diversity. Modernity and coloniality have frequently promoted a handful of epistemologies and knowledge systems, while systemically repressing others, including importantly, Indigenous knowledge systems and ways of knowing. Thus, we

have made a conscious choice and effort to embrace diversity and plurality with our selection of essays, and this includes a diversity of forms.

We invited colleagues who, though all based in contemplative and holistic education, come from diverse research fields, disciplines, and methodological orientations, representing diverse ways of knowing, living and being, as well as cultural backgrounds. Thus, this curated collection of essays represents diverse voices that speak to the multifaceted nature of contemplative and holistic education. We believe that each perspective offers something valuable; and leave the onus to the reader to navigate and explore these nuanced and contextualized understandings in ways they deem fit.

The third message is that *contemplative and holistic education is vastly more encompassing than quietly doing mindfulness meditation and managing our stressed-out nerves*. In fact, our readers would discover—that is, if they haven't already—that contemplative and holistic education provides a learning, studying, and training ground for cultivating ethical beings, well-integrated with the world; able to feel and experience pain and suffering, as well as joys and flourishing. Strong and solid, deep and wise activism, whether social or environmental, is born out of contemplative and holistic educational initiatives and understandings.

### **Inside-Out Work for Contemplative Activism**

Contemplative activists can counter all systems of inequity, injustice, inhumanity, and violence—against the biosphere and our fellow humans—by getting to the roots of these perverse formations: colonial, patriarchal, reductionist, fragmentary (divisive), and instrumentalized worldviews, values, and mindsets. Such work is not just concerned with interiority, or inside-work, or simply outside work, but rather constitutes something we might call *inside-out* work. Such lingering and liminal (in-between) spaces – those inner and outer border-crossings where the self can encounter the world – characterizes the relational nature of contemplative and holistic teaching and learning.

It is from out of such relational and liminal space that possibilities for growth, healing, wholesome change, creativity, and innovation are born. Creating and setting-up such space is the work of contemplative consciousness, and such work supports contemplative and holistic curriculum and pedagogy. We invite you readers, to engage with this pluralistic yet still interconnected series of articles and to share your reflections and thoughts through this new journal platform.

Putting this special issue together has been transformative for us. We are grateful to the *JCHE* for providing us with such an opportunity. As we close this special issue, we invite you to take the next step. We hope that the various pieces will sound and reverberate off one another, creating new resonances and revealing ways of knowing, living, feeling, and being that promote and nurture meaningful relationality.

In gratitude,

Heesoon, Cary, Charles, and Jwalin

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