



Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery works tirelessly in all areas to benefit all sentient beings. We do our best to skilfully bring the Dharma home to each and everyone.

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Established to sow and nurture the seeds of Buddhahood in our younger generation, it shares the Dharma with the young in a warm, supportive and inspiring environment. Call 6849 5329, visit pkssss.kmspsks.org or e-mail: sundayschool@kmspsks.org to be a Dharma volunteer, or sign up for the school.

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We are situated on the first level of Waterloo Centre (Blk 261 Waterloo Street #01-42), just a 5-minute walk from Bras Basah MRT station.

Our opening hours are 11.30am to 6.00pm daily (Closed on public holidays).
For more information, please visit awarenessplace.com or call 6336 5067.



2014 is coming to an end in a few months' time. It is time for us to reflect as the year draws to a close on the Buddha's teaching of benefiting oneself and others. This means obtaining liberation for yourself and helping others to do the same. These two go hand in hand: when you are helping yourself in the right way and in the right direction, you are benefiting others by setting a good example for them and strengthening your ability to help them; likewise, while helping others you are benefiting yourself by gaining merit from the altruistic act.

Practice and Learning Go Hand In Hand

Thus focus on practising the teachings. Yet even as you spend more time on spiritual practice, you should not stop learning. The importance of learning and applying knowledge and being innovative cannot be emphasised enough. Learning is from the womb to the tomb. The more you know about the Buddha's teachings, the wiser you will become and the more people you can help.

As you continue to learn and apply your knowledge, do not forget to seek guidance from those who are able to give it, and also be prepared to give generously of your knowledge and experience to mentor others. In this way you benefit others and make the world a better place.

As part of one's self-cultivation, perfecting morality is of paramount importance. Being a Buddhist, one should be kind, friendly, modest and humble, calm and reasonable. One should guard against mental impurities such as greed, self-centredness, arrogance and aggressiveness because they are the worst character traits for a civilised and educated person.

May the Triple Gem bless you all!

Ven Sik Kwang Sheng

Abbot, Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery

Editor: This message is an excerpt of the speech given by Ven Kwang Sheng at the Buddhist College of Singapore's Graduation Ceremony held in May this year.



This year, the Chinese "Hungry Ghost Month" began on 27 July and ended on 24 August 2014. Many believe that this is the month where the dead roam the earth and cause misfortune to the living, and it is a Chinese festival rife with superstitious practices. What is the real significance and meaning of the "Hungry Ghost Month" or what Buddhists call Ullambana? Read the clarification given by Ven Shi Ren Xu on page 54 for a better understanding of the origin of this Chinese festival.

For those who are wondering if the hell and hungry ghost realms are merely creations of the mind, read page 40 and also the short story on page 64.

The Buddha talked about the unskillfulness of greed and attachment on many occasions (pg 70 & 71). On page 48, Ven Phra Chun Kiang explains what constitutes greed and miserliness, or the hungry ghost mentality and its destructiveness. Flip to page 59 for a true-life account of the harms of greed and how greed can destroy an entire family's happiness. Then contemplate on the reflection penned by Ng Pei Fuen on the seventh month (pg 60) and on how our vision of the world can be clouded by our perceptions, values and ignorance (pg 62).

Nonetheless, we can purify our minds of these defilements (pg 52 & 63). Through learning, contemplation and meditation (pg 38), we can achieve inner purity and spiritual freedom.

Ven Shi Fa Xun talks about the transformation she witnessed in kids after they have learnt and practised simple mindfulness techniques (pg 44). This inspiring transformation is also echoed in the documentary *Room to Breathe* (pg 68). So learn and teach your kids the mindfulness tip featured on page 47. Join one of our meditation classes (pg 72) or read the recommended books on page 68 for a headstart to cultivate mindfulness.

May all beings be well and happy!

What is the real significance and meaning of Ullambana?

Yours in the Dharma,
Sister Esther Thien



Q: Sometimes we hear others say, “Okay, animals exist but the hell and hungry ghost realms?” Are the lower realms a creation of the mind? How can we make sense of them? – S.B.

A: There are three different kinds of phenomena. Manifest phenomena are the ones we can contact directly with our senses, like a table and animals that we can see. Hidden phenomena are things that we understand through inference or logic, and only later do we realise it with direct perception. Extremely hidden phenomena are things we come to understand through accepting somebody else’s word on it because that person is very knowledgeable and has no reason at all to deceive us.

The realms of hell beings and hungry ghosts might be manifest phenomena for the beings living inside such realms. But for us, they are extremely hidden and we have to rely on the word of somebody else to understand them and then keep checking to see if the existence of such realms makes sense for us. If the Buddha has touched your heart in some way and his words have seemed true to you, then this gives you a little bit more space in the mind to consider the existence of such lower realms that you can’t see.

The different realms of existence arise dependently. The lower realms come into existence because the cause for them exists. The cause is negative action. Our personal negative action is what creates our rebirth inside the hell and hungry ghost realms. So in some ways they are definitely created by the mind. Our actions are what propel us to take that kind of rebirth.

Shantideva, a great Indian sage once said, “By whom were the weapons of hell zealously forged? Who made the burning iron ground and whence did the conflagration come? The Buddha taught that all these stem from the evil mind, there’s nothing to be feared in the three realms apart from the mind.”

If it’s our own mind that creates our existence in the lower realms, how does that happen and arise? Recall a time when you were really paranoid and very fearful, terrified, so freaked out and frightened that there was a lot of anger too. Recall a time in your life when you were like that, and imagine getting stuck in that mental state, so stuck in that fearful, paranoid, angry mental state that everything you saw, you saw through that filter. If that mental state began to manifest externally, as your environment and as your body, that would be what the hellish realm is like.

The experience is so intensified that it determines how everything appears to you. For instance, if somebody has a very disturbed mind, even though nobody else is trying to harm him, he sees harm everywhere. Even though there is no danger, he is terrified. Just imagine the mind becoming so exaggerated and huge that it turns into the environment and body. So even if someone takes him out of that environment and places him in a safe place, he’d still see things exactly the same way, because his mind is completely stuck.

Or recall a time in your life when your mind was completely obsessed, when you had so much craving and clinging, and wanted something you didn’t have so badly that you couldn’t function because your mind was totally stuck. This could happen, for example, when relationships break up. The mind is just completely stuck on the other person and you cannot think about anything else, because there’s so much clinging, attachment and frustration. Now imagine again, having this mental state grow so large that it becomes your environment and body. Your whole life experience is one of such immense clinging that it is continuously frustrating. Everything you want just evades you, and your mind is completely obsessed. This is the realm of the hungry ghosts.

When we contemplate and meditate about the lower realms, it increases our mindfulness to stop destructive behavioural patterns, so that we make our lives meaningful right now. Understanding these kinds of sufferings and other types of rebirth gives us tremendous impetus to purify our minds and to stop following our continual destructive behavioural patterns. Doing so protects us from sufferings in the future and transforms our minds.

Are the **hell** and **hungry ghost**

realms a creation of the mind?

Imagine instead of developing loving-kindness, patience, generosity and wisdom, we develop our anger, jealousy, pride and attachment. What happens? Our mental state will degenerate. It would be really illogical to think, “Oh yes, yes, my mind can become a Buddha’s but it can’t become an animal’s or it can’t become a hungry ghost’s.” What we become is completely dependent on our mental states, our mental habits, and on the kind of qualities we cultivate. We can cultivate the good qualities or we can just let the bad qualities run the show. It’s completely up to us: our whole experience that follows is a result of our own mental states.

Our mental states do affect our body, even in this human body of ours. The mind and body are connected. Hence if we let the mind go in whichever direction it wants, our body in this life will also go in the corresponding direction, and so will our body in the next life. Conversely, if we take the time to develop loving-kindness and patience now, our body will be affected in this life. Studies have shown that people are healed from diseases much more rapidly if they have positive mental states. So one’s mental state does affect one’s body in this life, and will affect one’s body in future lives. ☺

- Ven Thubten Chodron



A Night of Glorious Music for Charity

Singapore – Buddhist and non-Buddhists enjoyed a memorable night of enchanting orchestral music at the Esplanade Concert Hall on 27 June 2014. A charity fundraiser for the Singapore Buddhist Free Clinic, the concert titled The Yellow River Cantata featured the Xiamen University Symphony Orchestra and Chorus with special appearances by Venerable Sik Kwang Sheng, Abbot of Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery (KMSPKS) and Iskandar Ismail, one of Singapore's most illustrious musicians. Venerable Kwang Sheng composed and performed the magnificent musical pieces Garuda and Smiling Heart, which were also the opening and closing acts of the concert.

The highlight of the night was The Butterfly Lovers Concerto, an orchestral adaptation of the well-known, beloved Chinese legend. Separated into distinct sections, each tells a different part of the tragic love story. Some of the heart-wrenching melodies come from Chinese opera or from traditional Chinese folk songs. The solo violin of the concerto is symbolic of Zhu Yingtai, the story's protagonist, and the erhu part is symbolic of Liang Shanbo, her lover.

The Singapore Buddhist Free Clinic was established 45 years ago. Founded in 1969 by Venerable Sik Siong Khye and the previous Abbot of KMSPKS Venerable Sik Hong Choon, the Clinic has provided quality medical services in the spirit of compassion to the poor and needy for decades. The Clinic also set up a Cancer Treatment Centre in 2012 to assist the destitute stricken with cancer. Since its formation, it has helped 90,000 cancer patients, with more than 36% receiving free medical treatment. In view of the huge financial resources needed for its operation, KMSPKS has been helping to raise funds for the Clinic. Last year's charity concert successfully raised \$1,071,914.58. This year, the concert garnered approximately S\$2.35 million for the Clinic.

text: Esther Thien

The Third Graduation Ceremony of Buddhist College of Singapore, and Other Developments

Singapore – Another 27 graduates completed their studies at the Buddhist College of Singapore (BCS) and received their degrees on 24 May this year. A graduation ceremony, graced by more than 500 local and overseas guests, was held at Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery (KMSPKS). In his speech, Abbot of KMSPKS and founder of Singapore Buddhist College of Singapore, Venerable Kwang Sheng encouraged the graduates to constantly learn and actively practise the Dharma for the benefit of sentient beings. There were performances at the ceremony including Zen Drumming and Guzheng, and a special performance by the graduates led by Venerable Kwang Sheng to sing "Smiling Heart." The ceremony ended with group photos and a sumptuous vegetarian lunch. Separately, 20 graduates from the BCS Year 2009 batch went to Thailand to attend a graduation ceremony on 18 May 2014. The ceremony was attended by 5,000 graduates from Thailand, Sri Lanka, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan who received their Bachelor, Master and PhD certifications. The grand ceremony was graced by over 10,000 guests with numerous group photos taken to commemorate the event. The BCS is also expanding its reach and has admitted students from Cambodia and Sri Lanka, aside from China this year. A total of 51 students from these countries and other non-Chinese nationalities have been admitted into the Bachelor Programme of 2014. Students who are enrolled into the Bachelor's programme are required to take an admission examination, administered by the teaching Sangha of the BCS.

