

普觉awaken

to Compassion and Wisdom on the journey of life



新加坡佛学院首届研究生毕业感恩发言

懂得感恩的人最快乐

关于艺术与禅修的开示

佛教的知足常乐思想

人生不会太圆满
摆正心态对苦甜

**AGEING GRACEFULLY:
THERE'S NO BETTER TIME
TO START THAN NOW**

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Loving Care of Our Seniors in their Golden Years

Recently, I experienced something which fully expressed the First Noble Truth taught by Lord Buddha. Life in this mundane world has the nature of impermanence and hence is dissatisfaction. Everything that is born, will age and die one day. What goes up must come down.

Lately, there have been a slew of articles in local media about Singapore's ageing population. More eldercare services such as nursing homes and daycare centres are needed as nearly one in three persons in Singapore will require some form of such facilities by 2030. Meanwhile, more services to reach out to the lonely seniors in Singapore are also being introduced, while elder-friendly facilities and other products are actively launched.

At the monastery, we also hope to do more for the seniors who have contributed greatly to our community. Many have selflessly dedicated themselves for decades as volunteers and devotees here, almost seeing the monastery as their second home.

We are immensely grateful to them. Without them, the monastery would not be what it is today. As many of the volunteers and devotees turn silver-haired, we hope to give them the support they need in their golden years, just as they have supported the monastery in its developmental years.

We recently started a KMS interaction corner for seniors, which is presently in its pilot phase. The elderly can come here from Mondays to Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. to mingle and interact with other seniors, do beneficial exercises, learn craftwork such as tying Chinese knots or beading, and participate in group chanting. Light refreshments are provided too.

We have also commenced a Dementia Prevention Programme for those aged 60 years and above (pg. 48). Developed by the National University Health System, participants of this programme go through five components—health education, meridian flapping exercise, mindfulness practice, music reminiscence and horticultural therapy—to improve their quality of life and mental health.

Additionally, the monastery is collaborating with the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) to set up a dialysis centre in memory of my Master, Ven Hong Choon, and his compassionate spirit. It is targeted to be fully operational in 2019 (pg. 41).

All these initiatives are introduced purely to benefit the seniors in our community to develop better wellness and health.

May everyone be blessed with good health, peace and gratitude! ☺

*Learn to appreciate what you have
before time makes you appreciate
what you had.*

Sik Kwang Sheng (Ven)
Abbot, Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery

Ageing gracefully and contentedly is a challenge. Loneliness plagues many elderly in their sunset years. Loss of control over bodily functions and certain abilities causes many to feel frustrated, helpless and dejected. Over time, a sense of loss and futility may also cause the elderly to develop depression.

But happiness is possible in old age. "Happiness is a state of mind. If we can cultivate positive thinking, we will not be miserable but contented and happy with whatever conditions we are in." (pg. 59)

We only need to focus on the positive, count our blessings, let go of our past glories and learn to be mindful of what we can do right now, in this very stage of our lives (pg. 62). But to do so, we must start right now to cultivate these good mental habits, while we still can (pg. 43).

We can integrate mindfulness practice into our daily lives (pg. 48 & 71) and see things with fresh perspectives instead of clinging onto preconceived ideas and concepts (pg. 55).

We appreciate that our journey into the golden years is a spiritual practice (pg. 71), and so learn to develop love, kindness, compassion and bodhicitta (pg. 52), realising that, if we do something harmful, it doesn't just fade away. Ultimately, everything comes back to us (pg. 64).

We accept difficulties with patience, for we know that we are purifying our negative karma while experiencing them, and understand that everyone goes through the same suffering of ageing, sickness and death.

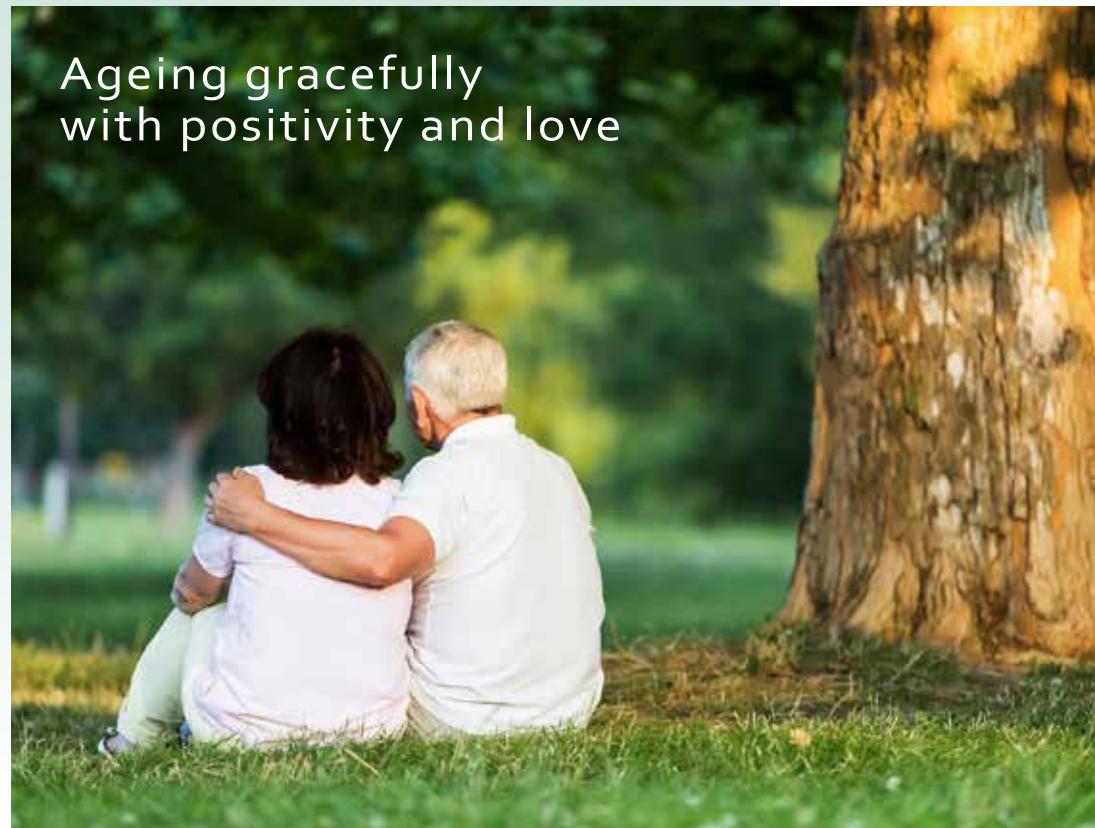
We do not think too much about the pleasures and suffering of this impermanent life, but place our refuge in the Buddhas (pg. 44).

Nourishing our bodies with wholesome, healthy food and healthful techniques becomes important too (pg. 66 & 70).

May all sentient beings be well and happy, enjoy a peaceful old age, and swiftly gain realisations of the path. ☩



Yours in the Dharma,
Sister Esther Thien



Milestones Achieved by the Buddhist College of Singapore in May 2016

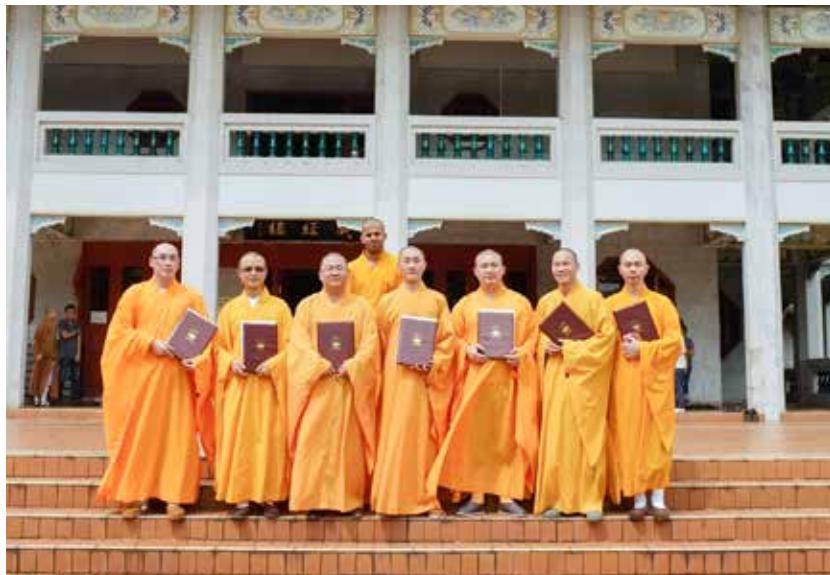
Singapore - May was a fruitful and busy month for the Buddhist College of Singapore (BCS).

Graduation of Our Inaugural M.A. students

On 19 May 2016, the first Master of Arts (M.A.) Graduation Ceremony was held. Rector Ven Kwang Sheng; Vice-Rectors Ven Dr Chuan Sheng and Ven Chuan Hou; the Dean of Academic Affairs Office, Ven Chuan Xiong; the Head of Admin Office, Ven Chuan Deng; the Head of Monastic Training Office, Ven Quan Zhi; staff, students and approximately 200 guests attended this event.

They first paid respects and offered flowers to the Buddha before reciting the Heart Sutra. This was followed by a speech from the Rector, who congratulated the students on getting their MA degree after seven years of diligent study.

Ven Kwang Sheng also exhorted the graduates to continue their self-study and propagate the Dharma: "I remember the late President of the Buddhist Association of China once said, 'The first mission of Buddhism is education, likewise the second and third.' The success of Singapore cannot be separated from the development of a qualified workforce. It is the same with Buddhism. Although BCS students may come from different Buddhist sects, ultimately everyone is a son of Shakyamuni Buddha, and shoulders the responsibility of propagating the Buddha's teachings of Wisdom and Compassion."



He emphasised the importance of gratitude and highlighted the three causes of failure, as encapsulated in a Chinese saying — lavishness, complacency and pride.

"Life can be tough sometimes, but these challenges are tests which will help to hone one's ability to transcend and grow," he added. He wished all graduates the best in their future endeavours and said that the College would always be their alma mater.

The ceremony ended with a presentation of certificates, photo-taking and a sumptuous lunch.

2016 B.A. Recruitment Exercise

Shortly after the Master of Arts Graduation Ceremony, the College launched its 2016 recruitment exercise for its Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Degree programmes. It held entrance exams for South Asian and Southeast Asian candidates in Singapore, Cambodia and Sri Lanka on 24 and 30 May.

Around 70 candidates took the English B.A. entrance exams, which were administered by Ven Dr Chuan Sheng, Ven Quan Zhi, Ven Chuan Hang, Dr Ji Yun, Ven Dr Chang Qing, Ven Ming Fa and Dr Lee Foong Ming.

Ven Kwang Sheng together with Ven Chuan Hou, Ven Chuan Xiong and Ven Chuan Deng administered the exams for the Mandarin-speaking candidates at the Buddhist College of Minnan in Xiamen, China at end May. With the full support from the Buddhist Association of China and the Buddhist College of Minnan, BCS successfully recruited 26 candidates from China.



International Exchanges

The 2016 recruitment exercise not only enabled the admission of new students to BCS, but also acted as a platform for harmonious interactions and exchanges between Chinese Mahayana and Theravada monastics.

Finally, the College wrapped up the month by hosting a visit of 16 professors and PhD students from the Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University's Department of Social Sciences. ☺



A Dialysis Centre in Memory of Venerable Hong Choon

Singapore – To commemorate Ven Hong Choon and his compassionate spirit, Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery is collaborating with the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) to set up a dialysis centre.

This centre will stand as a testament to the immeasurable contributions he made to Buddhism and the needy in Singapore when he was the second abbot of the monastery.

Housed within a community centre, the dialysis centre is targeted to be constructed and fully operational by 2019. It will have 20 dialysis machines and give hope to 120 kidney patients in the Bishan-Toa Payoh community.

Singapore has the fourth highest incidence of kidney failure in the world. More than 6000 kidney patients here require dialysis. Kidney failure is irreversible. Unless the opportunity for a transplant arises, the patient will have to spend the rest of his life hooked onto a dialysis machine, three times a week.

Each year, more people suffer from kidney failure due to diabetes and hypertension, the two leading causes of the problem.

If you would like to support this worthy cause and make a difference to the lives of needy kidney patients, please visit bit.ly/1svLdzG to donate online. ☺



Promoting Mindful Consumption with the KMSPKS Gratitude Shop

Singapore – To play our part to take care of the environment, Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery (KMSPKS) started the Gratitude Corner to reduce, reuse and recycle. Besides actively educating the public to burn less joss paper, using an eco-burner and kick-starting the initiative of not burning joss paper boxes during Qing Ming and Ullambana from 2017 onwards, the Monastery has also launched a thrift shop called the Gratitude Shop. It sells items in good condition donated by the public.



It is open every day, from 10:00 a.m to 3:00 p.m. On Sundays to Fridays and from 12:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Saturdays. The shop is located next to the Awareness Place Convenience Store.

