

## *minimalist wisdom*



CHRISTINE BROOKS COTE

Every morning when I wake up and every night before I go to sleep, I say to myself: *May I find wisdom; may all beings find wisdom.*

Wisdom, I believe, is the greatest quality possible. Wisdom is grounded in virtue, and every spiritual system has its list of virtues that its followers seek to attain. These virtues are universal: patience, kindness, compassion, forgiveness, truthfulness, nonviolence, and more. A wise person practices these virtues, fails, learns, and tries again.



But there is more to wisdom than virtue. As it takes time—a lifetime—to practice virtue, wisdom is a lifelong pursuit. Wisdom grows from experience and is nourished by the ability to reflect upon one's experiences so they can inform and guide one's beliefs and actions.

It takes time to gather up enough experiences to be wise, which is why wisdom is associated with old age. The wise old man or woman—the sage—is an archetype, a character of universal presence, a classic recurring figure in all forms of art and literature. A young person showing characteristics of wisdom is thought to be unusual, described as wise beyond their years.

If we consider the teachings of sages, those with both experience and well-practiced virtue, we find a commonality that at times goes unnoticed. This commonality is an orientation toward minimalism in all facets of belief and behavior and is characterized by simplicity, moderation, restraint, humility, as well as solitude, stillness, and silence.

In this issue, explore minimalist wisdom through art, fiction, non-fiction, and poetry, and consider the many aspects of the maximalist society that surrounds us.

*May all beings find wisdom.*

**CHRISTINE BROOKS COTE** founded Shanti Arts in 2011 to revel in nature, art, and spirit. She has called Maine her home for the last thirty years.

• [www.shantiarts.com](http://www.shantiarts.com) | • [www.christinecotephoto.com](http://www.christinecotephoto.com)