Additionally, female laypersons keen to receive ordination as Buddhist nuns can now have a taste of monastic life come October, when the BCS conducts its inaugural basic monastic training course for females. The basic monastic training course for females is a two-year full-time foundation course catered specifically to lay females seeking ordination as Buddhist nuns. Conducted in Mandarin, trainees will learn the moral characteristics and fundamental precepts of a monastic in order to fulfil the basic requirements of becoming a Buddhist nun. Singaporean, Malaysian or Chinese female laypersons who are single, can converse in Mandarin, have O-level education and are between 18 and 40 years old are welcome to apply. Candidates will be selected after they are interviewed. Female trainees will be housed at the Poh Ern Shih temple, off Pasir Panjang Road. Accommodation and course fees will be entirely borne by the College. Upon completion, the College will recommend trainees to local nunneries for ordination. Those who are interested to continue learning Buddhism may also apply for the 4-year Chinese or English Bachelor of Arts courses conducted by the BCS.

text: Chang Wei Si & Esther Thien



Running out of ideas for your kids' lunchboxes?
Delight your children with our nutritious yet *kawaii* recipes!



Asian Rice Burger 米饭汉堡包

Ingredients:

- ¼ - 1 cup of cooked sushi rice
- sesame oil for frying
- 1 piece of 6x6cm nori
- 1 serving of Kinpira Gobo (or any vegetarian burger patty of your choice)
- Cling wrap



Kinpira Gobo 日式炒牛蒡丝 (Vegetarian patty for rice burger)

Ingredients:

- 1 small carrot, peeled and cut into thin strips
- 1 burdock root
- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- 2 tbsp mirin
- 1/2 cup of water or vegetarian stock
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tbsp sugar
- some chopped red chilli (optional)
- Some toasted sesame seeds to garnish

Method:

1. Peel the skin of the burdock root and cut into thin strips. Soak the burdock root in water for 10 minutes and drain well.
2. Heat the sesame oil in a frying pan and add the carrot and burdock root. Stir fry for about 2-3 minutes.
3. Add mirin, water or vegetarian stock, soy sauce and sugar. Stir fry until the liquid has almost dried out. Turn off the heat. Sprinkle some sesame seeds and serve.

材料:

- 胡萝卜1根, 去皮切成细条
- 牛蒡1根
- 麻油1汤匙
- 料酒2汤匙
- 水或素上汤1/2杯
- 酱油1汤匙
- 糖1汤匙
- 烤香的芝麻适量



做法:

1. 将牛蒡根去皮, 切成细条, 然后浸泡在水里面约10分钟, 沥干。
2. 热锅后加入麻油, 胡萝卜和牛蒡, 炒2-3分钟。
3. 加入料酒, 水或素上汤, 酱油和糖, 搅拌至酱汁浓稠。关火备用。



Method:

1. Divide the rice into two portions. Place the first portion on a cling wrap. Wrap it tightly and shape it into a bun. Do the same for the second portion of the rice.
2. Heat the sesame oil in a frying pan, gently place the rice buns in the pan and cook on both sides until crispy and golden. You may want to brush some soy sauce on both sides of the buns for extra flavour.
3. Assemble the rice burger by placing the nori sheet on top of a rice bun, followed by Kinpira Gobo or vegetarian patty of your choice. Finally place the other rice bun on top.

Tip: To make the rice burger more attractive, use some sushi rice to make ears and nose of a bear, and use nori to cut out the eyes and nose. Place them on the top of the burger to turn it into a cute bear rice burger.

材料:

- 煮熟的寿司饭¼-1杯
- 麻油少许
- 6x6cm 紫菜1片
- 日式炒牛蒡丝1份 (或任何素食汉堡肉饼)
- 保鲜膜1张



做法:

1. 将寿司饭分为两份。将第一份放在保鲜膜上, 紧紧包裹住, 然后塑造成一片圆形。然后用相同的步骤, 将第二部份的寿司饭塑造成一片圆形。
2. 热锅后, 加入麻油, 轻轻地将饭团放入锅里, 煎两侧。
3. 放一片紫菜在煎好的饭团上, 再加上一份日式炒牛蒡丝或任何素食汉堡肉饼, 最后放上另一片饭团, 米饭汉堡包完成。

Recipes courtesy of Hui Ping.
Please visit instagram account @hpbento or facebook.com/hpbentoveg for more interesting ideas.

The Voice of a Singaporean Buddhist Nun

Receiving full ordination in 1993, Ven Shi Faxun is a Singaporean who is the youngest in a family of eight and the only child who had the privilege of attending an English school. She speaks to Esther Thien on what it was like to sail in uncharted waters by becoming a Buddhist nun in her quest for liberation.

Awaken: Venerable, please tell us more about your childhood and your encounter with Buddhism.

Venerable: My parents were migrants from China. I was born the youngest in a family of eight and the only child of the family to be sent to an English school. I can still remember how worried my father was at that time. He feared that the influence of Westernisation and Christianity would disrupt the family, and he would have no one to carry the joss stick. Though most of my classmates were Christians, none was able to influence me. Even as a child, I had strong faith in Buddhism though I knew nothing about the Dharma then. I always feel connected and really happy when visiting Buddhist temples or encountering monastics. It must be my karmic affinity with the Triple Gem, and it seems I'm searching for the unfinished path that I carried over from a past life.

During my poly years, I encountered Buddhism and joined the Buddhist Society. The teachings inspired and transformed my life.

Awaken: How has learning and practising the Buddha's teachings changed your life?

Venerable: Like many youngsters growing up in Singapore, I was pretty materialistic. I strove hard for my certs believing that education would be my ticket to success and happiness. The teachings of the Buddha provided me with an alternative way of looking at life. The teaching of impermanence in particular resonated with me. "Since life is impermanent and upon death I can't bring anything along with me, aren't I chasing after something I'm going to lose ultimately?" I reasoned. **Worldly achievement appeared to me transient and illusionary and a conventional lifestyle seemed ultimately meaningless.** "Surely, life is more than just earning a degree, building a career, climbing the social ladder and making money, raising a family, growing old and dying?" I asked. The Buddha's teachings offered me the possibility to redirect myself towards altruism, which benefits not just oneself but also others. My spiritual cultivation will give purpose and meaning to life, and I realised then there is another path in life, a path that will lead us to happiness and ultimately liberation.

Awaken: How was life like after your ordination as a monastic?

Venerable: I was ordained as a novice in 1992 by Venerable Wu Yin of Luminary Bhikkhuni Sangha and received full ordination in 1994. I went through five years of monastic training in Taiwan where I studied the classical texts, and learned to be a better person - a sangha that is worthy of respect. In 1997, I returned to Singapore to teach others. Then in 2001, I left Singapore to pursue a Bachelor of Arts and Education at the University of Western Australia. In 2008, I did my Honours in Arts degree, using the feminist perspective to discuss the true meaning of nunhood. In 2013, I pursued a Master of Arts course in Applied Buddhist Studies and did a research paper on Mindfulness in Education. By adopting a more scientific approach, the study sought to explore the impact of mindfulness on children's academic achievement and well-being.

I developed a trial programme for a primary school in Singapore. The results showed meditation practice supported 10-year-old children's academic achievement, well-being and character development. The children were able to apply the simple mindfulness skills that they had learnt through this course beyond their classroom. For instance, they recounted that unlike in the past when they would continue to play computer games, they were now able to sit quietly in a corner when they were tired. The kids were also able to come back to their breathing when negative emotions such as anger or stress arise.

Awaken: Greed is strongly advocated in our increasingly materialistic world, and promoted in all aspects of our modern life. Yet it is also one of the three poisons that the Buddha cautioned about that will bring about grave negative consequences for one. Could you share with us your thoughts and views on this?

Venerable: We must accept the reality that we are living in a consumerist and materialistic world. We are constantly bombarded with advertisements that fan our greed. In fact, we have been brought up to believe that to be happy we need to “own” and “consume”. Society is so accustomed to consumption that if we ask people to let go they may turn a deaf ear. However, if we promote the practice of mindfulness and let them experience peace in a personal and direct manner, they will then realise that they do not need to rely on consuming or acquiring material goods to be happy. In this way, we can then bring the Dharma to them.

Awaken: Could you tell us more about your work at the BCS Nuns College and the Basic Monastic Training Course (BMTC)?

Venerable: My role at the Nuns College is to oversee the whole operation of the college, to provide proper training for women sincerely walking this ancient path. The BMTC is developed to help women who are genuine about walking the Buddha’s path. The transition from a layperson to nunhood is often complex. This programme charts a slow and steady path. It helps one to take it step by step, to truly understand one’s goal and commitment before taking the vow. It also serves as a probationary period for one to assess if she is ready to go forth. This programme provides basic training such as understanding the core teachings of the Buddha and inculcating the right view and understanding in becoming a nun. They will also learn some basic Buddhist etiquette as well as the basic *Sramaneri* vows.

Awaken: What are some of the issues and problems concerning materialism that you might foresee in training future nuns?

Venerable: Our society is so used to materialism that we measure results in a material way – grades, certs etc. True Dharma knowledge comes from within; it is acquired through one’s direct experience and realisation from truly practising the teachings rather than scoring in tests and exams. However, most are so accustomed to grasping the external and tangible (in this case, certificates) that they forget the importance of inner cultivation. Also, as we are living in a consumerist society, the trainees need to put in extra effort to work against their greed. ☺

Meditation is just like watching a play. No matter how involved you become in the plot, no matter how much you care about the characters, you don’t climb up on stage to help them out of whatever mess they might be in; you stay in your seat and watch. This is similar to how we monitor the activities in our minds and bodies when we meditate. We experience them and are touched by them much in the same way we experience and are touched by a play, participating in the experience without becoming enmeshed in the drama.