There are plenty of good buys here. Scour through quaint ceramic vases, porcelain plates and teapots, soft toys, books and other decorative items. Or delight in the many beautiful chanting beads and Buddha statues you can purchase at very affordable prices. Electronic items are also sold at a fraction of their market prices. Most of the pre-loved clothes here cost \$1 each and have been worn only a few times. You can find brand-new dresses and even designer items! A few regular customers commented that the shop is like a treasure trove where, with patience, you can find unexpected gems.

The Gratitude Shop allows us a chance to practise mindful consumption by reusing pre-loved items, and to reflect deeper on our consumption habits: is what we're buying a 'want' or 'need'? Instead of getting new clothes from the malls, which contribute to global warming from the production process, why not come to the Gratitude Shop and reuse the mint condition or brand-new apparels so that there is no extra impact on the environment?

The Monastery hopes that, instead of a mindless cycle of buying-recycling-buying again, we can refuse, reduce, reuse, repair and recycle. We hope not for more donations of recyclables, but for less need for recycling in the first place. ◎

55 Participants Compete to Create Winning Canopy Design

Singapore – With the blessing of the Abbot, Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery recently organised a design competition inviting public submission of innovative ideas for a lightweight canopy to replace the tents at the open court fronting the Hall of Great Compassion.

55 participants registered for the competition, and attended a one-day charrette in June to familiarise themselves with its functional, aesthetic, technical and other aspects. They came from all walks of life— from practising architects, architectural undergrads to design students and industry professionals.

The final judging will be conducted by professional architects, university professors and representatives of the Monastery.

The top winner will take home a cash prize of S\$3,000, while the second and third prize winners will receive S\$2,000 and S\$1,000 respectively. All cash prizes are sponsored by Newsman Realty Private Limited. ◎





Q: How is the Dharma the supreme possession that will bring us everything beneficial, even in old age?

A: The word “dharma” has many different meanings. In this context of supreme possession, it means “to hold.” It holds us back from negativity and its resultant suffering, and holds our mind in virtue so as to create good causes. To do that, we have to integrate the Dharma into our mind as much as we possibly can.

That means resetting our priorities, by thinking about what's important in the long run, especially for our future lives. Do we want to remain in samsara without end or do we want to turn that around?

Pondering such questions is really very important. As our mind changes, it becomes easier to practise and we can really see how the Dharma protects us, and how it is the best possession that will bring us everything beneficial, especially in old age.

Most people don't like the idea of getting old, even though we're all getting older each passing day. Have you ever thought of what sort of elderly person you want to be if you're fortunate enough to live till

old age? Or what will help you in old age? Will having a million dollars help you when you're old?

It may be helpful as you do not have to live on the streets or struggle to survive. But I don't think you need a million bucks in order to avoid living on the streets when you're old. A smaller sum would suffice. But even if you have the money to take care of your body when you're old, does that guarantee you're going to be happy when you're old? Not at all, because you can have very nice, favourable living conditions when you're old, and yet the mind is terribly unhappy. For instance, where I come from in the US, the highest suicide rate takes place amongst white, older men. Many people found that their lives have no value, meaning or purpose when they became old and retired.

So what will make us happy when we're old? It is our state of mind. If we let our mind become angry and bitter now, that mental habit will continue and we'll be miserable when we are old. If we cultivate forgiveness, kindness and compassion now, we'll have an abundance of that in our old age and other people will be drawn to us. By developing our wisdom now, we will become wise seniors whose views and advice will be respected. These human connections—our ability to benefit others and receive love from them—give meaning to our lives.

In addition, we should start preparing for death now. Death is a natural process; it happens to everyone, and it can be a time of great spiritual meaning if we practise the Dharma well while we're alive. So let's work on applying the Buddha's teachings to our lives so we can counteract ignorance, anger, and clinging attachment now. That way, our lives will be more peaceful now and we'll be peaceful at the time of death and will have a good rebirth.

My teachers are good examples. When I first started learning the Dharma many of my teachers were in their 70s or 80s. The ones who were in their 50s and 60s are in their 80s now. Yet I observed how happy they are teaching and engaging in many activities to benefit others. Even though they are old and their bodies are weak, they have such happy minds! ☺

Living a Peaceful Life in Old Age

Venerable Garchen Rinpoche, who has just turned 80, speaks to Esther Thien on how one can age peacefully into the golden years.

Awaken: Many elderly feel lost, lonely and distraught when they retire in their old age and discover that they are afflicted with various illnesses or livelihood issues. How would Venerable advise them to deal with these difficulties?

Venerable: When we are young, we are always busy working. However, as we age, before our retirement, we have to start preparing for death so we can ensure that before death comes, we would have cultivated a pure mind. We should not think too much about the pleasures and suffering of this impermanent life. Thinking too much about the affairs of this life binds up our mind. What we experience is related to our karma. We do not have control over results that ripened due to causes planted long ago but we can manage our present reactions. We should accept difficulties with patience and think that we are purifying our negative karma by experiencing them. We must understand that all suffering comes from self-grasping. If we cling to our problems, we will not accomplish anything successfully.

When we pay taxes, think that the money we paid resulted in the services of nursing homes and public hospitals, etc. This is a great benefit actually, for it benefits others and the country. Every time, we pay our taxes, it is not wasted. In the future we will get the merit in return so we should rejoice in our contribution. But if we are greedy and stingy, the negative result will return to us in the future.



Awaken: What is your advice, Venerable, for leading a fulfilling life in old age?

Venerable: By developing love and compassion, and thinking of the Buddha at all times! Cultivate bodhicitta and the Buddha can help you in many future lifetimes. The mind is like a mirror and when the Buddha appears, it is like a reflection in the mirror. The moment you think of the Buddha, you become the Buddha, because there is no real self, and when there is no self, there is also no karma and no habitual imprints. The habitual imprints and tendencies come only from clinging to a self. If you see the nature of the mind as it really is, you purify the negativities accumulated in a thousand aeons. The negativities are cleared away actually by the bodhicitta of the Buddha, because the self disappears. Without a self, thinking of the Buddha, you can be born in the Pureland of the Buddha. That is possible because ultimately our mind is the Buddha, but we are obscured by the clinging to a self. If we let go of that belief, and think of the Buddha, then we will attain freedom and our compassion for others increases.

If you don't think of the Buddha, it is difficult for the mind to stay still. But when the reflection of the Buddha appears in your mind, the mind is focused. This is the practice of calm abiding. Without a reference point for the mind to focus on, the mind cannot stay still. So for a reference point, you can meditate on the Buddha, do shamatha practice, or meditate on love or the Four Immeasurables.

The root of all suffering is self-grasping and boundless love is the only way to eliminate self-grasping; meditate that "all beings had once been my parents, friends or spouses" and love them as you would your dear ones. Cultivate love for your friends and teachers, and then your mind becomes relaxed. When you die, with that love, you will take rebirth and be endowed with great intelligence and many other great qualities. You will be able to serve your country and be a powerful person in a future life. But if you think, "Oh, poor me, I am so pitiful...", you will be reborn as an animal. So cultivate the Four Immeasurables and practise shamatha for peace of mind and happiness.

Awaken: Many people are diagnosed with mental illnesses like anxiety disorder, depression and bipolar mood disorder when they are in their 40s or 50s. How can we maintain good mental health?

Venerable: Medications may help temporarily in the short term, but it's like being intoxicated, in the long run, it may lose its efficacy. It is better to do mind-training by meditating and visualising the Buddha. If the Buddha does not appear clearly, just visualise the colour of the Buddha with your mind. When you focus on that, your mind has some reference point. The Buddha's Purelands, such as the Western Pureland, actually do exist. When you supplicate to Amitabha Buddha, you can see his Pureland. In Buddhism, this is really the only method we apply. **This practice of visualising the Buddha or Bodhisattva is beneficial for any problems we encounter**

in this life. The more you think about your problems, the more your mind solidifies and becomes like an ice block. If you cut through it by thinking of the Buddha or the love for your friends, your mind relaxes and opens up. The form of the Buddha appears more clearly, and a feeling that the Buddha is really here arises; you will then experience confidence that when you die, you really do have a friend who will be with you and that you're not alone. You should really develop trust and faith in the Buddha. Train in this technique first, otherwise it will be difficult to do other kinds of meditation. Also, recite mantras or names of the Buddhas; ideally, at all times, if you can. This recitation helps to improve physical and mental health. If you can't, just think of the Buddha constantly and play mantra CDs of the Buddha. As you listen, recognise that this is the sound of the Buddha.

Awaken: Some people enjoy much wealth and success in their youth but encounter hardship and difficulties in old age. Why is this so?

Venerable: When things go well, it is the result of good deeds we have done in the past out of generosity, patience, kindness and ethical discipline. But that result has an end too. That's why in the later years, the results of all the negative things we have done ripen.

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All beings have the same suffering of birth, ageing, sickness and death. Even someone with a long life will experience suffering, for it is the nature of a human body. Like a flower, the human body will wither one day. The moment you are born, you are bound to age. Everyone suffers from that.

We should reflect that this process purifies our obscurations, and think that, "It's not just me. Everybody ages." Then, practise *tonglen* or the 'sending and receiving' meditation: "May I take upon the suffering of all other elderly. Through my suffering, may I represent the suffering of all sentient beings so that they suffer less."

Some people do not suffer much in their bodies and minds in old age due to their karma. This is due to the result of having cultivated bodhicitta in previous lives. In

brief, if you experience well-being, it is due to love. So you should cultivate more love for all beings. If you suffer, it is because of self-grasping and negative emotions, and so in the future you must be careful not to create more causes of suffering. Everybody in this world experiences suffering, and most people suffer even more than us. So cultivate compassion for them and you purify negative karma.

This will definitely help you in your future lives. Experiencing a small amount of suffering in a precious human body can purify the negative karma that would otherwise have to be experienced in the hell realms for many hundreds of aeons. For example, if you have a loan to pay back, a precious human body is like a piece of gold. You only need a little bit to pay back the loan.

Awaken: What can children and other family members do to help the elderly in their families cope with old age?

Venerable: Tell them not to cling to this life and the attachments in the mind. If they are Buddhists, ask them to focus and visualise Amitabha Buddha. If they are free-thinkers, introduce them to shamatha practice. If they are not keen to practise, play and loop a mantra CD* so that they can hear and be mentally accustomed, for example, to the mantra of Amitabha Buddha. The sound of a mantra is very pleasing and will relax their minds. You can also place Buddha images around the house, so that the elderly can look at the images. Tell them that when they die, the Buddha will appear to them and will be their only support and refuge. It is better to develop confidence and faith in the Buddha while one is still healthy and alive.

Awaken: When the elderly experience great fear in their suffering, for instance at the moment of death, how can family members help them?

Venerable: The degree of their fear correlates to the degree of their self-grasping. The stronger the self-grasping, the stronger their fear will be. Family members can recite mantras for them, or play such CDs to calm their fear. The antidote to self-grasping is compassion, and that is the best thing we can do for them, by cultivating compassion and thinking of Avalokiteshvara (Guanyin Bodhisattva) or Buddha as we help to comfort them. Family members can also ask the fearful elderly to pray to Avalokiteshvara and Amitabha Buddha by showing him or her an image, and telling the elderly that the Bodhisattva and Buddha will help him or her. This will help to release the fear and may help the elderly to cultivate devotion in the Triple Gem. Reciting the Amitabha Sutra to them is helpful too, as they may develop the wish to be reborn in Buddha Amitabha's Pureland.

Awaken: Many people don't think about the issues of ageing until they have hit their 40s or 50s. How can we prepare to lead a meaningful life in old age?

