

新加坡佛学院 2014年招收女众养正班

Buddhist College of Singapore Basic Monastic Training Course 2014 for Females

1. 培养对象 Course Applicants :

“养正”者，即培养正信正见正行也。本班是专门为出家少于一年或准备发心出家的女士而设立的培训班。

The “Basic Monastic Training Course” is a foundation course specifically catered to lay females seeking ordination as a Buddhist nun or those who have been ordained for less than a year.

2. 目标 Objectives :

它旨在培养新生正信正见、僧格品行和基本律仪，以圆满出家初阶素质。

To inculcate Right Faith, Right View and Right Action. In addition, students will learn the moral characteristics and the fundamental precepts of a monastic in order to fulfill the basic requirements of becoming a Buddhist nun.

3. 报读资格 Entry Requirements :

- 年龄为18至40岁的新马女众。
Singaporean or Malaysian females aged between 18 – 40 years old.
- 在家众或出家少于一年。
Layperson or ordained for less than a year.
- 最低“O”水准学历，能用华语交流。
Minimum ‘O’-level qualifications, able to communicate in Mandarin.

4. 学费 Fees :

佛学院全权资助。Fully sponsored by BCS.

5. 学制 Duration :

两年全日制；2014年9月开课。2 years, full-time, commencing September 2014.

6. 指导语言 Language of Instruction :

中文。Mandarin

本院将在2014年6月7日星期六下午3点于光明山普觉禅寺，宏船老和尚纪念馆1楼，5和6号教室进行课程介绍。

A briefing will be held at Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery, Venerable Hong Choon Memorial Hall Level 1, Classroom 5 & 6 on 7 June 2014 (Saturday), 3pm.

欲知详情，请访问本院网站的“招生”栏目，或来函来电咨询。

For more detailed information, please visit the “Admissions” section on our website or contact us in writing or via telephone.

地址 : Buddhist College of Singapore Registrar’s Office
Address 88 Bright Hill Road | Singapore 574117

电话 : 6849 5355 **传真** Fax: 6456 0180
Telephone 请在周一至周五新加坡时间上午9点到下午4点
之间拨打

Please contact us between Mondays and Fridays
9am – 4pm.

电子信箱 : enquiry@bcs.edu.sg
Email

网页 : www.bcs.edu.sg



Wishing all A Happy Vesak Day

Vesak Day commemorates the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and parinirvana. "Vesak" means "a day of full moon", which symbolises the Buddha's perfect wisdom and virtue. Meritorious and resplendent in insightful understanding, the Buddha cast the light of Truth widely on the world so that by breaking through their problems and darkness, all beings from the six realms can benefit from his Teachings to attain the bright and clear state of Buddhahood.

Shakyamuni Buddha taught ceaselessly for 49 years to spread compassion, evoke insight, purify the heart and promote equality. Nowadays, our quality of life has experienced unprecedented changes and improvements with rapid technological advances. Such technological innovation, cross-cultural exchanges and development of nations are all gratifying achievements.

However, in such a rapidly changing and distracting world, the balance between materialism and spiritualism is seriously impaired. This results in problems such as environmental pollution, food safety infringements, racial clashes, security issues and other societal problems. The root cause of all such problems is psychological and therefore, requires psychological intervention.

The Buddha taught that we should refrain from all evil and do all good deeds; we should not seek happiness and safety only for ourselves but strive for all beings to be liberated from their suffering; and that we should always remember to live in gratitude. All these teachings are calming, purifying, wholesome and mindful remedies for our present societal ills. The Buddha is the greatest healer who can treat the mental ailments of all beings. As long as we practise earnestly and sincerely to eliminate evil and cultivate goodness, treat others with compassion and kindness, and engage in spiritual cultivation as taught by the Buddha, we will definitely remove all obstacles blocking our inner light that give rise to psychological problems.

On Vesak Day, Buddhists all over the world conduct solemn and meaningful ceremonies to commemorate the Buddha with his boundless compassion and wisdom. The Buddha gave his Teachings to all without distinction and taught tirelessly out of compassion to relieve the suffering of all beings. He promoted the ideals of equality among humans and self-cultivation as the basis for a happy, harmonious life and world peace. When we follow the Buddha's Teachings, we aspire to be the best we can be. By practising diligently and cultivating ourselves with utmost effort, our virtues and wisdom will shine forth like the crescent moon transforming into a full moon, illuminating all that is around.

The potential of Buddhahood is in each and everyone of us, regardless of our age, gender, nationality or religion. While we look different, speak diverse languages, think and act in dissimilar ways, we share the common human experience of wanting happiness and fearing pain. If we start cultivating love, compassion and wisdom, we can surely overcome the defilements of greed, hatred and delusion.

As Vesak Day approaches, I wish all Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike good health and happiness, and urge all to realise this Buddha Nature in ourselves and others, in the celebration of Vesak, a celebration of the conquering of our common suffering, the attainment of True Happiness, Nirvana! ☺

Ven Sik Kwang Sheng
Abbot



Lord Buddha is full of praise for gratitude (pg 70). It is a virtue of good persons (pg 71). A grateful person will experience harmony, peace, be remembered and loved. As Venerable Sariputta showed us through his conduct, gratitude is a manifestation of faithfulness, respect, and desire to thank and reciprocate in kind for the kindness given to oneself. The Buddha, too, exemplified gratitude (pg 64) and taught this quality as one of the 38 auspicious signs of making spiritual progress (pg 54). Hence, we should always remember to live in gratitude (pg 38).

In Buddhism, we express gratitude primarily to our parents (pg 68), teachers and spiritual friends.

To our parents, we express gratitude by encouraging them to practise the Dharma and dedicating merits to them (pg 67). To our teachers, we express gratitude by putting what we have learnt to good use for the society's well-being and benefit. To our spiritual friends, such as the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Sangha who taught us meditation and the scriptures, and are the object of our intense, heartfelt gratitude for they have given us the greatest gift – the gift of the Dharma, we express gratitude by practising (pg 40) and passing on the Dharma we have received the best we can.

In this issue, we pay tribute to all staff and volunteers who dedicate their lives to serving the Triple Gem out of gratitude (pg 59 & 62). According to Venerable Garchen Rinpoche, receiving a small salary in the monastery is actually better compared to getting a big salary in the world, because one accumulates merit in the former. Even after we die, for many generations, our work will still benefit others. To give Dharma is the greatest work of generosity (pg 44).

In another article, Datuk Dr Victor Wee explains how we can multiply Buddhist missionaries in order for the Buddhist community to prosper (pg 48).

This Vesak Day, let's recollect the Triple Gem with immense gratitude and express this gratitude by being earnest and mindful, and with pure virtue, strive diligently to tame our minds. ☺

Gratitude is the basis
for happiness

Esther Thien

Yours in the Dharma,
Sister Esther Thien

*Reverence, Humility, Contentment, Gratitude and
Opportune hearing of the Dharma.
This is the Supreme Blessing.*

– Mangala Sutta, Verse 8



Q: How can we integrate Buddhism into our daily lives? How do we balance work and spiritual practice? – *L.F.*

A: When you wake up in the morning, try to make your first thought, “Today, I don’t want to harm anyone. I’m going to help others as much as possible. May all my actions be directed towards the long-term goal of becoming a Buddha to benefit others.” After you get up, meditate for a while to get in touch with your inner calm, to learn about yourself, and to set up good motivation for the day.

During the day, be mindful of your feelings, thoughts, words and actions. When you notice disturbing attitudes or harmful behaviour, apply the antidotes taught by the Buddha. In the middle of a busy day, you can stop, breathe and get centred again before going on. Although this takes only a minute, it’s sometimes hard to get ourselves to pause when we’re on automatic pilot. Pausing is a good habit to develop: instead of answering the phone right away, we can think, “May I speak kindly and benefit the person on the line,” and then pick up the phone. When we sit down at our desk, we can breathe quietly for a few seconds and then begin work. When we’re stopped at a light or stuck in traffic, we can look around and think, “All these people around me want to be happy and to avoid problems just as I do. Because we live in an interdependent society, I receive benefit from the different jobs these people do, even though I don’t know them personally.” It’s also very helpful to think like this when someone cuts you off!

In the evening, take a little time to review the day’s events, purify your harmful behaviours, rejoice in the changes and positive attitudes you’re developing, and dedicate all the positive potential for the enlightenment of all. We often expect “fast food enlightenment,” not wanting to expend much time or energy to gain it. Unfortunately, things don’t work that way! It’s important to recognise that profound change occurs gradually. We need to rejoice at our own and others’ development instead of being dissatisfied with what we haven’t done. ☺

- Ven Thubten Chodron



How can we integrate
Buddhism
into our daily lives?

www.thubtenchodron.org
www.sravasti.org

Gratitude to Triple Gem
三宝恩

卫塞 Vesak 2558

Gratitude Brightens Life

知恩·报恩

3-4 May 2014

3 May | Sat | 10am-8pm
5月3日 | 星期六 | 早上10时至晚上8时

4 May | Sun | 10am-5pm
5月4日 | 星期日 | 早上10时至下午5时

KONG MENG SAN PHOR KARK SEE MONASTERY
光明山普觉禅寺



JOIN US THIS VESAK CELEBRATION AND LET US LIGHT UP
THE LIVES OF OTHERS WITH GRATITUDE.
请加入我们的卫塞庆祝以感恩心共同点亮众生的生命。

♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥ Gratitude to Sentient Beings ♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥

众生恩

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Bathing of Prince Siddhartha 浴佛
- Flower Offering - Flower Mandala 花卉坛城
- Vesak Fair 义卖会
- Games & Fun Activities 游戏欢乐区
- Light Offering 供灯
- Youth Performances 青年组演出
- Lighting up ceremony of Lantern Exhibition 灯饰启亮仪式 (3 May: 7pm)
- Light Transference Ceremony 传灯仪式 (3 May: 7.30pm)
- Mother's Day & Exam Blessings 母亲节与考试祝福仪式 (4 May: 1pm-2.15pm)
- Gratitude Concert 感恩音乐会 (4 May: 6pm-8pm)

Lantern
Exhibition Schedule
灯饰展示日期与时间

7pm-10pm
3/5, 4/5, 10/5, 11/5, 13/5,
17/5, 18/5, 24/5, 25/5

7pm-7am
12/5 - 13/5

Contribute in the making of the
BIGGEST FLOWER MANDALA
ever in Kong Meng San Phor Kark See
Monastery through flower offering.

让我们齐供鲜花共造光明山普觉禅寺
最盛大的花卉坛城。

Flower offering 供花日期:
3/5-4/5

Gratitude to Country
国家恩

Gratitude to Mother Earth
地球恩

Gratitude to Parents
父母恩

Jointly Organised 联办



新加坡佛教总会



光明山普觉禅寺

* Coupons can be purchased at
Singapore Buddhist Federation &
Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery
售票处: 新加坡佛教总会与光明山普觉禅寺

Enquiries 询问: 6744 4635

Website 网址: vesak.buddhist.org.sg

Due to the construction projects in the monastery, no parking
facilities are available. Please take public transport instead
由于本寺多层停车场建筑未完工, 暂无车位, 敬请公众乘搭
公共交通工具前来。不便之处, 尚请见谅!

USA – 30 minutes of meditation daily may alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression, suggests a new Johns Hopkins analysis of previously published research.

"Many people use meditation, but it's not a practice considered part of mainstream medical therapy for anything," said Madhav Goyal, M.D., M.P.H., an assistant professor in the Division of General Internal Medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and leader of a study published online in JAMA Internal Medicine on 6 January this year.

"But in our study, meditation appeared to provide as much relief from some anxiety and depression symptoms as what other studies have found from antidepressants." These patients did not typically have full-blown anxiety or depression.

The researchers measured the degree to which those symptoms changed in people who had a variety of medical conditions, such as insomnia or fibromyalgia, although only a minority had been diagnosed with a mental illness.

Goyal and his colleagues also found that Buddhist mindfulness meditation showed promise in easing some pain symptoms as well as stress. The findings held even as the researchers allowed for the possibility of the placebo effect, in which subjects in a study feel better even if they receive no active treatment because they perceive they are getting help for what ails them.

"Meditation programmes appear to have an effect above and beyond the placebo," Goyal said.

To conduct the review, the researchers focused on 47 clinical trials that involved meditation performed through June 2013 among 3,515 participants with various mental and physical health issues, including depression, anxiety, stress, insomnia, substance use, diabetes, heart disease, cancer and chronic pain.

They found moderate evidence of improvement in symptoms of anxiety, depression and pain after participants underwent what was typically an eight-week training programme in mindfulness meditation. They discovered low evidence of improvement in stress and quality of life. There was not enough information to determine whether other areas could be improved by meditation. In studies that followed participants for six months, the improvements typically continued.

