

Editorial**Navigating the Landscape of Contemplative Education
and Psychological Wellbeing****Shree Krishna Wagle** *

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We are pleased to present the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Contemplative Education and Psychological Wellbeing*, a platform dedicated to exploring the dynamic intersections of education, social and emotional health, educational psychology, school counseling, and contemplative practices. As the complexities of life in the 21st century continue to challenge traditional educational paradigms, there is a growing urgency to develop approaches that cultivate inner awareness, emotional resilience, and holistic wellbeing among learners, educators, and communities (Wang & Yorks, 2012). This journal responds to that call. Rooted in a vision of integrating intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of human development (Bainbridge & Del Negro, 2020), this journal invites scholarly and practice-based contributions that bridge Western scientific understanding with Eastern wisdom traditions. We aim to nurture a space where contemplative methods and psychological theories can be studied, applied, and reflected upon in meaningful ways within educational and counseling contexts.

Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSOED) has demonstrated its commitment to this transformative vision through innovative academic programs that promote both educational quality and psychological wellbeing. In August 2023, the School introduced a one-year Master of Education (M.Ed.) in School Counseling, a pioneering step toward strengthening comprehensive school counseling supports in Nepali schools. This was followed by the launch of a comprehensive two-year M.Ed. program in 2024, designed to meet increasing demand from educators, counselors, and mental health professionals in educational settings. Understanding the need for deeper inquiry and scholarship in this field, KUSOED further established an MPhil/PhD program in School Counseling and Psychological Wellbeing. This program fosters research, critical thinking, and the development of new frameworks that are contextually relevant and globally informed. These academic initiatives provide fertile ground for the kinds of dialogue and exploration that *Contemplative Education and Psychological Wellbeing* seeks to nurture. This journal centers around two core themes-



contemplative education and psychological wellbeing that, according to Ferrer et al. (2005), when thoughtfully integrated, offer transformative potential in both individual and collective educational experiences.

Contemplative education refers to the intentional inclusion of contemplative practices such as mindfulness, meditation, reflective journaling, yoga, deep listening, reflection and introspection within educational settings to cultivate holistic learning by nurturing the seeds of contemplative epistemology (Barbezat & Bush, 2014). These practices are designed not only to enhance focus and emotional regulation but also to nurture qualities like compassion, self-awareness, and ethical sensitivity (Miller, 2010). Parker and Zajonc (2010) advocate for integrating contemplative pedagogy in academic settings to foster self-awareness, empathy, compassion and deep learning. Wagle and Sitaula (2023) highlight the need to live with purpose, authenticity, and mindful self-awareness, contributing to inner transformation and professional growth.

While often introduced through the lens of neuroscience and cognitive psychology in Western discourse, contemplative education has deep roots in Eastern philosophical traditions, including Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, and indigenous knowledge systems (Panta, 2022). Drawing from these traditions, contemplative education opens pathways for integrating the inner life of learners into the broader aims of education (Duenkel & Sullivan, 2014). In this journal, we invite explorations of how contemplative pedagogies can be practiced in classrooms, teacher training, leadership development, counseling, and curriculum design, especially in culturally diverse or resource-constrained contexts like Nepal.

Psychological wellbeing, on the other hand, refers to a broad state of mental and emotional health that encompasses both the absence of illness and the presence of positive psychological attributes such as autonomy, purpose, connectedness, and resilience. It is shaped by both internal processes and social conditions. The concept of psychological wellbeing has traditionally been studied through Western psychological models such as positive psychology, cognitive behavioral theory, and developmental psychology. However, Eastern philosophies have long engaged with parallel ideas through concepts like Sukha (inner joy), Shanti (peace), and Dhyana (meditative absorption) (Yogananda, 2002). Our journal encourages scholarly engagement with both traditions—acknowledging, for instance, how mindfulness as taught in secular Western contexts can be enriched by understanding its roots in Vipassana or Zen traditions. Similarly, modern trauma theory and attachment research may be deepened by dialoguing with yogic or Buddhist notions of suffering and healing. By critically and creatively integrating Western psychological insights with Eastern contemplative frameworks, we seek to promote holistic models of wellbeing that are inclusive, cross-cultural, and grounded in lived experience.