This is an important distinction when using mindfulness to help manage difficult emotions, that pre-adolescents and teenagers can understand and use in their life.

The first step of the scientific method is observation, and like good scientists, when practising mindfulness, we start by observing life experience with an open and curious mind. One activity that helps kids learn this skill is the *Hello Game*.

HELLO GAME

The *Hello Game* teaches awareness of present experience, while instilling confidence, respect and a sense of teamwork.

1. In this simple game, children are seated in a circle. They then take turns, turning to their neighbour to say hello and note the colour of his or her eyes by saying for example, “Good morning, your eyes look brown.”
2. The greeting “Your eyes *look* brown” rather than “your eyes *are* brown” reinforces the objective of observing rather than analysing.
3. The objective is to notice and say out loud what the other person’s eyes *look like* to you, which may or may not be what they *look like* to someone else, or even to the person whose eyes you are describing.
4. Through this game, kids emphasise the process of observation rather than the object being observed, and the difference between describing what they see and drawing a conclusion. ☺

Meditation

is Like Watching a Play

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

Greed and miserliness

What is greed and miserliness? The *Saleyrika Sutta* states clearly that the various manifestations of the unwholesome qualities of greed and miserliness through body, speech and mind create the conditions for one to enter a bad rebirth such as the realms of the hungry ghost or even hell:

Unskilful Bodily Actions

“And how are there three sorts of un-Dhamma conduct, dissonant conduct with the body?”

“There is the case where a certain person takes life, is brutal, bloody-handed, devoted to killing and slaying, showing no mercy to living beings.

“He takes what is not given. He takes, in the manner of a thief, things in a village or a wilderness that belong to others and have not been given by them.

In this feature, Ven Phra Chun Kiang explains what constitutes greed and miserliness, or the hungry ghost mentality.

The Hungry Ghost Mentality

“He engages in sensual misconduct. He gets sexually involved with those who are protected by their mothers, their fathers, their brothers, their sisters, their relatives, or their Dhamma; those with husbands, those who entail punishments, or even those crowned with flowers by other men.

“This is how there are three sorts of un-Dhamma conduct, dissonant conduct with the body.

Unskilful Verbal Actions

“And how are there four sorts of un-Dhamma conduct, dissonant conduct with speech?”

“There is the case where a certain person engages in false speech. When he has been called to a town meeting, a group meeting, a gathering of his relatives, his guild, or by the royalty [i.e., a royal court proceeding], if he is asked as a witness: ‘Come and tell, good man, what you know’: If he doesn’t know, he says, ‘I know.’ If he does know, he says, ‘I don’t know.’ If he hasn’t seen, he says, ‘I have seen.’ If he has seen, he says, ‘I haven’t seen.’ Thus he consciously tells lies for his own sake, for the sake of another, or for the sake of a certain reward.

“He engages in divisive speech. What he has heard here he tells there to break apart those people from these people here. What he has heard there he tells here to break apart these people from those people there. Thus breaking apart those who are united and stirring up strife between those who have broken apart, he loves factionalism, delights in factionalism, enjoys factionalism, and creates factionalism through his speech.

“He engages in abusive speech. He speaks words that are harsh, cutting, bitter to others, abusive of others, provoking anger and destroying concentration.

“He engages in idle chatter. He speaks out of season, speaks what isn’t factual, what isn’t in accordance with the goal, the Dhamma, and the Vinaya, words that are not worth treasuring.

“This is how there are four sorts of un-Dhamma conduct, dissonant conduct with speech.

Unskilful Mental Actions

“And how are there three sorts of un-Dhamma conduct, dissonant conduct with the mind?”

“There is the case where a certain person is covetous. He covets the belongings of others, thinking: ‘O, that what belongs to others would be mine!’

“He bears ill will, corrupt in the resolves of his heart: ‘May these beings be killed or cut apart or crushed or destroyed, or may they not exist at all!’

“He has wrong view, is warped in the way he sees things: ‘There is nothing given, nothing offered, nothing sacrificed. There is no fruit or result of good or bad actions. There is no this world, no next world, no mother, no father, no spontaneously reborn beings; no contemplatives or brahmins who, faring rightly and practising rightly, proclaim this world and the next after having directly known and realised it for themselves.’

“This is how there are three sorts of un-Dhamma conduct, dissonant conduct with the mind.

“It’s by reason of this un-Dhamma conduct and dissonant conduct that some beings here, with the break-up of the body, after death, re-appear in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell.

< *"Householders, there are three sorts of Dhamma conduct, harmonious conduct with the body; four sorts of Dhamma conduct, harmonious conduct with speech; and three sorts of Dhamma conduct, harmonious conduct with the mind.*

Life of a hungry ghost

And what is life like living as a hungry ghost? In the *Tirokudda Kanda*, the Buddha describes the prison-like state of the hungry ghost realm whereby the hungry ghosts can only receive food and merits dedicated to them only from their relatives:

*Outside the walls they stand,
and at crossroads.*

At door posts they stand,

returning to their old homes.

*But when a meal with plentiful food and drink is served,
no one remembers them:*

Such is the kamma of living beings.

*Thus those who feel sympathy for their dead relatives
give timely donations of proper food and drink
— exquisite, clean —*

[thinking:] "May this be for our relatives.

May our relatives be happy!"

*And those who have gathered there,
the assembled shades of the relatives,
with appreciation give their blessing
for the plentiful food and drink:*

"May our relatives live long

because of whom we have gained [this gift].

We have been honoured,

and the donors are not without reward!"

*For there [in their realm] there's
no farming,
no herding of cattle,
no commerce,
no trading with money.
They live on what is given here,
hungry shades
whose time here is done.*

*As water raining on a hill
flows down to the valley,
even so does what is given here
benefit the dead.*

*As rivers full of water
fill the ocean full,
even so does what is given here
benefit the dead.*

*"He gave to me, she acted on my behalf,
they were my relatives, companions, friends":*

*Offerings should be given for the dead
when one reflects thus
on things done in the past.*

For no weeping,

no sorrowing

no other lamentation

benefits the dead

whose relatives persist in such way.

*But when this offering is given,
well-placed in the Sangha,*

it works for their long-term benefit

and they profit immediately.

In this way

the proper duty to relatives has been shown,

great honour has been done to the dead,

and monks have been given strength.

*The merit you've acquired
isn't small.*

More beings in the lower realms

So what is the rough statistical proportion of beings reborn in bad destinations? In the *Pansu Suttas* the Buddha describes the situation to the monks:

"Then the Blessed One, picking up a little bit of dust with the tip of his fingernail, said to the monks, What do you think, monks? Which is greater: the little bit of dust I have picked up with the tip of my fingernail, or the great earth?"

"The great earth is far greater, Lord. The little bit of dust the Blessed One has picked up with the tip of his fingernail is next to nothing. It doesn't even count. It's no comparison. It's not even a fraction -- this little bit of dust the Blessed One has picked up with the tip of his fingernail -- when compared with the great earth.

"In the same way, monks, few are the beings who, on passing away from the human realm, are reborn among human beings. Far more are the beings who, on passing away from the human realm, are reborn in the animal womb... in the domain of the hungry ghosts.

"Therefore your duty is the contemplation: 'This is stress... This is the origination of stress... This is the cessation of stress.' Your duty is the contemplation, 'This is the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress.'" ◉

References : Accesstoinsight.org

Venerable Phra Chun Kiang took his Three Refuges and Five Precepts from Khen Rinpoche at Amitabha Buddhist Centre. When studying at the Singapore Polytechnic, he held the position of Publications Secretary and President of its Buddhist Society. He was a volunteer teacher at Kong Meng San Phor Kar See Monastery's Saturday Sunday School for two years.

In 2008, he received higher ordination into the Thai Dhammayut tradition at Santi Forest Monastery in Johor, Malaysia.

An ancient maxim found in the *Dhammapada* sums up the practice of the Buddha's teaching in three simple guidelines to training: to abstain from all evil, to cultivate good, and to purify one's mind. These three principles form a graded sequence of steps progressing from the outward and preparatory to the inward and essential. Each step leads naturally into the one that follows it, and the culmination of the three in purification of mind makes it plain that the heart of Buddhist practice is to be found here.

Purification of mind as understood in the Buddha's teaching is the sustained endeavour to cleanse the mind of defilements, those dark unwholesome mental forces which run beneath the surface stream of consciousness vitiating our thinking, values, attitudes and actions.

The chief among the defilements are the three that the Buddha has termed the "roots of evil" — greed, hatred and delusion — from which emerge their numerous offshoots and variants: anger and cruelty, avarice and envy, conceit and arrogance, hypocrisy and vanity, the multitude of erroneous views.

Contemporary attitudes do not look favourably upon such notions as defilement and purity, and on first encounter they may strike us as throwbacks to an outdated moralism, valid perhaps in an era when prudery and taboo were dominant, but having no claims upon us emancipated torchbearers of modernity. Admittedly, we do not all wallow in the mire of gross materialism and many among us seek our enlightenments and spiritual highs, but we want them on our own terms, and as heirs of the new freedom we believe they are to be won through an unbridled quest for experience without any special need for introspection, personal change or self-control.

However, in the Buddha's teaching the criterion of genuine enlightenment lies precisely in purity of mind.



Purification of Mind

text: Bhikkhu Bodhi

The purpose of all insight and enlightened understanding is to liberate the mind from the defilements, and Nirvana itself, the goal of the teaching, is defined quite clearly as freedom from greed, hatred and delusion. From the perspective of the Dharma, defilement and purity are not mere postulates of a rigid authoritarian moralism but real and solid facts essential to a correct understanding of the human situation in the world.

As facts of lived experience, defilement and purity pose a vital distinction having a crucial significance for those who seek deliverance from suffering. They represent the two points between which the path to liberation unfolds — the former its problematic and starting point, the latter its resolution and end.

The defilements, the Buddha declares, lie at the bottom of all human suffering. Burning within as lust and craving, as rage and resentment, they lay to waste hearts, lives, hopes and civilisations, and drive us blind and thirsty through the round of birth and death. The Buddha describes the defilements as bonds, fetters, hindrances and knots; thence the path to unbonding, release and liberation, to untying the knots, is at the same time a discipline aimed at inward cleansing.