Venerable: Actually, life is impermanent and death can come at any age. We do not know when death will come knocking. Young people too can face untimely deaths. We do not know for sure, so actually it is a mistake to think that one will die in old age. Anyone can die at any moment. It is important to prepare for death when we are still young. We can prepare by

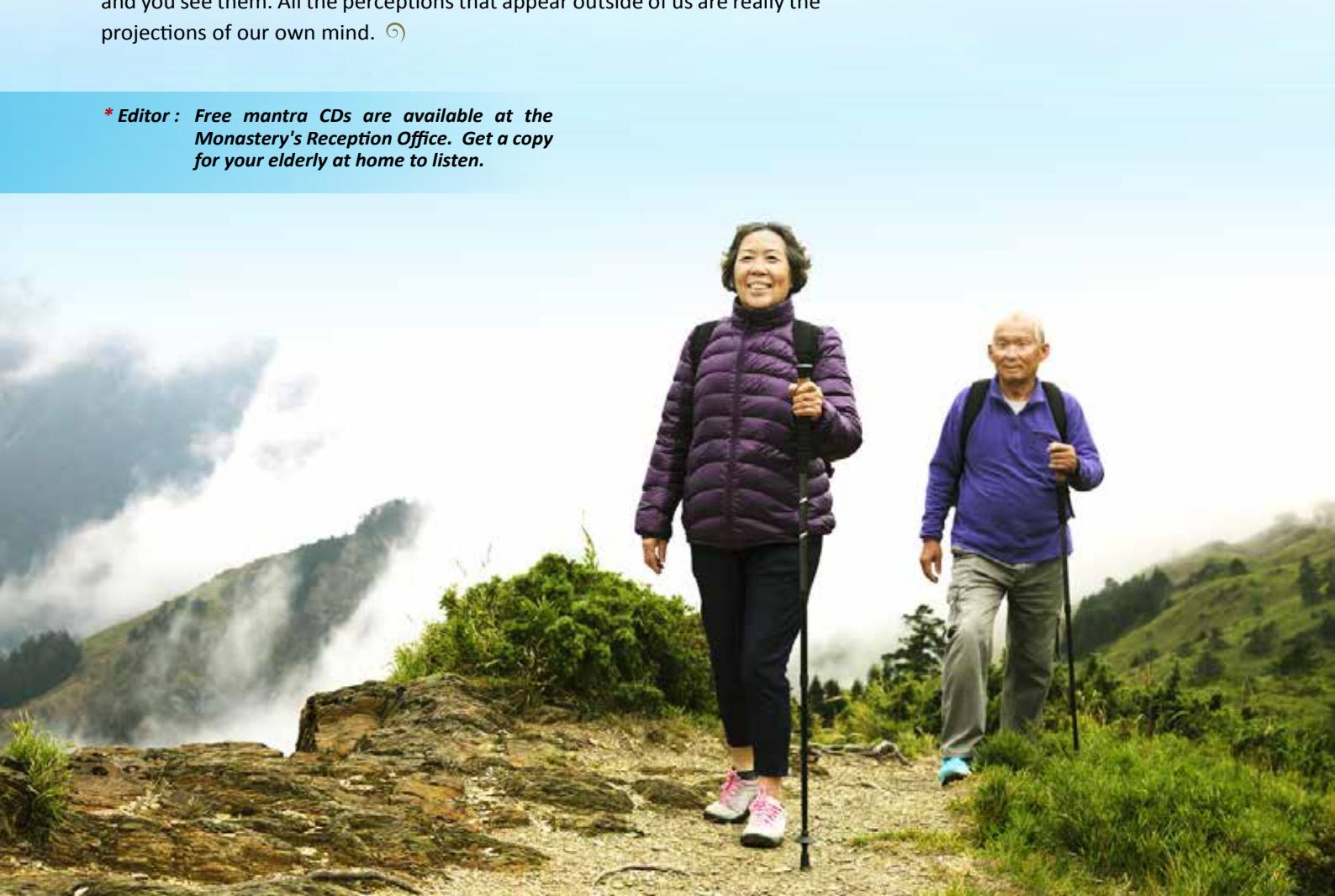


thinking of Amitabha Buddha and reciting his mantra, even as we work, upon waking up or in the evening. Think that when the time comes for us to pass away, Amitabha Buddha is our only friend who can help us. Amitabha Buddha and his retinue will bring us to his Pureland. Don't think of worldly friends. Contemplate on the Amitabha Sutra and the qualities of his Pureland. Think of all the happiness we will experience there and how lovely that Pureland is. Also look at the image of Amitabha Buddha before falling asleep and develop a strong trust.

It is important to habituate to visualising the Buddha and reciting his mantra while alive. This will release the bondage of your fixating mind from thinking and grasping which gives rise to afflictive emotions and suffering. Your mind will calm down due to the compassionate blessings and love of the Buddha and your own devotion. As a result, you will experience mental peace and later on, at the point of death, no suffering.

By preparing, it's possible that one will have a longer life, and when you live longer, you will experience less suffering in old age, because you start habituating to the Amitabha Buddha practice at a young age. Naturally, by the time you are older, your mind is more at peace. If you do not meditate or focus on the Buddha, then there is only self-grasping and that only gives rise to fear, as that is its nature. For instance, if you are alone in the house, you will be afraid, thinking that there are ghosts and evil spirits. But if you focus on the Buddha, there are no ghosts. If you focus on evil spirits, you are creating them with your mind and they come to you as your mind's reflection, and you see them. All the perceptions that appear outside of us are really the projections of our own mind. ☺

* Editor : Free mantra CDs are available at the Monastery's Reception Office. Get a copy for your elderly at home to listen.





text : Janice Goh and Esther Thien

Forging Happier Singaporean Seniors

If the results of the pilot Dementia Prevention Programme (DPP) in Jurong Point shopping mall are replicable, participants of the DPP music reminiscence group at Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery (KMSPKS) were probably having a field day belting out evergreen hits of the 50s and 60s and sharing the personal significance of these songs with one another.

Singing is one of the five components of the DPP launched at the monastery in July 2016. Strongly supported by the Abbot "as an initiative purely to benefit the seniors in our community to develop better wellness and health", the monastery also hopes to engage more elderly through this programme to forge spiritual fellowship for greater well-being. The 62 seniors, between the ages of 60 and 85 years, also participated in health education, meridian flapping exercise, mindful awareness practice and horticultural therapy.

"This programme helps to enliven the elderly, especially those who lack companionship and are often alone at home. They can make new friends here and reminisce about the good, old times though music. The meridian flapping exercise is very beneficial for their health too," shared Janice, a 63-year-old homemaker who is a regular volunteer at the monastery.

Envisioning an improved quality of life

The DPP is a culmination of the vision and efforts of a group of doctors who were inspired 12 years ago to improve the quality of life for patients at risk of developing dementia.

Back then, there was no apparent treatment for dementia, especially Alzheimer's disease. But doctors had observed that some patients in the National University Hospital (NUH) lived longer and enjoyed a better quality of life than others.

This group of health experts posited that if the risk factors for dementia, such as high blood pressure and diabetes, could be stabilised by educating seniors on their diet and exercise and engaging them on some form of mentally stimulating activities such as art and music therapy, their quality of life might improve.

Their idea finally took shape in 2013 when they launched the pilot DPP in Jurong Point. The programme was funded by Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple, Jurong Point mall management and a private donor. They started with about 50 high-risk patients aged 65 and above, after knocking on their doors and inviting them to participate in the programme at the mall.

Once they were on board, the seniors were free to choose activities that they preferred, such as tai-chi, music and art therapy. Nine months later, results from the study showed that some of the participants' memory had improved. In a follow-up study, which controlled the activities that the seniors could engage in, the group that practised mindfulness showed significant improvement in terms of neuroplasticity, i.e. the brain develops new circuits to remember things. The other group, which received health education, reaped similar but smaller improvement.

Distinct eldercare programme

Among the doctors was Professor Kua Ee Heok from the Department of Psychological Medicine at the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Yong Loo Lin medical school. Prof Kua was also a guest speaker at the 5th Buddhism & Science Symposium held in October 2015, where he spoke about mental well-being.

According to Prof Kua, the DPP stands out from the myriad of programmes for the elderly in the community in a few distinct ways. First, the programme is evidence-based, unlike common health tips which are not backed by research

yet widely adopted by the public at large. It is also a structured programme, which is evaluated rigorously. However, the senior consultant psychiatrist was upfront that the programme does not cure dementia.

"This is a preventive programme based on a non-drug approach to improve the quality of lives, prevent depression and stabilise chronic diseases," he said.

"Every year, 2500 new cases of dementia are diagnosed. Even if the programme reduces this number by just 10 percent while others benefit from a delay in the onset of the condition, it would still be wonderful."

"You'll pay less money to see the doctor," he quipped.

Dr Kua also shared that similar research is being carried out in Helsinki, Finland, and Paris, France, although it is confined to scientists and has not been translated into programmes for people in the community.

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Happier seniors

To date, about 400 seniors have participated in the DPP in Jurong Point. Prof Kua recounted a music reminiscence therapy session when everyone started singing the popular song, "The Moon Represents My Heart" (月亮代表我的心) by the late Teresa Teng.

"They don't just listen to the song. They are also prompted to talk about the song, like how they started listening to it," said Prof Kua.

"Singing is good for the seniors' memory and lifts their quality of life."

The seniors' love of such shared songs has spawned a choir. As part of a study, a group of these seniors was trained to sing by a professional conductor at the NUS concert hall. As a testament to their confidence and honed singing skills, these seniors went on to perform at Jurong Point's Chinese New Year celebrations this year, and sang for PM Lee Hsien Loong in June 2016.

The DPP is now also available at Queenstown and Eunos Community Centres (CCs), where nearly 140 people have signed up for it.

Prof Kua said the elderly at these two CCs have shown improved memories and reported higher levels of life satisfaction. They are also making more friends and creating social connectedness through the activities.

Mindful awareness practices

According to Mr Wee Sin Tho, a DPP workshop volunteer, who is also an adviser of the programme at KMSPKS, "Many people continue with the DPP programme at the CCs because of the mindful awareness component. They find that mindfulness practice helps them to relax and calm the mind. They feel more at ease, are more aware of their relationships and surroundings and sleep more easily. The elderly also become more understanding and appreciative, and discover more joy in life."

Mr Wee is most encouraged that despite their age and different faiths, the participants can relate to the mindfulness practice, free of religious labels and association.

"We are indeed able to transcend any doubt that mindfulness practice can be universal and embraced by the elderly from our multi-racial and multi-religious society."

In the Mindful Awareness Practice or MAP for short, the elderly learn to better cope with aches and pain, give up unhelpful emotions and find joy by listening with an open mind. They also learn to calm their mind when anxious or stressed by focusing their attention on the breath. They are encouraged to do this 'Mindfulness of the Breath' practice for at least 10 minutes, once a day.

In addition, they are taught techniques to eat and walk mindfully, to be more aware of their bodily sensations, surroundings and cultivate positive states of mind such as loving-kindness and compassion.

Mr Wee hopes that all the elderly participants and 26 DPP volunteers at the monastery can experience the same benefits of an enhanced quality of life and mental health.

DPP at the monastery

Prof Kua, too, is hopeful about the outcome of the DPP at the monastery.





"There is a big army of volunteers, courageous people, at the monastery, taking up the challenge. They are very enthusiastic and I'm sure they will do well. I hope the volunteers will continue to give their time to this cause," he said.

"Even the Abbot himself is very encouraging, which is very important. Being a non-governmental body, the monastery can be more flexible (in carrying out the programme)."

He added, "If the number of people with dementia is reduced, that would be wonderful. This would benefit their families as well as themselves because the volunteers will also age."

Challenges and sustainability

The main roadblocks that Prof Kua and his team have encountered so far were resistance from the elderly to undergo Magnetic Resonance Imaging or MRI for brain scans and blood tests. The doctors had to cajole them to do these procedures.

Sustaining and scaling the DPP may also pose a challenge. He said the sustainability of the programme hinged on identifying a strong leader to plan and rally the team together.

"This needs enthusiasm, so we need to meet the volunteers half-yearly to encourage them and provide refresher courses to improve their skills," he said, adding that the volunteers' communication skills would also affect the programme.

"There must also be consistency in the practice of mindfulness to maintain the quality of the practice."

Looking forward, he hopes that all CCs in Singapore can run the DPP.

He said, "This would be wonderful for the country in terms of dementia prevention and improving the quality of life for our people."

"It is also a way to de-stigmatise dementia." ☺

Editor: If you would like to enquire about the DPP or join as a DPP volunteer
email community@kmspks.org or call 6849 5317.

Ven Thubten Chodron explains why developing bodhicitta is our best insurance in old age.

The altruistic intention, or *bodhicitta* in Sanskrit, has incredible advantages, such as being able to purify negative karma very rapidly, creating vast amounts of merit, and gaining realisations of the path. Here are some other advantages.

1) We please the Buddhas

By having an altruistic intention, love and compassion, we endeavour to act constructively, which is especially pleasing to the Buddhas. **The Buddhas are delighted when we work for the benefit of others with a sense of altruism and compassion.** The Buddhas' entire focus is on benefiting sentient beings, so when we cherish others, cultivate bodhicitta, and act on it, we're helping to fulfil the Buddhas' aim.

2) Bodhicitta is our real friend that never deserts us

Ordinary friends come and go. They aren't completely reliable and aren't always with us. But when we have bodhicitta in our heart, it will always be there. No matter what happens, good or bad, bodhicitta is reliable and will always be present in our heart, to help us calm our mind and make our lives meaningful. It's our best friend that never judges us and always encourages us to do what is virtuous. Bodhicitta will never lead us astray.

3) Our lives become very purposeful

When we have altruism and compassion for others, our life becomes very purposeful. We have a sense of meaning in our lives; something that drives and directs our energy in a good direction. We feel that we can do something to benefit others. The situation in the world doesn't overwhelm us anymore, and we develop the ability to cope with it. This is really important as the world gets crazier. The crazier the world, the more important and necessary altruism, love and compassion are. When we see that sentient beings' minds are controlled by ignorance, anger and attachment, we understand suffering in a very deep way, and compassion will automatically arise.