The investigators also found no harm or side effect came from meditation.

"Many people have this idea that meditation means sitting down and doing nothing," continued Goyal. "But that's not true. Meditation is an active training of the mind to increase awareness, and different meditation programmes approach this in different ways."

Mindfulness meditation is generally practised for 30 to 40 minutes a day. It emphasises acceptance of feelings and thoughts without judgment and relaxation of body and mind.

Goyal also added that further studies are needed to clarify which outcomes are most affected by these meditation programmes, as well as whether more meditation practice would have greater effects. ☺



Scan this to read how UK schools teach mindfulness to help pupils concentrate better and cope with stress



Study says meditation may relieve anxiety and depression

text: Esther Thien

Broccoli contains high levels of soluble and insoluble fiber. It is also rich in vitamin A, C, K, B-complex vitamins, iron, zinc, phosphorus and phyto-nutrients. In fact, taking just 100 grams of broccoli gives you more than 150% of your recommended daily intake of vitamin C. According to studies listed on Medical News Today.com, broccoli has been shown to prevent osteoarthritis and skin cancer; reverse heart damage due to diabetes; and reduce cancer risk.

Mushrooms are potent antioxidant sources rich in total dietary fibers and provide high-quality protein, vitamins and unsaturated fatty acids.

Cream of Broccoli Soup

西兰花浓汤

Ingredients:

400g fresh broccoli
150g whipped cream
1 small pc butter (thumb-sized)
½ tsp ground black pepper
salt to taste



Method:

- 1 Slice broccoli into small pieces and wash clean.
- 2 Melt the butter and stir-fry broccoli when pot is hot.
- 3 Add water till it just covers the broccoli. When it starts to boil, simmer on low heat for 10 minutes.
- 4 Transfer the broccoli soup into blender. Blend till smooth. Transfer back into pot and add in whipped cream. Simmer on low heat for two to three minutes. Add black pepper and salt to taste.

材料: 西兰花400G、淡奶油150G、黄油1小块约拇指大小、黑胡椒粉1/2茶匙、盐少许。

做法:

- 1 西兰花掰成小块，洗净；
- 2 锅烧热，放黄油直至黄油融化成液态，放西兰花翻炒片刻；
- 3 锅里加水，水量没过西兰花即可，沸腾后，转小火煮10分钟；
- 4 把西兰花连带汤水放到搅拌机里搅拌成稀糊，再放回锅里，加入淡奶油，小火加热2到3分钟；调入黑胡椒粉和盐即可。

Cabbage Mushroom Vegetarian Dumplings

白菜香菇素水饺

Wrappers:

500gm bread flour
250gm water
Blend water and flour until it becomes smooth.

Ingredients for fillings:

1 cabbage
10 pcs mushrooms
4 pcs dried beancurd
ginger to taste
salt to taste
ground pepper to taste
sesame oil to taste

Method:

- 1 Wash and slice cabbage into small pieces. Add a little salt and soak for 10 minutes. Drain dry and leave aside.
- 2 Soak mushrooms in warm water. Drain dry and slice into small pieces.
- 3 Dice dried beancurd into cubes. Add a little oil into frying pan and stir-fry beancurd on low heat till golden-brown.
- 4 Mix cabbage, mushrooms and beancurd evenly with ginger, salt, pepper and a suitable amount of sesame oil.
- 5 Wrap fillings with enough dough to form dumplings. Add dumplings in boiling water. Cook till dumplings float then boil for another two to three minutes and before serving.

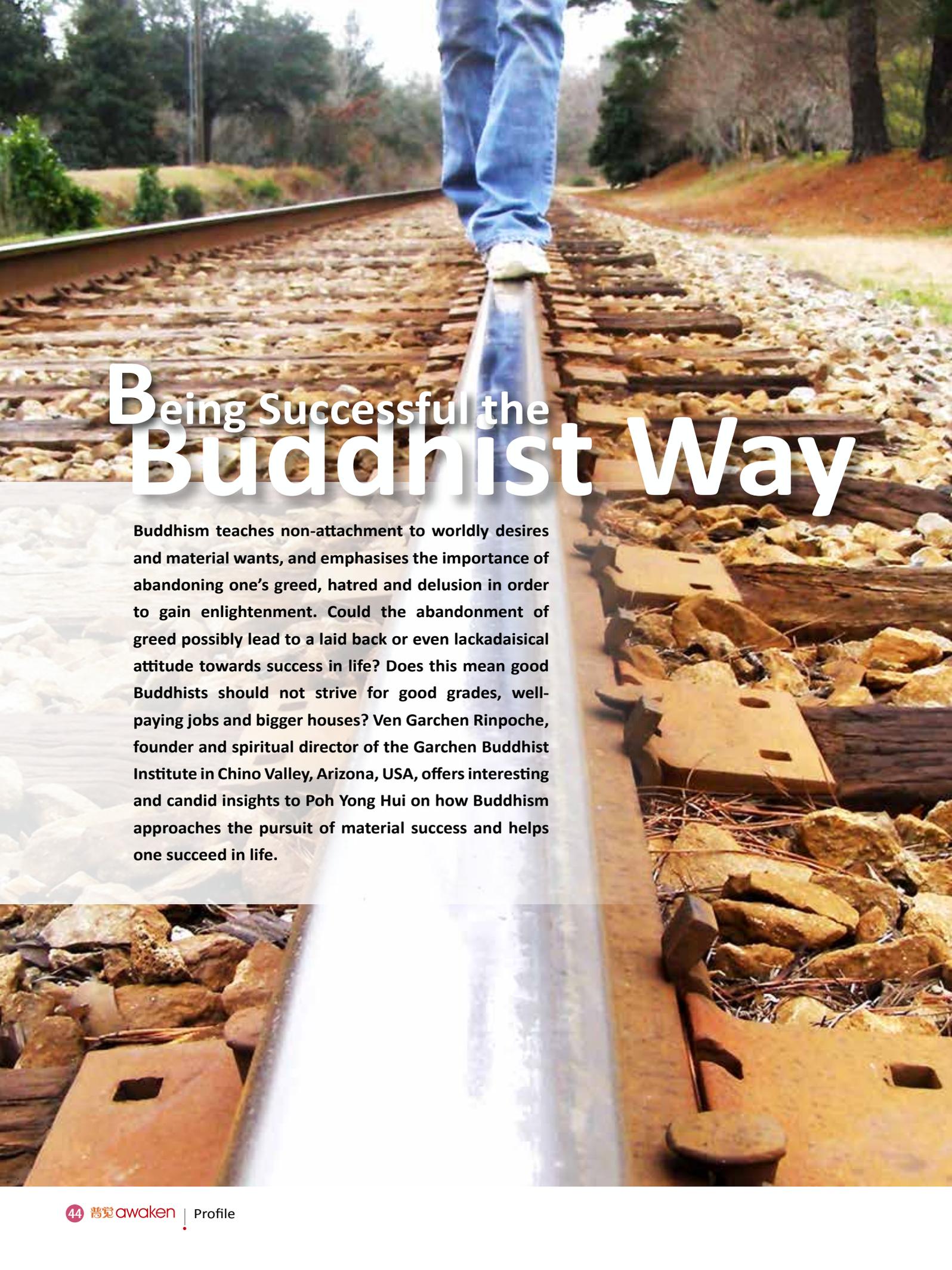
合面: 高筋粉500克，水250克（面粉与水的基本比例是2比1）合成光滑的面团，稍醒20-30分钟备用。

饺子馅料: 白菜1棵，香菇10朵，白豆干4块，姜汁、盐、胡椒粉、香油适量。

做法:

- 1 白菜洗净切碎粒，放少许盐腌20分钟，挤干水分放大碗中备用；
- 2 香菇用温水泡发后挤干切碎放大碗中备用；
- 3 白豆干切碎丁，炒锅放少许油，倒入豆干小火煸至微黄，晾凉放入大碗中备用；
- 4 最后调入姜汁、盐和少许胡椒粉，调入适量香油拌匀即成饺子馅料，就可与擀好的面皮包成饺子。
- 5 水烧开后，倒入饺子，再烧开后煮到饺子全浮起来，再煮约2-3分钟捞起盛盘即可。



A person wearing blue jeans and white sneakers is walking on a narrow railway track. The track is made of wooden ties and metal rails, set on a bed of gravel. The background shows a forest with trees and a dirt path. The title 'Being Successful the Buddhist Way' is overlaid on the image in large white font.

Being Successful the Buddhist Way

Buddhism teaches non-attachment to worldly desires and material wants, and emphasises the importance of abandoning one's greed, hatred and delusion in order to gain enlightenment. Could the abandonment of greed possibly lead to a laid back or even lackadaisical attitude towards success in life? Does this mean good Buddhists should not strive for good grades, well-paying jobs and bigger houses? Ven Garchen Rinpoche, founder and spiritual director of the Garchen Buddhist Institute in Chino Valley, Arizona, USA, offers interesting and candid insights to Poh Yong Hui on how Buddhism approaches the pursuit of material success and helps one succeed in life.

Awaken: **How do we pursue wealth and success without becoming attached?**

Venerable: You need to discern between selfish interest and collective interest. In the real world, you need to earn money in order to survive. In Singapore, you have really good laws and if you act according to the law with an altruistic intention, there is no fault.

For example, if someone has taken the precept of non-killing but is made to go to war for his country, there is no self-interest and hence, no breach of the precept. If he kills even a small insect out of hatred, greed or attachment, then there is a breach. In the monastery, we need to sell things or advertise so that our monastery can expand our propagation efforts. Intention is key.

When people do business with one another with good intention to benefit others, money travels around, and this becomes a continuum of merit. There is nothing wrong with that.

Awaken: **Good relation with colleagues is key to a successful career. How should we practise patience at the workplace?**

Venerable: No amount of work is too trivial. If we remember that our work benefits others – and this could apply to any occupation – it is easier to practise patience and kindness in the face of unfavourable work conditions such as low salary or unpleasant colleagues. Even if you hold a very mundane job, remember that what you do helps the economy and your country.

There is no need to ask if your colleagues are doing their jobs well – you should only question if you are doing your own job well. If there is work that nobody wants to do, especially at the monastery, volunteer to do it – the more that you do, the more it is to your advantage, as this is how you gain merit. Think that everyone does what they can, and don't worry or be bothered about others' behaviour. To be liberated, we have to purify our own mind, and watch our afflictions and harmful thoughts.

Awaken: **Most Dharma workers take a pay cut when they join the temple. Do you have any words of encouragement for them?**

Venerable: If you work in a monastery, you may be paid less, but you are accumulating merit. Just hold the intention of wanting the monastery to turn out well. If the monastery stays stable, even after we die, for many generations, our work will still benefit others. When the monastery grows, it can then flourish the teachings of karma, love and compassion. To give the Dharma is the greatest work of generosity. Receiving a small salary in the monastery is actually better compared to getting a big salary in the world, because one accumulates merit in the former. What is important is that the colleagues are amicable and respectful towards one another, which is why you must learn and put the Dharma into practice. Also, Dharma workers should not differentiate between the various Buddhist traditions – Chinese or Tibetan Buddhism, it's all the same – we practise Bodhicitta. In fact, all religions are beneficial if practised in an authentic way.

Awaken: **As city dwellers, many of us are busy juggling work or studies with little time for ourselves and our families. Some of us do not have enough sleep. How do we practise the Dharma when we are so busy?**

<

Venerable: Don't force yourself to chant or sit, as you may lose interest in the Dharma if it becomes a chore. You can recite "Om Mani Padme Hung" before and after sleep. When we do that, there is no self-grasping. Throughout the day we are bound by these ropes of self-grasping; that's why our minds are so tense. So every time we chant or recollect the Buddhas or Bodhisattvas, we cut through these ropes. Simply cultivate mindfulness; check your mind at all times. Be kind and patient.

If you find the time, do sitting meditation. When you get angry or upset, recollect the Buddha or meditate without thinking. Just observe that you are experiencing negative emotions, and let it be – it will go away. These emotions start to dissolve once you acknowledge their presence. That's wisdom. But if you follow after your afflictive emotions, your mind just gets tighter and tighter and you suffer.

Awaken: **Is it okay if I make donations with the hope that I will become richer?**

Venerable: If someone offers donations with this mindset, it is easy for the merit to be exhausted. This is why some wealthy people lose their wealth later on in life. Conversely, if you offer donations with the intention to benefit all sentient beings, this merit will never get exhausted. It becomes the cause for enlightenment.

Awaken: **What advice do you have for Buddhists who want to start their own business?**

Venerable: Whether a business is virtuous or not depends on the motivation. If you have good motivations, even worldly activities become Dharma practice. It is okay to make profits as long as you are ethical, pay taxes and do not cheat others. Some people think it is not good to sell Dharma articles like statues but this is not true – in fact, you are benefiting the person who buys it. As consumers, when we buy something, it's good to think that we are buying it with love, with the intention of benefiting the country's economy.