The work of purification must be undertaken in the same place where the defilements arise, in the mind itself, and the main method the Dharma offers for purifying the mind is meditation.

Meditation, in the Buddhist training, is neither a quest for self-effusive ecstasies nor a technique of home-applied psychotherapy, but a carefully devised method of mental development — theoretically precise and practically efficient — for attaining inner purity and spiritual freedom. The principal tools of Buddhist meditation are the core wholesome mental factors of energy, mindfulness, concentration, and understanding. But in the systematic practice of meditation, these are strengthened and yoked together in a programme of self-purification which aims at extirpating the defilements root and branch so that not even the subtlest unwholesome stirrings remain.

Since all defiled states of consciousness are born from ignorance, the most deeply embedded defilement, the final and ultimate purification of mind is to be accomplished through the instrumentality of wisdom, the knowledge and vision of things as they really are. Wisdom, however, does not arise through chance or random good intentions, but only in a purified mind. Thus in order for wisdom to come forth and accomplish the ultimate purification through the eradication of defilements, we first have to create a space for it by developing a provisional purification of mind — a purification which, though temporary and vulnerable, is still indispensable as a foundation for the emergence of all liberative insight.

The achievement of this preparatory purification of mind begins with the challenge of self-understanding. To eliminate defilements we must first learn to know them, to detect them at work infiltrating and dominating our everyday thoughts and lives. For countless eons we have acted on the spur of greed, hatred and delusion, and thus the work of self-purification cannot be executed hastily, in obedience to our demand for quick results. The task requires patience, care and persistence — and the Buddha's crystal clear instructions. For every defilement the Buddha in his compassion has given us the antidote, the method to emerge from it and vanquish it. By learning these principles and applying them properly, we can gradually wear away the most stubborn inner stains and reach the end of suffering, the "taintless liberation of the mind". ☺

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The Real Significance and Meaning of Ullambana

text: Ven Shi Ren Xu

The *Ullambana Sutra* is a Mahayana Sutra which consists of a brief discourse given by Lord Buddha Shakyamuni principally to one of his chief disciples, Venerable Maudgalyayana, on the practice of filial piety. The origin Sutra was in Sanskrit, and it means “deliverance from suffering”. The Sutra was later translated into Chinese by Venerable Dharmarakasha.

In this Sutra, the Buddha instructed Venerable Maudgalyayana on how to obtain liberation for his mother, who had been reborn into a lower realm, by making food offerings to the Sangha on the 15th day of the seventh month. This day is often known as the Buddha's joyful day and the

day of rejoice for monks. This is because when the Buddha was alive, all of his disciples meditated in the forests during the rainy season in summer. Three months later, on the 15th day of the seventh month, they would emerge from the forests to celebrate the completion of their meditation and report their progress to the Buddha. The Buddha was pleased because many monks became enlightened during the rain retreat.

Venerable Maudgalyayana was known for having clairvoyant powers. After he attained arhatship, he thought deeply of his parents, and wondered what happened to them. He used his clairvoyance to see where they were reborn and found his father in the heavenly realms. However, his mother had been reborn in the form of a hungry ghost (*preta*) – a sentient being who could not eat due to its highly thin and fragile throat in which no food could pass through, yet it was always hungry because of its huge belly.

The cause for his mother to be reborn in this form was due to her greed. She had been overly attached to the money Venerable Maudgalyayana's father had left her. Her husband had instructed her to kindly host any Buddhist monks who came her way, but instead she withheld her kindness and the money and did not follow her spouse's instructions. It was for this reason that she was reborn in the realm of hungry ghosts.

As Venerable Maudgalyayana felt deep pity and sadness for his mother, he filled a bowl with food and went to look for his mother. However, as soon as the food was placed in his mother's palms, it immediately turned into burning coals which could not be eaten. Disappointed and helpless, Venerable Maudgalyayana approached the Buddha for help and advice.

He asked the Buddha how he could ease his mother's suffering. The Buddha instructed Venerable Maudgalyayana to place some food on a clean plate, recite a mantra seven times to bless the food, snap his fingers to call out to the deceased and finally tip the food onto clean ground. By doing so, the *preta*'s hunger would be relieved. Through these merits, his mother was subsequently able to be reborn as a dog under the care of a noble family.

Venerable Maudgalyayana then sought the Buddha's advice to help his mother gain a human rebirth. The Buddha told Venerable Maudgalyayana to offer food and robes to 500 bhikkhus on the 15th day. Through the merits created, Venerable Maudgalyayana's mother finally obtained a human rebirth.

After that, he asked the Buddha whether other people could also help their departed relatives by offering alms to the Sangha. The Buddha replied that the same method could be used. This is known as “dedication of merit”. The practice of dedicating merit has been an important practice in Buddhist countries.

On the 15th day of the seventh month, Buddhist monasteries follow the Ullambana traditional ritual of reciting scriptures and distributing food. Recent Ullambana ceremonies have tended to mix the event with folk beliefs. In addition to making offerings to monks, the event now includes making offerings to the departed and the deliverance of ghosts.

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However, the latter practices arise from the folk understanding of deliverance from suffering and the so-called “Ghost Festival (中元节).” Traditional folk beliefs maintain that the gates of hell are opened during this month, and that sentient beings from the ghost realm are set free. These folk practices are somewhat contradictory to the Buddhist ideas of compassion, protection of life, and the prohibition against killing, so the meaning behind the Ghost Festival is actually different from the Buddhist Ullambana ceremony.

Why is The Compassionate Samadhi Water Repentance Puja 慈悲三昧水忏 conducted during Ullambana? What is the Puja about?

The purpose of conducting The Compassion Samadhi Water Repentance Puja is to repent one’s unwholesome deeds. These include the karmic actions done in body, speech and mind, comprising the three misdeeds of the body – killing, stealing and sexual misconduct; four misdeeds of the speech – lying, slandering or divisive speech, idle talk and harsh speech; and three misdeeds of the mind – covetousness, malice and wrong views.

Through repentance, we can eliminate the negative strength or influence of these misdeeds in our mind. The Compassion Samadhi Water Repentance Puja can be conducted not just on Ullambana day, but also on any other day of the year.

We participate in the repentance puja and dedicate the merit to all departed ones for them to be reborn in a good realm. For those who were born in the lower realms, how exactly they would benefit might be hard to measure. If during that time, they come to the occasion and rejoice at the puja and feel great joy, they will gain from it.

Could you tell me more about Yogacara Ulka-mukha Puja 瑜伽焰口?

The Yogacara Ulka-mukha Puja stems from a story related to Venerable Ananda, another chief disciple of the Buddha.

According to the *Ulka-mukha Preta Sutra*, Venerable Ananda once saw the manifestation of Avalokitesvara or Guan Yin Bodhisattva (观音菩萨) as Lord of Hungry Ghosts (面燃大士) while practising meditation in a forest. The Bodhisattva had manifested herself to save all suffering beings in the hungry ghost realm. The Lord of Hungry Ghosts was emaciated in appearance with hideous features. His hair was unkempt; his nails and teeth were long and sharp. His throat was needle-like; its stomach jutted out like a mountain, and flames spurted out of his face.

Venerable Ananda was flabbergasted, and asked about the cause of such frightening rebirth. The Lord told Ananda that he was greedy and miserly while he was alive. Thus upon his death, he descended into the realm of hungry ghosts and transformed into his present form. He further had to endure all kinds of suffering, and year-round starvation.

Moreover, the Lord of Hungry Ghosts informed Ananda that Ananda too would pass away in three days, and would likewise suffer the same destiny. Venerable Ananda was terrified and hurriedly sought the Buddha for help.

Lord Buddha explained The Discourse on the Feeding of Hungry Spirits or Yogacara Ulka-mukha Puja to Ananda and taught him the proper way of bestowing food. If living beings can give food and drink to the infinite number of hungry ghosts and deities, not only will they never descend into the realm of hungry ghosts, they will gain longevity. While being watched over by all spirits and gods, they will have good fortune in every endeavour.

The Yogacara Ulka-mukha Puja (放焰口) is held in accordance to the Sutra, and lasts for three to four hours. Although the service is performed to eradicate the hollow hunger of the hungry ghosts by bestowing food and drink on them, more importantly, it is performed to deliver these beings from all sufferings through the teachings of Lord Buddha.

By listening to the Dharma, the ghosts will then take refuge in Lord Buddha, receive the precepts, and thus cultivate Right View, which will enable them to refrain from negative deeds and their terrifying consequences. Only then will enlightenment be within their grasp.

The humanistic aspect of this puja is two-fold; to cultivate loving compassion amongst the living and to remind them to be faithful and sincere Buddhists and never leave the auspicious boundary of the Buddha and His Teachings. ☺



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The
Harms
of Greed

text: Janice Goh

Since I was seven years old, I have witnessed how greed can really destroy an entire family's happiness.

My youngest auntie was my father's business partner, and she had also invited her other siblings to join her in the business, which lasted for about 20 years.

I understand from my dad, other aunties and uncles that she made a fortune. But she denied it. At the end of every year, her brothers and sisters received only a small amount of profit to be shared among them. They later found out that she had been cheating them for the past 20 years and decided to take legal action against her.

She declared bankruptcy, but not before transferring all her cash and properties to her five children. That was in the late 1970s and I recall that my eldest cousin was only 18 years old then and yet, he already had a few semi-detached houses under his name.

At the age of 49, my auntie suffered from what my family members said was a very rare sickness which has no cure.

Two years later, her husband passed away.

Three of her children suffered from cancer, a mental problem and stroke respectively. The most tragic event happened to her daughter, who committed suicide in her mid-20s because her four elder brothers kept stressing her over wealth issues. ☹

Vincent Teo, aged 50, self-employed



Walking home this evening, I saw heaps of burning incense paper and joss sticks.

The smoke went deep into the nostrils and one had to take extra care to avoid stepping on the offerings. Everywhere, businessmen, housewives, shop owners, the young and old were burning, praying, lighting up...

If the enlightened ones were here, perhaps this is what they would say:

A Seventh Month Reflection

Thig XII.1 (vv. 236-251)

[Punnika*:]

I'm a water-carrier, cold,
always going down to the water
from fear of my mistresses' beatings,
harrassed by their anger and words.
But you, Brahman,
what do you fear
that you're always going down to the water
with shivering limbs, feeling great cold?