The 10 Advantages of Bodhicitta

4) It is the best way to serve others

If you wish to help your family, the best way to help is through altruism, love and compassion. When we are overwhelmed by self-centredness, we do things that harm our family, but when we cultivate the aspiration to become a Buddha for the benefit of others, we benefit our family members as well as everyone else. If we want to help our country, the best way is through having compassion and bodhicitta. When somebody in a family, or the society has an altruistic intention, that person's actions automatically contribute to the benefit of the family, the society and the world. Therefore, the best way to really serve others is to change our mind to one of altruism.

5) We become balanced and relate to people in a direct and straightforward way

If we don't have altruism and try to be people-pleasers to win others' approval, our actions will be based on wanting or looking for something in return. Even though we may try to help, it's not going to work well because our motivation is not genuine kindness—we want something for ourselves. When we have an altruistic intention and help simply because we want others to be happy and free of suffering, then our actions are beneficial and no ego trips are involved.

6) We will not feel alienated or discouraged

When we have bodhicitta, we won't feel alienated or discouraged anymore. They say that bodhicitta is a very good natural anti-depressant. We get depressed when we are overwhelmed by situations, and feel helpless. When we have a sense of altruism, we realise that there's a lot that we can do, and we feel encouraged and uplifted. We see a path out of misery and confusion, hence there is no reason to be depressed. Although the path may take a long time to accomplish, we're joyful because we know we're going in the right direction. By the force of love and compassion, we develop the inner strength and self-confidence to go through difficulties with a balanced mind.

7) Bodhicitta eliminates fear

Some people are very fearful and anxious about what could happen in their lives. Fear comes when there is a lack of clarity, when we have a lot of attachment and are afraid of losing the things we are attached to. Fear obscures our mind so we can't find our own internal resources to help us deal with a situation. But when we develop love and compassion for others, there is a sense of confidence that eliminates feelings of weakness and confusion. We are connected with our own internal resources, we trust our own wisdom, and we know when to ask others for help. Because we are not attached to our own ego, body, possessions or reputation, we don't fear losing them. We know that even if things don't work out the way we want them to, the world won't end. Altruism makes the mind very courageous, strong and optimistic.



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8) Bodhicitta frees us from our pride, conceit & arrogance

When we are altruistic, we look upon others as equal to ourselves; we recognise that everyone—no matter who they are—is the same in terms of wanting happiness and freedom from suffering. Because we see ourselves and others as equal, there's no reason for pride to arise. As we are not seeking a good reputation and praise, we don't need to put on a false air of arrogance. We really don't care if we have a fantastic reputation or not because we see that reputation is rather meaningless. Neither a good nor a bad reputation makes us healthy, gives us a long life, or makes us closer to awakening.

9) “Old age” insurance

Bodhicitta is also very good old age insurance. If you have an attitude of love and compassion, you don't need to worry about who's going to look after you when you're old because you have spent your life cultivating a kind attitude towards others and others are naturally attracted to you. They want to reciprocate your kindness.

10) A very good antidote for loneliness

When we feel lonely, we feel disconnected from others because there isn't a bond of kindness. But when we have bodhicitta, we definitely feel connected to other people because we realise we are all the same in wanting happiness and not wanting pain. Our heart opens towards others, and we become aware and conscious of the kindness we receive from friends, relatives, strangers and even enemies. Bodhicitta gives us the strength to overcome wallowing in self-pity when challenging situations crop up. We remember that throughout our lives, we have been the recipients of so much kindness from others. The fact that we are alive now proves this, because without others' kindness we would not have food, clothing, shelter and medicine. We would not know how to read or write. Everything we know and all our talents come due to the help, encouragement and support of others. Instead of thinking we are the recipients of a lot of cruelty, we realise that others have been extraordinarily kind to us.

What we emphasise and pay attention to influences our experience. Continuously recalling all that we have received from others eliminates our feelings of alienation and loneliness. Instead we feel grateful and reach out to connect with others. Of course, they appreciate this and respond with kindness. ☺



The Beginner's Mind

The beginner's mind, or a clear mind, is the most natural thing in the world. It is a child's default mental state that is open and receptive, with non-reactive, non-conceptual awareness. Many of us have had it conditioned out of us long before adulthood. It is rare for someone to still hold the beginner's mind in his or her golden years and experience life directly.

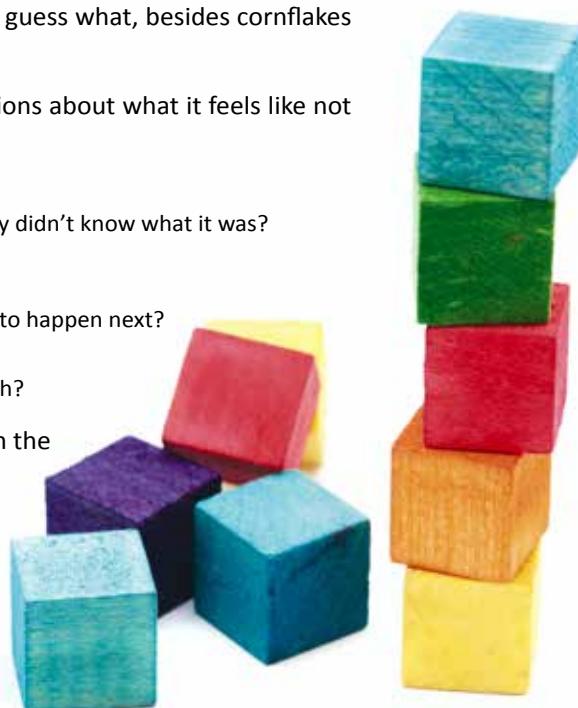
Our modern lifestyle has conditioned children to aim for worldly success: many get good grades, make it to the school team, perform solo at concerts or accomplish amazing feats of community service. It comes relatively easily to our children as they have seen their parents model achievement since they were little. But the flip side is, in doing so, we sometimes make natural things — like finding the way back to a childlike, open and curious beginner's mind — very, very hard.

Try the simple game below, to guide your little ones to banish preconceived ideas and concepts to look at something with fresh eyes.

WHAT'S INSIDE THE BOX

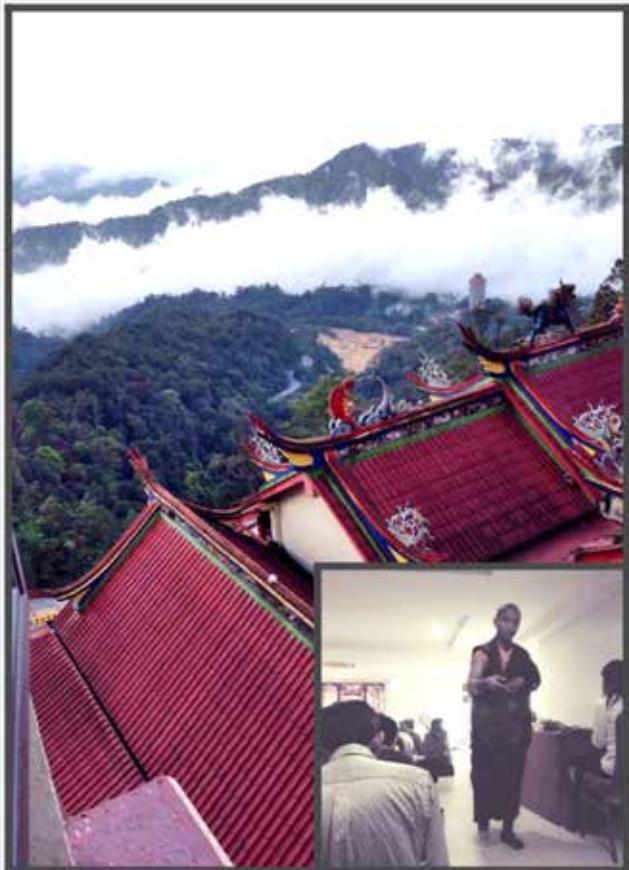
- 1 Take an empty box (e.g. a cornflakes or biscuit box) and put something fun inside. You can put a mini toy car, shiny glass trinkets or colourful building blocks etc.
- 2 Cover the box, and place it on a table. Ask your children to guess what, besides cornflakes or biscuits, could possibly be inside the tall box.
- 3 After everyone has had a turn guessing, ask the kids questions about what it feels like not to know what's in the box:
 - Do they want to know?
 - Have there been times when something was going on and they didn't know what it was?
 - What was that like?
 - How does it feel to be really curious and eager to discover?
 - How do their bodies feel when they don't know what is going to happen next?
 - Is it comfortable, or uncomfortable?
 - Do they feel excited? Or experience butterflies in their stomach?
- 4 Feel the energy and thrill of not knowing that is pulsating in the room together with the children, and take it all in.
- 5 Now, look inside the box together. ☺

by : Susan Kaiser Greenland, author of *The Mindful Child*.
www.susankaisergreenland.com



The Tibetan Sang Offering and *Vimalakirti Sutra*

Dr Vincent Lim highlights the Tibetan Buddhist practice of sang (smoke offering) to interesting references in a popular Mahayana sutra.



One year ago, I looked out of the window after a morning session of sang offering at a mountain retreat in Genting Highlands, Malaysia, and I saw cloud-covered peaks and mist-shrouded forests. The air was cool and crisp, and my mind was calm and clear. It felt auspicious, as if all the gods were really present physically to receive the offerings, and so I was inspired to take up the practice myself.

What is sang offering?

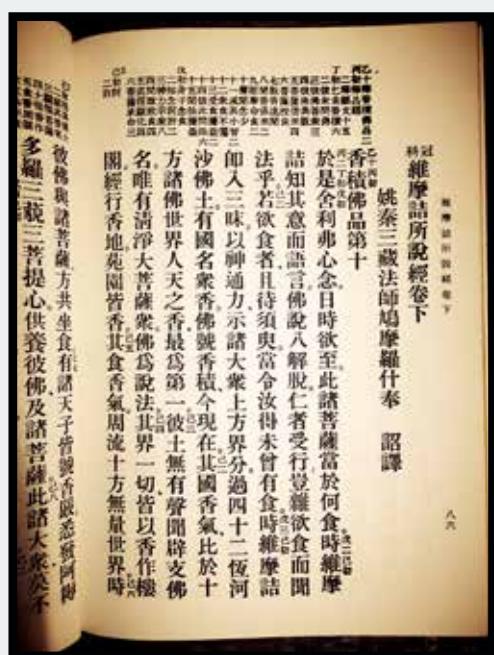
Sang offering is a smoke offering practice that is peculiar to Tibetan Buddhism, and seems to be most popular in the Nyingma School. In brief, it is performed by kindling a flame to burn aromatic wood, especially juniper, and supplemented by powdered grains and herbs and other precious substances.

What is its significance?

Through skilful and expansive visualisation, and by blessing it with mantras, the smoke is imagined to be “vast clouds of Samantabhadra’s offerings”, transforming into whatever objects desired by the guests. It pleases them, and purifies them at the same time.

The outer vessel, the environment is thus transformed into a pure Buddhafield, while the inner contents, all the beings, are realised as the form of enlightened deities.

After all, as Shantideva has said, generosity is an attitude of mind rather than the mere physical act, and the merits are proportional to the scope of your mind, and the purity of your intention.



Who is it offered to?

This magical smoke is offered to the four types of guests—the enlightened beings who are the field of merits, Dharma protectors and gods, sentient beings of the six realms who are the objects of compassion, and karmic creditors.

Some Chinese Mahayanists might speculate that the practice of sang offering is a Tibetan invention. However, there are actually references to sang offering in the Vimalakirti Sutra, known in Chinese as 维摩诘经. This sutra is available in both the Chinese and the Tibetan Tripitaka, and is well-known to scholars from both sides.

In chapter 10 of that sutra, there is mention of a particular Buddhafield in the zenith, called the world of Fragrance Accumulation Buddha (香积佛国), where beings are sustained by inhaling fragrances, and where the presiding Buddha teaches the Dharma through the use of fragrances. Below are excerpts of the relevant passages, in italics, translated by Robert Thurman.

Then, the Licchavi Vimalakirti set himself in such a concentration and performed such a miraculous feat that those bodhisattvas and those great disciples were enabled to see the universe called Sarvagandhasugandha, which is located in the direction of the zenith, beyond as many Buddhafields as there are sands in forty-two Ganges rivers. There the Tathagata named Sugandhakuta (Fragrance Accumulation) resides, lives, and is manifest. In that universe, the trees emit a fragrance that far surpasses all the fragrances, human and divine, of all the Buddhafields of the ten directions. In that universe, even the names “disciple” and “solitary sage” do not exist, and the Tathagata Sugandhakuta teaches the Dharma to a gathering of bodhisattvas only. In that universe, all the houses, the avenues, the parks, and the palaces are made of various perfumes, and the fragrance of the food eaten by those bodhisattvas pervades immeasurable universes.

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Then, the Tathagata Sugandhakuta poured some of his food, impregnated with all perfumes, into a fragrant vessel and gave it to the incarnation-bodhisattva. And the ninety million bodhisattvas of that universe volunteered to go along with him: "Lord, we also would like to go to that universe Saha, to see, honour, and serve the Buddha Shakyamuni and to see Vimalakirti and those bodhisattvas.