Awaken: **A successful life, from the Buddhist point of view, involves some form of altruism. Some people say "I need to be enlightened first before helping others". What do you have to say about this?**

Venerable: You can help others anytime, even right now. Just by thinking "may I benefit beings", you are already helping them with this thought of love. And when you receive bodhisattva vows with this love, you benefit them through the power of altruism, the power of all the Buddhas and the power of Dharmadhatu. Think of only two fields of reference – "I have respect for the Sangha, and compassion for sentient beings" – then the mind is completely relaxed and always happy. The greater the devotion and compassion, the greater the merit. When you have these qualities in your mind, there is only love and no self-grasping.

Awaken: **When we see people destroying the Dharma, how should we as practising Buddhists respond?**

Venerable: First think of the cause of such acts – it's hatred – and we all have it in our minds. Every time you destroy your own hatred, you destroy the hatred of all sentient beings. My hatred and their hatred is the same. It arises from self-grasping. Change your own mind first. ☺

I've seen dramatic, meaningful shifts in children's attitudes once they recognise that by choosing how to pay attention, and what to pay attention to, they are exercising their brains and changing them in a specific way.

Where and how children choose to direct their attention makes a huge difference in who they are and who they will become. I've watched in wonder as children have realised their own power to shape brains and lives for the better. Thus it is crucial to impart this to children.

Here are some ways on how you can train your kids to develop direct, focused attention:

Refining Awareness and Attention



PINWHEELS

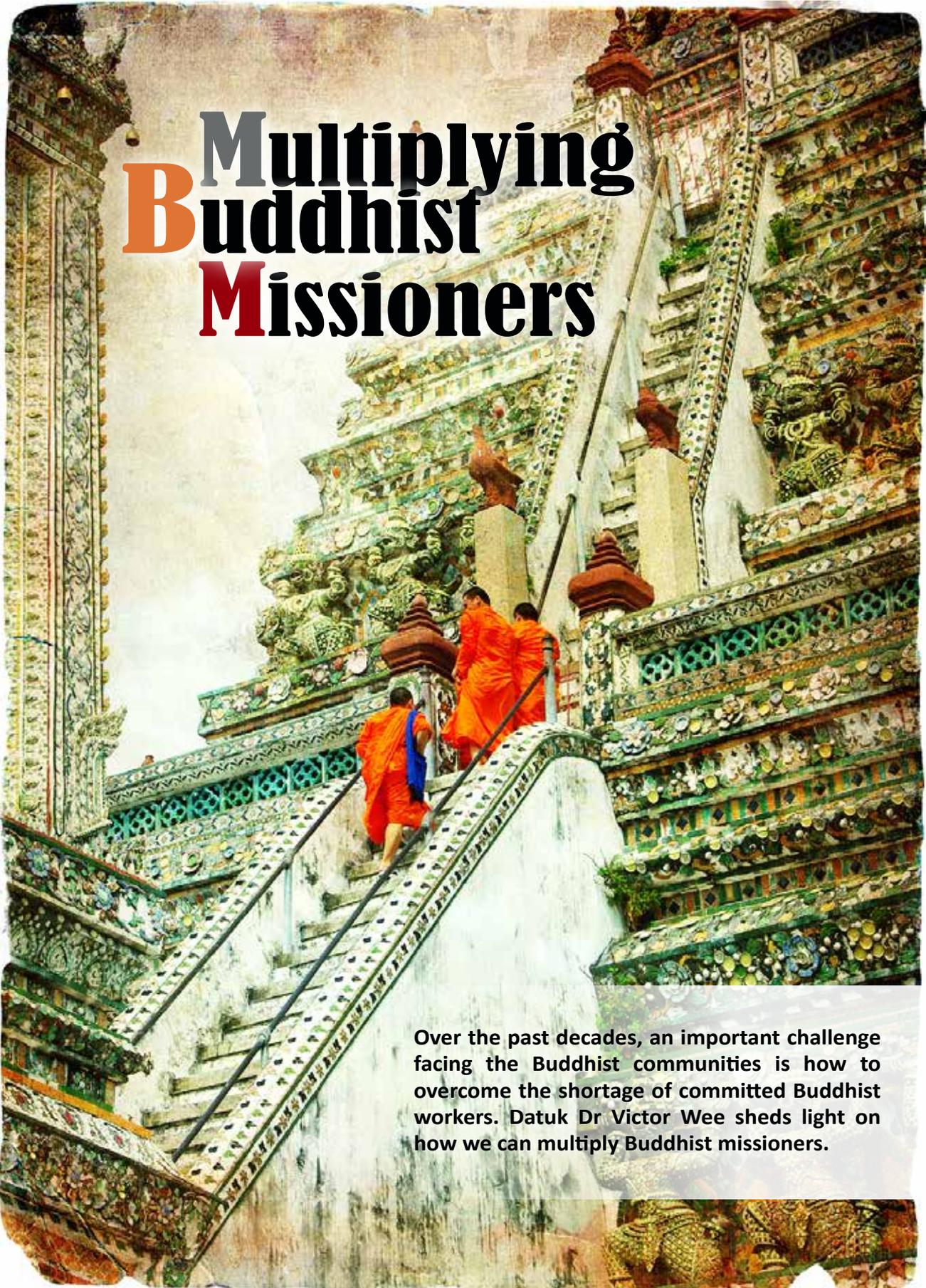
1. Ask your child to take a deep breath in through the nose and blow on the pinwheel with the mouth.
2. Invite your child to pay attention to how his or her body feel taking long breaths.
3. Then try this exercise again with short breaths.

It's fun for younger kids to watch the pinwheels spin as they notice what taking long and short breaths feels like to them.

COUNTING BREATHS

1. Relax as you inhale.
2. Then think of the number "one" and hold it in your mind as you exhale for the entire out-breath. (That is, silently extend the word "one" from the beginning of the out-breath to the end.)
3. With the second breath, you once again relax as you inhale.
4. Keep the number "two" in your mind throughout the exhale until your lungs feels empty.
5. Repeat the process with number "three" until your mind quiets and you can rest in the physical sensation of breathing without counting.

*text: Susan Kaiser Greenland, author of The Mindful Child.
(www.susankaisergreenland.com)*



B Multiplied **Buddhist** **Missioners**

Over the past decades, an important challenge facing the Buddhist communities is how to overcome the shortage of committed Buddhist workers. Datuk Dr Victor Wee sheds light on how we can multiply Buddhist missioners.

A very important challenge facing the Buddhist communities is how to overcome the shortage of committed Buddhist workers by increasing their numbers in a significant and effective manner. The current state of affairs is far from satisfactory, with the demand for trained Buddhist missionaries far exceeding their supply.

The problem lies with the lack of a proper approach to train lay Buddhist missionaries. Buddhist activities are run without much thought on how they should be sequenced and integrated so that missionaries can be trained in the process. Very few Buddhist organisations run their activities with a clear vision of growing new leaders and equipping them with the requisite knowledge and skills so that they can raise the quality of Dharma propagation and practice to a higher threshold.

Given the lack of an effective methodology to train new leaders, Buddhist organisations often complain that they lack leaders who can infuse new ideas into their activities and relieve their overworked members who have been in the committees for a long time. Even after many years of operation, these organisations languish at the level they were at many years before. Since little headway has been made to increase the number of committed workers, there is no impact or improvement in their society's capacity to deliver.

This paper argues that for the community to rise to the challenge of multiplying Buddhist workers, Buddhist organisations should adopt a more focused and systematic approach in their programmes.

Vision of Buddhist Programmes

Before we start multiplying Buddhist workers, it is important for us to lift our vision and aim high, because we normally achieve what we aim for. **We must first have a vision to develop communities of Buddhists who are knowledgeable in the Buddha Dharma and engaged in daily practice, while contributing actively to the growth of Buddhism.**

Once this vision is adopted by the organisation, it should be communicated to every member so that the organisation's activities can be directed towards its realisation. It should be clear to all that creative thinking is needed and the organisation should go beyond organising the run-of-the-mill activities.

The training of lay Buddhist missionaries is an important aspect of realising the vision. If we wish to increase the number of committed workers in our Buddhist community, we will have to reach out and develop them, without depending on luck or chance. Once your organisation has a clear sense of direction, it will also inspire others to come forward and be trained.

Who is a Missioner?

A mission is the work that a person feels that he is called upon to do. **Hence, a missioner is an inspired individual with a sense of mission who believes that it is his role and duty to protect the Buddha's teachings and bring others closer to Dharma.**

He is a committed Buddhist worker equipped with the requisite skills to achieve his goal, including skills of leadership, organisation and Dharma transmission. Among the areas of work he can be involved in are: delivering Dharma talks, leading group discussions, organising activities, undertaking social work, carrying out fellowship and welfare programmes, helping out in publication, running a kindergarten, etc.

<

Having the right vision is important. A person may be satisfied that he is currently actively involved in Buddhist work. But that is not enough.

The goal of every Buddhist missionary should be to develop and multiply other missionaries.

Reproducing Buddhist Missioners

Let us ask ourselves these questions: How long has our society been operating? How many Buddhist committed workers has our society produced in the last five years? If the response is not encouraging, it only means that we will need to examine the composition, context and approach of the programmes that have been organised all these years.

One need not settle for a missioner-deficit situation. By carrying out a well thought-out programme of activities, it is possible to gradually transform new members into competent and committed Buddhist workers and our organisation can contribute towards increasing the number of missioners in the community.

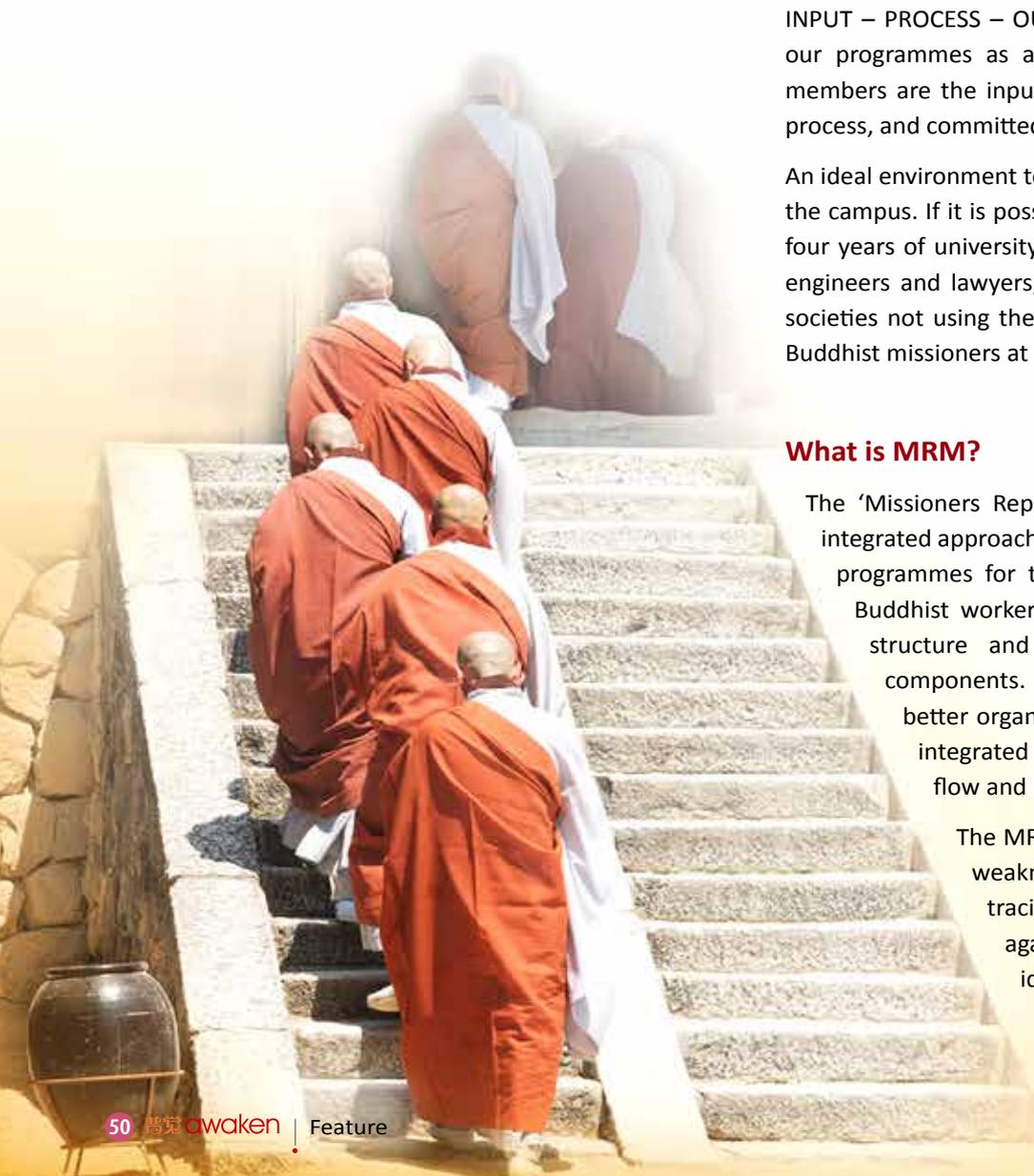
We are all familiar with the production process of INPUT – PROCESS – OUTPUT. It is possible to think of our programmes as a production process. Our new members are the input, the activities we conduct the process, and committed Buddhist workers the result.