[The Brahman:]

Punnika, surely you know.
You're asking one doing skilful kamma
and warding off evil.
Whoever, young or old, does evil kamma
is, through water abluion,
from evil kamma set free.

[Punnika:]

Who taught you this
— the ignorant to the ignorant —
'One, through water abluion,
is from evil kamma set free?'
In that case, they'd all go to heaven:
all the frogs, turtles,
serpents, crocodiles,
and anything else that lives in the water.
Sheep-butchers, pork-butchers,
fishermen, trappers,
thieves, executioners,
and any other evil doers,
would, through water abluion,
be from evil kamma set free.

If these rivers could carry off
the evil kamma you've done in the past,
they'd carry off your merit as well,
and then you'd be
completely left out.
Whatever it is that you fear,
that you're always going down to the water,
don't do it.
Don't let the cold hurt your skin.

[The Brahman:]

I've been following the miserable path,
good lady,
and now you've brought me
back to the noble.
I give you this robe for water-abluion.

[Punnika:]

Let the robe be yours. I don't need it.
If you're afraid of pain,
if you dislike pain,
then don't do any evil kamma,
in open, in secret.
But if you do or will do
any evil kamma,
you'll gain no freedom from pain,
even if you fly up and hurry away.
If you're afraid of pain,
if you dislike pain,
go to the Awakened One for refuge,
go to the Dhamma and Sangha.
Take on the precepts:
That will lead to your liberation.

[The Brahman:]

I go to the Awakened One for refuge;
I go to the Dhamma and Sangha.
I take on the precepts:
That will lead to my liberation.

Before, I was a kinsman to Brahma;
now, truly a brahman.
I'm a three-knowledge man.
consummate in knowledge,
safe and washed clean.

* Punnika, an enlightened nun teaching
a Brahman who believed that washing
in the river would purify him.

Don't let the smoke irritate you Don't let the heat burn you...

If burning incense papers and joss sticks can burn away fear,
then we shouldn't be just burning in the seventh month.
For spirits, ghosts and hell-beings that we fear
are around always; they burn incessantly, continuously
'burning' inside and out because of past wrongdoings.
They are hot enough, do they need more heat?

Knowing this,
do you still want to 'burn' now
and perhaps become a recipient of others' offering in the future?

"If you're afraid of pain,
if you dislike pain,
then don't do any evil kamma,
in open, in secret.
But if you do or will do
any evil kamma,
you'll gain no freedom from pain,
even if you fly up and hurry away.
If you're afraid of pain,
if you dislike pain,
go to the Awakened One for refuge,
go to the Dhamma and Sangha.
Take on the precepts:
That will lead to your liberation."

text: Ng Pei Fuen



Sitting at my study table, I noticed a few specks on my glasses.

Removing it from its position perched upon my nose, I held it up against the light to find that there were not just those few specks I had seen. There were also some blotches that I had not noticed until I held my glasses against the light.

So what's new? Everyone's glasses gets dirty and smudged from time to time. It didn't really affect my vision because when I looked out from behind these frames and plastic, I could still see because those little clouds were insignificantly semi-transparent.

It suddenly struck me how similar this process of taking off my glasses to remove the smudges was to learning and practising Buddhism in our daily lives.

Periodically we need to take off our glasses, or whatever viewing instrument that we use to see the world - and check to see if they are still clear and unclouded. Many times, like I just found out, there are smudges and blotches, but we are not aware of them, until we step back and re-examine our perception in the greater light of the Buddha's teachings.

Many times, these smudges - in the form of perceptions, values and in the ultimate sense, ignorance - exist but we see through them and dissolve them into our overall field of vision unknowingly, unaware, and unfortunately so.

Try as I might, there were still some blotches that refused to go away despite my persistent rubbing. If I were to stare hard enough at that pair of plastic circles straddled on my nose, I could detect some of those clingy patches. But I could go cock-eyed doing that.

Maybe the solution would be to just remove those glasses and keep rubbing them. But then I would need the light to tell me where the spots were.

Walking the path is like this little saga I had with my glasses today; becoming aware of the flaws and blotches in my sadly shortsighted and clouded vision of the world, and then taking remedial action to clear up this view while holding up this pathetically conditioned frame of perception against the brighter clarity of the Buddha's insight. ☺

A Ruminations on Glasses...

text: Ng Pei Fuen



The Miserly Man

Once, there was a family of which the wife was very devoted to the Dharma and delighted in the practice of generosity. A son was born into that family, and it soon became apparent that he had a miserly nature. He continually obstructed his mother's desire to give things away. When his father passed away, he assumed responsibility of the household. Whenever his mother tried to give things to others, he always prevented her from doing so.

One day the son said, "It looks like you don't want any wealth in our house, so stay out of our affairs. I will take care of the house by myself." The son did not allow his mother to have any authority in the house; he only gave her enough food each day to survive.

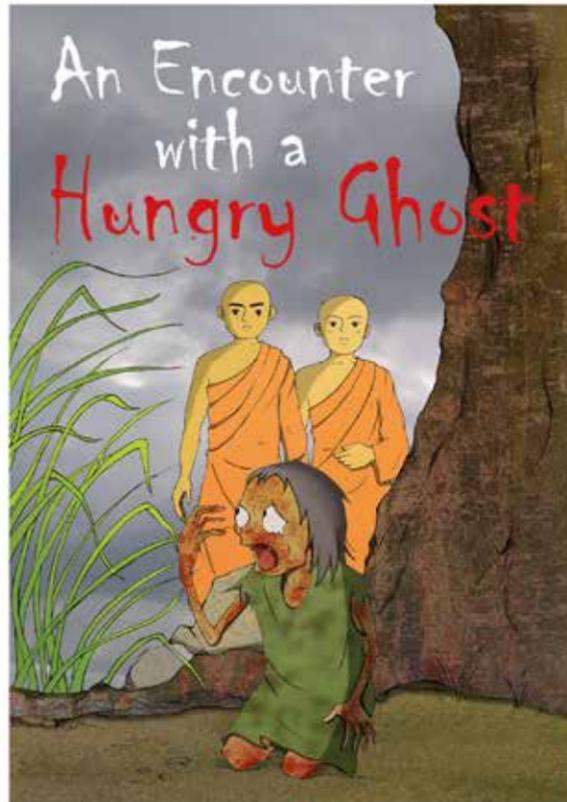
His mother continued to give half of her meagre food to others because of her generous nature. The son was angered by this and said, "You are going to empty this house. I won't give you any more food." He kept her without food for six days, after which his mother begged for some food. He threw a handful of dust into a bowl of water and gave it to her. The mother drank it but soon died of starvation.

As a result of this karma, the son was reborn in the Howling Hell for many kalpas, and then in the hungry ghost realm for many more kalpas. Even when he was born again as a human being, he held on to his miserliness, and ended up being reborn as a hungry ghost for still more lifetimes. Finally, he regained another human rebirth, but was born into circumstances where he was always hungry. Once, he saw a monk, who was a pratyekabuddha, receiving offerings on his alms round, and this aroused jealousy and miserliness in his mind. He stole the monk's begging bowl and threw it on the ground. Due to that karma, he was repeatedly born into poverty.

After many such lifetimes, Buddha Kashyapa appeared on earth and the man felt devotion for Him. Due to that connection, he was born as a human during Buddha Shakyamuni's time and had the opportunity to meet Him. Understanding what the Buddha taught, he did everything he could to purify his negative thoughts and habitual tendencies. He succeeded in purifying his negative mental patterns and achieved a high level of realisation. ☺