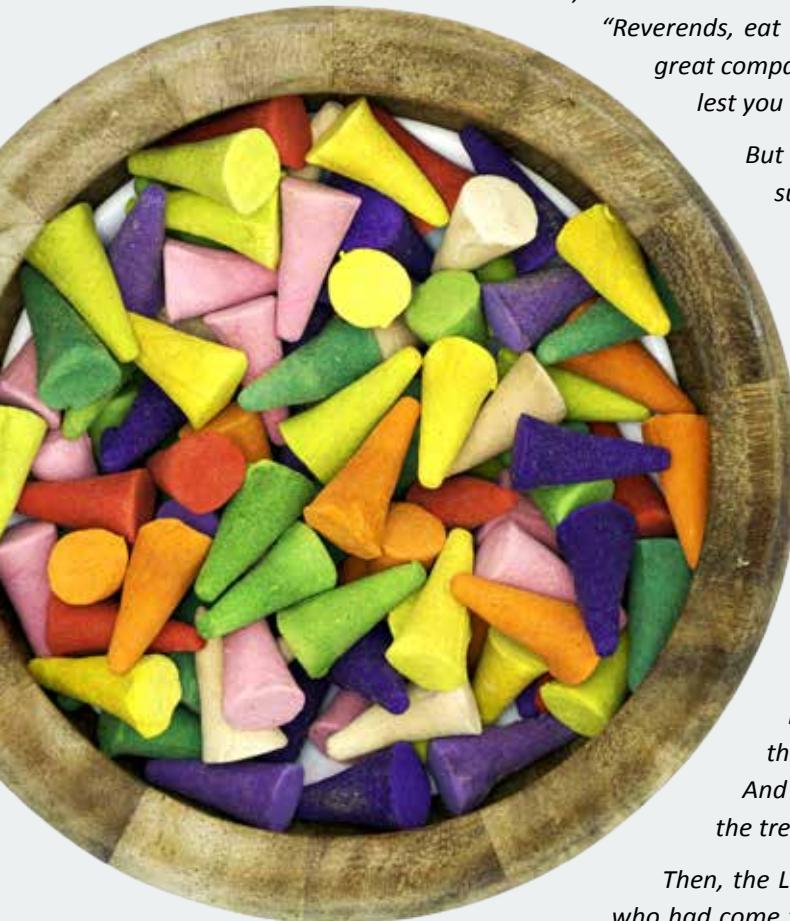
Then, the incarnation-bodhisattva gave the vessel full of food to Vimalakirti, and the fragrance of that food permeated the entire great city of Vaisali and its sweet perfume spread throughout one hundred universes. Within the city of Vaisali, the brahmans, householders, and even the Licchavi chieftain Candracchakra, having noticed this fragrance, were amazed and filled with wonder. They were so cleansed in body and mind that they came at once to the house of Vimalakirti, along with all eighty-four thousand of the Licchavis.

*Then, the Licchavi Vimalakirti spoke to the elder Sariputra and the great disciples:
"Reverends, eat the food of the Tathagata! It is ambrosia perfumed by the great compassion. But do not fix your minds in narrow-minded attitudes, lest you be unable to receive its gift."*

But some of the disciples already had the thought: "How can such a huge multitude eat such a small amount of food?" Then the incarnation-bodhisattva said to those disciples, "Do not compare, venerable ones, your own wisdom and merits with the wisdom and the merits of the Tathagata! Why? For example, the four great oceans might dry up, but this food would never be exhausted. If all living beings were to eat for an aeon an amount of this food equal to Mount Sumeru in size, it would not be depleted. Why? Issued from inexhaustible morality, concentration, and wisdom, the remains of the food of the Tathagata contained in this vessel cannot be exhausted." Indeed, the entire gathering was satisfied by that food, and the food was not at all depleted. Having eaten that food, there arose in the bodies of those bodhisattvas, disciples, Sakras, Brahma, Lokapalas, and other living beings, a bliss just like the bliss of the bodhisattvas of the universe Sarvasukhamandita. And from all the pores of their skin arose a perfume like that of the trees that grow in the universe Sarvagandhasugandha.

Then, the Licchavi Vimalakirti knowingly addressed those bodhisattvas who had come from the Buddhafield of the Lord Tathagata Sugandhakuta: "Noble sirs, how does the Tathagata Sugandhakuta teach his Dharma?" They replied, "The Tathagata does not teach the Dharma by means of sound and language. He disciplines the bodhisattvas only by means of perfumes.

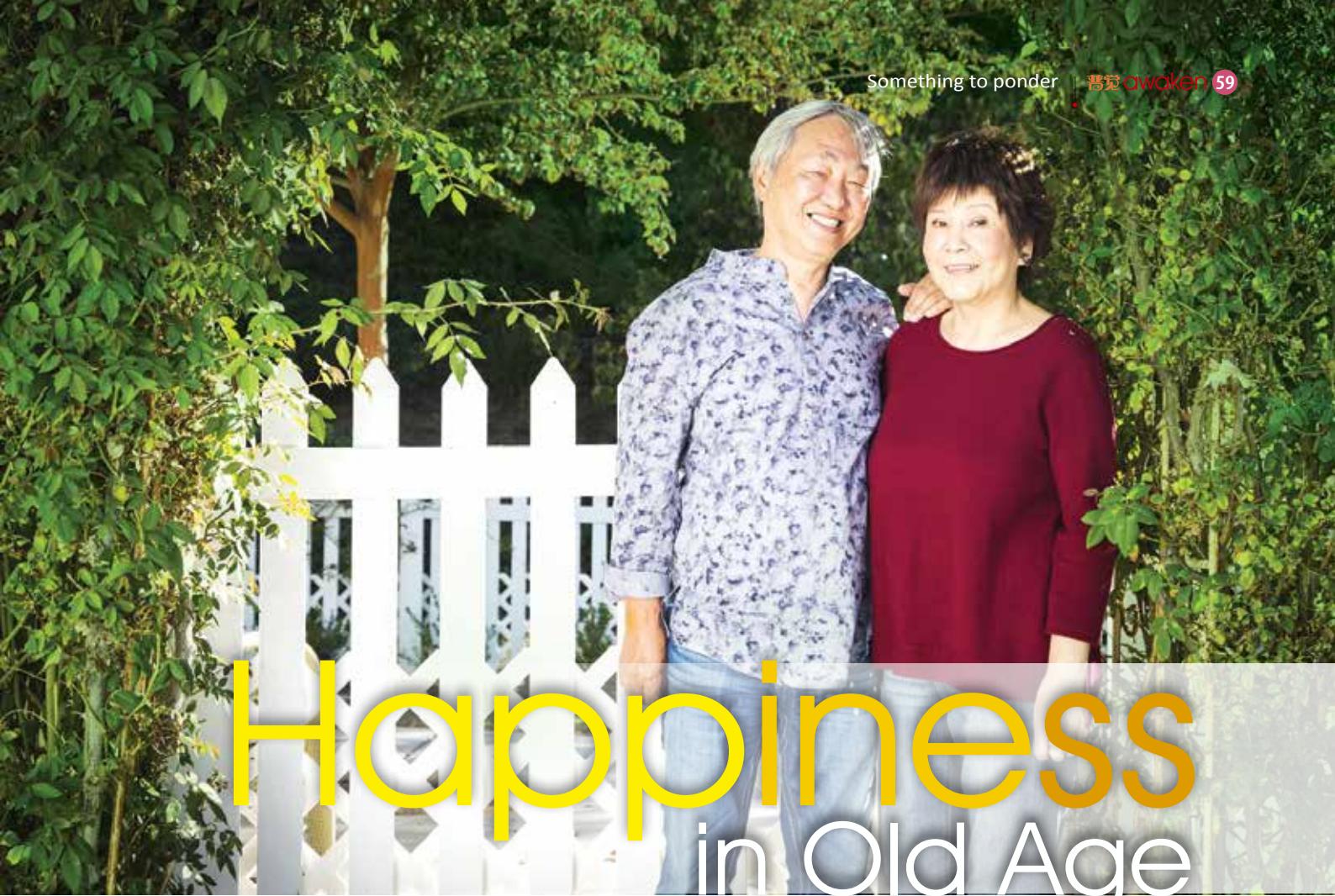
At the foot of each perfume-tree sits a bodhisattva, and the trees emit perfumes like this one. From the moment they smell that perfume, the bodhisattvas attain the concentration called 'source of all bodhisattva-virtues.' From the moment they attain that concentration, all the bodhisattva-virtues are produced in them." ☺



Scan this to find out more about the practice of sang offering.



Scan this to read the full text of chapter 10 of Vimalakirti Sutra, as translated by Robert Thurman.



Happiness in Old Age

text : Dr Ang Beng Choo

An old lady went to an ENT doctor and complained, "Doctor, something is wrong with my stomach and I fart frequently. Luckily my flatulence doesn't bother others as it never smells and is always silent. I've farted at least five times here since I came in but you didn't notice it."

The doctor said, "I see, take these pills and come back to see me next week."

When the lady went back to the doctor the following week, she said, "Doctor, what did you give me? Now my farts, though still silent, stink terribly."

The doctor said, "Good! We've cleared up your sinuses, let's work on your hearing."

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Three senior citizens were having a conversation. One said, "I have difficulty passing urine." Another complained, "I have constipation." The third one just listened and smiled.

"Don't you have any problem?"

"Yes, I have one too."

"You have problem passing urine?"

"No, I pass urine as easily as turning on the tap at 6 a.m. every morning."

"You are constipated?"

"No, I relieve my bowels at 6.30 a.m. daily."

"Then what is your problem?"

"I only wake up after 7 a.m."

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Besides these common ailments, many senior citizens suffer from poor memory. For me, I remember things that happened when I was 10 years old, but forgot where I

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placed my glasses five minutes ago. My late aunt was worse. She often forgot to turn off the tap and the gas cooker after using them. No wonder people said, "Keeping an old chap at home is like holding on to a time bomb."

Children are like rugby balls. Everyone fights to hug them. Youths are like basketballs. Everybody rushes to catch hold of them. Old people are like volleyball. Everyone tries to push them away. Old and sick people are like soccer balls. Everyone runs to kick them off. Physically weak, mentally frail, old people are seen to be a burden on family and society.

Under such circumstances, how can we live a happy life in old age?

As Buddhists, we know happiness is a state of mind. If we can cultivate positive thinking, we will not be miserable but will be contented and happy with whatever conditions we are in.

The Buddha said, "This is an impermanent world". When we were born, we started walking on the path towards death, through old age and illness. Nobody can run away from it.

Ageing is a progressive process. The cells in our bodies are changing and being replaced every moment. Researchers told us that all our body cells are fully replaced once every seven years. The compliments "you never grow old" or "you still look the same," are kind words to cheer us up. The song "Tomorrow will be better" is just a wish. Although I am not sure if my tomorrow will be better, I am sure I will definitely be older. However, in old age, we are blessed in many areas:

① Money

Money is not everything but without money we can do nothing. Many old people in Singapore are retired with Central Provision Fund

(CPF) or pension, and own their homes that can be turned into cash. The elderly are entitled to discounts for many things such as MRT and bus rides, movie tickets, buffets, purchases at supermarkets, cruises, medical treatment and

many more. If we use our money wisely, we can still live a simple but quality life. Of course, we should not overspend and exhaust our savings before we pass away. It is also not necessary to be stingy and leave the bulk of our life savings behind.

Since our physical and mental abilities are not as good as they used to be, be contented and kind to ourselves. Never go into high risk investments or chase fame, both of which are energy-consuming, health-harming and fleeting. They give us needless stress and tension. We are like antique cars, beautiful classics that we certainly would not want to risk in an F1 race.

② Commitments

With grown-up children, our commitments and responsibilities have been relinquished. We have a lot of time at our disposal. Don't use this extra time to worry about illnesses or how other people treat us. These would cause unhappiness.

Instead, if we use this extra time to upgrade our knowledge and skills, such as learning a new language, internet, calligraphy, photography etc, we can delay dementia.





④ Conducive to Buddhist practice and meditation

The best part of being old is that we can practise Buddhism and meditation with less distraction. As most of our six senses (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind) are getting dull and blunt, we learn equanimity more easily than others. As we cannot see clearly, we cannot differentiate between beautiful and ugly faces, or smiling and unfriendly looks. Regardless, we smile back at them all. It may clear up misunderstanding and hatred. With poor hearing and poor memory, when people say unkind words, we either cannot hear them or forget soon after. With

a weak sense of smell, sweet or foul smells during meditation will not affect us. All food tastes the same as we have lost most of our taste buds. Due to indigestion, we tend to eat less, which is a good practice especially before meditation. While we cannot move fast because of joint problems, the pace is most suitable for practising walking meditation.

Although people say, "Patients with prolonged illnesses normally give rise to unfilial children," this statement is not cast in stone. It is nobody's fault that one becomes sick. We should not feel bad to be a burden to our family members. Instead be appreciative and not overly demanding of their care and love.