An ideal environment to develop Buddhist missioners is the campus. If it is possible within the span of three or four years of university education to train economists, engineers and lawyers, why are the campus Buddhist societies not using the opportunity to train motivated Buddhist missioners at the same time?

What is MRM?

The 'Missioners Reproduction Model' (MRM) is an integrated approach for societies to better plan their programmes for the development of committed Buddhist workers. It enables us to analyse the structure and balance of the programme components. The model can help us to better organise our thoughts to plan a well-integrated programme by identifying the flow and linkages among activities.

The MRM can also be used to diagnose weaknesses in our programme. By tracing our current programmes against the model, we can quickly identify the components that are receiving too much or too little time and effort, as well as the missing components.



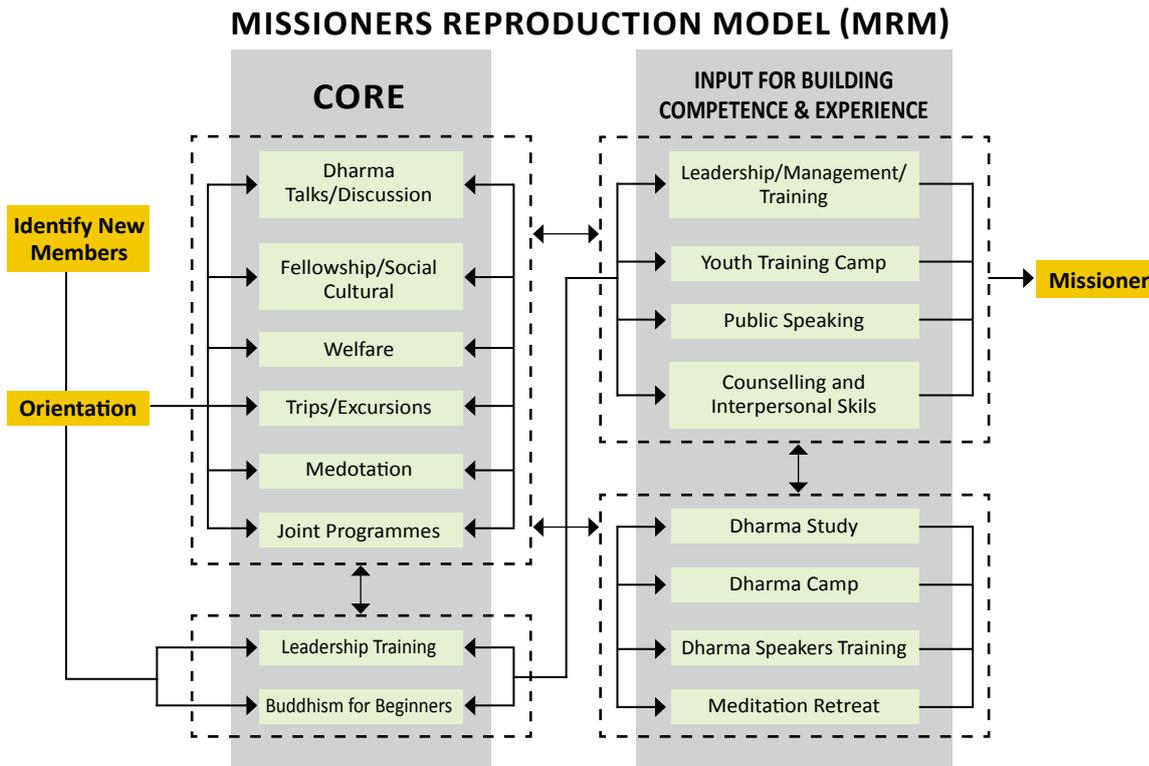


Figure 1

An example of the programmes within the Missioners Reproduction Model is given in *Figure 1*. It gives some examples of programmes for members at different stages of their development: beginners, intermediate/advanced and reproduction. The 'core activities' are those that are organised to bring everyone together, regardless of their developmental stage. These are usually organised to foster practice, fellowship and interaction. The other activities are those that can increase the competence of members and enable them to move to the next stage of development.

Groups of Activities

For simplicity, the activities of Buddhist societies can be classified into two groups:

- **Maintenance activities:** These are activities that are organised regularly to strengthen fellowship and practice among members. Examples of these activities are puja, fellowship gatherings, social and cultural activities, games, and regular talks. A society lacking in maintenance activities will experience weak cohesion among members and declining membership.
- **Directional activities:** These activities help members develop in a particular direction, such as developing well-grounded Buddhists or committed Buddhist workers. Examples of these activities are Dharma courses at different levels, meditation retreats, public speaking course, leadership course, counselling course, Dharma speakers course, etc.

For a society to grow in strength and fulfil the vision of multiplying Buddhist missioners, it should strike a good balance of maintenance and directional activities in its programmes.

Maintenance activities should be organised to provide ample opportunities for fellowship and personal growth. They should give a sense of enrichment as well as give the participants a 'good time', enabling them to forge links of love and friendship with the Triple Gem as the core. A society that focuses on

<

maintenance activities will be able to build good fellowship, which is important for any organisation, but if directional activities are missing, it will lack a sense of direction, mission and growth.

For the society's activities to be balanced, maintenance activities should be coupled with directional activities to help members grow in their understanding and practice of the Buddha Dharma, and equip them with skills for Buddhist work. These are the activities that will take the members through the various stages of developing Buddhist missionaries, up to the reproduction stage.

Beginner Stage

At this stage, a new member undergoes an orientation programme in which he is introduced to the society's vision, activities, and members. Effort should be made to clarify his understanding of Buddhism and introduce him to a senior member who acts as a role model and takes care of him during the initial stage of his development. Activities at this stage include a basic course in Buddhism as well as meditation. There should be strong emphasis on fellowship to widen his social network within the society and help him to achieve growth in Dharma.

Intermediate Stage

After the beginner stage, he moves to the intermediate stage and is given inputs to help him mature. He is given the opportunity to deepen his Dharma knowledge through participation in *sutta* camps, Dharma seminars, and meditation training. This should be complemented by training courses to improve his leadership, public speaking and organisational abilities as well as areas of his interest. He is encouraged to be involved in organisational work in order to bring out his potential and qualities.

Advanced Stage

When the member proceeds to the advanced stage, he is exposed to the more difficult aspects of Buddhism and encouraged to develop various skills, such as leadership, communication, management and counselling. He is encouraged to participate in specialised programmes organised by other societies that can help to build his skills and commitment as a Dharma worker.

Reproduction Stage

A person with the potential and interest to be a missionary is encouraged to understudy a Dharma worker to help him mature into a committed Buddhist missionary. In the reproduction stage, he is provided with positive feedback to draw out his best qualities and encouraged to widen his exposure, contacts and experience to be a better worker for the *Buddha Sasana*.

Implementing MRM

There is no fixed duration for each stage. People vary in their level of interest, aptitude and rate of progress along the learning curve. Some can emerge as a leader within two to three years, while many never seem to go beyond the beginner or intermediate stage. However, through appropriate monitoring, follow-up, guidance and encouragement, it is possible to develop new Buddhist workers, even out of those who seem to be lagging behind.

The input to be given to a person depends on his personal need and the developmental stage he is in. Every individual is different and has varying requirements. Typically, at the beginner stage, he should be supported with a lot of guidance in terms of direction, clarification and encouragement.

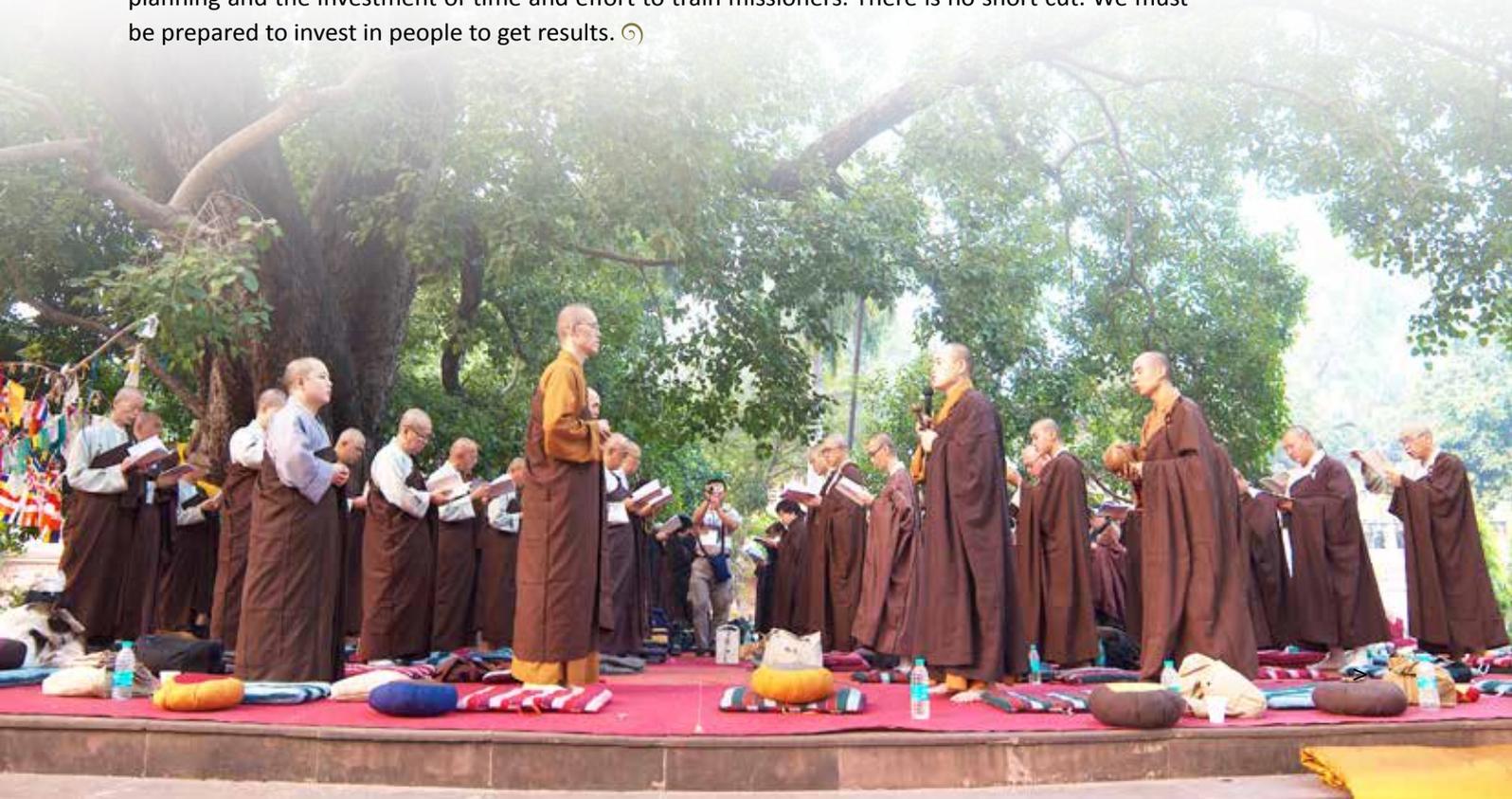
Once he moves to the intermediate stage, he should be given positive feedback to help him develop his potential in a particular area of work, e.g. organisation, leading Dharma discussions, giving talks on Buddhism, working with youth groups, etc. We should help him discover his hidden potential and encourage him to develop other areas, e.g. public speaking.

At the advanced stage, the directional inputs could be reduced because he is expected to be able to 'feed himself with Dharma'. However, there is the need to keep an eye on him to ensure that he does not backslide or drop out, the two common tendencies at this stage. He may feel de-motivated, bored or think that he is unable to commit so much. It is very important to help him remain motivated and encourage him to set his eye on the goal, i.e. working for Dharma.

