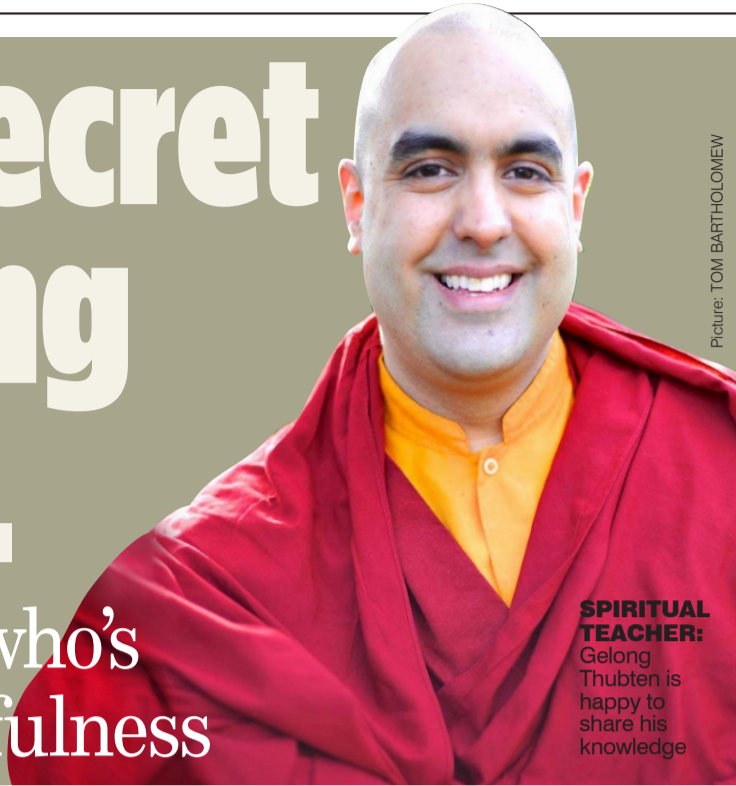


Revealed, secret of everlasting happiness...

... According to the monk who's teaching Hollywood mindfulness



Picture: TOM BARTHOLOMEW

SPIRITUAL TEACHER:
Gelong Thubten is happy to share his knowledge

BBC's £22m for late work

THE BBC handed its staff £22 million in bonuses over the last year – because their jobs may involve getting up early in the morning or finishing late at night on occasion.

The Corporation paid the perk as an 'unpredictability allowance (UPA)' to those whose shifts do not follow a set pattern and can change at short notice. The payouts went to almost 5,000 staff, averaging about £4,500 per employee, on top of their salary, over a 12-month period beginning September 1, 2015, according to a Mail on Sunday Freedom of Information request.

In answer to critics, the BBC said: 'It's impossible to broadcast 24 hours a day, seven days a week without employing people to work through the night.'

'However we're always looking to make savings and UPA has come down by £11 million since 2009.'

By **Lorraine Kelly**

HE spends most of his time pursuing inner peace through prayer and meditation.

But now a Buddhist from a Scottish monastery has traded his quiet lifestyle for the hectic glamour of the red carpet, teaching A-list stars how to achieve 'mindfulness' and spiritual contentment.

Gelong Thubten was guest of honour at the recent premiere of a Hollywood film starring Tilda Swinton and Benedict Cumberbatch.

Turning heads in his traditional red robes as he strode alongside the award-winning stars, the Buddhist monk made his debut last month in front of screaming fans at the Los Angeles launch of blockbuster *Doctor Strange*.

And last night the monk – who has been part of the Samye Ling monastery in Dumfriesshire for 24 years – spoke of the work he did promoting the film in LA and his time in the spotlight.

Speaking to *The Scottish Mail on Sunday*, he said: 'The red carpet was a real laugh. It was very different from what I am used to, of course.'

'It was important not to take myself or any of it too seriously. I try to stick with the one motivation of trying to help others.'

'And really, it was just nice to be there to celebrate with Tilda and Benedict and to pass on the film's message – that we all have a mind with limitless potential.'

Thubten has been a monk for 24 years, after joining the Kagyu Samye Ling Monastery and Tibetan Centre near Langholm when he was 21. And after meeting Oscar-winning actress Miss Swinton in the Highlands, he was asked to accompany her to practise mindfulness on the film set of *Doctor Strange* – the latest movie from Marvel.

Thubten said: 'Tilda told me that she was working in a film that had very strong messages about the mind and asked me if I would help her with it. Of course I said yes, and I spent around three weeks training her and Benedict Cumberbatch in mindfulness. We worked on the set, doing the mindfulness in between camera takes.'

'The film set was the noisiest situation I have ever worked in, because while they were resetting the cameras there was a lot of noise, with around 400 crew members.'

'We would go to the side of the set and sit and meditate, and we would have to get super focused in a short space of time amongst all the noise.'

Cumberbatch played the starring role as Stephen Strange –

DO try this at home – his top five tips

1. Train yourself in gratitude and appreciation. Every day, appreciate what you have and who you are – that means you are really teaching yourself happiness.
2. Be compassionate towards others and act kindly. Today is so fast-paced and work environments are often cut-throat, so be thoughtful and kind toward others.
3. Meditate every day at home in a quiet space. It is not about clearing the mind but focusing the mind on the present moment.
4. Have regular moments of mindfulness throughout the day. At different points when you are busy, try and bring your attention to the here and now, and just perceive the present moment very directly.
5. Use your body as a focus point. Use the natural flow of your breathing as support for being calm and focused in the moment. When your mind gets distracted you can just gently bring it back to the breathing. Try not to struggle or fight your thoughts, just re-focus as many times as it takes.

an arrogant surgeon who draws on powers of mysticism when his glamorous life is taken away from him after damaging his hands in a car accident.

And the British actor, who is best known for his starring role as Sherlock Holmes in the BBC One series, praised the art of mindfulness taught by Thubten.

He said: 'As an actor it's great because it brings you into that moment of stillness and presence. You've got a lot of people demanding your attention in film-making. That's a great practice to have in your life – full stop.'

Despite being in such demand, Thubten does not earn a salary but asks those he teaches to donate to projects and charities that involve mindfulness and meditation.

He said: 'I teach mindfulness to workers at Google, Facebook, HSBC and McCain Foods and law firms, hospitals, schools and rehab centres. I teach hundreds of people from all levels.'

'The companies make donations towards the projects we do, and they just fly me to wherever they are and pay for my food and accommodation – they feed me.'



EAGER PUPIL:
Tilda Swinton was keen to learn

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