Many people are afraid of death. Actually, we experience death every night. Death is like sleeping in bed, and when we get up in the morning,

it is a new day. When we wake up from death, it is a new life. Look at babies—they cry at birth because they fear an unknown world. But we all know that there is nothing to fear. There are always groups of people, the "parents", "relatives" and "friends" who are waiting eagerly for the babies. Under their love and care, the babies will grow up and develop into strong, confident and responsible adults. The old and sick body is like an old and problematic car. When it cannot function anymore, it will be better to let it go and get a healthy new body. **Viewing it positively**

and passing away gracefully at the end of our lives will give us peace and a good rebirth.

There are only three important things in this world. One relates to ourselves—our thoughts, speech and behaviour which we can control. One relates to others—their thoughts, speech and actions which we have no control. The third one relates to nature—natural phenomena which again are out of our control. Let us live in accordance with the Dharma, and catch hold of the present moment to take care of things we can control. Create our own well-being and find our own happiness through wholesome thoughts, speech and actions. Show a sense of humour in the face of unkind words or acts, and show our generosity with a smile that will make our wrinkled and freckled faces less ugly. With these, we will be happy every day and enjoy life into the beautiful sunset. ☺

We will become more effective and efficient in bridging the communication gap with our younger generation. It will also facilitate passing on our moral and cultural values to them. We can do things that will benefit others, such as helping our children to keep an eye on our grandchildren, doing social or religious work where our services are valued. However, we have to remind ourselves of our physical limitations and not take on tasks that are beyond ourselves.

③ Freedom from stress

We are the most senior in the house. We do not have to be accountable to anyone for where we are going and how we spend our money. We can make small mistakes with no consequence of being nagged at. There is no one to look over our shoulders or pressurise us. Released from these stresses, we can live a carefree and relaxed life.



Ageing Gracefully: There's No Better Time to Start than Now

text : Dr Lee Foong Min

H ave you seen the rabbit-squirrel-bird-hermit crab advertisements recently? Or the one with pictures of happy young people declaring “We are retiring”? Maybe another that asked, “How will the future you thank you?” The message is clear—retiring may be some (or many more) years ahead, but it is prudent to plan for it now—even when you are young.

Financial planning for retirement is, to me, ‘ageing gracefully financially’. Now even these brainy maths experts and economists are saying it: ageing gracefully financially starts now, yes, even if you are still young. That ties in beautifully with the rest of the “ageing gracefully” concept: want to still have plump bouncy cheeks and wrinkle-free porcelain complexion when you are in your 40s? Start moisturising and pumping up your collagen now. Want to have flat six-pack abs even in your 50s? Start working on those cores now. Want to travel the world well into your 60s? Train to maintain your mobility... now. Want to be that wise, cheerful and charming senior who inspires? Ditch those negativities ... NOW. All these goals have one thing in common—start now, because before we know it, things (fats and bad habits) start to harden and will be so much more difficult to combat “when we get old”.

**And the catch is, old age isn't some period in future—
we are growing old day after day.**

In Buddhism, the body and the mind are connected as one system. Hence physical changes will have an impact on our mind which is a sum total of our emotions, thoughts and mental habits. These physical changes do not only affect our mobility and aesthetic appearances, they also affect us emotionally and psychologically. I'll share two real life stories, common among our seniors:

Madam A is in her 80s. She used to be a very successful fundraiser in the local temple circuit. But, when she went into old age, she also developed depression. She was not able to be as active as before and she felt insecure: no fund-raising, no clout, out of the groove. She interpreted it as a loss of respect and stature, no more recognition from her temple friends.

Madam B is in her 70s. She has mild dementia and is angry with herself because she could not clean up her house as efficiently as she used to. She cannot dust those hard-to-reach corners and mop the floor every day now because she has aches and pains every other day. She cannot get from point A to point B as quickly as she did in the past. These made her really grouchy and depressed.

One of the mental conditions that plague many old people is

depression. Depression sets in not only because they have to deal with physical changes but also because of emotional issues that come with 'retirement' when they are no longer 'purposefully employed'. A sense of meaninglessness coupled with impending loss of financial independence often leave old people feeling dejected and gloomy. They feel they have become useless. Physical and mental inhibitions enervate these old people so that they while their precious time away in inactivity and melancholy. And so the vicious cycle continues.

The depression Madams A and B face is not a mere result of their recent physical and mental states. It is the uppermost layer of stubborn visceral fats of negativities, concepts and views accumulated over their lifetime. Just as the quickest way to get rid of visceral fat is to not allow it to accumulate, the quickest way to get rid of insidious mental habits is to learn how to not let them grow —by cultivating good mental habits.

I am also trying to highlight with these examples the need to be mindful and aware of what we can do in different stages of our lives, to learn to let go of our past glories and look into what we can do right now, in this very stage of our life. This letting-go and mindful awareness can't arise in us like an app on our mobile phones. We have to start cultivating these good mental habits right now, so that we are not haunted by our glorious past like Madams A and B, we don't allow our glorious past to stop us from living purposefully now in some other ways.

The late Mr Lee Kuan Yew outlined yet another type of old people who,

despite having things to do to while away their time, are still susceptible to degeneration like their melancholic peers. In his characteristic brutal honesty, he said in a Facebook entry:

"If the mindset is that when I reach retirement age 62, I'm old, I can't work anymore, I don't have to work, I just sit back, now is the time I'll enjoy life, I think you're making the biggest mistake of your life. After one month, or after two months, even if you go travelling with nothing to do, with no purpose in life, you will just degrade, you'll go to seed. The human being needs a challenge, and my advice to every person in Singapore and elsewhere: Keep yourself interested, have a challenge."

He also advised, and this is not alien to Buddhists:

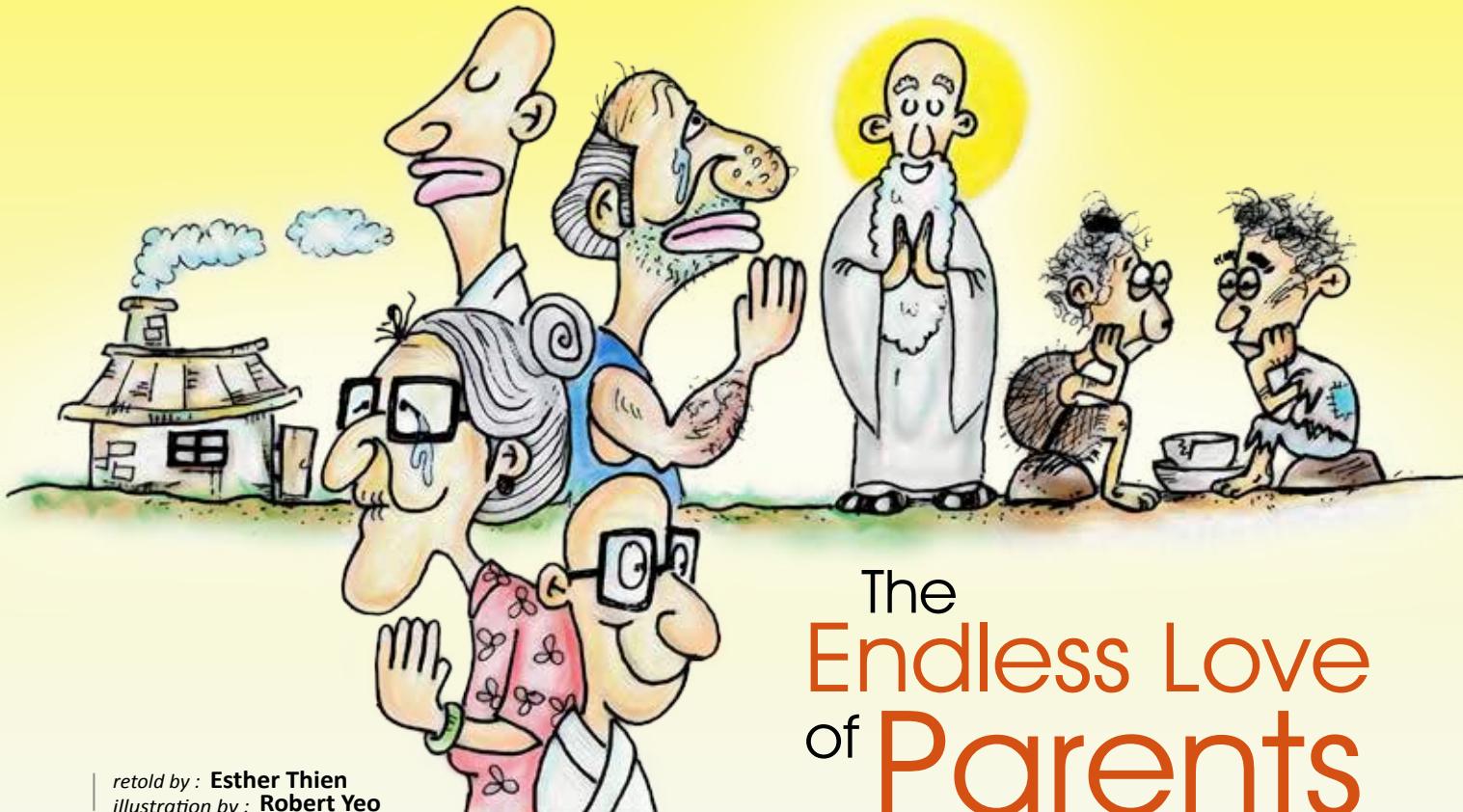
"I think the most important thing in ageing is you have got to understand yourself. ... So, as you acquire more knowledge, you then craft a programme for yourself to maximise what you have."

To us Buddhists, these programmes should help us learn the reality about 'ourselves'. Learning about ourselves keeps our minds buoyant. **Keep track of negative emotions so that they do not hijack our mental health. Re-invent ourselves by shedding mental afflictions consistently, so that we advance towards enlightenment stage by stage, life by life. This, I think, is the cool Buddhist way to "age gracefully".**

Let me share Mr LKY's parting words in that Facebook article:

"Have a purpose-driven life and finish well, my friends." ☺





The Endless Love of Parents

| retold by : Esther Thien
illustration by : Robert Yeo

Once, there was a childless couple. After many years of prayer, they finally conceived a son. They raised him with great love and devotion, but the child grew up to be selfish and greedy. When the son got married, he secretly sold off his parents' farmland and cattle, and absconded with the money with his wife. The elderly couple was left with nothing but their small house.

Although angry, betrayed and hurt, the couple still loved their son very much, and expected him to return soon. When there was no sign of their beloved son and his wife after a long time, the couple prayed for the youngsters' well-being: "May their lives be free of hardship, hunger, disasters and illnesses."

When their savings were used up, the elderly couple had no choice but to sell their house. Eventually, even that sum of money was depleted. Fortunately, a nearby temple took them in, so the elderly

couple did not have to roam the streets homeless. The mother worked in the kitchen while the father collected firewood and did other chores. A few years later, the couple passed away one after the other. They were reborn in a nearby village as neighbours, and both ended up becoming monks at that very temple.

One day, the younger of the two monks chanced upon a very poor, elderly couple in a dilapidated hut huddling together. They looked so sick and impoverished that you could see their bones visibly. The wife wore an old rice sack with holes cut out for her head and arms, while the husband wore rags that looked like they were strung together. The couple took turns to wear the rags, and the one wearing it would beg for food.

The younger monk told the older one about the elderly couple upon his return to the temple, and said

that they would probably die if nothing was done to help them. Just then, their Master entered the room. After hearing what the young monk recounted, he sighed and said, "There's no escaping from karma. In your past life, you two were a married couple, and the elderly couple were your son and daughter-in-law."

The young monks were shocked and heartbroken when they heard the full story from their teacher.

"Why did they still suffer such an ill fate with all our prayers for them?" asked the older of the two monks.

"People receive things in proportion to their deeds. You two have received the fruits of what you did, and they're receiving the fruits of what they did. Although you wanted them to lead a better life, their hearts were so full of greed, anger and foolishness that they were unable to receive your prayers and compassion," answered their Master sadly.

"How can we help them?" cried the two monks.

"They need to do something for others. All their lives they've thought of only themselves. Without the virtue that comes from generosity, it'll be hard to lead them forward. Do they have anything?" said their teacher.

"No," answered the younger monk, "just the rags they wore and a rice sack for a blanket."

"That will do. Go back and have them donate their rags. It's everything they own, so that's a huge donation from them. With your help, they may break through the damage created by their greed and desire," sighed their teacher, tears welling up in his eyes.

Holding back his tears, the younger monk went to the old couple and told them to donate their only set of filthy, threadbare clothes. Complaining bitterly, the old man took off his rags and threw the stinky clothes at the monk's feet. Then, the old couple cut the rice sack equally and used it to cover their private parts.

The younger monk took the rags back to the temple. Together with the older monk, they washed and boiled the rags, then used them to clean the Dharma hall and the monk's quarters. They did this morning and night until the rags were useless even for cleaning. Then, the monks burned it and drank the ashes mixed with water.