Once past the advanced stage, he should be given the opportunity to lead groups and teach so as to hone his skills and widen his experience. He is attached to a competent worker who will give him encouragement and feedback to help him develop as a missionary. He should be conversant with the principles of MRM. At every stage of the development of a Buddhist missionary, he should keep close fellowship with fellow Buddhists and like-minded friends to keep his interest and sense of mission strong.

Conclusion

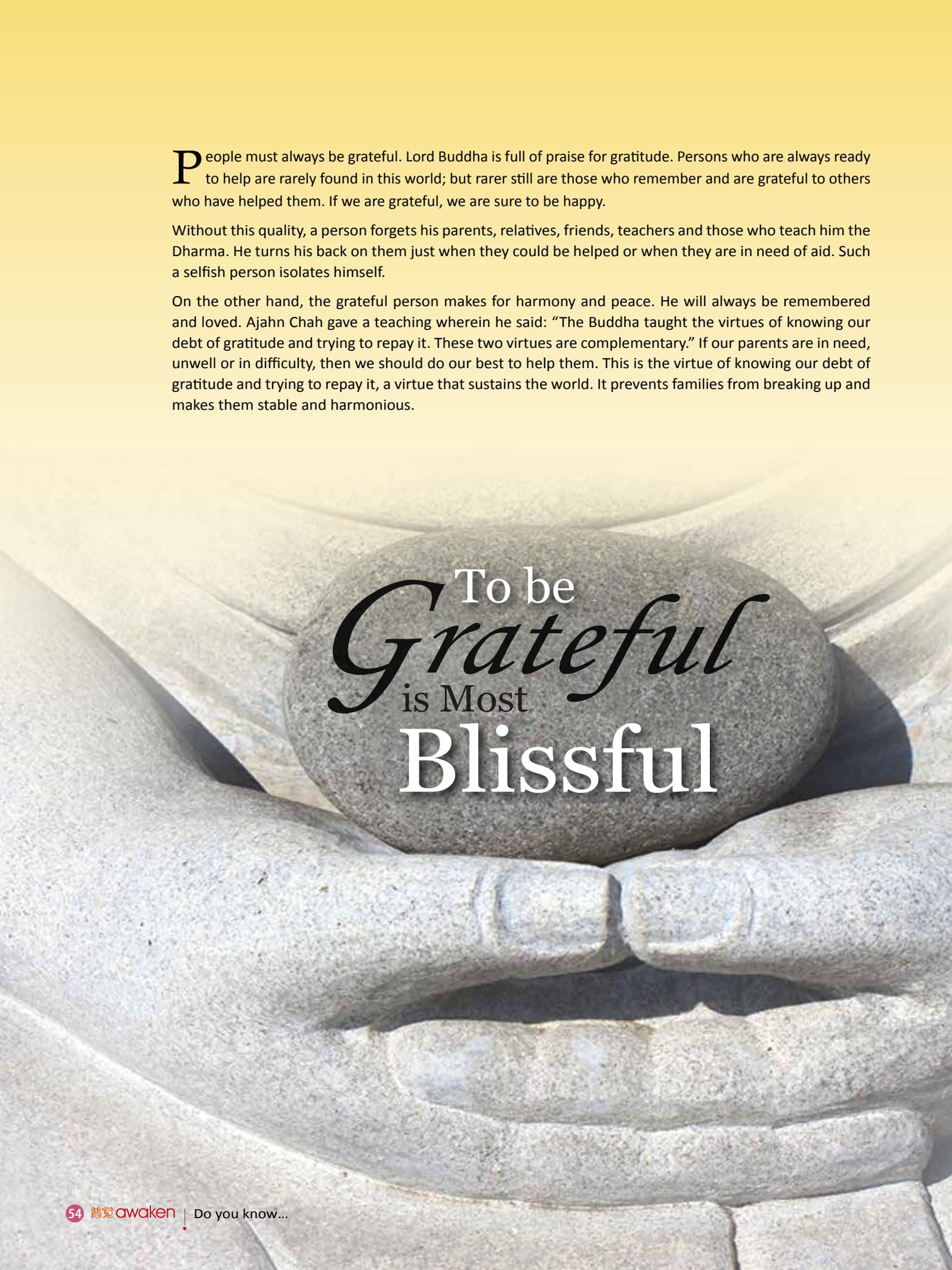
For the Buddhist community to prosper, there is the need for some transferable success formula, rather than hoping for some windfall to happen. The Missioners Reproduction Model can guide Buddhist societies in the planning and execution of their programmes that can not only bring about fellowship and increase the understanding and practice of Buddhism, but also develop their members' potential in becoming committed Buddhist workers. The MRM is about systematic planning and the investment of time and effort to train missionaries. There is no short cut. We must be prepared to invest in people to get results. ☺



People must always be grateful. Lord Buddha is full of praise for gratitude. Persons who are always ready to help are rarely found in this world; but rarer still are those who remember and are grateful to others who have helped them. If we are grateful, we are sure to be happy.

Without this quality, a person forgets his parents, relatives, friends, teachers and those who teach him the Dharma. He turns his back on them just when they could be helped or when they are in need of aid. Such a selfish person isolates himself.

On the other hand, the grateful person makes for harmony and peace. He will always be remembered and loved. Ajahn Chah gave a teaching wherein he said: "The Buddha taught the virtues of knowing our debt of gratitude and trying to repay it. These two virtues are complementary." If our parents are in need, unwell or in difficulty, then we should do our best to help them. This is the virtue of knowing our debt of gratitude and trying to repay it, a virtue that sustains the world. It prevents families from breaking up and makes them stable and harmonious.



To be
Grateful
is Most
Blissful

Gratitude is a manifestation of faithfulness

Gratitude is a manifestation of faithfulness. It suggests an evenness of behaviour as opposed to vanity or haughtiness. An instance of this may be seen in the conduct of Venerable Sariputta.

Venerable Sariputta had come across the Venerable Assaji, one of the Lord Buddha's first Five Disciples one day. He was enlightened by the Elder's sermon, converted and later ordained into monkhood.

The Venerable Sariputta subsequently became what is called in Pali 'the right-hand disciple of the Buddha', highly respected for his supreme wisdom and exceptional teaching methods which were unequalled among all other disciples of the Buddha. He was one of the most valuable helpers of the Buddha in spreading the Dharma and was generally looked upon as second only to the Buddha. But he remained unwaveringly faithful to his first teacher, the Venerable Assaji. Although Venerable Assaji was enlightened, he had no special gifts. Notwithstanding this, Venerable Sariputta always regarded the Elder as his great benefactor, never failing to pay homage to his teacher before he rested for the night throughout his life. This aspect of faithfulness, therefore, is an ennobling virtue for children, pupils or servants who do not forget their debt of gratitude and never neglect to pay respect to their parents, teachers and masters respectively.

Gratitude is a feeling of indebtedness towards another

Gratitude is also an attitude which involves a feeling of indebtedness towards another person. This is often accompanied by a desire to thank the person, or to reciprocate in kind. The Buddha, for instance, knew that the Bodhi tree had sheltered Him. He knew that his five former companions in asceticism had been helpful to Him, so He felt gratitude towards them.

Not only that, He expressed His feelings of gratitude. It was said that soon after attaining Buddhahood, He spent a whole week simply gazing at the Bodhi tree. Then He went in search of His five former companions of asceticism so that He could communicate to them out of gratitude the Truth that He had discovered. The important implication here is that it is perfectly natural behaviour for a good and noble person to feel gratitude for benefits, which he has received. It's a natural feeling, a natural response.

Of course, the benefit has to be recognised as a benefit first. If we don't feel that someone or something has actually benefited us, we won't feel grateful to the person or the thing. This suggests that we have to understand what is truly beneficial, what has really helped us to grow and develop as human beings. We also have to know who or what has benefited us. And we have to remember that they have benefited us, otherwise no feeling of gratitude is possible.

The Buddha exemplified gratitude

The newly-Enlightened Buddha was a grateful Buddha. We don't usually think of the Buddha in this way. We think of the Fully Enlightened one as a compassionate Buddha, we think of the resourceful Buddha who was a teacher of gods and men, but few think in terms of a grateful Buddha. But the Buddha exemplified gratitude, and one of the very first things He did after He attained

<

Enlightenment, as mentioned earlier, was to show His gratitude to those who had helped Him. He was even grateful to the tree that gave Him shelter during his final quest for Enlightenment! This alone should give us a lot of food for thought, food for reflection.

It's therefore not surprising that this quality, this virtue of gratitude finds a place in the Buddha's ethical and spiritual teaching. The Mangala Sutta, the Sutta of Blessings, or sometimes translated as the Sutta of Auspicious Signs, which is very short and is found in the Pali Canon, mentions gratitude as one of the 38 auspicious signs. If you practise gratitude, if you are grateful, then it's a sign that you are making spiritual progress according to the Mangala Sutta.

The three objects of gratitude

In Buddhism, there are three principal objects of gratitude traditionally: In the first place are our parents, next are our teachers, and in the third place our spiritual friends.

First of all, let us take our parents. In the modern era, there have been quite a few reported cases of ill will between parents and their offspring. Of course, if one is on bad terms with one's parents then something is seriously wrong. Perhaps it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that if one is on really bad terms with one's parents then one's whole emotional life, indirectly at least, is affected, perhaps quite seriously. This is where the practice of *metta bhavana* (meditation on loving-kindness) helps in re-establishing positive relation with the parents.

One has to learn to develop *metta*. Although some people may have suffered at the hands of their parents, it is necessary in the interests of their own emotional, psychological and spiritual development to get over whatever feelings of bitterness or resentment that they harbour towards their parents.

The Buddha Himself has quite a lot to say about our positive relation to our parents in the Sigalovada Sutta. If it were not for our parents, we would not be here now. Our parents have given us life, they have given us a human body, and they bring us up, as best as they can. They enable us to survive, and they educate us.

The second object of gratitude: our secular teachers from whom we derive rudiments of knowledge and learning. Practically everything that we know or think we know has been taught to us in one way or another, for example, our knowledge of science and history. Others have done all the work for us. We benefit from their efforts. We also learn from people who have been dead for many, many years. We learn from the writings they left behind, from the records of the words they spoke, through books. So to all of them, we should be grateful. Then there are great works of imagination and art which are sources of infinite enrichment. They help us to deepen and expand our vision, and help to create our collective cultural heritage. We would be immeasurably poorer without them.

Our third and last object of gratitude: our spiritual friends, *kalyana mitra*. These are friends who feel a strong unselfish active love towards us, who are more spiritually experienced or advanced than we are. The Buddhas of course are our spiritual friends, especially Shakyamuni Buddha, who discovered and taught the Dharma in this aeon. The Arhats and the Bodhisattvas are our spiritual friends. The great Buddhist teachers of India and China, of Tibet and Japan, are our spiritual friends. Those who teach us meditation, those with whom we study the scriptures, those who ordain us are all our spiritual friends, and should be the object of our intense, heartfelt gratitude.

We should be even more grateful to them than to our secular teachers, because it is through our spiritual friends that we receive the Dharma, the teachings handed down from the Buddha.

Passing on the Dharma to others

In the Dhammapada, the Buddha said, “The greatest of all gifts is the gift of the Dharma.” The greater the gift, the greater the gratitude that we should feel. We should not only feel gratitude in our hearts, we should give expression to it in words and deeds. How do we do this? We give expression to it in three ways. By singing the praises of our spiritual friends; by practising the Dharma they have given us; and by passing on the Dharma to others to the best of our ability.

The greatest of our spiritual friends is of course Lord Buddha. Buddha Shakyamuni, who discovered the path that we as Buddhists follow today. It’s to the Buddha that we go for Refuge, it’s the Dharma taught by him that we try to practise, and it’s with the support of the Community or Sangha founded by Him that we are able to practise the Dharma today. We are therefore intensely grateful to Him. Our parents have given us life; our teachers have given us knowledge, education and culture; and our spiritual friends give us spiritual guidance, but what are these without the Dharma?

For 45 successive years, the Buddha slept less than two hours each night and preached the supreme Dharma of the Buddhas for the welfare of gods and men. To further clarify the profound panacea for the ills of samsara, the Compassionate One explained the Dharma he re-discovered in 84,000 different aspects. He would traverse miles, on foot, if he could enable even one person who has the potential to escape the clutches of samsara. So we should be intensely grateful to Buddha Shakyamuni, indeed to all Buddhas.

Ingratitude

Yet, why is it that people don’t always find it easy to be grateful?

There are many reasons but the four most common are:

1. Failure to recognise a benefit as a benefit.
2. Taking benefits for granted.
3. Egotism.
4. Forgetfulness.

>



<

There are some people who do not regard life itself as a benefit. They don't appreciate its value or realise the immense potential of a human life. In Buddhist terms, they don't realise that it is possible for a human being to attain enlightenment or at least to make some progress in that direction.