About this Issue

This issue covers nine different evidence-based research articles, a reflection of a PhD thesis, and a book review. In original articles section, *Acharya and Adhikary* discuss how disrupted intrapersonal communication from conflict and migration affects student wellbeing and proposes the *Sadharanikaran* School Counseling Technique (SSCT) to foster emotional connectedness (*sahridayata*) using the *Sadharanikaran* Model of Communication (SMC). The findings of the study show that children have self-harming tendencies due to disconnection from parents and overindulgence in digital media, hindering intrapersonal communication. In their article, *Basnyat and Shrestha* explore the impact of societal stigma on caregivers in inclusive school settings in Nepal, highlighting the emotional exhaustion, isolation, and disengagement experienced by those raising neurodiverse children. Using narrative inquiry, the study shows how affiliate stigma, or stigma experienced by association, undermines the

wellbeing of carers. *Satyal* explores stress of transition from pre-school to structured writing activities in grade one students. Early writing skills are foundational for academic success. Drawing on Bridges Transition Model, Transactional Model of Stress and Coping Theory, this study explored whether school counselors' perspectives address the critical questions as: how do first graders experience transition in writing activities? Are teachers aware of stress and trained on academic/ systematic writing? How has this stress been addressed by teachers? The researcher's experience with grade one students during the transition and adaptation to writing skills analysed phenomena of stress. The findings provide insights into solving stress issues in students, achieve academic success, helping teachers understand the classroom better and school stakeholders make a better school environment.

Sharma highlights socio-emotional learning (SEL) as vital in early childhood development (ECD) by supporting children's thinking, emotional well-being, and social behaviour. The findings reveal that structured play, storytelling, and group activities are effective in fostering SEL. *Shrestha and Panta* explore mindfulness-based self-care practices of counsellors working in school settings. Mindfulness improves self-care and wellbeing, reduces stress and burnout, balances mental and physical health, and compassion towards self and others from a Buddhist perspective. This study further unpacks how counselors notice signs of stress and burnout, their existing self-care practices, and how they practice mindfulness in their daily life to enhance their wellbeing. *Chhetri* explored how parental reading habits can shape adolescents' screen time behavior and emotional wellbeing. Parental reading habits contribute to better screen time control and emotional resilience. *Sharma* unpacked experiences of body shaming among girls attending public schools. The findings indicate that students experience significant frustration due to derogatory nicknames from peers and teachers, leading to feelings of irritation towards friends, faculty, and administration.

Dhungana contemplated on her lived professional experiences of attaining, sustaining and nurturing wellbeing in diverse professional spaces. She adapted a phenomenological inquiry to unfold and make sense of her everyday experiences of her un/wellbeing inspired Eastern Wisdom notions of *shrawana-manana-nidhishyan*. Panta highlights the possibilities of meaningful living and a transformative professional journey by embracing interconnected ways of knowing, becoming and valuing based on the *chakra* paradigm informed by Eastern wisdom contemplative traditions through the lens of critical spirituality.

Overall, the journal supports interdisciplinary research that crosses the boundaries between education, psychology, philosophy, and the contemplative sciences. We are particularly interested in contributions that are rooted in the South Asian context—where spiritual traditions remain deeply embedded in everyday life but are often excluded from academic discourse. Nepal, with its rich history of spiritual diversity and its evolving educational landscape, presents a unique context for such inquiries. From community-based mental health interventions to school-based mindfulness programs, there is a growing field of practices that deserve academic attention (Bainbridge & Del Negro, 2020). Research grounded in action, reflection, and dialogue with local communities will be especially valued in our pages. We welcome both empirical and theoretical submissions that reflect this integrative and inclusive spirit. These may include case studies, qualitative and mixed-methods research, reflective essays, curriculum innovations, and practice-based narratives.

At a time when both mental health and educational systems are facing unprecedented stress—due to global crises, technological disruption, and cultural fragmentation—the need for inner resources, contemplative awareness, and human-centered education has never been more urgent. *Contemplative Education and Psychological Wellbeing* emerges as a response to this need. It is a space where educators, counselors, researchers, and contemplative practitioners

can come together to envision new possibilities for how we teach, learn, relate, and live. It also serves as a mirror and a guide for those seeking to reimagine education as a space for healing, meaning-making, and transformation. We look forward to building a vibrant community of contributors and readers who share a commitment to cultivating peace, compassion, and wisdom—within ourselves and the systems we serve.

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