In the past as parents and in this life as monks, their love was that deep and unconditional. Some days passed, and the villagers went to check on the old beggars when they didn't see them around. They found

the old couple burning with fever and decided to take turns feeding and looking after them.

Receiving so much kindness, the old couple thought of how they had treated their own parents. They visited the temple and asked for the young monk who came by months before.

"We have done terrible things, and we experience immense suffering as a result. But then you came and everything changed. Although we only donated our rags, the merit of that alone has caused us to live comfortably these past few months. We did a horrible thing to our parents, and left them with nothing. I wondered what happened to them?" sobbed the old couple.

"Your parents are right in front of you! They are these two monks. Although their appearance has changed, their love and prayers for you are complete and unconditional," said the Master.

The old couple couldn't believe their ears. They fainted, and sobbed when revived. In that instant, they saw all the suffering they had caused their parents, as well as the blessings they had thrown away and wished to follow a wiser path. They then died in the arms of the monks who had been their parents, bathed in their love and compassion. ☺

Instead of curses, the parents embraced their wayward children with love. They viewed everything that had happened as their own karma. Rather than being angry or depressed, they responded wisely entrusting everything back to their true nature, and freed their children from ignorance and misguided views.

Although we do things for others, ultimately we are the one who will benefit. If we do something harmful, it doesn't just fade away. Eventually, it will all return to us.

Understanding this, one will be diligent and do one's very best; one will be utterly sincere with everything that arises in one's life. Then the things you do for others will also benefit you.

If you only think about yourself and your own difficulties, while ignoring the situation of those around you, how is this correct? Even if you have only a little to eat, share it with those who have less. If everyone practises like this, there will be more than enough for everyone.

- Zen Master Daehaeng



Looking for something palatable for your elderly at home? Try our version of the brown rice porridge. Throw in red dates, beans and nuts, and you get a naturally sweetened brown rice porridge that is far from being bland. The use of millet also adds a smooth and creamy touch to its texture. Needless to say, it is a pot jam-packed with nutrients, suitable for both the young and old.



Wholesome Brown Rice Porridge 养生糙米粥

Ingredients :

- Mixture of long grain brown and white rice $\frac{3}{4}$ rice-measuring cup (120ml)
- Millet 2 teaspoons
- Red dates (pitted) 3
- Chickpeas, black beans, kidney beans, 1 small handful each
- Cashew nuts 1 handful
- Walnuts 5
- Filtered water 6 rice-measuring cups (960ml)
- Soya sauce (optional)

Method :

1. Wash and soak chickpeas, black beans and kidney beans overnight.
2. Wash rice then soak in filtered water for one to two hours before cooking.
3. To use rice cooker to cook porridge, bring water to boil in rice cooker. The water used for soaking rice can be used as part of the water for cooking.
4. Add all ingredients except soya sauce into boiling water.
5. Cook till porridge is soft and thickened. This takes about two and half hours.
6. A slow cooker could also be used. Cook porridge in slow cooker for approximately five hours, until desired softness and thickness is achieved.
7. Check approximately every half hour that porridge does not dry out before the desired texture is achieved. Add more hot water if required.
8. Porridge can be served as it is, with a drizzle of soya sauce, or eaten with simple vegetarian dishes. Serves three to four persons.

想要烹煮迎合家中年长者口味的一餐？何不尝试这道糙米粥，加入红枣、豆类、坚果，等丰富材料，让一般人认为枯燥乏味的糙米粥变得清甜美味；小米则有画龙点睛的作用，使整锅粥的口感变得绵密柔顺，营养丰富，老少咸宜。

材料：

- 白米掺长粒糙米 $\frac{3}{4}$ 米杯 (120ml)
- 小米2小匙
- 红枣3颗 (去核)
- 鹰嘴豆、黑豆与大红豆各1小把
- 腰果1把
- 核桃5颗
- 过滤水6米杯 (960ml)
- 酱油少许 (可省略)

做法：

- 1 将鹰嘴豆、黑豆与大红豆清洗后浸泡隔夜。
- 2 糙米清洗后浸在过滤水一至两小时。
- 3 电饭锅煮法：将水煮沸，部分水量可运用之前浸米的水。
- 4 除了酱油，把所有材料倒入锅中。
- 5 将粥煮至绵密浓稠，熬煮时间约两个半小时。
- 6 电子沙煲煮法：同样把水煮沸后，加入所有材料，熬煮时间约五小时。
- 7 约每半小时查看，粥在还未变软前，确保锅中水足够，需要时可添加热水。
- 8 依个人喜好，淋上少许酱油，或是搭配简单素菜，即可享用。(以上食谱为三至四人份量。)

Recipe & photos courtesy of 食谱 / 照片: Joyce T

预知更多纯素贴士，请浏览
For more vegan food ideas, check out
www.facebook.com/rejoyceveg/

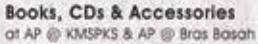


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- 能承诺服务至少一年

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kms Dharma School
光明山少儿佛学班

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 yakṣas, 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.

Please glue here and do not staple

Dear Reader, "The Gift of the Dharma Excels 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:

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Issue 36 / May 2016

Counselling & Social Services

心理辅导与社会服务



你是否经常觉得
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 情绪低落沮丧	Sad
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<input type="checkbox"/> 紧张	Tense
<input type="checkbox"/> 情感上碰到状况	Stuck in a relationship rut
<input type="checkbox"/> 需要一位聆听 心事的人	Simply in need of a listening ear

Whatever difficulties or situations you are experiencing, you do not have to face them alone. Call us to meet our counsellor. Together we will help you to weather the storms!

无论您有什么烦恼，都可以找我们倾诉。请立即致电与我们的辅导员预约。让我们协助您克服困境。

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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@kmfspks.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.kmfspks.org and click onto "kmfspks", followed by "Livelihood" to view our job vacancies.

WHAT'S NEW

text: Esther Thien



more than just about being busy and checking off accomplishments from our list. We should instead seek to live a meaningful life and develop strength and quietude of the mind.

Crafted from synthetic resin, you can select from numerous styles and sizes. Certain designs are accompanied by a pen holder. Packaged in a cute box, they are suitable as gifts for loved ones, and also perfect for your car's dashboard. While stocks last. ☺

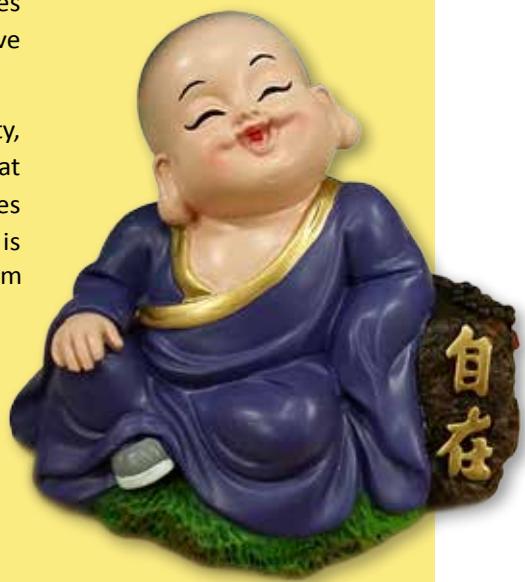
To find out more, please call Awareness Place stores at 6337 7582 or 6452 1732.



Cute Figurines to Recollect the Qualities of the Triple Gem

Want something adorable yet *Zen* to brighten up your office environment? You may like these little *sami* figurines that are *kawaii* yet silently meditative with their simple *Zen* phrases.

Meditate on words such as stability, tranquillity, blessing, calmness and what it means 'to be at ease'. The figurines act as little timely reminders that life is





Journey from Zanskar

Directed by: Frederick Marx

Zanskar, a remote border region in northwest India, is one of the remaining places on Earth where the original Tibetan Buddhist way of life still exists. While its inaccessibility and isolation

have protected it from cultural change, there are no schools there for the children to study their native language, religion, or cultural traditions.

In 2004, Geshe Lobsang Yonten and Lobsang Dhamchoe brought 17 children from Zanskar to Manali, where they could receive an education to protect the Tibetan Buddhist lineage. Their journey is documented on film by director Frederick Marx and cameraman Nick Sherman who followed their trek over the Himalayan mountain passes on yaks and horses.

While this journey from a faraway land may seem distant to us, I found myself relating to the rollercoaster of emotions captured in the documentary to my journey through life.

The journey out of Zanskar is fraught with crippling setbacks one after another. I found the cycle of having one's hopes repeatedly raised and shattered hauntingly familiar. I recalled the emotional turmoil of aged family members who encounter unending challenges that threaten to cripple them physically and mentally. They often slip into a vicious cycle of frustration and helplessness as they gradually lose control over their bodily functions.

I often asked myself: how would I deal with this plethora of crippling circumstances that will inevitably arrive with ageing? Watching the Zanskar people laugh in the face of crushing disappointment, seeing Geshe firmly place the children's future above his own life, inspired me.

In order to capture the journey, the filmmakers had to be right there with them. There were times when Marx himself thought he was going to die upon the snow-capped mountains. This brooding sense of uncertainty throughout the film echoes my observations of loved ones who, when plagued with one severe illness after another, can never know if the hurdles they are surmounting will mark the end of their lives.

The heartbreak scenes of parents having to part with their beloved children for decades, or possibly forever, reminded me of parents who send their children overseas for further studies.

This tale of kinship and sacrifice, of despair and uncertainty, does put our lives into perspective.

Catch *Journey from Zanskar* and 16 other Buddhist-themed films at THIS Buddhist Film Festival, 17-24 September 2016. There will be a post-screening discussion with Geshe Lobsang Yonten. More details at www.thisfilmfest.com.



Scan to watch the
online trailer

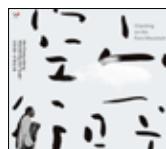
HEARD

Yogic breathing techniques and easy-listening music for good health

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Pranayama, an ancient yoga breathing technique practised by brahmas and yogis thousands of years ago, can rejuvenate one's body, bringing about physical and mental wellness. A monastic recovered from a serious liver disease after practising pranayama. He then taught this method to others to help them heal from various ailments. This DVD contains seven parts with detailed explanations given by the said monastic. Get it from the Awareness Place stores.



Chanting on the Pure Mountain

S\$19.90

Turn Left, Turn Right

S\$11.00

In *Chanting on the Pure Mountain*, listen to the soft melodies of the *gu qin* (Chinese zither) and the soulful singing of Ma Chang Sheng, a former rock-and-roll guitarist who now produces contemplative music after becoming a Tibetan Buddhist practitioner. Comprising 11 tracks, let the soothing rhythms drift you to a place of contentment with wind and mist weaving through a Zen landscape of fishermen and wood gatherers. Tracks three and five are my personal favourites!

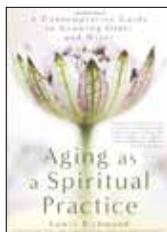
More relaxing piano tunes await you in the second album. The five soulful tunes bring to life the poignant tales of love lost in a chance passing.

The albums are available at all Awareness Place stores.

READ

Grow older and wiser with kindness and compassion

text : Esther Thien



Ageing as a Spiritual Practice

By Lewis Richmond

S\$26.00

Life is Spiritual Practice

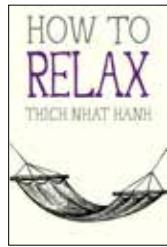
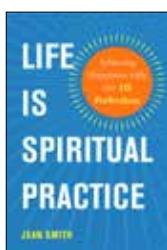
By Jean Smith

S\$22.90

How to Relax

By Thich Nhat Hanh

S\$16.00



If you need some help in ageing well, read *Ageing as a Spiritual Practice*. The first truth of ageing is also the first truth of Buddhist teaching: Everything changes. Branded as a contemplative guide to growing older and wiser, this book is a thoughtful, truthful and loving read that sheds light on the mystery of ageing with great kindness and wisdom. It offers an inner road map that reframes ageing as a time of fulfilment and peace. Even in the midst of difficulty, it is possible to find enjoyment in the gift of each moment and breath.

Practice and reflection on ageing is the first chapter you see in the second book, *Life is Spiritual Practice*. Drawing on more than 20 years of experience, Jean Smith guides us through the subtleties of the 10 perfections, incorporating useful exercises which we can practise in daily life to achieve lasting peace and happiness in life.

In the last book, *How to Relax*, well-known Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh provides concise and easy-to-understand meditative techniques that can help us to unwind, bringing balance and joy back into our lives.

All three books are available at Awareness Place stores. ☺

Wok Wisely: Chinese Vegetarian Cooking

S\$26.90



Looking to provide nourishing and palatable food for your family? Check out this cookbook for practical, responsible and healthy approaches to the vegetarian diet. It contains numerous light yet savoury Chinese recipes that are beneficial for the health of both young and old. Purchase it from any Awareness Place stores.