Similarly, there are people who don't regard knowledge or education or culture as benefits. They may even feel resentful that education or culture is being imposed upon them. Such people are unlikely to come into contact with spiritual values, the Dharma or spiritual friends. Or even if they do come into contact with the latter, they may perceive these as their enemies, and therefore the question of gratitude will not arise. There were many people during the Buddha's time who didn't see the Buddha as the Buddha. They saw him as a rather eccentric, unorthodox teacher, and they certainly didn't feel any gratitude towards him for the gift of the Dharma.

Secondly, ingratitude arises when benefits are taken for granted. We think that they are owed to us. We think that we have a right to them and therefore, they belong to us. Hence, we've no need to be grateful. This attitude is, of course, very widespread in society today. People tend to think that everything is due to them. They think that they have a right to everything. Such people feel that their parents, teachers, friends and even the state have a duty to provide them with whatever they want.

How is egotism a reason for ingratitude? Egotism has many forms, it has many different aspects – an attitude of chronic blind individualism; and the belief that one is separate from others and is not dependent on others in any way. That is, one does not owe anything to others; one is not obliged to them; and one can do everything by oneself.

The fourth and last reason is forgetfulness of the benefits we have received. It could be that the benefits were given to us a long, long time ago. As we have no distinct recollection of them anymore, we no longer feel grateful to the person(s) who bestowed those benefits upon us, even if we did originally feel grateful to the person(s). This is perhaps the principal reason for the failure to express gratitude towards our parents, or at least for not being actively grateful to them.

Over the years, so much has happened in our life; early memories have been overlaid by later ones. Other relationships have assumed importance in our lives. Perhaps we've moved away from our parents, geographically, socially or culturally. Or they may have died. So we tend to forget them. We forget the numerous ways in which they benefited us: when we were infants and needed round-the-clock attention, or when we were young and had to be guided, or how they looked after us when we were ill, and so on. Therefore we cease to actually feel grateful.

It could also be that we do not feel the positive effects of the benefits very strongly in the first place. As the original feeling of gratitude is not very strong, it becomes easy for it to fade away over time and be forgotten altogether.

Yet, none of these reasons justifies ingratitude.

Let us be grateful. Let us overflow with gratitude to our parents, teachers, spiritual friends and the Buddhist tradition, and recognise the vast benefits we have received.

Above all, let us be grateful to the Buddha. Remember Him on this day and always!

Let us remember in particular that the Buddha exemplified gratitude. Recall how, out of gratitude, He spent the second week after the attainment of supreme, perfect Enlightenment by paying homage to the Bodhi tree that sheltered Him. ☺



I have been studying the Dharma at a Dharma Society for two years. On an ad-hoc basis, I help out at its events. Two months ago, I became a committee member of the Society's entrepreneurial and temple-building project groups, attending monthly meetings, making presentations and being involved in the planning of activities.

Through the Dharma, I have learnt, and now realise that gratitude, as in "fourfold gratitude", is multi-dimensional.

Before studying the Dharma, I was grateful to those who treated me well.

But now, I learn to be grateful to all sentient beings. I have learnt to O-M-A-K: *Observe merits* and *appreciate kindness*. To people who harm us, I have learnt to give gratitude through OMAK, looking at their merits rather than at how they treat us. I also appreciate how people support me. These include even people who build the roads and the bus driver who waits for me as I make a run for it. I am grateful to them for sending me to my destination to do volunteer work or study the Dharma.

I am grateful for everything under the sun. The magnitude is as wide as what you can think of. For example, I am grateful to be a human being because we know how precious it is to obtain a human life. Every day, I wake up feeling grateful, unlike previously when I would take many things for granted.

To repay my parents' love and efforts for bringing me up, I am focusing on getting them to practise the Dharma so that they do fewer misdeeds and more good deeds, leading to better lives, now and in the future. Taking them out for dinner to express my gratitude, for example, is superficial.

Being able to practise the Dharma in this lifetime is a rare opportunity, as is being able to serve not just anyone, but the precious Triple Gem.

I see many senior brothers and sisters who dedicate their time and effort to this cause and the kind of aura and energy they release from volunteering is not something I see often in daily life. They are happy doing it.

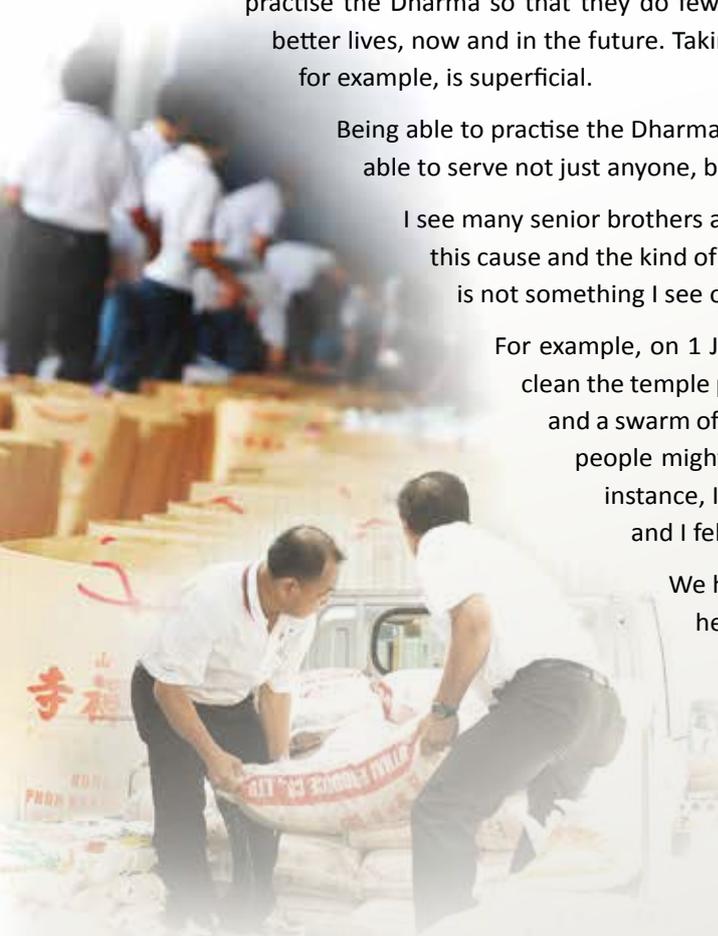
For example, on 1 January 2014, a group of us had volunteered to clean the temple premises. While cleaning the lift, I asked for help and a swarm of people came forward. In normal circumstances, people might find cleaning a chore and avoid it. But in that instance, I saw many people serving in the same direction and I felt very touched.

We have a human life and when we make use of our healthy bodies and leisure time to help others as a volunteer, it is a privilege. Despite feeling tired after an activity, I feel so good volunteering for it. It offers a different perspective to life. ☺

By Celine Chan, aged 34, business owner

text: Janice Goh

Thoughts of Gratitude in Serving the Triple Gem



A person with long dark hair, wearing a white top and dark shorts, is walking away from the camera on a sandy beach. The background shows a sunset or sunrise over the ocean with a hazy sky and distant hills. The person's shadow is cast on the sand.

For the past three days, I have been listening to Dharma talks on the teaching of karma by various venerables. The bombardment and total immersion in this topic left me quite speechless as I closely compared the lessons with my own experiences over these three days. Here's what I understand:

1. Karma can directly or indirectly explain everything that happens to us.
2. Karma cannot be lost and will stay with us.
3. When we decide to 'renounce', to let go or to want to be free, we must start by facing up to the situation. This means we have to be prepared to face up to the 'dirt' and get our hands dirty. It is not about running away or hating the dirt. It's about finding a way out.

We always ask 'why me?' when bad things happen to us, but we don't ask 'why me?' when good things happen.

Musing on Karma

text: Ng Pei Fuen

We seem to take good things for granted because we are attached to them. Conversely, we push away those which are not good or pleasant. But all these are the results of our own karma!

If somebody blames you in this life for something you did not do, then you might have done something to that person in a previous existence! We are all linked to one another by cause and effect. Karma is about planting seeds (both virtuous and non-virtuous) in our consciousness and once these are planted, they WILL ripen in the future.

Karma plays a part in who become your teachers and which practice method you undertake. Although there are numerous different methods to cater to people's different inclinations, as long as an individual has faith and practises consistently, it will eventually lead to enlightenment.

"This is the innate potential of goodness that we all have. Do we recognise it? Where has it gone to hide? Do we know how to handle it?"

Ven Robina continued, "Look at your current situation and problems and feel happy for them because you are now finishing off the bad karma! When all these have gone away, you will be purified and your good qualities will emerge and you can strengthen them." On another note, Ven Mahinda said, "It does not matter what our meditation object is. The more we focus our minds there, the more our minds are purified and the full potential of each of our minds will emerge; and we can begin to connect our minds to other beings, devas, Bodhisattvas, etc at a frequency with lots of love and compassion."

I also reflect that the two simple words 'let go' is so powerful when we continue to learn and find out about what our karma is meant to be.

To negative and binding situations, we let go and face the music because they are a boomerang effect of our own past actions. I like this analogy by Ven Robina who said that when we want to get out of samsara, to get out of this dirt, we have to be prepared to deal with it. That means being able to put both our hands into the dirt, not hating the dirt, avoiding the dirt, or cursing the dirt. We want to get out, and we recognise that this is a necessary step. In other words, we 'let go' of our resistance and accept that this is a result of our own actions. No finger pointing at other people, no blaming of external conditions, but simply seeing it clearly and accepting it as our own mess. We roll up our sleeves and begin to tackle our own mess with equanimity and happiness that it has now ripened and will not come again.

To positive seeds, potential, good tendencies, wholesome states, we 'let go' of control, grasping, wanting to dictate how they should evolve and how they should serve our sensual desires.

Instead we let go of the 'I', the possessiveness of 'mine' and the addiction of 'wanting to be'. When we let go of all these self-imposed states of attachment, ill will and delusion, our positive potential and goodness emerges. It carries us, just like a tide carries a boat without much effort into the wide, boundless sea. It expands and liberates, it does not confine. There is no room for fear, no room for hesitation, no room for other things, not even other people to come onboard. This path is an individual one; and a transient one. If we can be content and let things fall into place, we can sit back and relax for an amazing show and amazing insights into the workings of karma: of how we are inter-related and how we can tap on our positive potential to bring us to the end of *dukkha*, suffering, samsara.

Liberation without trying or struggling...

Just recognising with mindful awareness. ☺



“Where is the Buddha?” That was the question a student asked me when I first joined the Sunday School as a Trainee Teacher three years ago. I was nervous and must have fumbled when replying, “Buddha is everywhere and he’s in your heart”. That began my journey in learning and sharing the Dharma with the children. I have never looked back since. I have gained much joy and experience in the process.

On the first day of class, we asked the students their purpose for coming to the Sunday School. After some reflection, I told the class how I felt too. I had come to the Sunday School to learn to be a better person. It’s so easy to be lazy by just lying in bed or playing my favourite games on the iPhone. To be a better person requires effort, endurance and the right conditions and friends to guide us. I thank our young friends for the opportunity to learn the Dharma together in this wonderful karmic environment. I wished my parents had sent me to Dharma Class when I was young. I would have learnt to handle some mistakes I made in life differently and in better ways.

Musing on Joy and Appreciation

We appreciate parents who could come for the Parent-Child-Teacher Conference. Each child is unique in his or her own way. We share with the parents some of the issues concerning each child’s development. With the help of the parents, we find ways to guide the child to be more confident to share his or her inner feelings as we share our experiences as well. Through such interaction, we become Spiritual Friends who “Share, Listen and Engage rather than Teach, Tell and Follow” as we come to employ the Dharma in our daily life and activities. We need to be patient in guiding the child to overcome some problems he or she may face. It gives us great satisfaction when a child improves in studies, school activities, relationship and bonding with others through Dharma cultivation and meditation.

Every year when the new school-term begins, I always look forward to seeing the children and hearing what they have done during the holidays. It is a joy to see profound changes in them after a long absence. They would become taller, more mindful, well-mannered and attentive. Gradually, they have grown into fine young, compassionate and healthy youth in our society. However, it is sad that some students could not continue into the new term for various reasons. Nevertheless, we hope that the Buddha seeds that have been planted in them will continue to germinate and provide the foundation for them to act correctly during their journey into adulthood.

We are most grateful for the continuous encouragement and guidance from all the experienced Teachers, Principal, Staff and Venerables. They constantly find ways and means to facilitate and equip us with the various skills and tools needed for classroom engagement and participation. We learn to employ various skilful means to engage our young students. The compassion and loving-kindness displayed by all members were inspiring and further strengthen our faith and devotion to our Mission to “Learn, Practise, Realise and Share” as one big spiritual family.

May the Triple Gem always guide and protect us in our continuous journey and dedication.

Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu! ☺

Once, there lived a lion that would hunt an animal from his territory each day for food. One day, it was the rabbit's turn to be eaten by the lion. The rabbit was petrified, and pondered long and hard on how she could avoid this untimely death.

Pacing around anxiously, the rabbit noticed a well nearby. When she popped her head over, the rabbit saw her own reflection. When she shook her head, her reflection did the same. Likewise, when she bared her teeth and made funny faces. Suddenly, an idea struck her!

Soon after, the rabbit presented herself to the lion as lunch. The lion was fuming mad and demanded to know why the rabbit was late.

"I was late because I encountered a ferocious creature on my way here. That creature has come to challenge you," the rabbit replied timidly.

"What! Who could that be? Show him to me!" the lion roared.

The rabbit took him to the well and said, "Look down and you will see the creature clearly."

The lion looked over, and of course, saw his own reflection.

The creature in the well did whatever the lion did – shaking his head and baring his fangs.

The lion became so consumed with anger that he pounced at the creature and leapt to his death in the well.

The Lion and the Rabbit

- This story demonstrates the disadvantages of being angry. It destroys our 'world' and environment, and causes us to see everyone as our enemy. Overpowered by anger, the wisdom eye is blinded. It burns our virtues, robs us of our peace of mind and leads us onto a path of more negative actions. Therefore, examine anger and its faults very carefully and purify them with Dharma practice of cultivating love, compassion and gratitude for all beings, even for one's enemies.

Retold by Esther Thien



The Story of Upali the Millionaire

illustration: **Beeli Chua**
retold by: **Esther Thien**

1. Once, Upali the millionaire, a follower of Nigantha Nataputta, approached the Buddha.



2. He was so pleased after having heard the Buddha expound the Dharma that he instantly expressed this wish.



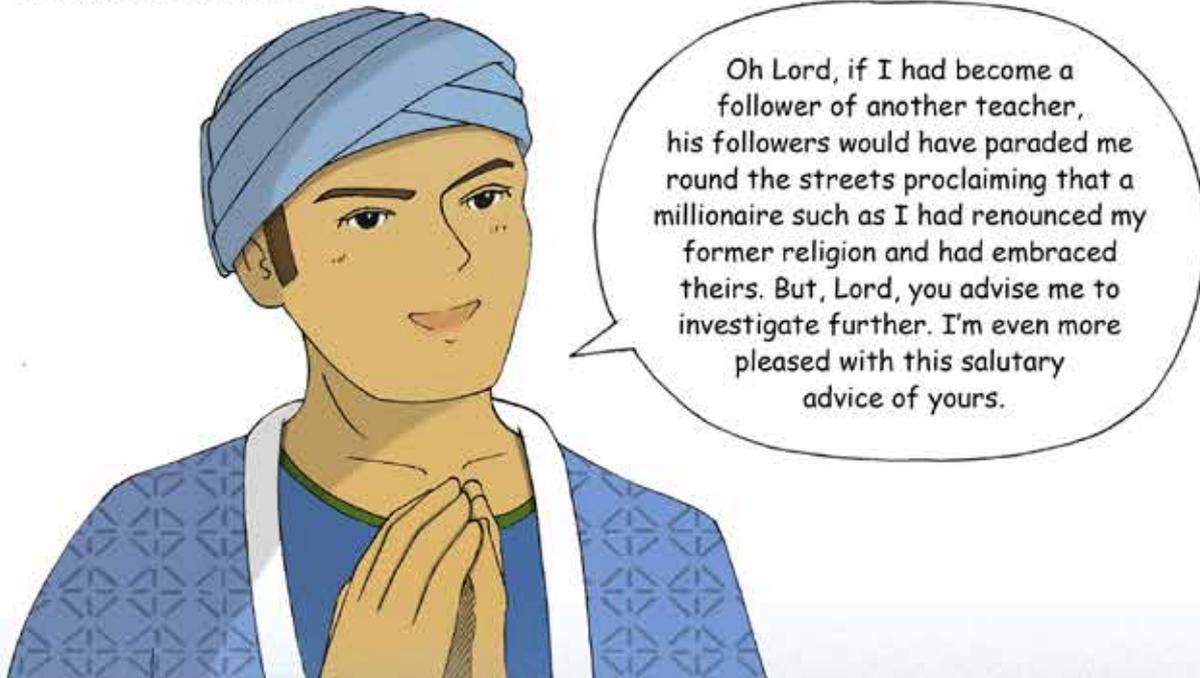
Oh Lord, I wish to become your follower and practise your teachings.

3.

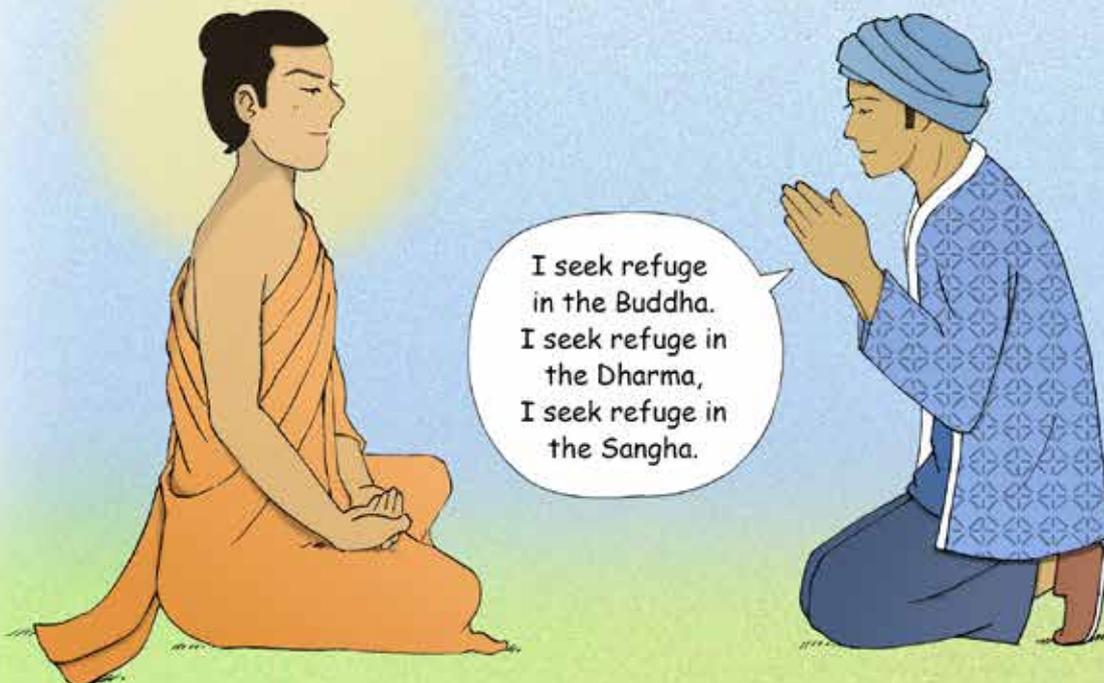


Dear householder, make a thorough investigation first. It is well for a distinguished man like you to make a thorough investigation.

4. Upali was overjoyed to hear the Buddha respond in such an unexpected manner.



5. Upali then proceeded to repeat his refuge vows thrice in front of the Buddha with appreciation, commitment and devotion.



Though Upali became a staunch Buddhist, the Buddha, embodying boundless compassion, perfect tolerance and gratitude, advised him to support his former religious teacher in accordance with his practice.

The Merits of Producing Buddhist Teachings and Buddha Images

- 1 One's light karmic misgivings will dissolve, while heavy ones lighten.
- 2 One will be protected by devas, and be unharmed by natural and man-made disasters.
- 3 One will always be free from the suffering of hatred and vengeance.
- 4 One will be unharmed by yaksas, evil spirits and wild beasts.
- 5 One's mind will be at peace, free from harm and nightmares.
- 6 One's complexion will be radiant.
- 7 One will be full of auspicious energy.
- 8 One who practises the Dharma wholeheartedly will have adequate living necessities.
- 9 One's family will be harmonious and be blessed with fortune and wisdom.
- 10 One who practises what one preaches will be respected and loved by all.
- 11 One who is dull-minded will gain wisdom.
- 12 One who is ill will gain health.
- 13 One who is poor will gain wealth.
- 14 One will be free of being reborn in the negative realms.
- 15 One will be able to help others grow in wisdom and gain great merits in doing so.
- 16 One will always be able to learn the Dharma, till one's wisdom and spiritual penetrations are fully grown and one becomes a Buddha.

Dear Reader, "The Gift of the Dharma Exceeds All Other Gifts."

Do you wish to offer this greatest gift to others, so that more can be touched by the beauty of the Dharma, and be inspired to lead happy and meaningful lives? If so, you can share in the production costs of AWAKEN Magazine for free distribution. Simply photocopy this page, fill in the sponsorship form and mail it back to us together with your cheque or money order. All cheques and money orders should be made payable to "Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery" and sent to:

Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery

AWAKEN Magazine
88 Bright Hill Road Singapore 574117

For overseas readers, please send bankdrafts in Singapore currency. Please include S\$10 for bank charges. Please note that the monastery is NOT able to accept cheques in foreign currency.

You can also donate online via eNets or Giro at <http://kmspks.org/about/donate>

If you have any enquiries, please call 6849 5300 or e-mail: awaken@kmspks.org

Name: Chinese Name:

Gender: Age: Highest educational level:

Address:

Occupation:

Tel: (H) (O) (Hp)

Email:

Amount: (Cash*/ Cheque No:)

Do you require an official receipt? (Yes* / No) *Please delete where appropriate

Would you like to receive emails on upcoming talks, retreats or other events of the monastery? (Yes* / No) *Please delete where appropriate

Where did you obtain this magazine?

I acknowledge and consent KMSPKS to contact me with regard to any sponsorship matters, via the information provided above. To update any changes to your personal particulars, please email publication@kmspks.org or call us at 6849 5342

Issue 29



Seeking Fulfilling Careers?

Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery (KMSPKS) is an established Buddhist organisation with a vision to be the exemplary spiritual and service sanctuary for the spread and practice of Buddhism; one that is guided by compassion and wisdom to enrich the lives of the community at large.

If you are passionate about joining us in realising our vision and take pride in producing great work, we welcome you to join our big family.

You may send your resume to: hrdept@kmspks.org OR drop by our HR Office @ 88 Bright Hill Road, Singapore 574117 between 9am to 4.30pm (Mon-Fri), except public holidays.

Alternatively, you may log onto: www.kmspks.org and click onto "kmspks", followed by "Livelihood" to view our job vacancies.

AWAKEN to... Compassion & Wisdom on the journey of life...

Published three times a year by Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery, AWAKEN is a FREE bilingual Buddhist magazine that aims to help readers gain insight and make sense of life's journey using the Dharma.



Get your free copy from these outlets:

SINGAPORE BUDDHIST FEDERATION
59 Lorong 24A Geylang S 398583

SINGAPORE BUDDHIST LODGE
17 Kim Yam Road S 239329

TAI PEI BUDDHIST CENTRE
2 Lavender Street S 338823

CI YAN VEGETARIAN HEALTH FOOD
8/10 Smith Street S 058917

AWARENESS PLACE
Blk 231 Bain Street #01-63
Bras Basah Complex S 180231

AWARENESS PLACE WELL-BEING CENTRE
Blk 261 Waterloo Street
#01-42 Waterloo Centre S 180261

* whilst stocks last



Create Merits through the Gift of Bliss

The world has become so wired and advanced technologically that it is now possible for you to create stores of positive potential or merits with the click of a mouse. Today, you can opt to make an offering to the Triple Gem online!

Making an offering to the Triple Gem is an act of devotion that expresses veneration and gratitude to Lord Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.

You can choose to offer flowers (\$12), light (\$12), hamper (\$90) or rice (\$10.80) on Vesak Day, other holy or special dates such as on Bodhisattvas' birthdays or Mother's Day, or on any of the 365 days in the year.

Once your intention to offer is completed online, your offering will be physically offered on your selected offering date at a Hall in the Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery.

To find out more, please visit www.awarenessplace.com/index.php/gift-of-bliss.html.

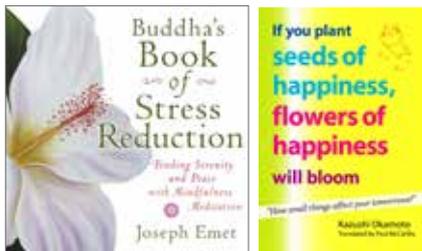


- ① Flowers \$12
- ② Light \$12
- ③ Hamper \$90
- ④ Rice \$10.80

If You Plant Seeds of Happiness, Flowers of Happiness Will Bloom

by Kazushi Okamoto

A bright and cheery book with adorable illustrations, this is a pleasing book to read. Distilling the Buddha's teachings into very practical and down-to-earth advice, Kazushi Okamoto shows us how happiness lies in our own hands. Depending on the choices we make each day, even small ones, we create our own buds of happiness and unhappiness. So long as we continue steadily to sow good seeds, to plant seeds of kindness, consideration and gratitude, the flowers of happiness will bloom for us, and brighten the lives of all we encounter. Get it from Awareness Place stores for S\$15.00.



