



NATIONAL CORE FOR NEUROETHICS
LA NEUROÉTHIQUE



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

NEUROETHICS SEMINAR SERIES 2009-2010

Becoming Ethical According to Buddhism and Neuroscience: Accessing Goodness and Perfection, Mitigating Responsibility

Jessica Main, University of British Columbia

**Wednesday, November 25, 2009
12:15pm - 1:15pm**

Neuroethics explores the implications of behavioral and cognitive neuroscience for our understandings of ethics: why and how people behave as they do. In particular, neuroethics is adept at revealing why people cannot perform actions or feel emotions prescribed by ethics. As such, it mitigates or reduces how responsible people are thought to be for certain actions.

Jessica Main will bring this cautionary tendency of neuroethics into conversation with Buddhist ideas of moral perfectibility. One general understanding behind many different Buddhist practices is that they morally improve the person who performs them. Acts of meditation, chanting, and moral training are thought to change, bypass, perfect, or deconstruct ordinary and imperfect states of mind. Ideally, for at least some people, such practices provide access to goodness and perfection beyond the person, or eradicate evil and imperfection within the person. How might neuroethics respond to this Buddhist idea of moral perfectibility? And how might Buddhism respond to such cautions?

The National Core for Neuroethics Conference Room
UBC Hospital Room S117
2211 Wesbrook Mall - Koerner Pavilion
Vancouver, British Columbia

About the speaker: Jessica Main is the Tung Lin Kok Yuen Canada Foundation Chair on Buddhism and Contemporary Society, affiliated with UBC's Institute of Asian Research and the Department of Asian Studies. She is currently completing her Ph.D. in Asian Religious Studies from McGill University.

For more information please visit: <http://www.neuroethics.ubc.ca>