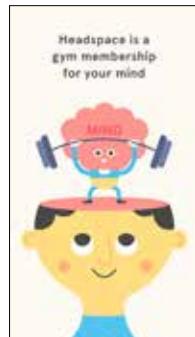
Dharma Apps

慧覺 awaken 71

Headspace

Headspace

Free



Marketed as "gym membership for the mind", *Headspace* is your very own personal trainer to help you train your mind. Using proven meditation and mindfulness techniques taught by a monastic, *Headspace* shows you how to train your mind for a healthier, happier and more enjoyable life.

This app starts with a free 10-session programme of 10-minute meditation a day. The sessions are immensely useful and relaxing. The app even comes with rewards, reminders, and a personalised progress page to track your stats. There is also a buddy system for you and your friend to motivate each other on your journeys.

After the free sessions, you can opt to buy and access hundreds of hours of original meditations, including guided and unguided, ranging from two to 60 minutes.

It is compatible with all devices. Available from Google Play. ☺

text: Esther Thien

Dharma Apps

Connecting you to the wisdom of the Dharma 24/7



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video to understand
the science behind
mindfulness

2016

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Calendar of Events

DHARMA

CEREMONY | PRAYERS

Medicine Buddha Prayer

3-9 October | Mon - Sun | 7.30pm

Venue : K MSPKS

Registration of names:

6 names - \$100; 2 names - \$50; 1 name - \$10

Registration : 3rd Aug onwards till fully registered

Enquiry : 6849 5333

Threefold Refuge & Five Precepts Ceremony

Through taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, one enters the Buddhist path, whilst undertaking the precepts (basic guidelines of moral conduct) helps one to develop mindfulness.

Oct | Sun | 12.30pm-2.30pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Hall of No Form

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspks.org



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.

Consecration: 4 Dec | Sun | 2pm

Prayers: 5-11 Dec | Mon - Sun

Venue : K MSPKS

Registration of names:

Inner Shrine :

\$38,000; \$22,000; \$12,000; \$6,000; \$3,800

Grand Shrine:

\$2,000; \$1,000

Shrine of Various Sutra:

\$300 (5-6names); \$200 (1-4 names); \$20 (1 name)

Pureland Shrine:

\$300 (5-6names); \$200 (1-4 names); \$20 (1 name)

Food Offering to Triple Gem:

\$3,000; \$2,000; \$1,000; \$500; any amount

Registration : 1 Sep onwards till fully registered

Enquiry : 6849 5333



Usher in 2017 with prayers and 108 "Bell Resonance"

Join us to make wholesome aspirations in our prayers and offerings.

31 Dec | Sat | 10pm - 2am

Venue : Hall of Great Compassion

Enquiry : 6849 5300

TALKS | WORKSHOPS | COURSES

English Buddhism Course Year 1 (Module 3)

Conducted by a Venerable

Understand the core principles in Buddhism, the Four Noble Truths and Noble Eightfold Path.

31 Aug – 26 Oct | Wed | 7.30pm-9pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspks.org

English Buddhism Course Year 2 (Module 3)

Conducted by a Venerable

Understand the Four Immeasurables, Three Poisons, Five Hindrances, Stages of Sainthood and the Bodhisattva Ideal including the Six Perfections.

29 Aug – 7 Nov | Mon | 7.30pm-9pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspks.org

Spiritual Group Cultivation (Open to all ages)

Join us every Sunday for a short chanting, short guided meditation and a discussion led by a Venerable. No prior registration is required.

Every Sun | 2pm-3.30pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom 5

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sgc@kmspks.org

English Dharma Talk – The Collapse of Buddhism in India

by Yick Keng Hang

15 Sep | Thu | 7.30pm-9pm

Venue : APWBC | Free (Registration is required)

Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspks.org

English Dharma Talk – The History of Chinese Buddhism

by Yick Keng Hang

15 Dec | Thu | 7.30pm-9pm

Venue : APWBC | Free (Registration is required)

Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspks.org

KMSPKS Guided Tour

Join us on a guided tour around KMSPKS and get to know more about Buddhism, its history and arts.

25 Sep (Sun) | 10am-12pm

30 Oct (Sun) | 10am-12pm

27 Nov (Sun) | 10am-12pm

Meeting Place : VHCMH | Level 1

Registration : 6849 5300 | guidedtour@kmspks.org

Threefold Refuge & Five Precepts Preparatory Course

Understand the meaning of taking refuge and precepts.

Oct | Sun | 9.30am-11am

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspks.org

Buddhist Etiquette Workshop

Learn to be mindful of our daily conduct as we progress on the spiritual path by cultivating virtuous action, speech and thought that benefit ourselves and others.

Oct | 12.30pm-2pm

Venue : K MSPKS

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspks.org

MEDITATION

Self-Meditation @ Lunch

Rejuvenate your mind and body! Take an hour break during lunch to join our meditation practice.

7 Sep - 28 Dec | Wed | 12.30pm-1.30pm

Venue : APWBC

(Registration is required & subject to availability)

Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspks.org

Meditation Group Practice

7 Sep – 26 Oct | Wed | 7.30pm-9pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | sem@kmspks.org



Mindfulness Meditation

Learn to live in the moment to improve your physical, social and emotional balance.

18 Sep – 27 Nov | Sun | 3pm-4.30pm

Venue : APWBC | Fee: \$60 per person

Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspks.org

YOUTH

DHARMA

Sunday Youth Fellowship

Join our weekly Sunday Youth Fellowship (SYF) programme to grow with us while expanding your social circle. (13 - 28 years old)

1st & 3rd Sun of every month | 1pm-2pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1

Enquiry : 6849 5345 | youth@kmspks.org

Dharma & City Series

Join us for a series of Dharma talks that are catered specially for the busy city folks.

8 Sep & 22 Sep | Thu | 7.30pm-9.30pm

Venue : APWBC

Fee : \$15 per person

Enquiry : 6849 5345 | youth@kmspks.org

LIFESTYLE

Y Talk

A self-improvement and self-help initiative targeted at young adults and professionals. There are various themed topics and invited speakers will share their stories and experiences.

Every 2nd & 4th Thu of the month

Thu | 7.30pm-9.30pm

Venue : APWBC

Enquiry : 6849 5345 | ytalk@kmspks.org

Sports & Games

Captain's Ball, Frisbee, Badminton etc for aged 13-25 years.

Every Sun | 3pm-4.30pm

Venue : Big field behind KMSPKS

Enquiry : 6849 5345 | youth@kmspks.org

COMMUNITY

Food Ration

Play your part for the community! Join us to deliver food to the low-income families at Thomson Ville Estate.

Every 2nd Sun of the month | Sun | 8.30am-12pm

Venue : KMSPKS

Enquiry : 6849 5345 | youth@kmspks.org

Clean Our Parks

Clean the park and make it pleasant and safe for us and its inhabitants.

Once a month | Sun | 9am-12pm

Venue : KMSPKS

Enquiry : 6849 5345 | youth@kmspks.org

Y-Tuition

A free tuition programme for needy Secondary 3-5 students.

Every Sun | 9am-2pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom

Enquiry : 6849 5359 | youth@kmspks.org

ARTS

Blissful Drumming

A drumming programme for participants aged 40 years and above.

8 Apr – 9 Sep | Fri | 2pm - 3.30pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Music Room

Fee : \$80 per person (40 - 65 years old);

Donation basis (Above 65 years old)

Ukulele Interest Group

A platform to learn the basics of playing a Ukulele and get to know fellow enthusiasts.

8 Apr – 25 Nov | 7.30pm - 9.30pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Music Room

Fee : \$50 per person

Vocal Interest Group

A platform to learn the basics of singing and be a vocalist.

10 Apr – 27 Nov | Sun | 12.30pm - 2pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Music Room

Fee : \$50 per person

Zen Drum

A programme to train Zen Drum performers.

10 Apr – 27 Nov | Sun | 2.30pm - 4pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Music Room

Fee : \$100 per person (17 - 25 years old);

\$200 per person (Above 25 years old)

Enquiry : 6849 5359 | arts@kmspks.org

For more details :

<http://www.kmspks.org/groups/common-interests>

LIFESTYLE

FAMILY | RELATIONSHIP

Journey to an intimate relationship - Enriching self and others | Conducted by Sean Liew

1 & 8 Oct | Sat | 10am - 12pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom 5 & 6

Fee : \$50 per person

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | community@kmspks.org

Coming Together - Rhythm Rejuvenation

(Mind-body Well-being, Relaxation & Empowered Living) Conducted by Trained Health RHYTHM Facilitators - Sean Liew, Karamen Chia, Wendy Tiow No prior musical experience needed.

5 & 12 Oct | Wed | 7.30pm - 9pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom 5 & 6

Fee : \$40 per person

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | community@kmspks.org

Emotional Freedom Workshop

This workshop will help you to recognise your emotions and raise your emotional intelligence (EQ).

2 Sep – 7 Oct | Fri | 7pm - 10pm

Venue : APWBC

Fee : \$200 per person

Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspks.org

100 Bliss Blanket Workshop

Let us rekindle a tradition that delivers and expresses love through the 100 bliss blanket to people we love and care sincerely.

Workshop A : 6 & 20 Oct | Thu | 2pm - 4pm

Workshop B : 6 & 20 Oct | Thu | 7pm - 9pm

Venue : APWBC

Fee : \$40 (2 sessions)

Material Fee : \$48 (2 sessions)

Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspks.org

CULINARY

Vegan NutriBake & Homemade Ice Cream (Dairy-Free)

4 Sep | Sun | 3pm - 6pm

Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspks.org

Italian Bake and Cook Vegan Cuisine

30 Oct | Sun | 3pm - 6pm

Venue : APWBC

Fee : \$65 (Inclusive of ingredients)

Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspks.org

Malaysian Vegan Cuisine III

6 Nov | Sun | 3pm - 6pm

Venue : APWBC

Fee : \$60 (Inclusive of ingredients)

Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspks.org

Chinese New Year NutriBake

4 Dec | Sun | 3pm - 6pm

Chinese New Year Vegan Cuisine

11 Dec | Sun | 3pm - 6pm

Venue : APWBC

Fee : \$65 (Inclusive of ingredients)

Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspks.org

WELLNESS

Yin Yoga

Join this class to improve flexibility and circulation in joints as you cultivate awareness of inner silence.

20 Sep – 22 Nov | Tue | 7.30pm - 9pm

14 Oct – 30 Dec | Fri | 7.30pm - 9pm

29 Nov 16 – 7 Feb 17 | Tue | 7.30pm - 9pm

Venue : APWBC

Fee : \$180 (10 sessions)

Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspks.org

Simple DIY Yoga

Learn simple and structured stretching yoga poses and relaxation techniques which you can do in the comfort of your own home.

3 Oct 16 – 9 Jan 17 | Mon | 2.30pm - 3.30pm

Venue : APWBC | Fee: \$150

Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspks.org

CHILDREN

Children's Art

A workshop for kids to explore and express themselves through fun art activities.

3 Sep – 19 Nov | Sat | 2.30pm - 4.30pm

26 Nov 16 – 4 Feb 17 | Sat | 2.30pm - 4.30pm

Venue : APWBC | Fee : \$60 (10 sessions)

Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspks.org

Rainbow Child Yoga

A workshop for children to learn healthy yoga routines to achieve balance of the mind and body.

4 Sep – 30 Oct | Sun | Healthy Body Series

6 Nov – 18 Dec | Sun | Harmonious Mind Series

10.30am - 11.45am (ages : 4 - 7)

11.45am - 1pm (ages : 8 - 11)

Venue : APWBC

Fee : \$120

Enquiry : 6336 5067 | sem@kmspks.org



ENVIRONMENTALISM

Gratitude Corner – Sorting of Recyclables

Assist us to sort out items that can be recycled and reused for sale at the thrift shop!

Every Tue, Thu, Sat | 9am - 4pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 1

Outside South Wing Office

Gratitude Shop

Check out our thrift shop for cheap and good deals.

Sundays – Fridays | 10am - 3pm

Saturdays | 12pm - 4.30pm

Venue : Next to Awareness Place Convenience Store

Mobile Kiosk

Every 27th of the Lunar Month | 9am - 4pm

Venue : Corridor between Dining Hall & Front Office

World Vegetarian Day – Movie Screening

1 Oct | Sat | 12.30pm - 4.30pm

Venue : VHCMH | Level 3 | Classroom 307

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | gratitude @kmspks.org

COMMUNITY

Blood Donation Drive

31 Dec | Sat | 9am - 3pm

Venue : Pagoda of 10,000 Buddhas | Level 2 Hall of Medicine Buddha

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | community@kmspks.org

KMS Seniors' Interaction Corner

Mingle and interact with other seniors and learn beneficial exercises and craftwork.

Mon – Thu | 9.30am - 3pm

Venue : Dharma Hall | Level 1

Enquiry : 6849 5300 | volunteer@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
8am – 4pm

- 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 Amrita Precepts 甘露戒堂
8am – 4pm

- Hall of Pureland 净土堂
8am – 4pm

- Hall of Universal Brilliance 光明殿
8am – 4pm

- Ancestral Hall 功德堂
8am – 4pm

- Crematorium 火化场
8am – 4pm

- Pu An & Pu Tong Columbaria 普安塔与普同塔
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