Buddha's Book of Stress Reduction Finding Serenity and Peace with Mindfulness Meditation

by Joseph Emet

Mindfulness is a child of the Buddha. Knowing how to be mindful in everyday life is an art. When we live mindfully with awareness and recognition of the roots of stress in ourselves, we can live more positively without allowing stress to rob us of our happiness and health. Besides teaching readers the techniques and benefits of mindfulness meditation to reduce stress, this book also guides readers to cultivate positive values of a calm and constructive attitude, so that they may leap from the threshold of stress to well-being. Priced at S\$24.65 from Awareness Place stores.



Closer Apart

Written and Directed by: Jason Lee
Starring: Henry Thia, Joanne Chan, Sharon Ng
William Lawandi, Esther Goh, Dora Teo

Most of us love our family. But how many of us really express our love (enough) with mindfulness and awareness to make it known? More often than not, we display indifference, impatience and the like, and take our loved ones for granted.

This paradox forms the crux of this short film aptly titled *Closer Apart*. Does absence really make the heart grow fonder? Do we have to experience separation before we treasure what we have? Does being together stoke up feelings of apathy instead?

The protagonist is played by Henry Thia, a.k.a "Hui Ge". As a husband, a father of two adult children and a grandfather, he feels unappreciated, undervalued and slighted.

At a family dinner, his wife and children unwittingly hurt his feelings when they shift the main dishes away from him towards his daughter-in-law and grandchild. Pushing a big bowl of soup in front of him, they tell the kid that soup and rice are enough for her grandfather. Although hurt, he quietly tells his granddaughter that he is fine.

In the next scene, he returns home from work early because he is feeling under the weather. He asks his daughter, who is watching TV, to read a stack of mail for him. Engrossed, she shrugs his request off, saying she will do it later. She does not make eye contact or seem contrite. As if to rub salt in the wound, he finds a cup of cold and untouched coffee, which he makes for her regularly, sitting in the kitchen. Moments later, his wife nags at him for not working longer hours and unleashes a litany of complaints, and comparisons with her wealthy friend.

In the car with his son, an awkward silence fills the air. "Hui Ge" attempts to make conversation, reminding his son to take care of his health. He gets a one-word reply. He then asks his son if he will be home for the reunion dinner. He gets an impatient expression in return.

On Chinese New Year's eve, the family gathers for dinner. But "Hui Ge" is absent. Confident that he will turn up eventually, they tuck in nonetheless. Unknown to them, he has packed his bags and left home. He feels left out in the family and feels like a burden as he gets on in years. Gradually, his wife, son and daughter, one by one, start feeling anxious.

The film's director Jason Lee felt compelled to make this film, having observed that many people in Singapore get so caught up in their daily lives that they do not demonstrate their love enough. He is a first year student at Nanyang Junior College, and with a few of his peers, produced the show under the mentorship of the two production houses that were involved in making the local films *Ah Boys to Men*, *881* and *12 Lotus*.

In support of youthful aspiration to bring about a more wholesome society, the Monastery funded the entire production and distribution. DVDs of the film will be distributed at the monastery from 12 May 2014. Grab one and make a donation at the same time. Be sure to also share it with your friends and family members to spread the message.

Buddha Activity III

By Kuo Heng Chi

Popular and well-known Taiwanese singer Kuo Heng Chi, also known fondly as Kuo-Zhi released this CD fusing Buddhist mantras with his own signature musical style and flavour. Comes bundled with vibrantly printed postcards and colourful two-sided lyric cards that explain the significance of the various mantras. Available for S\$22.90 at Awareness Place stores.



Password to Natural Health

Meditation Guided by Chang Cheng

Feel the spirit of serenity inundate you as you progress through a series of Mandarin guided meditation tracks in this 2-CD pack. Separated into the "Body System" and the "Spirit System", the crisp and clear guided meditation tracks are accompanied by the relaxing sounds of Nature and ethereal music. Includes a users' manual in Chinese for better understanding of the meditative practice. Retail at \$23.90 at Awareness Place stores.



iDharma

Calm-Mind Creations
Free

If you are looking for a mobile phone app that contains Buddhist Sutras, you can consider installing iDharma. This is a handy app to browse through, as you wait for the next bus or train, and reflect on the Buddha's teachings from a collection of Theravada and Mahayana Sutras, courtesy of various Buddhist organisations. Presently, the app consists of Paritta Sutta (Book of Protection), Dhammapada, Vajra Prajna Paramita Sutra (Diamond Sutra), Prajna Paramita Heart Sutra and Satipatthana Sutta. The developer said more Buddhist texts would be added in the future. Only available on the iPhone and iPad.



Mind Training

by Buddhist Apps
S\$1.22

If you are into cultivating *Lojong*, a mind training practice in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition that involves refining and purifying one's motivations and attitudes, check out this app. Containing 10 texts related to this practice that was developed in Tibet in the 12th century, this app is most convenient for the practising Vajrayana Buddhist. Only available on Google Play.

There are two persons who are rare in the world.

Which two?

First the one who volunteers to help
others selflessly (*pubbakari*).

And second, the one who is grateful (*katannu*)
and helps in return (*katavedi*).

A good person (*sappurisa*) is grateful (*katannu*)
and helps in return (*katavedi*).

This gratitude, this helping in return is
praised by fine people.

It is entirely the attitude of a good person.

- The Buddha (*Anguttara-nikaya*)

He who had received kindness from others
and then harms them with evil,
this ungrateful person will not attain prosperity.

- The Buddha (*Anguttara-nikaya*)

Endowed with four things a good person is in heaven
as though led and laid there.

With what four?

with bodily right conduct,
with verbal right conduct,
with mental right conduct and
with gratitude and
helping in return (*katannuta, katavedita*).

Endowed with four things a foolish,
unskilled and wicked person
is one who has destroyed his own foundation,
is censurable and blamable by the wise, and
accumulates a lot of demerit (*apunna*)

With what four?

With bodily misconduct,
With verbal misconduct,
With mental misconduct and
With ingratitude and
not helping in return (*akatannuta, akatavedita*).

Endowed with four things a wicked person is in hell
As though led and laid there.

With what four?

With bodily misconduct,
with verbal misconduct,
with mental misconduct and
with ingratitude and
not helping in return (*akatannuta, akatavedita*).

- The Buddha (*Anguttara-nikaya*)





If a person stays in another's house
even for one night and receives food and drinks,
he should not even wish evil for the host.
Gratitude is what is praised by good persons (*sappurisa*).

Whenever prudent people have met a good person
they don't give up his friendship,
nor do they spoil the service done to themselves.
The fools, however, give up the friendship,
and they spoil the service done to themselves.

Even if one would offer the whole earth
to an ungrateful person,
one could not please him.

Even a lot of service towards the fools
is reduced to nothing,
for fools are merely ungrateful.

Gratitude

A Virtue of
Good
Persons

- The Buddha

A service is hopeless from one
who has no gratitude
who does not help in return.
Is ungrateful and apathetic.
His friendship is not won
By the clearest good deed.
One should hastily shun him
With no bitter thought and angry word.

The wise ones indeed don't give up the friendship,
Nor do they spoil the service done to themselves.
Even a slight service towards themselves
Is not disowned,
For the wise ones are full of gratitude.

05
MAY08
AUG

Calendar of Events

DHARMA

Ceremony | Prayers

• 3 Refuges & 5 Precepts Ceremony

Taking refuge is opening the door of the Buddha's teaching by accepting the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha, while precepts help one to develop mindfulness by following the basic guidelines of moral conduct given.

Jul | Sun | 12.30pm – 2.30pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form
Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspks.org

• Ullambana Prayer Festival

An act of filial piety to express gratitude to deceased parents as well as to liberate the sufferings of sentient beings in the three lower realms.

10 Aug | Sun

Venue : KMSPKS

Tablet Booking : \$100 & \$50

Registration : 12 Jun onwards till registration is full

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | 6849 5333

Talks | Workshops | Courses

• English Buddhism Course Year 1 Mod 2 – Introduction of Buddhist Observances and the Triple Gem | *By Venerable*

22 May – 24 Jul | Thu | 7.30pm – 9pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom 9

• English Buddhism Course Year 2 Mod 2 – Tracking the development of Buddhism | *By Venerable*

19 May – 21 Jul | Mon | 7.30pm – 9pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom 9

• English Buddhist Sutra Class (Medicine Buddha Sutra) Mod 2 | *By Venerable*

A well-known scripture in Mahayana Buddhism that lays an important foundation in the cultivation of Medicine Buddha practice.

22 May – 10 Jul | Thu | 7.30pm – 9pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom 5

• English Dharma Talk Series 2: Heart Sutra | *By Venerable*

The Heart Sutra is the shortest sutra with 260 Chinese characters, expounding deep and profound teachings of Emptiness as taught by the Buddha.

6 Jul – 14 Sep | Sun | 4pm – 6pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom 5

Fee : \$40

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspks.org

• Public Talk on Ullambana Prayer | *By Venerable*

Understanding the Ullambana Festival and its meaning.

Jul | Sat | 9am – 11am

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom 9

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspks.org

• 3 Refuges & 5 Precepts Preparatory Course

Understand the meaning of taking refuge and precepts

Jul | Sun | 9.30am – 11pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 Classroom

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspks.org

• Professor Cheng Chen-Huang Workshop

16 – 17 Aug | Sat & Sun | 9.30am – 5pm

Venue : APWBC

Fee : \$60 (2 days)

Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspks.org

• English Dharma Talk 'An Overview of Dependent Origination

Bro Yick Keng Hang

Thurs Aug 21 | 7.30pm to 9pm

Venue : APWBC

Fee : Admission via Ticket

(nominal donation \$2 per pax)

Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspks.org

MEDITATION | RETREAT

• Walk in Self-Meditation

Take an hour break during lunch to meditate and rejuvenate mind and body

7 May – 27 Aug | Wed | 12.30pm – 1.30pm

Venue : APWBC

Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspks.org

• Meditation Group Practice

A weekly meditation practice for all

8 Jan – 12 Nov | Wed | 7.30pm – 9pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form

• Mindfulness of Breathing Meditation Class 2 | *By Venerable*

Meditation through mindfulness of breath to develop awareness, mindfulness and concentration

19 May – 21 Jul | Mon | 7.30pm – 9pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form

Fee : \$40

• Mindfulness Retreat by Plum Village – "The Pure Land in the Here and Now" | *By Venerable*

A retreat led by delegates from Plum Village under the tradition of *Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh*.

4 – 8 Jun | Wed – Sun

Venue : KMSPKS

Fee : \$150

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspks.org



• Urban Retreat (Observance of 8 Precepts) | *By Venerable*

A weekend retreat on observing the 8 precepts.

20 – 22 Jun | Fri – Sun

Venue : KMSPKS

Fee : \$30

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspks.org



• Monkhood Novitiate Programme

Experience a 10-day monastic life, and to cultivate compassion and wisdom for inner joy and peace.

19 – 28 Dec | 10 days programme

Venue : KMSPKS

Fee : \$120

Enquiry : 6849 5300 or sem@kmspks.org

YOUTH

Dharma

• Sunday Puja & Dialogue

A weekly Sunday puja designed to facilitate the learning and understanding of Dharma through devotional chanting practices, short meditation session and dialogue with Ven. Chuan Guan.

Every Sun | 1pm – 3pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom 5

• Y Guide

A bi-monthly guided temple trail introducing Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery's history, unique architectural styles and introduction of Buddhism. (Conducted in English and Chinese)

12 Aug | Mon | 8pm

Venue : KMSPKS

Lifestyle

• Y Talk

Talks on self-improvement and self-help as speakers share their life experiences that might be useful to young adults and professionals.

Every 2nd & 4th Thu | 7.30pm – 9pm

Venue : APWBC

Enquiry : 6849 5345 | youth@kmspks.org

Arts

• Zen Drum

An arts activity that helps one to cultivate concentration and coordination of the mind and body as one focuses on the beating of drum.

Zen Drum Ensemble

3 May – 30 Aug | Sat | 4pm – 5.30pm

Zen Drum Class (Adult)

3 May – 30 Aug | Sat | 1.30pm – 3.30pm

Zen Drum Holiday Program

8, 15 & 22 June | Sun | 9.30am – 11.30pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Music Room

Enquiry : 6849 5359 | arts@kmspks.org