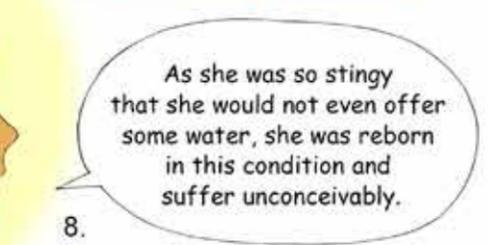
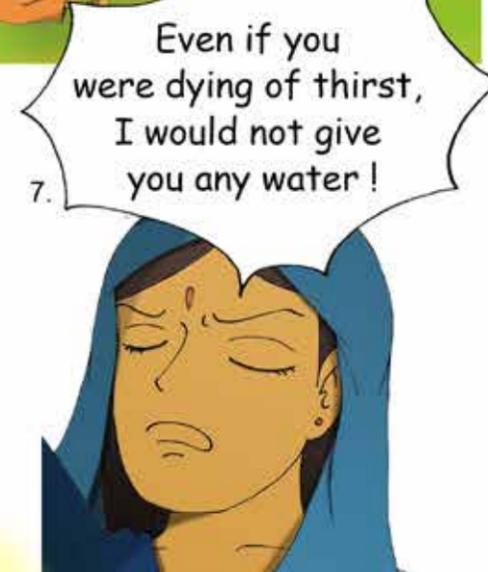
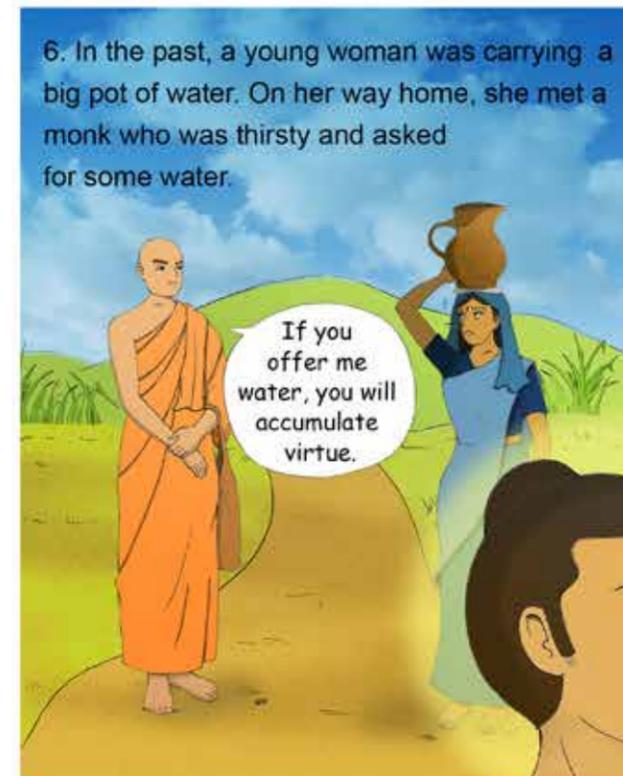
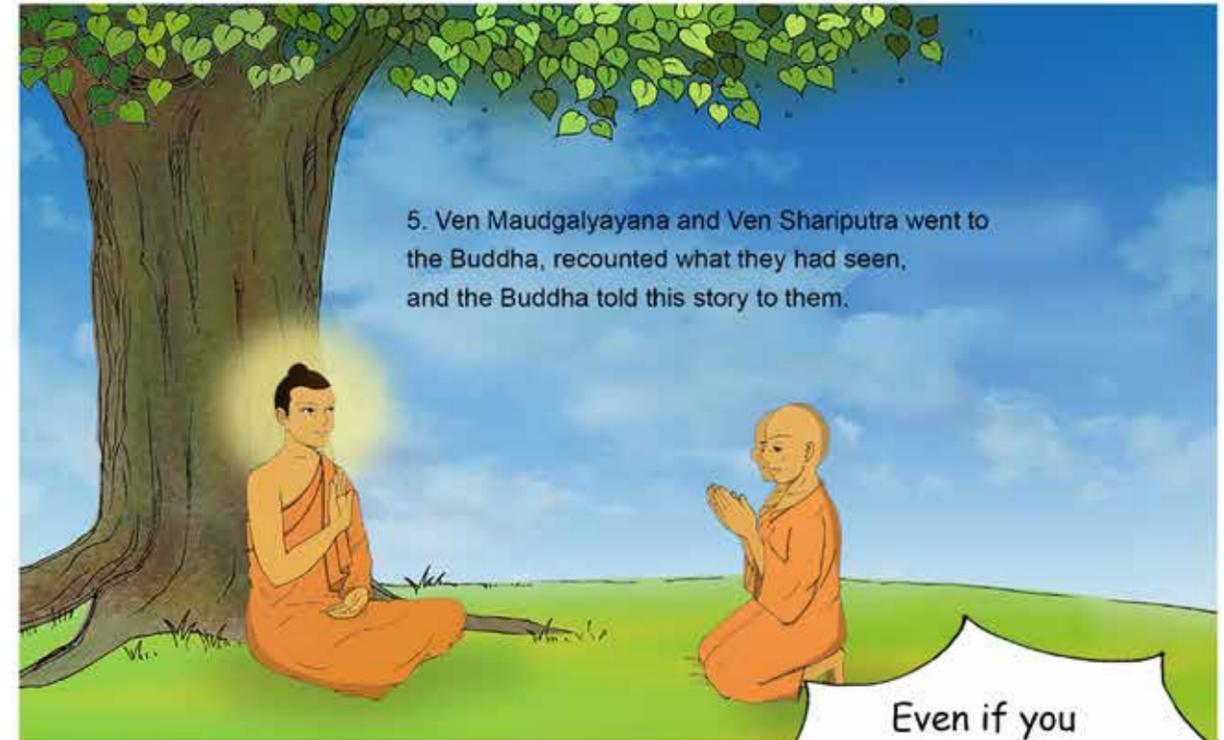
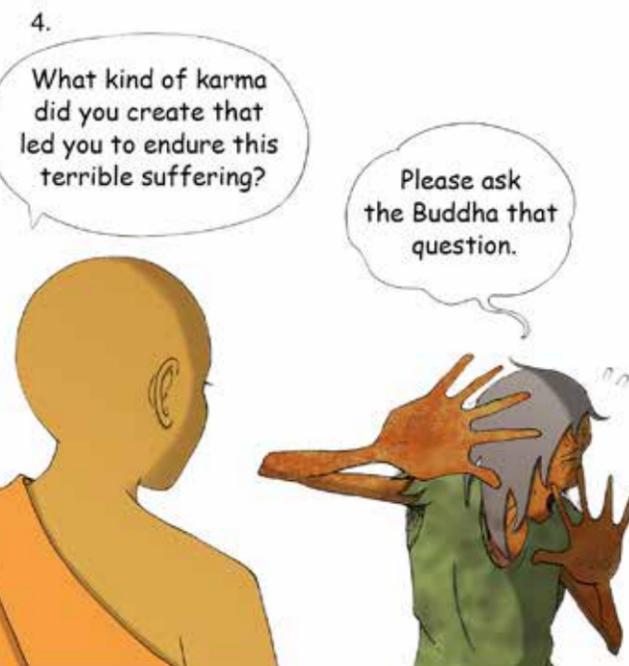
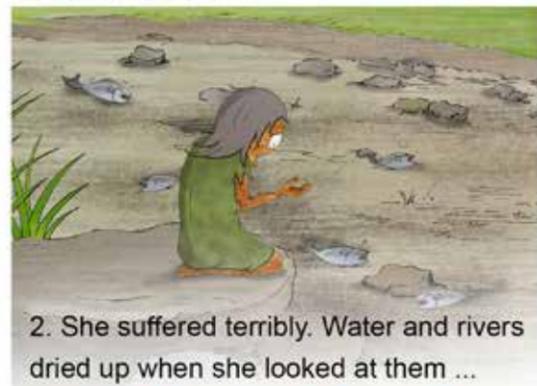
This story demonstrates the possibility of purification, even after many lifetimes of misdeeds. We should be inspired by this story to purify all our negative thoughts and sincerely practise the Dharma.

Retold by Khenchen Konchog Gyaltsen



retold by: Esther Thien
illustration: Beeli Chua

1. Once, Ven Maudgalyayana and Ven Shariputra met a female hungry ghost whose face was covered with burns.



Bearing this story in mind, we should purify all our obscurations of stinginess and attachment, and practise generosity with whatever we have, even if it is just a little water.

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 yakshas, 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 "KMSPKS 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://kmspk.org/about/donate>

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

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 Gender: Age: Highest educational level:
 Address:
 Occupation:
 Tel: (H) (O) (Hp)
 Email:
 Amount: (Cash*/ Cheque No:)

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Where did you obtain this magazine?

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 To update any changes to your personal particulars, please email publication@kmspk.org or call us at 6849 5342

DE ANSSI

WHAT'S NEW

text: Esther Thien

Making Offerings on the Go

Are you a frequent flyer? You can still make offerings on the go even as you travel light on business or short holiday trips with these fuss-free and easy to carry statues and incenses.

Travel with the delicate statues of Buddha Amitabha flanked by Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara and Bodisattva Mahasthamaprapta, enshrined in a palm-sized pinewood casing in a smooth cylindrical shape measuring about 9.6cm by 4.7cm.

Or opt for the other trio to carry with you, which includes Buddha Shakyamuni, Buddha Amitabha and Medicine Buddha. The carving and workmanship of the mini statues are pleasing and intricate.

Pack along a portable golden-hued carrier of incense. Unscrew the cap at the bottom and the metal base transforms into a mini holder for your incense to stand upright. Available in two sizes of 3.5 and 7 inches. Voila! A simple shrine in the hotel room that you can easily create in seconds!

To find out more, please visit www.awarenessplace.com/travel



ENHANCE
your campus life with
Buddhism

Experience how you can make sense of this world by first making sense of your life. Study hard and have fun with a group of close-knitted spiritual friends along the way.

Find out more about Buddhism (the fun way) through these clubs at your local campus.

Nanyang Polytechnic Buddhist Society
geocities.com/nyybuddhistsociety
NYPS_Membership@yahoo.com.sg

Ngee Ann Polytechnic Buddhist Society
ngbuddhistsociety.blogspot.com

NTU Buddhist Society
clubs.ntu.edu.sg/buddhist
buddhist@ntu.edu.sg

NUS Buddhist Society
nubs.org.sg
president@nubs.org.sg

SIM Buddhist Bhavana Club
sim.buddhistbhavana@yahoo.com

Singapore Polytechnic Buddhist Society
spbs-act.blogspot.com
spbs_sst@gmail.com

"The religion of the future will be a cosmic religion... If there is any religion that would cope with scientific needs, it would be Buddhism." - Albert Einstein

For more information on Buddhist activities for youths, please visit www.kmspk.org/youth

招募 志愿 佛学老师

Recruitment for Volunteer Dharma Teachers

Grow & blossom together in our big Buddhist family!
 引导儿童和少年在佛教大家庭里一起成长、提升

If you are a Buddhist who practise the Teachings of the Buddha, and you possess the following:

- Heart and passion to educate, to act as a friend and mentor to children/teens
- Able to commit for at least one year

如果你是遵循佛法教义的佛教徒，又符合以下条件：

- 有一颗热忱和慈悲的心，能对孩子和少年扮演益友良师的角色
- 能承诺服务至少一年

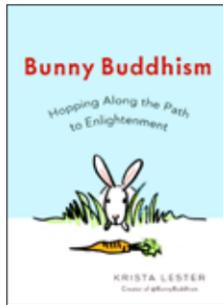
Brought to you by **kmspk**
 覺 醒 覺 醒 覺 醒
 learn practise realise share

Enquiry 查詢 6849 5300, 6849 5328/
sundayschool@kmspk.org

READ

Hop along the path to enlightenment with healing mindfulness practices

text: Esther Thien



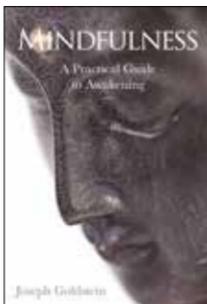
Bunny Buddhism

by Krista Lester

S\$19.90

A highly readable book that offers nuggets of wisdom in simple, reader-friendly quotes. Reflect and meditate on quotes such as *The*

wise bunny knows we rarely see things as they are; we see them as we believe them to be; and The wise bunny does not look back in anger or forward in fear, but around in awareness. So be a happy, peaceful 'bunny', spreading joy wherever you 'hop'. Add a bit more positivity to this world through your meditation on wisdom, peace and compassion; give a smile for your smile will bring on a chain of smiles and a brighter, happier world. Retails at Awareness Place stores.



Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Awakening

by Joseph Goldstein

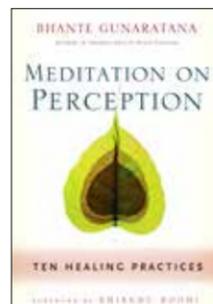
S\$31.90

Meditation on Perception: Ten Healing Practices To Cultivate Mindfulness

by Bhante Gunaratana

S\$22.30

The mind contains seeds of awakening which through constant cultivation can lead to the mastery of mindfulness and the development of wisdom for inner freedom. Learn and understand which mind states are skilful and beneficial to oneself and others, and which are not. As we train and purify our hearts and minds, loving-kindness and compassion will blossom in the core of our beings. Available at Awareness Place stores.



SEEN

Introducing secular mindfulness to troubled youth text: Chan Boon Kian

Room to Breathe

Directed by: Russell Long

As an educator, one of my daily duties is to ensure that the kids pay attention. Granted, not all of my lessons are engaging. But for some students, having to sit through and listen for 40 minutes is just plain suffering. And they will attempt to escape this *dukkha* through various, often disruptive means.

I had partially enlightened kids telling me before: "Cher, I am not in the zone." I know what they mean, and I do my best to extinguish or remove external distractions for them. As for their inner mental preoccupations, I had thought these were beyond my control; until I watched this film *Room to Breathe*, which shed some light on what is possible.

Room to Breathe is a documentary which explores the introduction of secular mindfulness to troubled American youth. The director, Russell Long, strongly believes that targeted socio-emotional learning programmes like mindfulness lessons offer great promise to help kids reconnect with their innermost selves, society-at-large, and the natural world; and only when such bonds are re-established can deep real-world problems then be solved.

The film follows a young mindfulness teacher, Megan Cowan, as she spends several months attempting to teach the technique to troubled kids in a San Francisco public middle school. Confronted by defiance and contempt, Cowan at first runs into substantial difficulties. But under her guidance, the students begin to learn the technique and eventually use it to take greater control over their lives, reduce stress, and focus better.

As a practising Buddhist, I am largely conscious of my mindfulness levels day-to-day. So while I don't doubt that mindfulness can be transformational, I remain sceptical of the sustainability of the outcomes depicted. Nonetheless, the movie is inspiring to me and I have two main takeaways (mainly for teaching, but applicable elsewhere too).

Firstly, Cowan introduces new methods of reaching mindfulness every lesson, such as deep breathing or developing good thoughts for oneself and others. Hence, the kids won't think mindfulness is difficult and boring. Secondly, mindfulness would have appeared an abstract concept to me if I were of a school-going age. Yet, Cowan communicated the idea in such a pragmatic manner to her students that she gradually won their attention. Such skilful teaching! All in all, this is a film you shouldn't miss if you need ideas to promote inward reflection to kids and adults alike.

Catch *Room To Breathe* and 15 other Buddhist-themed films at THIS Buddhist Film Festival, 20-27 September 2014. More details at www.thisfilmfest.com.



Musical blessings to nourish one's spirituality

text: Esther Thien

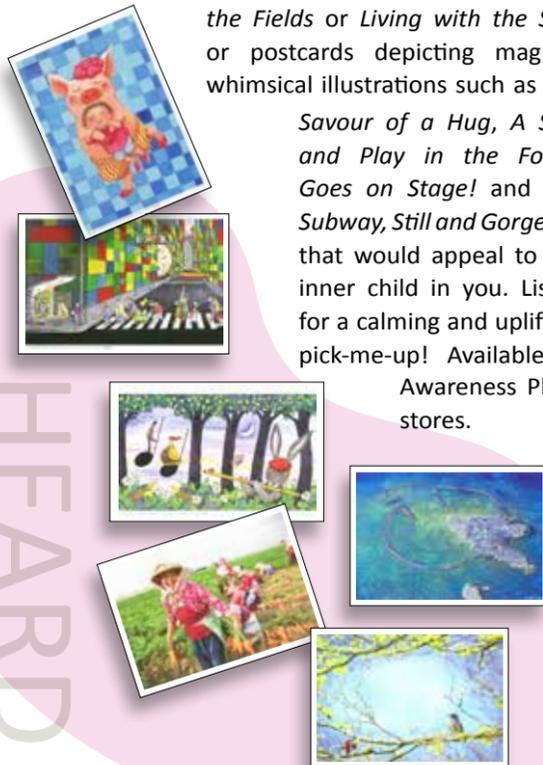
HEARD

Music Postcards

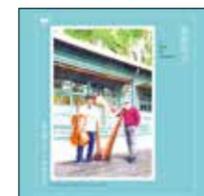
By Wind Music

S\$11.00 each

Get a music postcard and send songs of blessings to a cherished friend or a loved one. Select from a series of six music postcards each carrying five unique lyrical tracks. Choose from postcards featuring wondrous scenes of nature titled *A Forest of Heavenly Music*, *Sentiments in the Fields* or *Living with the Sea*; or postcards depicting magical, whimsical illustrations such as *The*



Savour of a Hug, *A Sing and Play in the Forest Goes on Stage!* and *The Subway, Still and Gorgeous* that would appeal to the inner child in you. Listen for a calming and uplifting pick-me-up! Available at Awareness Place stores.



A Time of Elegance

By Fan Tsung-pei and Li Che-yin

S\$25.00

Let the delicate feelings of softness and grace bloom in you as you listen to this album. Produced by duellists: Fan Tsung-pei, cellist and genius in musical accompaniment and Li Che-yin, a musician from a long line of harpists, they reinterpret 15 familiar classics and contemporary tunes, ranging from Baroque, classical, romantic and modern music in duet style with a nostalgic hint of old world charm. Be moved by the elegant romantic poetry in the music! Retails at Awareness Place stores.

Dharma Apps

text: Esther Thien

One good thing about having a smartphone or tablet is that it can be used to connect you to the wisdom of the Dharma 24/7

A Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Workbook

New Harbinger Publications

S\$22.21



Stress and pain are nearly unavoidable in our daily lives; they are part of the human condition. Yet, they can also often leave us feeling irritable, tense, overwhelmed and burned-out. The key to maintaining balance is responding to stress not with frustration and self-criticism, but with mindful, non-judgmental awareness of our bodies and minds.

Written by clinical psychologists with solid credentials, this book is great for beginners who are searching for a clinically proven programme to replace stress-promoting habits with mindful ones. In just weeks, you can learn mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), a proven-effective programme developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn taught in clinics worldwide that is effective in alleviating stress, anxiety, panic, depression, chronic pain and a wide range of medical conditions.

Comes with guided meditations. Available on Google Play.



Buddha Chant

Sky Little Free



Need to unwind after a stressful day at work? Install and tap on this app and listen to any of the 10 tracks of melodious mantra music to infuse peaceful, positive

vibes into your being. Or enhance your understanding of the Dharma by clicking on the stories found in the *Life of the Buddha* or watching webcasts of teachings given by various Buddhist teachers. Do note that this free app contains ads. Available on Google Play.

Greed itself is unskillful.

Whatever a greedy person fabricates by means of body, speech or intellect, that too is unskillful.

Whatever suffering a greedy person — his mind overcome with greed, his mind consumed — wrongly inflicts on another person through beating or imprisonment or confiscation or placing blame or banishment, [with the thought,] ‘I have power. I want power,’ that too is unskillful.

Thus it is that many evil, unskillful qualities/events — born of greed, caused by greed, originated through greed, conditioned by greed — come into play.

And a person like this is called one who speaks at the wrong time, speaks what is unfactual, speaks what is irrelevant, speaks contrary to the Dhamma, speaks contrary to the Vinaya. Why...? Because of having wrongly inflicted suffering on another person through beating or imprisonment or confiscation or placing blame or banishment, [with the thought,] ‘I have power. I want power.’

When told what is factual, he denies it and doesn’t acknowledge it. When told what is unfactual, he doesn’t make an ardent effort to untangle it [to see], ‘This is unfactual. This is baseless.’ That’s why a person like this is called one who speaks at the wrong time, speaks what is unfactual, speaks what is irrelevant, speaks contrary to the Dhamma, speaks contrary to the Vinaya.

A person like this — his mind overcome with evil, unskillful qualities born of greed... born of aversion... born of delusion, his mind consumed — dwells in suffering right in the here-and-now — feeling threatened, turbulent, feverish — and at the break-up of the body, after death, can expect a bad destination.

Just as a sal tree, a birch, or an aspen, when smothered and surrounded by three parasitic vines, falls into misfortune and disaster, in the same way, a person like this — his mind overcome with evil, unskillful qualities born of greed... born of aversion... born of delusion, his mind consumed — dwells in suffering right in the here-and-now — feeling threatened, turbulent, feverish — and at the break-up of the body, after death, can expect a bad destination. ☺

- The Buddha (*Mula Sutta*)

A person unknowing:
the actions performed by him,
born of greed, born of aversion,
and born of delusion,
whether many or few,
are experienced right here:
no other ground is found.

So a monk, knowing,
sheds greed, aversion and delusion;
giving rise to clear knowledge,
he sheds all bad destinations.

- The Buddha (*Nidana Sutta*)

The Venerable Mettagu:

“I ask the Lord this question, may he tell me the answer to it. I know him to be a master of knowledge and a perfected being. From whence have arisen these many sufferings evident in the world?”

The Lord:

“You have asked me the source of suffering. Mettagu, I will tell it to you as it has been discerned by me. **These many sufferings evident in the world have arisen from worldly attachments. Whoever ignorantly creates an attachment, that stupid person comes upon suffering again and again. Therefore a man of understanding should not create attachment, seeing it is the source of suffering.**”

Mettagu:

“What I did ask you have explained, now I ask another question. Come tell me this: how do the wise cross the flood, birth and old age, sorrow and grief? Explain it thoroughly to me, O sage, for this Dhamma has been understood by you.”

The Lord:

“I will set forth the Dhamma, Mettagu, a teaching to be directly perceived, not something based on hearsay, by experiencing which and living mindfully one may pass beyond the entanglements of the world.”

Mettagu:

“I rejoice in the thought of that highest Dhamma, great sage, by experiencing which and living mindfully one may pass beyond the entanglements of the world.”

The Lord:

“Whatever you clearly comprehend, Mettagu, above, below, across and in between, get rid of delight in it. Rid yourself of habitual attitudes and (life affirming) consciousness. Do not continue in existence. Living thus, mindful and vigilant, a bhikkhu who has forsaken selfish attachments may, by understanding, abandon suffering, birth and old age, sorrow and grief, even here in this life.”

Mettagu:

“I rejoice in the words of the great sage. Well explained, O Gotama, is the state of non-attachment. The Lord has surely abandoned suffering as this Dhamma has been realised by him. They will certainly abandon suffering who are constantly admonished by you, O Sage. Having understood, I venerate it, Noble One. May the Lord constantly admonish me also.”

The Lord:

“Whom you know as a true brahmana, a master of knowledge, owning nothing, not attached to sensual (-realm) existence, he has certainly crossed this flood. Having crossed beyond he is untainted and freed from doubt. One who has discarded this clinging (leading) to renewal of existence is a man who has realised the highest knowledge. Free from craving, undistressed, desireless, he has crossed beyond birth and old age, I say.”

- The Buddha (*Mettagu-manava-puccha*)

Mettagu's Questions



09 SEP 12 DEC **Calendar of Events**



Usher In 2015 with 108 "Bell Resonance"

Listen to 108 auspicious and refreshing chimes of the bell to regain clarity and peace in oneself. Start the new year afresh with resolutions to cultivate compassion, gratitude and equanimity.

31.12.2014 | Wed

- Aspiration Lamp Offering
- Bell Resonance 108 Times
- Recitation of The 88 Great Buddha Names & The Great Repentance Ceremony

1.1.2015 | Thu

- Offering to Heavenly Realms
- Alms Offering to the Sangha
- The Grand Diamond Gem Repentance Ceremony

Enquiry : 6849 5300

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. Temple tour included.
Oct | Sun | 12.30pm – 4pm
Venue : VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form
*Please call our enquiry hotline nearer to the event month
Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspks.org
- **Medicine Buddha Prayer**
29 Sep – 4 Oct | Mon – Sat | 7.30pm
5 Oct | Sun | 9am
Venue : KMSPKS
Registration of names : 6 names – \$100
2 names – \$50
1 name – Any amount
Registration : 15 Aug onwards till fully registered
Enquiry : 6849 5300 | 6849 5333

- **The Grand Prayer That Blesses and Benefits All Sentient Beings**
One of the grandest and most meritorious Chinese Buddhist Pujas to liberate all sentient beings, including the deceased, from suffering. Generating extensive merit through the offering of food and the Dharma, sentient beings can attain happiness and enter into the path of Buddhahood.

- 23 – 29 Nov | Sun – Sat
Venue : KMSPKS
Registration :
15 Aug onwards till fully registered
- Inner Shrine:
\$30,000; \$20,000; \$10,000;
\$5,000; \$3,000
- Grand Shrine: \$2,000; \$1,000
- Shrine of Various Sutras:
\$300 (5-6 names);
\$200 (1-4 names);
\$20 (1 name)
- Pureland Shrine:
\$300 (5-6 names);
\$200 (1-4 names);
\$20 (1 name)
- Food Offering to Triple Gem:
\$3,000; \$2,000; \$1,000; \$500; Any amount
Enquiry : 6849 5300 | 6849 5333

Talks | Workshops | Courses

- **3 Refuges & 5 Precepts Preparatory Course**
Understand the meaning of taking refuge and precepts
Oct | Sun | 9.30am – 11pm
Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom
*Please call our enquiry hotline nearer to the event month
Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspks.org
- **Public Talk on The Grand Prayer That Blesses and Benefits All Sentient Beings (Chinese)**
Attend this talk to understand the significance of one of the grandest and most meritorious Chinese Buddhist pujas.
Nov
Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom 9
*Please call our enquiry hotline nearer to the event month
Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspks.org
- **The Origins of Mahayana Buddhism**
Let us look into the history of Buddhism to trace the emergence and development of the Mahayana tradition.
4 Dec | Thu | 7.30pm-9pm
Venue : APWBC
Registration : Log on to www.eventbrite.com (Admission via Ticket only)
Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspks.org

MEDITATION | RETREAT

- **Self-Meditation @ Lunch**
Take a break during lunch to meditate and rejuvenate mind and body.
Wed | 12.30pm – 1.30pm
Venue : APWBC | Via registration only
Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspks.org

- **Meditation Group Practice**
A weekly meditation practice for all with basic meditation knowledge.
3 Sep – 12 Nov | Wed | 7.30pm – 9pm
Venue : VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form
Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspks.org
- **Basic Meditation Retreat**
By Venerable Chuan Guan
One-day meditation retreat.
13 Sep | Sat | 9am – 5pm
Venue : VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form
Fee : \$20
Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspks.org
- **Vipassana Meditation Retreat**
By Sayadaw U Tejaniya
(Fully registered)
31 Oct – 9 Nov | Fri – Sun | 8am – 5pm
Venue : Pagoda of 10,000 Buddhas | Level 2
Medicine Buddha Hall
Fee : \$150
Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspks.org
- **Monkhood Novitiate Programme**
By Venerable Kwang Sheng
Experience a simple monastic life together to cultivate compassion and wisdom for inner joy and peace. (Conducted in Mandarin)
19 – 28 Dec | Fri – Sun (Stay-In)
Venue : KMSPKS
Fee : \$120
Requirement : Ages 16 – 60, male only
Remark : Shortlisted participants are required to attend preparatory class on 15 – 18 Dec, 7.30pm – 9pm
Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspks.org

YOUTH

Dharma

- **Sunday Group Cultivation**
Join us weekly for short chanting, short guided meditation & not so short discussion led by Venerable Chuan Guan. Free for all ages.
7 Sep – 28 Dec | Sun | 2pm – 3.30pm
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 Mandarin)
15 Nov | Sat | 10am
Venue : KMSPKS
Enquiry : 6849 5345 | youth@kmspks.org

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

Community

- **Y Care**
- **Food Ration Distribution**
Contributing back to the community by delivering food to low income families staying at Thomson Ville Estate.
12 Oct, 9 Nov & 14 Dec
Sun | 8.30am – 12pm
Venue : KMSPKS
Enquiry : 6849 5345 | youth@kmspks.org



- **Outing with Bright Hill Evergreen Home (BHEH) Residents**
Visit old folks living at BHEH to take them out to dine and shop.
19 Oct & 7 Dec | Sun | 9am – 12pm
Venue : Bright Hill Evergreen Home @ Punggol
Enquiry : 6849 5345 | youth@kmspks.org
- **Secret to GCE 'O' Level Science Workshops**
- Physics Workshop 4
21 Sep | Sun | 10.30am
- Chemistry Workshop 4
28 Sep | Sun | 10.30am
- Biology Workshop 4
5 Oct | Sun | 10.30am
Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom
Enquiry : 6849 5359 | youth@kmspks.org



LIFESTYLE

Family | Relationship

- **Parenting Workshop (English and Mandarin)**
Be your teen's best coach/mentor
20 & 27 Sep | Sat | 10am – 12.00pm
Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom 5-6
Fees : \$30 per person
\$50 per couple



- **Family Bonding Workshop**
Family CONNECTION!
18 Oct | Sat | 9am – 12.30pm
Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom 5-6
Fees : \$50 per person
\$80 per per family
Enquiry : 6849 5300
community@kmspks.org

Health

- **Vegetarian Cooking Series**
Learn to cook healthy and delicious Vegan Cuisine
- **Thai Vegan Cuisine II**
2 Nov | Sun | 3pm – 5.30pm
Fee : \$50 (includes ingredients)
- **NutriMeal Cooking**
30 Nov | Sun | 3pm – 5.30pm
Fee : \$50 (includes ingredients)
- **CNY Vegetarian Cooking Class I**
7 Dec | Sun | 3pm – 6pm
Fee : \$60 (includes ingredients)
- **CNY Vegetarian Cooking Class II**
14 Dec | Sun | 3pm – 6pm
Fee : \$60 (includes ingredients)
Venue : APWBC
Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspks.org

Wellness

- **Hatha Yoga**
Simple postures and stretches can help to release tension of the neck, shoulders, lower and upper back & legs.
13 Oct – 15 Dec | Mon | 7.45pm – 9.15pm
16 Sep – 18 Nov | Tue | 10.30am – 12pm
17 Sep – 19 Nov | Wed | 7.30pm – 9pm
9 Oct – 18 Dec | Thu | 10.30am – 12pm
Venue : APWBC
Fee : \$160 (10 sessions)
- **Hatha Yoga-Lunch time**
Easy 50-minute yoga wellness.
16 Sep – 18 Nov | Tue | 12.45pm – 1.35pm
19 Sep – 21 Nov | Fri | 12.45pm – 1.35pm
Venue : APWBC
Fee : \$120 (10 sessions)
- **Gentle Hatha Yoga**
Learn joint-loosening methods through breathing exercises, basic effective yoga postures and relaxation techniques.
16 Sep – 18 Nov | Tue | 3pm – 4.30pm
10 Oct – 12 Dec | Fri | 2.30pm – 4pm
Venue : APWBC
Fee : \$140 (10 sessions)

- **Yoga Flow (Hatha)**
Synchronising of your breath with yoga movements. Beginners are welcome.
15 Oct – 17 Dec | Wed | 6.30pm – 7.30pm
Venue : APWBC
Fee : \$140 (10 sessions)
Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspks.org

Children

- **Rainbow Child Yoga (Holistic Mind Series)**
A playful and innovative approach to introduce children to yoga by using creative arts and play.
19 Oct – 28 Dec | Sun
3pm – 4.15pm (age 4 to 7)
4.15pm – 5.30pm (age 8 to 11)
Venue : APWBC
Fee : \$150 (6 sessions)
Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspks.org



Opening Hours 本寺各殿堂开放时间

- Front Office 寺务处
8.30am – 4.30pm
- Reception 接待处
8.30am – 5pm
- Hall of Great Compassion 大悲殿
7am – 5pm
- Hall of Great Strength 大雄宝殿
8am – 4pm
- Hall of Medicine Buddha 药师殿
8am – 4pm
- Hall of No Form 无相殿
8am – 4pm
- Hall of Precepts 甘露戒堂
8am – 4pm
- Hall of Pureland 净土堂
8am – 4pm
- Hall of Universal Brightness 光明殿
8am – 4pm
- Ancestral Hall 功德堂
8am – 4pm
- Crematorium 火化场
8am – 4pm
- Pu An & Pu Tong Columbarium
普陀塔与普安塔
8am – 4pm
- Library 图书馆
9am – 5pm
Sat & Sun 星期六及星期日
Inclusive of Public Holiday
包含公定假日